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Amir meets Jordan King, sends message to Qatar Amir



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets King Abdullah II of Jordan yesterday. — KUNA



DOHA: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah delivers a message from HH the Amir to Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday held official talks with King Abdullah II of Jordan. Talks were held in presence of 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 senior state officials from both countries. The two sides addressed the distinctive brotherly relationships that bind their countries and people, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-

Jarrah Al-Sabah said.

They also discussed the latest regional and international developments, ways to boost their ties in all fields and expand their cooperation in favor of their joint interests, he said. The Kuwaiti-Jordanian talks also tackled significant issues of joint interest such as unifying their political stands and finding ways to strengthen the march of joint Arab action, added Sheikh Ali. The two Arab leaders also expressed a desire to further their

joint cooperation and coordination on all levels, said the senior official. Meanwhile, the envoy of HH the Amir, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday delivered a message from HH the Amir to Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. The message tackled fraternal relations and ways of promoting and developing them in all fields, issues of mutual interest and the latest regional and international developments. — KUNA

KUWAIT/WASHINGTON: The United States and six Gulf allies including Kuwait announced sanctions yesterday on 25 entities associated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Lebanon's Hezbollah, in a move to tighten controls on both group's finances. The sanctions were set by Riyadh-based Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFTC), a two-year-old group that includes Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in addition to the United States.

Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement yesterday that the enlistment came as part of Kuwait's efforts to combat terrorism and dry up its resources. The decision in this respect was taken by the ministry's commission "for implementing relevant Security Council resolutions under the UN Chapter VII concerning the combat of terrorism and barring proliferation of weapons of mass destruction". Necessary measures will be taken in line with Kuwait's constitution, its laws and local regulations through the competent authority of the state, in implementation of Security Council resolution 1373/2991 issued under Chapter VII of the UN charter.

They targeted companies supporting the Basij Resistance Force, a subordinate group of the Revolutionary Guard, that the US Treasury Department said are used "to oppress domestic opposition with brutal displays of violence" and supply fighters to regional conflicts. Among the 25 are Iranian Bank Mellat and mining, manufacturing and investment firms that allegedly support the Basij. Four of those listed were individuals running Hezbollah's operations in Iraq, the Treasury said. All 25 have previously been named in US Treasury sanctions announced in 2018.

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News in brief

Kuwait names envoy to Palestine

KUWAIT: Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub announced yesterday that HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah issued an Amiri decree appointing Ambassador Aziz Ruhayem Al-Daihani as the non-resident ambassador of Kuwait to the State of Palestine. Tahboub added Palestine welcomed the appointment of Daihani.

Saudi to stage women's wrestling

RIYADH: The first ever women's wrestling match in Saudi Arabia will be held today, organizers said, the latest unlikely event staged in the kingdom as it attempts to shrug off an ultraconservative image. World Wrestling Entertainment Inc (WWE) said that its "superstars" Natalya and Lacey Evans will face off in the pay-per-view event which will also feature former boxing champion Tyson Fury as he takes on Braun Strowman. The bout at King Fahd Stadium will be an incongruous scene in a country where women are generally obliged to wear the black "abaya" cloak. — AFP

Informant to reap huge reward

WASHINGTON: An informant who provided crucial details on the movements of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the Islamic State leader killed in a US commando raid, is likely to scoop up some or all of a \$25 million reward, the Washington Post reported yesterday. The Post said the informant was a well-placed IS operative who facilitated Baghdadi's movements around Syria and helped oversee the construction of his Syrian hideout. The Post said the informant was at the scene as the raid unfolded, and was exfiltrated two days later with his family. — AFP

Gender neutral emojis hit screens

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple has put out new gender neutral emojis of most of its people icons - including punks, clowns and zombies - as part of an update to its mobile operating system. The tech giant has offered growing numbers of inclusive emoji designs in recent years, putting out a range of skin tones and occupations, with Google's Android publishing its own non-binary faces in May. A wheelchair, guide dog and a flexing prosthetic arm are among Apple's latest batch - put out on Monday with the iOS 13.2 upgrade - that users can slip into messages to get their points across. — AFP

Maid accuses Kuwaiti family in US of human trafficking

CLEVELAND: A domestic worker has accused a Kuwaiti family of human trafficking in the United States. The worker, from Gambia, escaped from her employers' apartment in Cleveland, Ohio, after calling a human trafficking advocate and the police. The woman, whose name has not been released, told police that she had

been sold to a family in Kuwait, held captive for four years and then brought to America to take care of the family's elderly relative, according to local police reports.

That family had traveled to Cleveland on Aug 12, 2019 so the elderly woman could receive treatment at Cleveland Clinic, says a report posted on Cleveland.com, quoting police reports. The family allegedly locked the woman in an apartment in Cleveland for two months, according to her statements to police. She also told officers that the family would lock her in a bedroom in the apartment when they left, and did not allow her to talk to anyone when they were in public.

After escaping, the woman called a friend, who

helped her report her case to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, and then to police. Cleveland police went to the apartment where the woman said she was held and found nothing inside, but noted the apartment smelled of hookah.

Cleveland police contacted the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, which helped find the woman a temporary place to live. Officers said while they were taking her to that location, she started receiving several calls from the family, local news websites reported. The woman also told police she feared for her life, and that she would be killed if she was returned to the family from Kuwait or her family in Africa. Investigations are ongoing in the case.

WhatsApp sues Israeli firm over cyberespionage

SAN FRANCISCO: WhatsApp on Tuesday sued Israeli technology firm NSO Group, accusing it of using the Facebook-owned messaging service to conduct cyberespionage on journalists, human rights activists and others. The suit filed in a California federal court contended that NSO Group tried to infect approximately 1,400 "target devices" with malicious software to steal valuable information from those using the messaging app.

WhatsApp head Will Cathcart said the lawsuit was filed after an investiga-

tion showed the Israeli firm's role the cyberattack, despite its denials. "NSO Group claims they responsibly serve governments, but we found more than 100 human rights defenders and journalists targeted in an attack last May. This abuse must be stopped," Cathcart said on Twitter.

The lawsuit said the software developed by NSO known as Pegasus was designed to be remotely installed to hijack devices using the Android, iOS, and BlackBerry operating systems. The complaint said the attackers "reverse-engineered the WhatsApp app and developed a program to enable them to emulate legitimate WhatsApp network traffic in order to transmit malicious code" to take over the devices.

"While their attack was highly sophisticated, their attempts to cover

Continued on Page 24

US House recognizes Armenian 'genocide'

WASHINGTON: Armenia rejoiced but Turkey was furious yesterday after the US House of Representatives passed a historic resolution recognizing mass killings of Armenians a century ago as genocide. With tensions already high over Turkey's assault on Kurdish-controlled areas of northern Syria, US lawmakers voted 405 to 11 on Tuesday in support of the measure to "commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance."

The move was a first for the US Congress, where similar measures with such direct language have been intro-

duced for decades but never passed. The resolution says the killing of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923 amounted to genocide, a claim recognized by some 30 countries. Turkey strongly denies the accusation of genocide and says that both Armenians and Turks died as a result of World War I. It puts the death toll in the hundreds of thousands.

Ankara was swift to condemn the measure, summoning the American ambassador and calling the vote a "meaningless political step".

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HERZLIYA: In this file photo taken on Aug 28, 2016, an Israeli woman uses her iPhone in front of the building housing the Israeli NSO group near Tel Aviv. — AFP



ANKARA: President of Turkey and leader of Turkey's ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party Recep Tayyip Erdogan waves during AK's parliamentary group meeting at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey yesterday. — AFP

Kuwait Amir sees off Jordan King after fraternal visit



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes King Abdullah II of Jordan. —Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes King Abdullah II of Jordan.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomes King Abdullah II of Jordan.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomes Jordan's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Al-Safadi.

KUWAIT: King Abdullah II of Jordan and his accompanying delegation departed Kuwait yesterday after a fraternal visit to the country. The Jordanian monarch was seen off at the airport by His Highness

the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah, and senior state officials. Upon his arrival to Kuwait, King Abdullah II was welcomed at the airport by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister and several

other senior state officials. The Jordanian King's accompanying delegation included Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Al-Safadi and a number of senior officials. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the outgoing Ambassador of Iraq to Kuwait Alaa' Majeed Al-Hashimy, in attendance of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Kuwait Amir receives Crown Prince, Premier

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at the Amiri Airport His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness also received His Highness the Prime Minister

Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir, in attendance of His Highness the Crown Prince, also received the outgoing Ambassador of Iraq to Kuwait Alaa' Majeed Al-Hashimy, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali

Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah also attended the meeting.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah addressed a cable of condolences to South Korean President Moon Jae-in on demise of his mother. Their

Highnesses the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah respectively, addressed cables of identical content to the South Korean president. — KUNA



Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with the Malaysian delegation. —Amiri Diwan photos

Amir receives letters from Malaysian PM, Guinea-Bissau president

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a written letter from Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, included an invitation to attend the 'Kuala Lumpur Conference' to be held December 20-21. An envoy of Malaysian Prime Minister handed the letter to Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. His

Highness the Amir also received a written letter from President of Guinea-Bissau Jose Mario Vaz on bilateral relations between the two countries in all fields. Guinea-Bissau's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Non-Resident Envoy to Kuwait, Mamadou Sano, handed the letter to Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah receives the letter from Guinea-Bissau's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Non-Resident Envoy to Kuwait, Mamadou Sano.

Kuwait, Turkey coordinate on relief projects: Minister

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri on Tuesday stressed keenness on coordination between the Kuwaiti and Turkish governments on several issues, mainly joint relief projects. Speaking in remarks to reporters on the sidelines of an event held by the Turkish embassy to mark the 96th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, Jabri said coordination and consultation between the two sides include all vital domains, mainly the humanitarian ones. He described the Kuwaiti-Turkish ties as deep-rooted, saying they are supported by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Kuwaiti minister extolled the relations between the two countries, noting that they are growing particularly in the commercial, economic and cultural fields. Kuwait's relief campaigns and programs continue in Turkey, as food and financial assistance are provided to the Syrian refugees living in Turkey. Kuwaiti-funded schools and towns are constructed in Turkey to accommodate the needy. Kuwait's humanitarian acts in Turkey also cover surgical operations and medications offered to poor people. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak (center) and Kuwait's Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri (right) cut the cake during the ceremony. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah attends the reception.

Local

Kuwait, US sign career coaching agreement for Kuwaiti graduates

WASHINGTON: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) signed Tuesday with the US-based Institute of International Education (IIE) an agreement to provide career coaching, job readiness, and skills development services for Kuwait Graduates Program (KGP) fellows. The agreement was signed by KFAS' Director-General Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin and IIE's President Allan Goodman. The deal aims at increasing the employability and competitiveness for Optional Practical Training (OPT) opportunities at leading global companies in the United States. "Today, we are entering a new phase having found a partner in the Institute of International Education," Shihab-Eldin said in a speech at the signing ceremony, held at the Kuwait Culture Office in Washington DC. "The objective of the program is to provide opportunities for Kuwaiti fresh graduates to get professional experience before they return home and work in US companies that are relevant to their work when they return to Kuwait," he added. "The program is part of our effort to ensure that young Kuwaitis are provided with opportunities and resources that foster their personal and professional development," said the Kuwaiti senior official. He also noted that "we believe we have a very good agreement. We have high expectations. And I believe that we will exceed our expectations."

Shihab-Eldin thanked Kuwaiti Higher Education Ministry's Undersecretary Dr Sobeeh Al-Mukhaizim, and Director of the Kuwait Cultural Office Dr Aseel Al-Awadhi. He also thanked Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, noting "he is the patron of this idea and his presence with us

today reassures us that he will be monitoring this program." Meanwhile, Goodman said, "What you've designed is a model of innovation for what happens after students graduate to make sure that they have a meaningful professional experience while they are able to remain in the US."

"We, the American people, are very grateful that you entrusted your students to our care," he added. "The US is very much the beneficiary of your students," he stressed. "It's an honor to be serving your students." In the meantime, Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah said, "There is no bigger emphasis than what my government has put on educating our young men and women."

"My government has put a lot of effort on this," he affirmed, noting, "it is a number one priority for our government to educate our youth and there is no better gift that we can give our young people than to educate them." He also mentioned, "the US is the premier destination for our students, where through this program we are giving our young men and women work experience also in the US because my government has a plan that's called plan 2035 and that is building our economy." The Kuwaiti diplomat also added that "we need our young men and women to be capable and ready to meet the new challenges that are ahead."

"Now, with this agreement with IIE, we found the right partner to do the right thing and we are full of hope that this program is going to be a success," he remarked. He indicated that, "this is the beginning of a program that hopefully would grow to encompass a large number of students. We look forward toward the day when they go home not only equipped with their degrees

but also with the experience to build the modern Kuwait that we aspire to."

Dr Awadhi expressed deepest gratitude for IIE's interest "to train our distinguished students who graduated from prestigious universities here in the US." She noted the students that will be trained under the agreement "are the best students that we have and it comes as a great opportunity for them to be trained in US companies when they finish their academic studies in the US before they leave to Kuwait to be integrated in the workforce there."

"We in the cultural office are eager to see the fruits of this agreement and we promise to do our best to turn it into a success," she remarked. Meanwhile, Dr Shihab-Eldin said that with this agreement signed, young Kuwaiti graduates from the US would have the opportunity for job training in successful large business scale companies. "Hopefully, that means they have a head start when they start a job, whether it's with a government or with private sector in Kuwait," said the Kuwaiti senior official. The message to those students is "you are being provided with the golden opportunity, if you take advantage of it you will see remarkable change in your career, so don't lose it, don't be distracted. Be perseverer for one year and you will see you will be rewarded ten times as much," he stressed.

Goodman said meanwhile that this agreement is a "model for how exchange and scholarship programs ought to finish their final years for the students in the United States, so we think it will teach many countries, inspire many countries for the wisdom that this new program now represents." Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah thanked the Kuwait



WASHINGTON: KFAS' Director-General Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin (left) and IIE's President Allan Goodman sign the agreement. — KUNA

Ministry of Higher Education, KFAS, and IIE for signing this "very important agreement that will give our distinguished students the opportunity to work in some US companies to attain professional expertise that would be added to their education."

"We, in Kuwait, have the 2035 Vision that requires us to equip our new generation to play a role in developing our beloved country and take it to advanced position," he said. He added that "this agreement is important in the sense that we would add professional experience to our students' education." Dr Awadhi also said that she extends her "deepest thanks to KFAS "for giving utmost attention to providing training opportunities to our graduates in the US."

"These are valuable opportunities for our distinguished students to be trained in US companies or institutions before they engage in work in Kuwait after they gradu-

ate from the most prestigious US universities," she said. She added, "I also extend my thanks to the Kuwait Ministry of Higher Education Undersecretary Dr Almukhaizim for studying this project and we promise our students that we will back every effort entitled with their education and training."

The Kuwait Graduates Program is a three year partnership between IIE, KFAS, Kuwait Ministry of Higher Education and Kuwait Cultural Office (KCO) in Washington, DC, where IIE will be working with Kuwaiti students in their senior year to place them into Optional Practical Training (OPT) opportunities for one year upon graduation, and will be working closely with KCO to ensure the success of the program. The program will equip students with career, critical skills, knowledge, and guidance that would play a crucial role in increasing job placement rates for recent graduates. — KUNA

Ministers discuss US-Kuwait Business Council

RIYADH: Kuwaiti Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf discussed with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin yesterday many common topics, including the launch of the Kuwaiti-American Business Council. Dr Hajraf said after the meeting, held on the sidelines of the Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh, that the Kuwaiti-American Business Council was announced last week in Washington. The business council would be a platform for Kuwaiti businessmen to meet with their American counterparts to accomplish common interests, he added.

Kuwait and the US have extremely strong ties, Hajraf stressed. Such opportunities are taken to emphasize Kuwait's strategic interests and to communicate with countries that have strategic ties

with Kuwait, and certainly America is an excellent ally, as they are keen to take such opportunities to emphasize vital ties, he said. He underlined Kuwait's efforts to support the international community's efforts in combatting financing terrorism, stressing that Kuwait is committed to the international community in combating it, which is unrelated to religion, homeland nor history, but a scourge facing humanity. Kuwait has been supporting international efforts in the fight against terrorism, emphasizing their discussions with the US side, especially since there is a conference that will be held in Melbourne with the Australian Ministers of Finance next week to complement the Paris Conference held last year, he underscored. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials attend the Kuwait Smart Grid Conference and Exhibition. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait's power consumption up 3.7% in summer

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Khalid Al-Fadel said yesterday there is now a pressing need to use smart grids to launch mega development projects. Addressing Kuwait Smart Grid Conference and Exhibition, the minister said in a speech delivered on behalf of him by Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity for Smart Grids Jassem Al-Nouri that the event aims at saving power, promoting economic openings and reducing carbon emissions. He added that power consumption hit 14,420 megawatts in the summer of 2019, up 3.7 percent.

The minister underlined the significance of finding new ways and detailed studies for the management of smart grids, pointing out the ministry's interest in saving power through available technological methods. The smart grid refers to next generation power grids, with multi-directional flows of electricity and information to make a wide distributed network. Through smart grid, the power

system becomes smart by communicating, sensing, controlling and applying intelligence. Advances in power electronics and communication, and emphasis on renewable energy, as well as consumer participation in both production and consumption of electricity are the major drivers in making the power system a Smart Grid.

Kuwait Smart Grid Conference and Exhibition offers a unique platform for exchanging knowledge and expertise about latest power and grid technologies, with a focus on the smart grid technology, smart power generation, renewable solutions, energy efficiency and smart metering. Kuwait Smart Grid Conference and Exhibition will bring together industry stakeholders, government authorities, research and innovation institutes, regional and global experts and solution providers discussing and evaluating the way forward and the future of the grid and metering infrastructure in the GCC region. — KUNA

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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A seagull flies as Kuwait Towers are seen in the background. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Zain: 10 entrepreneurs heading to the second phase of ZGI 5

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KUWAIT: The qualified projects' teams moving to phase 2.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the names of the finalists who will take part in the second phase of the Zain Great Idea (ZGI) tech startup accelerator program in its fifth edition during the Super Saturday pitch event held at Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait last weekend.

Nearly 100 participants who took part in the first phase of the program - the ZGI boot camp - pitched their projects and ideas to the judging panel, who in return selected 10 finalists that will take part in the second phase, the international accelerator program in San Francisco.

Zain announced the 10 finalists: Faisal Al Basri - Mezan, Yousef Al-Husainy - Baims, Abdulwahab Al-Refaei - Cybersys, Reem Al-Farhan - CTC, Rawan Al-Sabah - The Capital, Mishari Ameen - Touch point, Dalal Al-Qattan - That Designs, Fahad Al-Baghli - The Wish List, Majed Al-Hamlan - Blue Outdoors, Mohamed Al-Raqem - WellbiON.

The judging panel consisted of nine experts and specialists of various business fields, including Abdullah Al-Hassawi, Asset management, Portfolio management, Financial modeling, Technical analysis, and equity reports specialist, Hisham Al-Bosaty, Startups Investor and Group Treasurer at EFG Hermes Holding, Maryam Saif, Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer at Zain Group, Abdulaziz Hayat, Angel Investor, Former Associate Venture Capital at Faith Capital, Board Member at Harvard Business School Club Kuwait Chapter, Atef Abdulmajeed, Private Equity and Venture Capital Specialist at KFH Capital, Saud Al-Subaie, Chief Operating Officer at ALSayer Facilities Company, Sadegh Zobeidi - CPLP, MBA, Director of the Center for Professional Advancement and Continuing Education (PACE) at Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), Saleh Al-Shaya, Startups Investor and Alternative Investment at Rasameel Investment Company, Dakheel Al-Dakheel, Executive Vice President Alternative Investment at Rasameel Investment Company.

The first phase of the program, the ZGI boot camp, lasted for 4 weeks at the company's main headquarters, where the participants learned about the tech startup culture and workings from leading mentors from Stanford University, IE Business school, entrepreneurs and regional and international venture capital firms. Speakers included Abdulaziz Al-Loughani, cofounder and Managing Partner at Faith Capital, Pedram Mokrian - professor at Stanford University, Al-Harith Al-Atawi - cofounder and Chief Executive Officer of onegcc, Paris de L'Etraz - Director Venture Lab, IE Business School, Dr Naif Al-Mutawa -

Founder and Clinical Director of Soor Center for Professional Therapy and Assessment, Dr Abdullah Al-Mutawa - owner of Rijeemy for food and nutrition consulting company, Khaled Al-Mutawa - owner of Pogi for coding, Samer Baqer - Ghalia Tech company for advertising, Atef Abdulmajeed - Private Equity and Venture Capital specialist at KFH Capital, Saud Al Subaie - Chief Operating Officer at Al-Sayer Facilities Company.

ZGI was first launched in 2010 as a Corporate Social Responsibility initiative designed to support the youth into making their entrepreneurial dreams come true. Zain was the first in the region to launch such a comprehensive program of this kind. Then, throughout nearly 10 wonderful years, the company embraced over 500 entrepreneurs, travelled to 4 countries, and helped nearly 70 of the brightest Kuwaiti minds accelerate their ideas into active and thriving SMEs in the market.

Throughout four successful past editions, ZGI empowered, trained, and invested in hundreds of creative and driven Kuwaiti youth, of which many now own thriving and active Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to this day. Encouraging and providing the proper resources for the local entrepreneurial community is a top priority for Zain, as the company is keen on contributing to the further progress of Kuwait's economic and national development. ZGI is established by Zain in association with Brilliant Lab, a startup Accelerator Service from Kuwait, and Mind The Bridge, a global organization bridging the world through entrepreneurship education for startups, enterprises and investors to succeed in global markets. Mind The Bridge is based in Silicon Valley with offices in San Francisco and London.

The latest edition of the program features an all-new phase to the program: Co-developing. After Zain Great Idea is over, finalists will get full access to Zain's cross-functional team to help them get the most out of their newly accelerated startup. ZGI's entrepreneurs will be able to get consultations, mentoring, deals, tactics/strategies, and more from Zain specialists in various areas that are essential to any business, including sales, marketing, communications, legal, networks, IT, and more.

Zain is well aware of the crucial role played by private sector organizations in supporting social and economic sustainability projects. Springing from its growing commitment towards practicing its social responsibility, the company is committed to printing a positive print through all its activities. This has led Zain to embrace the most influential issues in the community, including the support of youth, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

Local

Panels elect office bearers as MP Hashem warns of grilling

Minister Bushehri denies allegation by griller

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Various newly-elected national assembly panels yesterday elected their heads and rapporteurs as pro-government lawmakers consolidated their control over key committees. The legal and legislative committee, which must clear all draft laws before concerned panels could debate them, elected MP Khaled Al-Shatti as its chairman and MP Mohammad Al-Dallal as its rapporteur. Interior and Defense committee, which is expected to debate the crucial law on stateless or bedoons, elected MP Askar Al-Enezi as its president while MP

Abdullah Al-Kandari was elected rapporteur. The Budgets Committee re-elected MPs Adnan Abdulsamad and Riyadh Al-Adasani as its chief and rapporteur while the educational committee elected MPs Awadah Al-Awdah and Khalil Abul as the chairman and rapporteur.

MP Ahmad Al-Fadhil was re-elected head of the Priorities Committee with Osama Al-Shaheen as its rapporteur while opposition MPs Abdulkarim Al-Kandari and Abdullah Fahhad were entrusted with the head and rapporteur of the foreign relations panel.

The financial and economic affairs committee was reported to have elected

MP Safa Al-Hashem as its head and MP Saleh Ashour as a rapporteur. Assembly panels are crucial because they debate draft laws before they could be sent to the floor for debate and on many occasions are assigned to investigate certain sensitive issues.

Meanwhile, Minister of Public Works and Housing Jenan Bushehri yesterday denied accusations by her griller MP Omar Al-Tabtabai that she has "bribed" a number of lawmakers with appointments in ministries under her to win their support in the grilling. Tabtabai had filed to grill the minister over alleged violations and failure to repair roads affected

by floods caused by heavy rains last year. The minister said that she will prove with documents that these allegations are baseless, adding that she will also prove how she safeguards public funds at the two ministries under her. Tabtabai said that in his grilling he will show how public funds are squandered.

The debate of the grilling of Bushehri and another one against Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf has been delayed until the assembly session on November 12. MP Hashem said that there will be lots of surprises during the debate of the two grillings and hinted that the government may abandon some ministers.

Customs launches e-services

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Director of the Kuwait General Administration of Customs Jamal Al-Jalawi yesterday launched a number of interactive e-services on the authority's website, such as company registration. The new services were launched in a special ceremony held at the customs headquarters in Shuwaikh. Border affairs general coordinator and head of the automation and security systems team Talal Al-Eidan stressed that the customs department always interacts with the latest technological developments made by business associates with the aim of accelerating work process and improving business environments in Kuwait. Eidan added that the website includes guidelines explaining the steps to be followed to register companies and upload the needed documents to be verified and used in each transaction.

In other news, the Ministry of Health (MoH) yesterday issued an administrative decision forming a special medical committee at the general medical council to facilitate examining cases that need referral to specialized medical committees at various hospitals and the medical council. According to the decision, the committee will be responsible for reviewing retirement recommendations made by hospitals specialized committees before referring them to the social security agency.

The committee will, upon request from one of the state's bodies, also review medical recommendations referred by the medical council and long sick leaves issued by public and private hospitals. In addition, the committee will also look into complaints made by patients examined by the medical council or those referred by MoH, review disability reports made by various hospitals and medical centers as well as endorse sick leaves issued outside Kuwait.

20 mini-market locations approved for campsites

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality allocated 20 sites where co-operative societies and other parties can provide services for campers during the upcoming camping season. This came during a meeting for the municipality's committee for studying and updating the locations temporary allocated for camping yesterday. The meeting was held to discuss allowing various co-ops to have mini-markets at campsites. The meeting was headed by deputy director for Farwaniya and Mubarak Al-Kabeer affairs Fahd Al-Shetaili and representatives from Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Ishbiliya, Ardiya, Andalus, Sabah Al-Nasser, Jahra, Na'em, Naseem, Saad Al-Abdullah and Abdali co-ops, in addition to the livestock society.

In other news, the Capital committee at the Municipal Council yesterday approved a proposal by Chairman Hassan Kamal concerning amending the council's decision pertaining commercial activities at the Sharq seafont (fish market). The committee also approved proposals on licensing temporary shades for yards outside restaurants and cafes and allocating a location to build a mosque in Doha. It postponed discussing the cancellation of unused allocations on Failaka Island until further concerned bodies attend the meeting. In another municipal concern, the head of the environment committee at the Municipal Council Maha Al-Baghli yesterday met cleaning managers from various governorates to discuss preparations to hold a joint workshop to discuss amending cleaning regulations in various areas.

Travel ban on expats not paying treatment charges

KUWAIT: While the State Audit Bureau reported that there are non-Kuwaiti patients who still receive treatment and leaving hospitals without paying any fees, the health ministry said in case of non-payment of deposit and treatment fees, the patient signs an undertaking to pay the fees, while the interior ministry is told to ban the travel of expats who do not pay.

The Audit Bureau also confirmed the continuation of weak supervision by the ministry over health insurance income the concerned company deposited at the Central Bank, which reached around KD 147 million in the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 fiscal years. The ministry said the online system is being implemented and is linked with the interior ministry, manpower authority and PACI, in addition to the finance ministry through K-net, so supervision is now complete over the collection of income from health insur-

ance. The bureau said despite the delay in implementing the procedure by the ministry for many years, the bureau appreciates its activation due to its effect in avoiding previous shortcomings and have tight oversight over collection of health insurance.

The bureau said it is not sure what was spent on treatment abroad, with amounts exceeding KD 1 billion over 18 years due to not settling documents and not having medical reviews for most of them to make sure the invoices are correct. This is in violation of ministerial decisions in this regard, as expenses of treatment abroad exceed the available finances, which accumulated debts to foreign hospitals along with the inability to pay them, reaching \$301 million at the Washington health office. The ministry also did not follow planned programs to send patients abroad. — Al-Rai

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International

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2019



Mullah on the march: Pakistani cleric takes on PM Imran Khan

New impeachment witness rocks White House

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BASRA: Iraqi medical students wave national flags and lift placards as they rally in front of their faculty at the University of Basra in the southern city yesterday in support of Iraq's anti-government demonstrations. — AFP

Iraqi PM's future on the line

Demonstrators smell change; protests leave over 240 dead

BAGHDAD: The future of Iraq's embattled premier was in the hands of his onetime parliamentary backers yesterday, as they deliberated over his ouster after mass anti-government protests that have left over 240 dead. Massive rallies broke out in Iraq's capital and south this month against corruption and unemployment, spiralling into angry calls for a total overhaul of the political system. Demonstrators were waiting to see whether the first fruit of their struggle - the ouster of Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi - was finally within reach. "Isn't it the people who have the power? Isn't it the people who put them all there?" asked protestor Athir Malek, 39. He had come from Diwaniyah, 200 kilometers further south, to join the biggest rallies so far in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, where celebration was in the air. Youssef, 33 expressed optimism late Tuesday as he spent his sixth straight night in the square. "They said we wouldn't be able to do anything. But even if we change one name, now we have a voice," he said.

Parliament has demanded that the premier appear "immediately" for questioning amid speculation he will face a no-confidence vote. But protestor Malek retained some skepticism. "They'll replace Abdel Mahdi with someone else just like him," he told AFP. Abdel Mahdi, 78, came to power last year through a tenuous partnership between

populist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and powerful paramilitary chief Hadi al-Ameri. But the kingmakers' alliance has since drifted apart. The protests exposed more clearly than ever the rift between Ameri and Sadr's powerful Saeroon bloc, the biggest in parliament, which has backed the demonstrators. The Hashed Al-Shaabi paramilitary force's political arm Fatah, headed by Ameri, is the second-biggest bloc and has so far backed the government. Several Hashed offices were torched in southern Iraq last week, further straining ties between the two.

'Back to square one'

But Sadr extended a hand to Ameri late Tuesday, inviting him to coordinate on a no-confidence vote in Abdel Mahdi and using Twitter to urge the premier to "Get out!" Hours later, Ameri announced he and Sadr would "work together to achieve the people's demands" - hinting he may agree to a vote on the premier's future. Sadr took to Twitter again yesterday to pile on the pressure, warning that failing to oust Abdel Mahdi would "turn Iraq into Syria or Yemen," both engulfed in bloody wars. While the premier's departure would be seen as a "victory" for demonstrators, it would "give protests a break but not break them," said Maria Fantappie, an Iraq analyst at the

International Crisis Group. Demonstrators have demanded deep-rooted reforms, including a new constitution, a reworked electoral law and mass resignations from a government they see as corrupt. Fantappie cautioned that "even an election with the same election law would bring same figures into parliament and the same process as last year in selecting the prime minister, which puts you once again at square one." As rumors swirled that Abdel Mahdi's days were numbered, people rallied at central Baghdad's Tahrir Square for a seventh consecutive day yesterday.

Despite violence that has left more than 240 people dead and more than 8,000 wounded, they have defied orders to clear the streets. The largest numbers yet - tens of thousands - flooded Tahrir overnight amid blaring horns, fireworks and loud Iraqi music. Demonstrators have shrugged off a litany of government reform plans and piled the pressure on Iraq's entrenched political class, saying they want to "weed them all out." "They should all quit and we should have a national salvation government," said Alaa Khdeir, 63.

'Take back everything'

Since the US-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam

Hussein in 2003, Iraq's political system has been gripped by clientelism, corruption and sectarianism. That means getting a job in government - by far the country's biggest employer - is often secured with bribes or connections. The country is ranked by Transparency International as the 12th most corrupt in the world.

Anger at the state of affairs had been swelling among the youth, who make up 60 percent of Iraq's nearly 40 million people. Youth unemployment stands at 25 percent, while one in five live below the poverty line, despite the vast oil wealth of OPEC's second-largest crude producer. Inequality has been a major rallying cry for protesters.

An initial six-day wave of demonstrations broke out on October 1 but was met with violence that left 157 people dead, mostly protesters in Baghdad.

The demonstrations resumed on October 24, with clashes breaking out in the south and heavy use of tear gas canisters in Baghdad, leaving another 85 dead. They included at least one protester killed overnight in the Shiite holy city of Karbala, according to the Iraqi Human Rights Commission. But the threat of violence did not prevent 55-year-old Hussein Nuri returning to Tahrir Square yesterday. "We want to take back everything they stole," he said.—AFP

IS prisoners in N East Syria: What we know

BEIRUT: Thousands of the world's most wanted jihadists remain a security hot potato for Syria's Kurds, even after Washington announced the death of their elusive "caliph" Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. A Turkish attack on northeastern Syria in early October sparked fears the Islamic State group suspects could break out en masse as their Kurdish guards were called up to the front. A Turkish-Russian truce deal signed on October 22 has since largely halted that offensive, but the fate of suspected Baghdadi followers remains uncertain. This is what we know:

How many

According to the Kurdish administration, there are around 12,000 suspected IS fighters in the custody of Kurdish security forces across northeastern Syria. At least 2,500 of them are non-Iraqi foreigners of more than 50 different nationalities. Tunisia is thought to have the biggest contingent. Officials in Paris say 60 to 70 French nationals are among those held. The rest are around 4,000 Syrians and roughly the same number of Iraqis.

Where

The fighters, who were detained mostly in the course of operations led by Kurdish forces and backed by the US-led coalition against IS, are detained in at least seven facilities. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces do not reveal the exact locations but some of them are known, including in Roj, in Dashiha, Jerkin, Navkur and Derik. Given the high value of some of the detainees, the security levels at these facilities is poor. "They are only buildings" and not heavily fortified, said one top official.

Breakouts

After Baghdadi was announced killed on Sunday, SDF commander-in-chief Mazloum Abdi warned IS fighters still at large

would seek revenge. "This is why anything is possible, including attacks on prisons," he said. His warning comes after dozens of IS prisoners were reported to have escaped when the long-threatened Turkish invasion became reality. Last week, Washington's special envoy for Syria James Jeffrey told Congress "over 100" IS prisoners had escaped and their whereabouts were unknown. On Friday, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Kurdish forces had managed to "recollect" dozens of IS prisoners who had escaped during the Turkish assault. The Kurds had for months been saying that any offensive would make guarding foreign prisoners "a second priority".

Transfers

Turkey's invasion has lent some added urgency, however, to the search for a solution for these prisoners, whom the Kurds warn they cannot keep, let alone prosecute. Western governments such as France have been reluctant to take them back, for lack of a clear legal framework and fears of a public backlash. France and other governments have sought instead to transfer some of them to neighboring Iraq. Apparently anticipating the risk of jailbreaks, the United States took control of two of the most high-profile IS detainees in the early hours of the Turkish offensive and spirited them out of the country.

IS relatives

The detained fighters have thousands of relatives - mostly women and children - held in other facilities, such as the infamous Al-Hol camp, which is so overcrowded guards are struggling to control riots. Another major facility housing so-called "IS families" is Ain Issa, which has found itself in the heart of the battlefield and from which around 800 people escaped in October, Kurdish authorities say. Some of them are since thought to have been reintegrated in the camp, others to have crossed over to the Turkish side of the front line, and several to have joined up with IS cells operating in the area.

Resurgence?

Whether large-scale jailbreaks are prevented or not, any redeployment of SDF fighters away from the detention facilities would create a security vacuum for IS to fill in the area. The past few months have seen an increase in the number and scope of attacks by IS sleeper cells, that never stopped being active after the jihadist group lost the final fragment of its once sprawling "caliphate" in March.—AFP

Saudi 'Davos in desert': Glitz, smiles, hidden name cards

RIYADH: Wall Street titans smiled and schmoozed at a Saudi investment conference widely shunned last year over a critic's murder, but as wariness lingers some delegates kept their name cards discreetly out of sight. Thousands of policy-makers and executives from over 30 countries packed into Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton hotel, bedecked with frescoed ceilings and glittering chandeliers, for the three-day Future Investment Initiative (FII) that opened Tuesday.

It was a striking contrast with last year's summit, which was largely filled with delegates from Arab countries - many from Saudi Arabia itself - as the fallout over dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul triggered mass cancellations by Western executives. "Most notable are the people who came for the inaugural FII (in 2017), boycotted the second and now have returned for the third," an American finance executive said, declining to be named.

"It's like they are giving their stamp of approval, saying to others: 'It's okay to come back to Saudi.'" He referred specifically to American asset management company Blackrock's chief executive Larry Fink and Stephen Schwarzman, head of private equity firm Blackstone, who participated in panels cheerleading Saudi reforms.

Others endorsing Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman included an all-star lineup of speakers, from Indian tycoon Mukesh Ambani to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro. But despite the ebullient mood on the stage, many delegates were squeamish about being named in media interviews, in a sign of the lingering reputational risk of doing business in Saudi Arabia. Some sought to fly under the radar, flipping their name cards behind their coats or hiding them behind their ties. Some even appeared hesitant to share their business cards with journalists. The Saudi organizers also sought to avoid media scrutiny, banning



RIYADH: Delegates chat near a robot during the Future Investment Initiative (FII) forum at the King Abdulaziz Conference Centre in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh yesterday. —AFP

journalists with cameras from entering the main conference hall and from a gala dinner organized for delegates. "The sanctions threat over Saudi's human rights record is currently over, but reputational costs are ongoing," Ryan Bohl, of the US geopolitical think tank Stratfor said. "Most companies have made the judgment whether they will be affected or endure those costs. Those that don't want those risks are staying away."

Khashoggi's murder plunged Saudi Arabia into a public relations crisis, forcing companies with ties to the kingdom to find a balance between maintaining their reputations and their business considerations. Many of those attending this year are Wall Street financiers chasing a potential windfall from the upcoming stock market listing of state-owned oil giant Aramco, the world's most profitable company. "There is massive potential," an executive from a Singapore-based manufacturer of engineering equipment told AFP.

"This is Saudi Arabia and Aramco - there is nothing bigger." But this year's FII has few names from the world's largest technology companies or from Hollywood, key areas of Saudi investment. —AFP

International

Syria govt and opposition open 'historic' constitutional review

Damascus calls on Kurdish forces to join army, police

GENEVA: Syrian government and opposition negotiators sat face-to-face yesterday to launch a committee tasked with amending the country's constitution, a meeting hailed by the UN as marking "a new chapter" for the war-torn nation. The United Nations-brokered constitutional review committee includes 150 delegates - divided equally among President Bashar Al-Assad's government, the opposition and civil society.

Hopes remain dim that the group will reach a breakthrough towards a political resolution to Syria's eight-year conflict, which has killed more than 370,000 people. But UN Syria envoy Geir Pedersen said the meeting amounted to "a historic moment" and "a new chapter for Syria". "I know that it is not easy for all of you to be here together," Pedersen said, conceding that "the road ahead will not be easy." Experts have argued that Assad - whose forces have made major gains against the opposition - has little to lose at the talks and will walk away before making any significant compromises.

His lead negotiator Ahmad Kuzbari praised the country's existing charter as "a modern constitution." "But this does not prevent us from meeting to consider possible amendments, or changes to the current constitution, and putting a new constitution in place, one that... effects positive change," he added. In opening remarks that also included tough rhetoric against those battling Assad, Kuzbari insisted that Syrian forces would continue fighting regardless of ongoing diplomacy.

"We have been fighting terrorism before the meeting, and we will wage this battle during the meeting and afterwards, until we liberate every inch of our nation's precious land," he said. The head of the opposition delegation, Hadi Albahra, described the meeting as "a first step on a long

path to recovery." "We all know that 150 people meeting today in this room have diverging opinions," he said. "But after eight painful years of suffering in Syria we came here to look for similarities."

Following yesterday's ceremony, meetings between the 150 will take place before a smaller group of 45 delegates will begin work drafting the constitution. There is no deadline for the process and Pedersen said the aim would be to reach consensus on all issues. Where that is not possible, changes would only be made with a 75-percent majority vote in the committee to avoid having any one side dictate the results. Constitutional review is a central part of the UN's peace plan for Syria, which was defined by Security Council resolution 2254, adopted in December 2015. The resolution also calls for UN-supervised elections.

In another development, Syria's army and police yesterday called on Kurdish fighters and security forces in northeast Syria to join their ranks following a Turkish cross-border incursion, state media said. The appeal comes after regime troops deployed along parts of Syria's northeastern border in a deal with Kurdish authorities to help stave off the Turkish offensive, launched October 9. It is the largest Syrian army deployment in the area since 2012.

A separate ceasefire agreement reached between Ankara and Damascus-backer Moscow last week provided for members of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces to withdraw from the border and solidified the presence of pro-government forces there. "The general command of the armed forces is ready to welcome members of SDF units who are willing to join its ranks," said a Syrian defense ministry statement carried by state news agency SANA. — Agencies



AD DARBASIYAH: Syrian Kurdish Asayish internal security forces and Russian military police patrol the town of Darbasiyah in Syria's northeastern Hasakeh province along the Syria-Turkey border. — AFP

Iraq's Moqtada Sadr: Cleric and kingmaker

BAGHDAD: Whether in protests, elections, secret negotiations or government formations, one man always seems to have the last word in Iraq's tumultuous political scene: sharp-tongued cleric Moqtada Sadr. The onetime militiaman has earned himself a cult-like following in Iraq which he can mobilize with a single tweet to crown-or bring down-a government. He appeared to do just that this week, endorsing mass protests in Iraq that have demanded the collapse of a government he himself brought to power only a year ago.

Mind-boggling politicking is par for the course when it comes to Sadr, said Renad Mansour of the London-based Chatham House think-tank. "He was concerned with how the government he formed had failed so he decided to take it down," said Mansour. "He's a guy who has multiple sides: an anthropologist who goes with the street, making him inconsistent over the years." Sadr, 46, was born in the southern Iraqi town of Kufa to a family with deep political roots.

His father, Mohammad Sadeq al-Sadr, who was assassinated in 1999, was one of Iraq's most respected Shiite clerics and a fierce opponent of Saddam Hussein's regime. Moqtada Sadr is also related to Mohammad Baqer al-Sadr, the prominent thinker who was executed by Saddam in 1980. This legacy fuelled the younger Sadr's fire, and he saw his opportunity in Saddam's 2003 ouster by a US-led invasion-which he also opposed with his Mehdi Army. Sadr virtually disappeared in 2006, spending the next few



BAGHDAD: Iraqi men work in front of posters bearing the portraits of Iraqi Shiite cleric and political leader Moqtada Al-Sadr (top), Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani (center), and Imam Ali, the cousin of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) in the capital Baghdad's eastern Sadr City district. — AFP

years studying to become a cleric in Iran's Qom before returning to Iraq's holy city of Najaf in 2011.

Ruling reformist

As he returned to public life, Sadr began railing against corruption and its main symbol in Iraq: Baghdad's once-exclusive "Green Zone" which hosts government offices and embassies. In 2016, he held weekly Friday protests against graft in a country considered the 12th most corrupt in the world, according to Transparency International. Sadr regularly dispatched his critiques to his more than 600,000 followers on Twitter. But after years as a self-

styled opposition, his Saeroon bloc won the largest share of parliament's 329 seats in elections last year. To form a majority, he allied with the next-biggest bloc Fatah, the political arm of the Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary force, and brought Adel Abdel Mahdi as premier.

"Sadr presents himself as an anti-establishment champion of reform and a populist voice of the millions who have been let down by the system," said Fanar Haddad, an expert at Singapore University's Middle East Institute. "But the fact remains that the Sadrists have been an integral part of the political classes and have had no shortage of ministerial posts and high ranking public office," he added.

That contradiction has been strained by the protests, which put Sadr and the Hashed on opposite sides of the swelling anti-government movement. More than 240 people were killed and thousands wounded in rallies that erupted on October 1 in anger at unemployment and corruption before evolving into calls for regime change. Amid the protests, several Hashed offices were torched in southern Iraq in what observers said was an escalation of the rivalry between Sadr and the Hashed. But in a slick about-face, Sadr invited Fatah chief Hadi Al-Ameri late Tuesday to jointly drop their support for Abdel Mahdi.

Their apparent rapprochement came hours after Sadr returned from Iran, a country with which he has complex ties. His family was long opposed to the theocratic ruling system there and Sadr even visited its regional foe Riyadh in 2017. He shocked many when he travelled to Tehran in September, meeting both supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and commander of the elite Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Major General Qasem Soleimani. An observer who was tracking the visit said it was sparked by fears for his life. — AFP

Grievances underlying the Lebanese protests

BEIRUT: An unprecedented protest movement has gripped Lebanon for almost two weeks, demanding an overhaul of a political class viewed as incompetent and corrupt. An announced tax on calls made through free phone applications sparked the demonstrations, but that was just the latest in a long list of economic grievances that have spurred exasperated Lebanese to protest. Here are some of them:

Poor services

Residents in Lebanon complain of unmaintained roads and inadequate public transport, as well as endless power cuts. Most Lebanese pay two bills for their power - the first to an ailing state electricity company, and the second to expensive private generators for the three to 12 hours each day when mains supply cuts out. Consultancy firm McKinsey ranked the country's electricity supply fourth from bottom in the world, following Haiti, Nigeria and Yemen, in a report covering 2017 and 2018. Reforms to the electricity sector have not been implemented since the end of the 1975-1990 civil war. A new electricity plan was approved in March but has not been implemented. Many say they are fed up with paying the state for intermittent tap water they describe as undrinkable. Most also pay for drinking water and private tankers to deliver water when pipes run dry.

Poverty and unemployment

More than 25 percent of Lebanon lives in poverty, the World Bank says. Unemployment stood at 10 percent in 2012, according to official figures, though many claim the real number is higher. It estimated that 200,000 Lebanese have been pushed into poverty as a result of the eight-year civil war in neighboring Syria. An additional 250,000 to 300,000 Lebanese citizens are estimated to have become unemployed, most of them unskilled young people. In the northern city of Tripoli, which has emerged as a nerve centre of the protests, 57 percent of the population live at or below the poverty line, according to a 2015 study by the United Nations. More than a quarter of the city's residents suffer extreme poverty, it said.

Inequality

Inequality has been a major rallying call of the protesters. The top one percent of the population make nearly 25 percent of national income while the bottom 50 percent make little more than 10 percent, according to the World Inequality Database.

Corruption

Lebanon ranked 138th out of 175 countries in Transparency International's 2018 corruption index, with different sectarian leaders accused of running demi-fiefdoms.



BEIRUT: Lebanese protesters sit in a makeshift camp during anti-governmental demonstrations in the centre of the capital Beirut yesterday. — AFP

Dollar shortage

In recent weeks it has become difficult to withdraw dollars from ATMs, despite the Lebanese pound being pegged to the greenback. Unofficial money exchangers have been selling dollars for far above the fixed rate of 1,500 pounds.

Stalling growth

Growth in Lebanon has plummeted in the wake of endless political deadlock in recent years, compounded by the 2011 breakout of civil war in neighboring Syria. It stood at around 0.2 percent in 2018, far below growth of more than 10 percent in 2009. It is expected to remain stagnant this year, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Colossal debt

Economists are deeply concerned by the country's crippling debt of \$86 billion. This equates to roughly 150 percent of gross domestic product, one of the highest rates worldwide. Eighty percent of that debt is owed to Lebanon's central bank and local banks.

Deficit

Lebanon adopted its first budget in 12 years last year. But by the end of 2018, it had failed to make good on a promise to donors to reduce its budget deficit, which reached a record \$6.2 billion - over 11 percent of GDP. This year's budget, adopted seven months late, aims to reduce the deficit to 7.6 percent of GDP. Saad Hariri, who resigned as prime minister Tuesday, promised last week after days of protests to reduce it to 0.6 of GDP under the 2020 budget. Economists said this was unrealistic.

Blocked aid

In July, parliament passed an austerity budget as part of conditions to unlock \$11 billion in aid pledged at a conference in Paris last year. But with no real progress made on reforms since, the financial aid has been held up. Lebanon has received only part of the aid promised at several previous conferences, after it failed to honor its promises to bring about substantial economic change. — AFP

Macron takes aim at Islamic 'separatism'

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron has urged France's Muslim community to step up the fight against "separatism" as he toughened his rhetoric against Islamic radicalism in the wake of a deadly attack. Macron, a centrist whose main political rival at home is far-right leader Marine Le Pen, has sought to show he is serious in cracking down on Islamic radicalism in France following the October 3 attack by a Muslim convert at Paris police headquarters that left four staff dead.

In a pre-recorded interview with RTL radio broadcast on Monday, Macron said he planned to fight, alongside Muslim leaders, against religious sectarianism and resistance among some French Muslims to integrate. "It is a fact that a form of separatism has taken root in some places in our Republic, in other words a desire to not live together and to not be in the Republic," he said. "It is in the name of a religion, namely Islam," he said.

Hours after Macron's comments, an octogenarian shot and seriously wounded two other men, in their seventies, who surprised him as he was trying to set fire to the door of a mosque in Bayonne in southwest France. The man was arrested later near his home. After the incident, Interior Minister Christophe Castaner offered his "solidarity and support to the Muslim community." Macron on Monday hosted representatives of the French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM) to press for joint efforts between the government and Muslims to crack down on radicalism.

Castaner, who attended that meeting, told AFP Macron had urged the CFCM leaders to "fight alongside the state" against sectarianism and Islamism. The president told them he wanted to see a "change in rhythm" from the council, to wage a genuine fight against radicalism. CFCM Vice President Anouar Khibech, who was present at the Elysee talks, said the council would now make "very strong announcements" on the fight against radicalism at an extraordinary meeting called for Tuesday.

There has been an ongoing debate in France in recent years about the role of Islam in a republic built on staunchly secular values where Muslims now make up some 10 percent of the population. The controversy intensified following a string of deadly attacks carried out by Islamist militants in 2015, including the massacres at the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine and Bataclan music venue.

The October 3 killings by Mickael Harpon, a 45-year-old computer expert who converted to Islam a decade ago and adopted increasingly radical beliefs, has again laid bare the tensions. Eager not to be outflanked by the National Rally (RN) of Le Pen, Macron after the killings gave a tough speech where he vowed "an unrelenting fight in the face of Islamist terrorism". He called on all of France to build "a society in a state of vigilance" in order to overcome what he termed the "Islamist hydra". — AFP



PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron (right) embraces former French Prime Minister Manuel Valls (2nd right), as President of the Central Jewish Consistory of Paris Joel Mergui (2nd left) embraces former French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve during the official inauguration of the European Center for Judaism (Centre Europeen Du Judaisme) in Paris. — AFP

At least 42 perish in Cameroon landslide

YAOUNDE: At least 42 people were killed after their houses were swept away Tuesday in a landslide caused by torrential rain in the western Cameroon city of Bafoussam, state media reported, showing images of rescuers desperately sifting through rubble for survivors. "Searches are ongoing. We fear there are further deaths," a senior local official told AFP on condition of anonymity as nightfall neared.

A total of 42 bodies were taken to the hospital in the city, according to an official statement read on Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV). Media reports had earlier spoken of about 30 dead, with the radio reporting that four pregnant women were among the victims. Pictures of the tragedy in Bafoussam posted on social media showed ramshackle houses having crumbled into the ochre-colored terrain and men clad in hard hats digging away at piles of mud in the search for survivors.

"The houses that collapsed were built on the side of a hill in a risk zone," said the local official in the West Region, of which Bafoussam is the capital, some 300 kilometers northwest of the capital Yaounde. He said the landslide was caused by torrential rains that have fallen in the country over the past few days as well as the wider region, with neighboring Central African Republic and Nigeria also seriously hit. Cameroon President Paul Biya offered his condolences to families of the victims in a message broadcast on CRTV.

Landslides are quite exceptional in the area although further south they are less rare in the rainy season, notably in the English-speaking southwest. It was in the southwestern coastal resort town of Limbe that five people died in a landslide following flooding in July last year. Neighboring Central African Republic, already mired in a brutal civil war, is reeling from 10 days of torrential rain which have plunged swathes of the country underwater, creating a new emergency in one of the world's poorest nations.

Tens of thousands of people have been left homeless after the CAR's largest river, the Oubangui, burst its banks at the height of the country's worst floods in decades which have left parts of the capital Bangui submerged, prompting authorities to warn of the risk of cholera. Several agrarian states in another Cameroon neighbor, Nigeria, have also been hit by flooding. A torrential downpour Monday allowed dozens of inmates to escape from prison in the central state of Kogi. — AFP

International

UK PM gambles on election to decide the fate of Brexit

First December election since 1923

LONDON: The fate of Britain's departure from the European Union could be decided in a Dec 12 election after Prime Minister Boris Johnson finally won parliamentary approval for a gamble that he hopes will break the deadlock over Brexit. Johnson, who has failed to deliver on his "do or die" promise that Britain would leave the bloc on Oct 31, secured the election agreement just hours after the EU granted a third delay to Brexit. The first Christmas election in Britain since 1923 will be one of the hardest to call in years. Brexit has variously fatigued, enthused and enraged swathes of voters while eroding loyalties to the two major parties.

When Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, bet on an early election in 2017, she lost her slender majority in parliament - a failure that ultimately prevented her from ratifying her Brexit deal in parliament and sank her political career. More voters switched between the two main parties at the 2017 election than in any ballot dating back to 1966, research by the British Election Study showed.

"It's time to unite the country and get Brexit done," Johnson told a meeting of Conservative lawmakers on Tuesday night shortly after securing the election to cheers from a parliament he has accused of stopping him from delivering the divorce. The election result, due to be announced in the early hours of Friday the 13th, could decide the ultimate fate of Brexit after almost four years of almost continuous political commotion in London that has shocked both investors and allies.

Johnson, 55, hopes to win a majority to push through the last-minute Brexit deal he struck this month with the European Union while his main opponent, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, is pitching a socialist government and

another EU referendum. If no party wins conclusively, the future of Brexit will be thrown up in the air again with options ranging from a tumultuous no-deal exit to another referendum that could scupper the whole divorce.

Election gamble

A five-year flurry of two historic referendums - on Scottish independence in 2014 and Brexit in 2016 - and two national elections in 2015 and 2017 delivered often unexpected results that ushered in political crises. The Conservatives are ahead of Labour by an average of about 10 percentage points in polls this month, indicating a majority in the 650-seat parliament for Johnson, though



**Johnson:
Let's get
Brexit done**

pollsters admit their models are imperfect with turnout a key variable. The election pitches two of the most unconventional British politicians of recent years against each other. Both have been repeatedly written off by opponents and both offer starkly different visions for the world's fifth largest economy.



LONDON: A pro-Brexit banner is seen outside the Houses of Parliament in London yesterday. Britain's political leaders tested their election pitches yesterday after parliament backed Prime Minister Boris Johnson's bid for a pre-Christmas poll aimed at breaking the years-long Brexit impasse. — AFP

Corbyn, a 70-year-old campaigner who won the Labour leadership in 2015 against the odds, offers a radical socialist alternative to the Western capitalist consensus complete with sweeping nationalization and higher taxation on financiers. "A Labour government will be on your side, while Boris Johnson's Conservatives - who think

they're born to rule - will only look after the privileged few," Corbyn said. Johnson, a New York-born former mayor of London who was hailed by the U.S. president as Britain's Donald Trump, has pledged to use Brexit to make the United Kingdom the most prosperous economy in Europe by 2050. — Reuters

New impeachment witness rocks the White House

WASHINGTON: A decorated Iraq War veteran rocked the White House Tuesday with devastating testimony on Donald Trump's alleged extortion of Ukraine as Democrats laid out plans for the public phase of the impeachment inquiry threatening his presidency. The Democratic-led House is investigating Trump over his bid to pressure Ukraine into digging up dirt on election rival Joe Biden - and accusations he conditioned nearly \$400 million in military aid on the political favor.

National Security Council Ukraine expert Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman said in written testimony for his closed-door deposition he witnessed Trump and a senior diplomat pressuring Ukraine for that help. In explosive prepared testimony, Vindman recounted listening to Trump pressure Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky on the now infamous July 25 phone call that sparked the impeachment probe. His opening statement, released late Monday, offers some of the strongest evidence yet for accusations that Trump abused his office and broke election law to gain Kiev's support for his re-election.

Decorated war veteran

Vindman arrived on Capitol Hill Tuesday in full military dress uniform, as Trump blasted him on Twitter as a "Never Trumper" - his label for Republicans who fundamentally oppose the president. "How many more Never Trumpers will be allowed to testify about a perfectly appropriate phone call," he asked. "Was he on the same call that I was? Can't be possible!" Republicans mobilized to undercut Vindman's credibility, questioning his loyalty by noting he moved to the US from the Soviet Union at the age of three and suggesting he is part of an effort by the US national security bureaucracy to undermine Trump. "Donald Trump is innocent. The deep state is guilty," said Republican lawmaker Matt Gaetz, one of the president's most strident defenders in Congress.

First White House witness

The first White House official to testify and a Purple Heart recipient after being wounded in Iraq, Vindman has proved a much more difficult witness for Republicans to dismiss, however, than previous civilian government figures. The veteran, who ignored White House orders to defy a congressional subpoena to testify, said alarm bells rang during a July 10 meeting with Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland and a Kiev official. Vindland said Sondland pressured the official to open corruption investigations into a debunked conspiracy theory that Ukraine helped Democrats against Trump in the 2016 election.

He also pushed for a probe into Biden over links between the Democrat's son and a Ukraine energy company, Burisma. "Following this meeting, there was a scheduled debriefing during which Amb. Sondland emphasized the importance that Ukraine deliver the investigations into the 2016 election, the Bidens and Burisma," Vindman said. "I stated to Amb Sondland that his statements were inappropriate, that the request to investigate Biden and his son had nothing to do with national security," he added. Vindland confirmed the public record of the Trump-Zelensky call, in which Trump responded to Zelensky's request for military aid by asking for "a favor though" before pressing for the investigations of the 2016 story and the Bidens. — AFP

Baghdadi's death 'doesn't feel like' justice yet: Yazidis

SHARYA CAMP: Islamic State leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi's death will mean nothing to 19-year-old rape victim Jamila unless the Islamic State militants who enslaved her are brought to justice. Jamila, who asked not to be identified by her last name, is one of thousands of women from the Yazidi minority religion who were kidnapped and raped by IS after it mounted an assault on the Yazidi homeland in northern Iraq in August 2014.

"Even if Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is dead, it doesn't mean Islamic State is dead," Jamila told Reuters outside the tent that is now her temporary home in the Sharya camp for displaced Yazidis in Iraq's Kurdistan Region. "This doesn't feel like justice yet," she said. "I want the men who took me, who raped me, to stand trial. And I want to have my voice heard in court. I want to face them in court ... Without proper trials, his death has no meaning," Baghdadi, who had led IS since 2010, detonated a suicide vest after being cornered in a raid by

US special forces in northwest Syria, US President Donald Trump announced on Sunday.

Inspired by his edicts to enslave and slaughter Yazidis, whom IS regard as infidels, his followers shot, beheaded and kidnapped thousands in a rampage which the United Nations called a genocidal campaign against them. Along with thousands of other women and children, Jamila said she was enslaved by the militants and kept in captivity for five months in the city of Mosul along with her sister. She was just 14 when she was seized. But her problems did not end after she and her sister managed to escape when, she said, their guards were high on drugs.

"When I first came back, I had a nervous breakdown and psychological problems for two years, so I couldn't go to school," she said. Now instead of working or catching up on her years of lost schooling, she looks after her mother, with whom she shares her cramped tent at the camp. "My mother can't walk and has health problems so I have to stay and take care of her because my older siblings are in Germany," she said.

No plans to go home

The prospect of going home to Sinjar in northern Iraq is not an option for Jamila, and many others. The city still lies in ruin four years after the IS onslaught, and suspicion runs deep in the ethnically mixed area. "Sinjar is completely destroyed. Even



WASHINGTON: This screen shot of US President Donald Trump Twitter account shows a picture of a dog that helped capture the Leader of ISIS Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. — AFP

if we could go back, I wouldn't want to because we'd be surrounded by the same Arab neighbors who all joined IS in the first place, and helped them kill us (Yazidis)," she said. Thousands of men are being tried in Iraqi courts for their ties to IS. Iraq has so far not allowed victims to testify in court, something community leaders and human rights groups say would go a long way in the healing process.

"It is deplorable that not a single vic-

tim of Islamic State's horrific abuses including sexual slavery has gotten their day in court," said Belkis Wille, Iraq Researcher for Human Rights Watch. "Iraq's justice system is designed to allow the state to exact mass revenge against suspects, not provide real accountability for victims." For some of the nearly 17,000 Yazidis at the Sharya camp, Baghdadi's death was a first step in that direction though they fear the IS fighters who are still alive. — Reuters

Chile's protests flare back up as reforms fall short

SANTIAGO: Chileans took to the streets again yesterday, pouring by the thousands into plazas and shutting down main boulevards in a sign that government promises of reform continued to fall short. Police in armored trucks watched over the gathering masses. The night before, vandals wreaked havoc nearby, looting, setting fires and sowing chaos amid a melee of sirens, protesters banging pots and heavy black smoke.

President Sebastian Pinera's newly appointed spokeswoman Karla Rubilar condemned the previous night's mayhem, saying it did not reflect the wishes of the majority. "The violence is over-taking the legitimate demands of the social movement," Rubilar told reporters. She called on all Chileans, from soccer players to cultural icons, to reject the rioting. Days earlier, more than a million Chileans marched peacefully against inequality in Santiago, the world's top copper producer, has long boasted one of Latin America's most prosperous free-market economies. A plummeting copper price and global trade tensions, however, have dragged on the export-dependent economy and exposed entrenched inequality.

The continuing unrest in Chile follows a week of riots, arson and protests over inequality that have resulted in at least 18 dead and 7,000 arrested, prosecutors said. Chilean businesses lost more than \$1.4 billion. The city's metro suffered nearly \$400 million in damages. Pilar Zofoli, a 30-year-old schoolteacher, said the



SANTIAGO: Demonstrators clash with riot police during a protest against the government's economic policies in Santiago. — AFP

violence and destruction to public spaces and services was making life miserable for Santiago's working class. "I support this cause, but I don't like the way things are going," she said. "In the end, this affects us, not the rich."

Protests over a hike in metro fares spun out of control earlier this month, prompting Pinera to pledge sweeping social and economic reforms, and to open his cabinet. Chile, the world's top copper producer, has long boasted one of Latin America's most prosperous free-market economies. A plummeting copper price and global trade tensions, however, have dragged on the export-dependent economy and exposed entrenched inequality.

Smoke, fire

A putrid blend of smoldering fire

from an overnight blaze downtown and tear gas hung heavily over Santiago through much of Tuesday. Chileans in business attire wore makeshift masks or wet towels over their faces as they headed to and from work. Many schools and businesses remained closed, or shut early. Catalina Barrera, an 18-year-old high school student, said she felt Pinera's announcements had missed the mark. "The protests would go on, she said.

"If, after that massive march on Friday, we get nothing but a cabinet change in which they continue to nominate more of the same people, then violence is our only option," she said. Students, unions and other social groups have joined the Chile protests in massive numbers, but a leader or spokesperson has yet to emerge. — Reuters

London fire service criticized in high-rise fire tragedy report

LONDON: The emergency response to a 2017 high-rise fire that killed 71 people in London had "serious shortcomings", British media said on Tuesday, quoting an official report into the tragedy. The long-awaited assessment into the Grenfell Tower fire is due to be published today and indicated fewer people would have died had London Fire Brigade been better prepared.

The June 14, 2017 inferno at the 24-storey residential block in west London was Britain's deadliest domestic fire since World War II and prompted widespread outrage. Several media organizations said the report says the fire service's readiness for such a blaze was "gravely inadequate" and that its response suffered from "systemic" failures.

It also accused LFB commissioner Dany Cotton of "remarkable insensitivity" after she told the inquiry she would not have done anything differently on the night. "I identify a number of serious shortcomings in the response of the LFB, both in the operation of the control room and on the incident ground," wrote inquiry head Martin Moore-Bick. "It is right to recognize that those shortcomings were for the most part systemic in nature," he stated, according to the domestic Press Association news agency. A public inquiry into the fire began in May 2018, led by retired High Court judge Moore-Bick, and is expected to take evidence in two phases. — AFP

International

Iranians say Malaysia banks close their accounts; US sanctions bite

US sanctions having a far-reaching impact on Iran citizens

KUALA LUMPUR: Banks in Malaysia are closing the accounts of Iranian individuals and companies, nearly a dozen affected people said, in a sign that US sanctions are having a far-reaching impact on citizens of the Islamic republic. Although Malaysian banks seemed to be more cautious in dealing with Iranians than those elsewhere, some Iranians and one embassy official said, there were "mass closures" in the Southeast Asian country in recent months.

The banks were being "more Catholic than the Pope", said university lecturer Behrang Samadi, who is among an estimated 10,000 Iranians living in Malaysia and learnt in August that his bank, CIMB, would close his 14-year-old account. "In Western countries, there is no problem open-

ing bank accounts," he added. "They are only sensitive about money transfers, especially in big amounts."

Samadi said he withdrew his money soon after the bank warned him of the closure within a month's time, though he was still able to access his account online on Sunday. Despite Washington's sanctions over Iran's nuclear program imposed late last year, Malaysia has kept up good diplomatic ties with Tehran, and last week, their leaders discussed ways to further strengthen ties. It was not clear if the account closures were linked to the tracking of a tanker of Iranian fuel oil offshore Malaysia this year, a development that annoyed the United States.

The US State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A spokesman for Malaysia's

prime minister did not respond to Reuters' questions. Many Iranians said they knew of dozens of compatriots who had received notices from CIMB and RHB Bank. "We regret to inform (you) that we are unable to continue the banking relationship," CIMB said in identical notices reviewed by Reuters. The banks did not state a reason, but some individuals said bank officials attributed the move to tighter scrutiny after the sanctions.

CIMB and RHB declined to comment. Malaysia's central bank directed queries to the Association of Banks in Malaysia, which declined to comment. Such matters depended on individual banks' own risk appetite and assessment, the central bank said this month in an email response to one Iranian's complaint that was viewed by

Reuters. But a July notification on the central bank's website refers to a statement by the Financial Action Task Force urging "enhanced due diligence" on Iranians by members of the global money laundering watchdog.

Iran's embassy in Kuala Lumpur said it was working to resolve the issue. "We hope that by goodwill and cooperation of the Malaysian officials, the negotiations will yield a positive result," it told Reuters in an email last week, adding that Iranian companies had also been affected. For now, Iranians in the Malaysian capital have been left wondering how to pay school fees or hospital bills. "Without a bank account we need to use the ancient techniques, keeping money under the pillow or in teapots," said one of them, who sought anonymity. "It's not fair." — Reuters

Mullah on the march: Pakistani cleric takes on PM Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan faces the first major challenge to his leadership as a grey-bearded, orange-turbaned rival he calls "Maulana Diesel" marches to Islamabad with thousands of Islamists hoping to bring down the government. Maulana Fazlur Rehman - one of the country's most seasoned political operators - has dominated the airwaves in recent days with his calls to unseat his old adversary Khan.

The prime minister, he says, did not win last year's election, but was "selected" by the powerful security establishment - a suggestion denied by Khan, but spread widely by Pakistan's opposition since even before the July 2018 election. "This movement will continue until the end of this government," Rehman told reporters ahead of the march. "There is no other way... to bring Pakistan back on the democratic path."

Rehman, who heads the Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F) - one of the country's largest Islamist parties - has been leading supporters from across Pakistan for days on a "Azadi (Freedom) March" towards Islamabad, with tens of thousands expected to converge on the capital. He says they will arrive by October 31, but so far has refused to clarify what happens next. It is a scenario Khan himself is familiar with. As opposition leader in 2014 he organized months of mass protests in Islamabad that failed in a bid to bring down the government.

With the ability to mobilize tens of thousands of madrassa students, JUI-F protests have a history of stirring unrest, and authorities are sealing off the capital's diplomatic enclave with shipping containers. A violent crackdown risks sparking a wider backlash in the Muslim-majority country, where mainstream politicians have long tried to keep the conservative right on side.

Bad blood

Rehman's bad blood with Khan runs deep. Khan ran on an anti-corruption agenda in 2018 and called out "Maulana Diesel", as he dubbed him, for his alleged participation in graft involving fuel licenses. Rehman, in turn, refers to the former World Cup-winning cricketer as "the Jew" - citing his first marriage to Jemima Goldsmith, along with incoherent anti-Semitic conspiracies. Rehman, a maulana (cleric) whose orange turban sports a traditional



LAHORE: Activists and supporters of the Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam party gather during an anti-government 'Azadi March' towards Islamabad, in Lahore yesterday. — AFP

pattern for his northwest hometown, lost his parliamentary seat in 2018 to a candidate from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party.

Still smarting from that loss, Rehman has chosen this moment carefully. Khan's government has been under pressure for months as anger simmers over the dire state of the economy. Unemployment, double-digit inflation, and rising utility costs have hit ordinary Pakistanis hard - issues other opposition parties have also railed against - and Rehman has been eager to exploit the unhappiness during the march. As the protest moved toward the capital this week, traders across the country launched a two-day strike, piling further pressure on Khan.

'Cheated'

The cleric insists that Khan needs to be removed from office, and a new "free and fair" election held. But he remains vague about how he aims to achieve their goals. That lack of substance has led some observers to suggest Rehman's protest is more a salve for his ego after the

humiliating election drubbing. "He's been left out of a game and he thinks he's been cheated out of his rightful place," said columnist Arifa Noor. "The (economy) is more of a stick to beat the government with." Rehman has rotated in and out of successive governments for decades, forging alliances with both Islamist and secular parties while enjoying occasional support from the military establishment. He was once a headline Islamist and anti-American firebrand, calling for the implementation of Shariah law publicly backing the Afghan Taliban, but more recently has tried to rebrand as a moderate.

That has not stopped him from dismissing the attack on Nobel prize laureate Malala Yousfzai in 2012 as a fabricated conspiracy, and protesting the exoneration of Asia Bibi - a Christian woman at the centre of Pakistan's most high-profile blasphemy case. Whether the march ends in violence or not, it has undeniably thrust Rehman back into the spotlight after suggestions he was increasingly becoming irrelevant. "When was the last time the maulana dominated the news agenda this much?" asked Noor. — AFP

In Vietnam 'Billionaire Village', migrant's cash can buy a palace

DO THANH: Vietnam's "Billionaire Village" doesn't sound like a place people would want to leave, but at least three of the 39 victims found in the back of a lorry in Britain last week set off from there in search of their fortunes. A billion dong may only be around \$43,000, but in the rural, northern-central Vietnamese town of Do Thanh, the money goes a long way, and even farmers live in palatial mansions, paid for with money sent back by family members working abroad. "70-80% of the villas here have been built with remittances," said Nguyen Van Ha, chairman of the rural, rice-farming commune in Nghe An province.

"If you work in Vietnam earning dong, it would take a long time to build a big house like this," Ha said, gesturing to the large, multi-storey villas flanking the town hall. In Do Thanh, even the majestic, renaissance-style church towering over the plush, neighboring villas was built with remittance money donated by the Catholic community. Many other victims are believed to come from outside the town, in the surrounding district of Yen Thanh. In the 1980s, Do Thanh used to be one of the district's poorest villages, according to state media.

One resident, 19-year-old Bui Thi Nhung, is thought by her family to be among the dead. She left a trail of messages on her social media account documenting her journey through Europe in the days before she boarded the fated vehicle. Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Quoc Cuong told Reuters on Tuesday the nationality of the victims had not been officially confirmed but that Vietnam and Britain were "trying to speed up identification of the bodies". The grisly discovery last week on an industrial estate near London, a magnet for Vietnamese migrants, has shone a spotlight on people smugglers bringing the poor of Asia, Africa and the Middle East on perilous journeys to the West. In Vietnam, poor job prospects, encouragement by authorities, smuggling gangs, environmental disasters and government pressure on Catholics are all factors pushing people to leave.

Remittance rise

But even though the cost of getting to Europe can run into thousands of dollars for migrants ready to pay for a so-called "VIP" service, they believe they can make enough money to justify the risk. "We know that many residents of this district are living in Britain, but we have no idea what they do there to earn all this money to send back home," Ha said.

Overseas workers sent nearly \$16 billion in remittances to Vietnam in 2018, more than double the Southeast Asian country's trade surplus for the same period, according to



MAGSAYSAY: Photo shows a general view of the damaged town hall after a 6.6 magnitude earthquake hit Magsaysay, in southern island of Mindanao. — AFP

World Bank data that showed remittances had risen 130% over the last decade. In Nghe An and neighboring Ha Tinh province, official policy supports the legal export of labor. Nghe An province alone rakes in some \$255 million annually from its overseas citizens, according to state media. "The remittance figures might be higher than reported as money transferred through unofficial ways, such as cash or as physical consumer goods, is not counted," said Nguyen Tri Hieu, a Hanoi-based economist and former government adviser. Many of the same networks which smuggle people also smuggle cash, in return for commission.

Weed and nails

About 70 percent of Vietnamese trafficking cases in Britain between 2009 and 2016 were related to labor exploitation, with migrants lured into jobs growing cannabis illegally and working in nail salons, Britain said last year. But many find legal work too, including in Europe, the United States and closer to home in Japan, Taiwan and neighboring Laos. In Nghe An, which borders Laos, GDP per capita stands at \$1,636, well below Vietnam's national average of \$2,540. "I didn't have enough money to go abroad so I went to Saigon instead," said Bui Van Diep, a welder, using the old name for Ho Chi Minh City.

He lives in a small shack in Do Thanh. His cousin, Bui Chung lives in a large, gleaming villa next door - with enough space leftover to park his jet black BMW. Bui Chung left Do Thanh for Britain in 2007, and when he returned home he built his house and started a steel trading business. "I went from Vietnam to France legally, but from France to the UK illegally inside a container truck," said Chung. "I chose to go to the UK because the salary is very good and so many people from Do Thanh had already lived there." Chung worked in a cannabis farm in Britain, and at a Vietnamese-run nail salon where he said he earned around 500 pounds (\$640) a week. "The Vietnamese community living there help newcomers to find jobs," Chung said. "That's why many people around here are willing to even sell their land to raise enough money to go." — Reuters

Facebook takes more criticism for enabling political falsehoods

WASHINGTON: Facebook came under fresh criticism Tuesday for its hands-off approach to political speech, as a group of employees and US lawmakers called on the social network to fact-check politicians spreading misinformation. A letter from employees urged the company to crack down on "civic misinformation," saying the spread of debunked claims is a "threat to what FB stands for."

"We strongly object to this policy as it stands. It doesn't protect voices, but instead allows politicians to weaponize our platform by targeting people who believe that content posted by political figures is trustworthy," said the letter first obtained by The New York Times, which said more than 250 employees had endorsed it.

At the same time, US lawmakers critical of Facebook stepped up their calls to revisit its policy, which exempts comments and paid ads on the platform from fact-checking - an issue that has become heated with President Donald Trump's online ads using what some called "provably false" claims. "Facebook's new ads policy allows politicians to run demonstrably false advertising on its platform. I don't think that's right," said Senator Mark Warner, a Virginia Democrat who added that he sent a letter to Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg calling on him "to reverse this decision."

Other Democrats joined the effort, welcoming the letter from Facebook employees. "Being a politician shouldn't be a license to lie - especially to spread hatred. If Facebook employees get it so should Zuckerberg," tweeted Senator Richard Blumenthal. Those comments were echoed by Senator and presidential hopeful Elizabeth Warren, who tweeted: "Facebook's own employees know just how dangerous their policy allowing politicians to lie in political ads will be for our democracy."

Mark Zuckerberg should listen to them - and I applaud their brave efforts to hold their own company accountable." Some Democrats have challenged Facebook's policy by running their own false ads, and one California entrepreneur announced he would run for governor of the state to be immune from fact-checking.

Not an arbiter

Facebook said in response to an AFP query about the controversy that the social media giant's culture was "built on openness so we appreciate our employees voicing their thoughts on this important topic." "We remain committed to not censoring political speech, and we will continue exploring additional steps we can take to bring increased transparency to political ads," it said in a statement. Zuckerberg earlier this month articulated Facebook's policy, saying it is based on a long tradition of allowing free expression.

"I don't think most people want to live in a world where you can only post things that tech companies judge to be 100 percent true," he said. The policy at Facebook, and a similar approach from other platforms such as Twitter, creates a challenge for online firms seeking to avoid the role of being an "arbiter" of truth and entering the fray of politics.

Nina Jankowicz, a disinformation fellow at the Wilson Center, a Washington think tank, said Facebook has a unique responsibility to root out false information because of its scale and its ability to allow advertisers to use "microtargeting" of users. "If they don't want to be involved in fact-checking, they shouldn't take that content," Jankowicz said. "They have become the world's biggest gatekeeper and they need to shoulder that responsibility."

Contentious decisions

Other analysts say the question is more complex with various standards for different media: broadcast television, for example, is not allowed to reject specific political ads, but cable outlets may, and internet platforms are not subject to specific regulations. Shannon McGregor, a University of Utah professor specializing in political communication, said Facebook would run into a thicket of problems if it sought to verify ads and other statements from candidates and politicians. The current standard "leaves them open to criticism, but that is the policy that makes the most sense," McGregor said.

"I don't think we want private companies like Facebook and Twitter making decisions on what speech is allowed or not allowed," Darrell West, head of the Brookings Institution's Center for Technology Innovation, said social media firms are struggling for the right guidelines to handle these controversies. "Technology firms increasingly are being asked to police national conversations because of their central communications role," West said. "This puts them in the middle of many contentious decisions (with) no real guidelines on how to make decisions." — AFP

Gunmen kill five migrant workers in Kashmir as EU lawmakers visit

SRINAGAR: Unidentified gunmen shot dead five migrant laborers in Indian-administered Kashmir, police said yesterday, in the bloodiest incident since New Delhi moved to strip the region of its autonomy. The killings in southern Kulgam district, some 70 kilometers south of the main city Srinagar, came as India allowed a group of mostly far-right European Union parliamentarians to visit the region where tensions have soared since New Delhi began a clampdown on August 5. A police official told AFP an unknown number of gunmen, believed to be rebels, barged into an accommodation rented by the six laborers late Tuesday and shot one of them dead on the spot.

They later took five others out of the residence and shot them with automatic rifles some distance from the building, killing four and wounding one. "He is critical and undergoing treatment at a hospital," a local police official said of the wounded laborer, speaking on condition of anonymity. Another top police official said the victims were from the eastern Indian state of West Bengal, and that additional government forces were rushed to the area to track the attackers.

No group has taken responsibility for the attack, but police in the past have accused militants of targeting non-locals in a campaign allegedly aimed at driving them from the region. A non-local truck driver was shot dead on Monday by gunmen while he was ferrying apples in the Himalayan valley's southern region. Five truck drivers and businessmen from other Indian states, who were associated with valley's vital apple trade, have been killed in recent weeks.

New Delhi in August controversially stripped the disputed region of its decades-old semi-autonomous status, which barred non-residents from buying land and taking government jobs. Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan, with most residents demanding either independence or a merger with Pakistan. The region has been in armed rebellion for the past 30 years, with New Delhi accusing Pakistan of training and arming scores of militant groups active in the area. Before stripping its autonomy, India sent tens of thousands of additional troops to join a 500,000-strong force in the region and imposed a weeks-long security and communication lockdown. — AFP

Analysis

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CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
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P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

India's defenses eat away at farmland along Pakistan border

When half a dozen trucks loaded with construction material screeched to a halt on their farms, Baryam Singh and fellow residents in the Indian village of Bobiya sensed they were soon going to lose more land to the military. The farmers chased away the contractors and laborers with protests and threats of deflated tyres, knowing it was only a temporary reprieve. "The military infrastructure has been growing in our village and our farmlands are shrinking," Singh told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, as other farmers sitting around him nodded. "More than 50 percent of our agricultural land is under military lockdown," he said of the village on the border with Pakistan.

Over the past 15 years, the Indian army and the country's Border Security Force (BSF) have been acquiring land to fortify defenses in the border districts of Jammu and Kashmir, according to the Border Welfare Committee, a local organization campaigning for the rights of border residents. Both India and Pakistan administer the disputed state of Kashmir in part while claiming it in full.

The fertile land where Jammu and Kashmir meets Pakistan has become dotted with barbed wire and landmines, leaving hundreds of farmers cut off from their farms, often with no warning or compensation, said Bobiya villagers. "This is adding to the economic distress of farmers who don't have alternative sources of livelihood," said Singh.

After India revoked the autonomy of its portion of Kashmir in August, farmers in border areas now fear losing even more of their land to the military, according to ID Khajuria, an activist who heads up the Jammu and Kashmir Forum for Peace and Territorial Integrity. With India bringing Jammu and Kashmir deeper into its fold, the central government will have greater power to seize territory in the border regions in the name of national security, he warned. "The local elected political representatives will now have a very limited say in the functioning of the (Jammu and Kashmir) government," Khajuria said.

Jammu divisional commissioner Sanjeev Verma said that all farmers in Jammu province would eventually be paid for their land. "Whatever new agricultural land is being acquired, the farmers will get financial compensation," he said in a phone interview. Some have already been compensated, he added, though he declined to specify how many.

'I am landless now'

The defense system includes a fence of about 900 km in length that sits several kilometres into India from the border, slicing through villages and leaving vast tracts of farmland on the other side of the fence towards Pakistan. India's government is also working on a "Wall of Defence" along the border between India and Pakistan, according to the Border Security Force. The project consists of a 10-m-high mud embankment to protect residents of India's border villages from frequent ceasefire violations that both sides blame on each other. There are also plans to install high-tech surveillance systems to plug gaps where physical surveillance is not possible, India's ministry of home affairs announced last year.

Members of the Border Welfare Committee - which is based in the city of Kathua - said that thousands of hectares of Indian farmland now sit untouched on the other side of the fence. Technically, farmers can still get to their land, but the checkpoints in the fence are opened only during specific times of day and farmers have to walk for hours to reach their fields, explained Bharat Bhushan Sharma, the committee's vice president. Even if they do manage to successfully cultivate their crops, "there is always a threat of cross-border fire", said Sharma, who is also head of Bobiya village. "And then (they) can't protect their crops from wild animals."

Committee president Nanak Chand, 87, said he lost almost eight hectares of land to the fence when it was first built in 2004. "Three months ago, the military acquired the remaining two hectares of farmland as well," he said. "I am landless now." Chand was given 3 million rupees (\$42,000) as compensation, which he says is not enough to buy himself an equivalent piece of land in a peaceful part of the country. Khajuria agreed, saying that "with developers and businessmen from other states rushing to Jammu and Kashmir, land prices are likely to soar and it would make it difficult for poor border residents to buy land in peaceful areas". In Dec 2018, Chand filed a petition with the Jammu and Kashmir High Court on behalf of farmers living in the border areas of the affected districts. — Reuters

The petition called for the government to pay rent for farmland on the Pakistan side of the fence and pro-

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A picture taken on Oct 28, 2019, shows Syrian artist Aziz Al-Asmar (center) posing with relatives near a mural he painted in the town of Binnish in the northwestern Idlib province, depicting US president Donald Trump directing the "play" of killing Islamic State (IS) group's leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi in Syria. — AFP

Baghdadi death end of an era for 'war on terror'

The death of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi this week will mark the end of Islamic state, nor US military efforts against Islamist militancy in the Middle East and beyond. But coming against the backdrop of the US withdrawal from Syria and growing Pentagon preoccupation with great-power rivals such as China, it may mark the end of an era in US foreign and military policy.

As late as summer 2014, as IS fighters seized huge swathes of Iraq and Syria, many in the US government still viewed such groups as America's preeminent national security threat and Washington's number one priority. Russia's seizure of Crimea and the beginning of its war in Ukraine the same year, however, were already beginning to shift that focus - a process that has since accelerated. Even in the Middle East, America's actions and the dynamics of wider conflicts are now defined by great power and other geopolitical factors, with the fight against militant groups - even those that might wish to threaten the West - now simply one of multiple competing priorities.

Where once its planners, arms manufacturers and strategic thinkers were focused on failed states, improvised explosive devices and nation-building, the Pentagon is now much more focused on hypersonic missiles, cyber, space and potential continental-level wars. Whether the United States will fare any better in these confrontations than its Middle East "forever wars", however, remains an open question.

Paradox

The defeat of Islamic State and Baghdadi's death point to the paradox of US power since well before September 11, 2001. Throughout that period, the United States has been able to strike and send forces often almost wherever

it chooses across a huge swathe of the planet. Its tactics have evolved - sending large numbers of soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan rarely broke the back of those insurgencies as expected. But through drones, air strikes, special operations forces and local allies, the United States has been able to push back but never quite defeat its extremist enemies as expected.

It would perhaps be a mistake to say America and its military feel humbled by their experience of the "war on terror". They have become accustomed - and distressed by - frequent attrition and the feeling they have failed to win. But they have also become accustomed to access to overwhelming firepower, instantaneous communications coupled with surveillance and intelligence and often friendly local forces. Even when casualties have ratcheted up to thousands over time, they have almost never been taken at the rate of more than a handful in a single day.

That, of course, is very different from the experience of Iraqi, Kurdish and other forces caught up particularly in the brutal early stages of Islamic State's expansion, or events such as the battle to retake Mosul or the Taliban's repeated attacks in Kabul and elsewhere that have often killed more than 100 in a single incident. By one estimate, up to 500,000 people have died in conflicts associated with the "war on terror" - which has cost the US up to \$6 trillion in direct and indirect costs. Those financial costs have dwindled substantially since the withdrawal of major US ground forces. As Turkey's intervention in Syria makes clear, however, the region's wars may if anything get more bloody with the US departure. Russia has made it clear it will willingly provide arms and diplomatic support for brutal governments, and proxy confrontations between Iran and its various nearby enemies continues to intensify. The

latter confrontation may yet pull the United States back into the Gulf - albeit unwillingly, given mounting US concerns elsewhere.

Concerns

Despite concerns over Russia and Europe - as well as Islamist militancy around the world including Africa and Asia - the Pentagon clearly believes the next war it must prepare for most would be in the Pacific. How likely a shooting conflict with Beijing truly is remains unclear - but if it happened, it could well be the most devastating war the United States has faced since World War Two.

It would certainly be a very different conflict than the United States has become used to. US drones that have operated with impunity for almost two decades would struggle in the face of sophisticated air defenses. Some officials openly argue that America's aircraft carriers would be vulnerable to Chinese long-range missile strikes - but others believe that with land bases also likely targeted, America's mobile carrier strike fleets might yet prove amongst its most, not least resilient assets. The US Marine Corps arguably takes such worries one step further, training to use its short take-off F-35 fighters from tiny islands and atolls, worrying that little else may be able to survive if war should really come. The primary stated purpose of America's growing military presence is to ensure it doesn't, and that China feels deterred from pushing its growing military footprint too far, for example by moving on Taiwan. Given its collapsing Mideast clout, particularly with its Kurdish allies, the United States will be glad it killed Baghdadi when it did. But the future is uncertain, and may yet pose more dangers to America and the world than anything Islamic State could ever truly offer. — Reuters

Trump reelection fight to be most perilous in decades

Elections are often described as a horse race but when Donald Trump seeks his second term in 12 months, it's going to look more like a monster car demolition derby. One of the most divisive presidents in US history, fighting impeachment in a Congress paralyzed by partisanship, will go before an electorate split down the middle on Nov 3, 2020. Democrats remain a long way from choosing Trump's opponent. The field of record size and diversity includes two African Americans, half a dozen women, an openly gay man and two top candidates seeking to move the United States dramatically to the left.

But one thing unites them: Desire to humiliate former real estate tycoon Trump into becoming only the fourth one-term president since World War II. One lead Democratic contender, centrist former vice president Joe Biden, says a "battle for the soul of America" is underway. To which Trump says: Democrats want to "destroy our country".

'Vamos to Victory': Trump Spanish ads skirt immigration, warn of socialism

US President Donald Trump's re-election campaign has run more than 3,000 Facebook ads in English asking for support to curb illegal immigration in the past six months, often asking people to sign online petitions to "deport illegals". But Republican Trump's more than 1,200 Facebook ads in Spanish during the same period hardly mention his signature campaign promise to be tough on immigration. Instead, they warn that Democrats want Venezuela-style socialism and advertise "Latinos for Trump" merchandise, according to a Reuters review of more than 69,000 of Trump's Facebook ads since May.

Venezuela is mired in an economic crisis and the Trump administration is using sanctions to try to force socialist President Nicolas Maduro from power. "Do you approve of socialism? Yes or no?" reads the Spanish-language text of several ads. Others tout a strong US economy or bash

And with US intelligence warning that Russia seeks to repeat its 2016 dirty tricks campaign, the possibility of the contest ending in genuine crisis cannot be discounted. "You really have to stretch to find an election as combustible and unpredictable as this one," Allan Lichtman, distinguished professor of history at American University, said. "There are very few analogues."

Battle of the bases

Trump's fate matters to the globe. Trade disputes with China and the European Union, the future of NATO, US entanglements in the Middle East and Afghanistan, Iran's nuclear program, the North Korean nuclear standoff, the Paris climate accord - there's a near endless list of major issues that depend on whether or not Trump's "America first" agenda gets another four years. But good luck to anyone trying to predict results.

Polls show Trump down against every serious Democratic candidate. His approval rate is stuck in the low 40 percent range, where it has been most of his presidency. Yet this unpopular president shocked many experts when he defeated heavily favored Hillary Clinton in 2016. And polls this October by Moody's Analytics show he could repeat the feat, once again losing the popular vote but easily winning the all-important electoral college vote by focusing on strategically positioned strongholds.

Charles Franklin, director of the Marquette Law School Poll, says the depth and firmness of

Republican-Democratic divisions nationwide mean there's little middle ground to play for. "Support for the president is intense with his base and opposition is, if anything, more intense," he said. "The group to watch," he said, is the small slice of voters who say they "somewhat approve" of the president. A shift to "somewhat disapprove" could be "a danger signal to the Trump campaign."

Impeachment wild card

Impeachment could yet throw all those considerations out the window. Trump is accused by Democrats of withholding military aid to compel Ukraine to mount an embarrassing corruption probe against Biden - in other words using US foreign policy for his personal political benefit. Trump dismisses the case as cooked up, but Congressional investigators have heard a steady flow of damaging evidence.

A vote to impeach in the Democratic-controlled lower house is seen as near inevitable. Trump would then face trial in the Republican-led Senate. Conviction still seems highly unlikely. Yet even without being removed from office, a House vote to impeach would indelibly mark Trump's record. Only two presidents have been successfully impeached before and at minimum the scandal would fuel bitterness across the country, with unpredictable consequences.

Impeachment aside, the quantity of variables one year from voting day is already dizzying. — AFP

prominent leftist Democratic Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar.

The contrast suggests a high-stakes balancing act for Trump ahead of the November 2020 election as he tries to fire up his white Republican base, which applauds his tough stance on immigration, while also courting Latino voters, who could be the largest minority voting bloc next year. Trump, despite his divisive rhetoric calling Mexicans "murderers" and "rapists", won nearly a third of the Latino vote in the 2016 election. And 29 percent of Latinos approve of Trump's performance in office, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted between July and September, though that is lower than 39 percent approval among all Americans.

Building on that support will be key to win increasingly diverse states, including Arizona and Florida. But Hispanics are less likely than non-Hispanic whites to support Trump's immigration policies, such as his now-abandoned practice of separating families detained at the US-Mexico border. Among Latinos who consider immigration the most pressing political issue - above healthcare and the economy - about four in 10 support conservative policies such as tightening border security, compared to eight in 10 among non-Hispanic whites, according to the Reuters/Ipsos poll.

Given the split nature of the issue, leaving immigration out of Spanish-language ads could be wise for Trump, said Mike Madrid, a Republican political strategist in

Sacramento, California. But for 28-year-old IT worker Jeremiah Espinoza in Houston, who dislikes Trump's immigration stance, the ads - whether in English or Spanish - are toxic anyway. Espinoza blocked an English-language "Latinos for Trump" ad when it appeared on his Facebook feed a few days after a gunman killed 22 people, most of them Hispanic, in El Paso, Texas in August. "I think it is pretty cruel in general," Espinoza said of Trump's immigration policy, particularly separating families.

Spanish is widely spoken among America's roughly 60 million Hispanics. Spanish speakers make up about 10 percent of the US electorate, with large numbers in battleground states such as Arizona and Florida. Trump, already running the largest digital advertising operation in the 2020 campaign, has run more ads in Spanish than all of the 18 Democratic presidential contenders combined, according to the Reuters analysis of Facebook ad data, which was gathered by computer scientists at the Tandon School of Engineering at New York University. Democrats, led by US Senator Elizabeth Warren, are also running ads in Spanish. But unlike Trump, their messages mirror English-language ads, often lauding the contributions of immigrants and calling out Trump's immigration policies as divisive or racist. Latinos historically skew Democratic in presidential elections but some Latinos believe that Trump's economic policies and positions on issues such as abortion reflect their conservative values. — Reuters

Business

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TURIN: People walk past the logo of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) at the Fiat Mirafiori car plant in Turin, northern Italy. Fiat Chrysler, Peugeot are in talks to create a \$50 billion entity. — AFP

Fiat Chrysler, Peugeot look to form car giant

Tie-up to make fourth largest automaker in the world

MILAN: Fiat Chrysler and Groupe PSA, the maker of Peugeot and Citroen cars, announced yesterday they were in merger talks that could propel them into the top ranks as the world's fourth largest automaker. Italian-US carmaker Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) confirmed in a statement that "there are ongoing discussions aimed at creating one of the world's leading mobility groups" with France's PSA after reports of the talks began to circulate.

The statement and a similar one from PSA offered no additional details. A person with knowledge of the matter told AFP on Tuesday that a merger—which is not guaranteed—would create a firm valued at about \$50 billion. A merger would bring PSA access to the lucrative US market, while finally fulfilling the long-held goal of ex-FCA head Sergio Marchionne, who died last year, to merge the carmaker with another in order to survive escalating costs and global pressure to roll out electric vehicles.

The tie-up would make the new automaker the fourth largest in terms of sales behind Volkswagen, Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi and Toyota, and would combine a host of well-known brands from Alfa Romeo, Jeep and Dodge to Citroen, Opel and Peugeot.

The negotiations come four months after talks to merge FCA with Renault broke down, a potential deal scuppered in part by resistance from the French government, which owns a stake in Renault as it does PSA. Analyst Michael Hewson at CMC Markets UK cautioned in a note yesterday that political pressure from Paris could again be an obstacle, given that the French government holds an approximately 12 percent stake in PSA. "It is hard not to see that this attempt by Fiat might well go the same way as the failed Renault attempt earlier this year," wrote Hewson. "Business and government always make uncomfortable bedfellows."

Under the FCA-PSA merger, Carlos Tavares, the chief executive of Peugeot's parent, Groupe PSA, would

lead the company as CEO while John Elkann, chairman of FCA, would be chairman, the source said. Discussions between the automakers are ongoing, the source said, confirming details first published in the Wall Street Journal.

According to Bloomberg News, FCA's board of directors was expected to hold an emergency meeting yesterday.

Consolidation

A merger of the two groups would bring under one roof Alfa Romeo, Chrysler, Citroen, Dodge, DS, Jeep, Lancia, Maserati, Opel, Peugeot and Vauxhall, while combining the strengths of the two groups.

Despite its Italian origins with Fiat, FCA does not have a very strong position in Europe compared to PSA with its French and German mass market brands. The company is also behind others in bringing electric cars to market, and investing in nascent forms of mobil-

ity such as self-driving cars.

PSA on the other hand is absent from the massive US market, where truck sales prevail and where FCA has Chrysler plus the Jeep, Dodge and Ram brands. "Both FCA and PSA need an alliance," Marco Bentivogli, head of the Italian trade union Fim-Cisl, said late on Tuesday when reports of merger talks first began to circulate.

"This is not the first time Elkann and Tavares have spoken," he added. PSA posted a new record for revenues of 74 billion euros (\$82 billion) in 2018 while FCA reported 110 billion euros in revenue.

The French group has a market capitalization of 22.54 billion euros on the Paris Stock Exchange, while FCA is valued at just over \$28 billion on Wall Street and 20.74 billion euros in Milan. FCA shares in Milan raced over 9 percent higher in morning trading. Meanwhile, PSA shares climbed more than 6 percent in Paris. — AFP

France outshines Germany as eurozone gloom deepens

PARIS/BERLIN: Strong domestic stimulus is helping France shrug off a global slowdown even as export-dependent Germany heads closer to a recession, starkly divergent data on the euro zone's two leading economies showed yesterday.

France saw national output rise 0.3 percent in the third quarter - defying forecasts for slightly slower growth - as unemployment in Germany rose faster than expected and its chambers of commerce warned that exports would shrink next year for the first time since the financial crisis as world trade friction mounts. The contrast in national fortunes was underlined as incoming European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde doubled down on her predecessor Mario Draghi's calls on Germany to use some of its budget surplus to invest in growth-enhancing measures.



PARIS: French Junior Minister for Economy and Finance Agnes Pannier-Runacher leaves the Elysee palace in Paris after the weekly cabinet meeting yesterday. — AFP

"Those that have the room for manoeuvre, those that have a budget surplus, that's to say Germany, the Netherlands, why not use that budget surplus and invest in infrastructure? ... Why not invest in education, why not invest in innovation, to allow for a better re-balancing?" she told France's RTL broadcaster.

France's economy, which has long relied more on domestic consumption than that of its northern neighbor, got a boost from President Emmanuel Macron's injection of 10

billion euros in stimulus to quell the "yellow vest" protests this year. Most of that money went on boosting benefits for minimum-wage earning workers. Paris has also said it would cut taxes by more than 10 billion euros in total next year. "At the same time, measures enacted in recent years .. have contributed to make the French labor market more flexible and have lowered labor costs for corporates," JP Morgan's Raphael Brun-Aguerre said of reforms begun under Macron's predecessor Francois Hollande and pursued by him.

"Huge challenge"

A separate read-out by the European Commission in Brussels showed that economic sentiment across the 19-country eurozone as a whole deteriorated in October for a second straight month as pessimism in industry spread to services and consumers. A breakdown showed that sentiment fell in Germany for the second straight month and to its lowest level in more than six years. France also saw a small dip but remained above the eurozone average. The Germany economy shrank 0.1 percent in the second quarter, and third-quarter output figures next month are expected to show another fall, putting the country in recession by the standard definition. — Reuters

Aramco IPO will be crown prince's decision: Minister

RIYADH: The timing of the highly anticipated stock market debut of Saudi energy colossus Aramco will be dictated by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's energy minister said yesterday.

Aramco was expected to launch the first part of a two-stage IPO earlier in October, but the process has been delayed, reportedly due to the prince's dissatisfaction with the valuation of the firm, which had been hoped to reach \$2 trillion. The long-awaited initial public offering will now happen on December 11 on the Riyadh stock market, Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya television said on Tuesday.

Aramco did not confirm the report and Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman side-stepped the details when he spoke at a major investment conference in Riyadh where the listing has been a topic of discussion. "I hate

this time around to disappoint the media, because I'm not going to talk about OPEC or what we should do, and I'm not going to talk about the IPO," he said to laughs from the audience of policy-makers and top executives.

"It's going to come soon... but it will come at the right time with the right approach, and definitely with the right decision. And it will be a Saudi decision first and foremost, specifically Prince Mohammed's decision," he added. Prince Abdulaziz is the half-brother of the crown prince, whose ambitious reform plans for the kingdom's economy largely rest on the anticipated \$100 billion windfall from the Aramco listing. After an initial listing on the domestic stock exchange, Aramco is believed to be planning to sell the rest of a planned tranche of five percent of the firm on an international bourse. "The Saudis' current objective is to raise \$100 billion through the IPO process, even if that means ultimately selling up to 10 percent of the company to outside investors," Energy Intelligence said in a report this week. It cited sources as saying they expect the Saudis to settle on a valuation of \$1.6 trillion to \$1.7 trillion for the firm. — AFP

Business

S&P Affirms Gulf Bank rating at 'A-' with 'Stable' outlook

Ratings reflect Gulf Bank's sound market position

KUWAIT: S&P Global Ratings has affirmed Gulf Bank's Issuer Credit rating at A-/A-2 with a Stable outlook. According to the recently published S&P Global Ratings commentary, the ratings reflect Gulf Bank's sound market position as the fourth-largest commercial bank in Kuwait, and factors in the Bank's improving revenue mix and business stability. The stable outlook on Gulf Bank balances S&P's view that the Bank's business and financial profiles will remain resilient over the next 12-24 months. This is owing to the Bank's adequate capitalization and good asset quality.

Commenting on S&P's credit rating announcement, Dalal Al-Dousari, Gulf Bank's Head of Investor Relations said: "We are very pleased to receive the affirmation of our Bank's Issuer Credit Rating at 'A-' with a 'Stable' outlook by S&P Global Ratings. "This is an international acknowledgement of Gulf Bank's sustained improvement in asset quality and profitability,

solid capitalization and sound market position," added Al-Dousari.

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized in terms of its credit worthiness and financial strength internationally as it is rated "A" by all four leading credit rating agencies. In addition to S&P's recent affirmation, Gulf Bank has a Long-term IDR of "A+" with a "Stable" Outlook by Fitch Ratings, a Long-Term Deposits Rating of "A3" with a "Positive" Outlook by Moody's Investor Services and a Long-term Foreign Currency Rating of "A+" with a "Stable" Outlook by Capital Intelligence Ratings.



Dalal Al-Dousari

VIVA trade-in program reports high turnout at all stores

KUWAIT: VIVA, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and a subsidiary of STC Group,

announced that the recently launched VIVA Trade-in program has reported high turnout across all VIVA stores.

This exciting program grants both existing and new postpaid customers a great experience and the opportunity to replace and upgrade their old iPhone with a new iPhone of their choice. Old iPhone devices include iPhone 7+ and beyond, and can be replaced with iPhone 8+ and beyond, as well as 2019 models. The VIVA trade-in program has a value further than a mere simple discount on new VIVA Postpaid plans. It helps the customers saving the planet, recycling old and unused devices, eliminating clutter in their home and preserving the environment.

Volkswagen confident despite braking car market

FRANKFURT: German car giant Volkswagen said yesterday it was confident of hitting financial targets despite a lower unit sales outlook, warning "vehicle markets will contract faster than previously anticipated in many regions". The Wolfsburg-based group now expects deliveries to match 2018's level, rather than the slight growth forecast until now, after unit sales fell 1.5 percent in the year to September at around eight million.

A global growth slowdown triggered by trade wars and Brexit uncertainty has hit the car industry particularly hard, while VW's Asian sales were dragged down by a three-percentage fall in the vital Chinese market. "The best of the party is over" for the car sector, finance chief Frank Witter told journalists in a telephone conference.

Worldwide demand has fallen around five percent, Witter said, prompting VW to slash its production plans for this year by 900,000 vehicles.

But in January-September, net profits at the group grew 19 percent, to 11.2 billion euros (\$12.5 billion). Sales income added 6.9 percent, reaching 186.6 billion euros, making for an operating profit up 24.5 percent, at 13.5 billion.

Performance was "good... amid a challenging market environment," Witter said, adding he was "optimistic that we will achieve our full-year targets". The sprawling 12-brand



KIGALI: Rwanda's Minister of Trade and Industry Soraya Hakuziyemeye (second left), Rwanda's Prime Minister Edouard Ngirente (third right) and Michaela Rugwizangoga (right), CEO of Volkswagen Rwanda, pose beside Volkswagen's first imported electric vehicle "e-Golf" during its launching ceremony in Kigali, Rwanda, on Tuesday. — AFP

group is confident of increasing revenue "as much as" five percent year-on-year, and keeping its closely-watched operating profit margin between 6.5 and 7.5 percent, compared with 7.3 percent last year.

SUVs ramping up

"VW was able to clearly beat market expectations for revenue and profits," LBBW analyst Frank Schwope commented. "While various carmakers and parts suppliers had to issue profit warnings in recent months, VW is bursting with strength."

Witter reported that "above all, we're growing in the highly profitable SUV segment," helping pump up the group's operating margin to 7.9 percent in January-September.

Around one-third of the group's vehicles sold so far this year have been SUVs. The flagship VW brand managed to increase revenue five percent while selling the same number of cars, and plans to roll out its all-electric new ID.3 range beginning later this year. Meanwhile, the group suffered lower charges related to the company's "dieselgate" emissions cheating scandal dating back to 2015.

In January-September 2018, the diesel burden reached 2.4 billion euros, falling to 1.3 billion over the same period this year. A major element in 2019's total was a 535-million-euro fine Stuttgart prosecutors issued in May to sports car subsidiary Porsche over so-called "defeat devices", designed to cheat regulatory emissions tests. — AFP

Deutsche Bank headed for painful 2019 after Q3 loss

FRANKFURT: Germany's biggest lender Deutsche Bank appeared headed for a historic loss in 2019 yesterday as a restructuring weighed on its third-quarter earnings, although bosses insist their harsh medicine is taking effect. The group lost 859 million euros (\$954 million) in July-September, down from a profit of 211 million last year.

That brought its net losses in the year to September to a whopping 3.9 billion euros. And there is little sign of the cavalry arriving in the fourth quarter, as Deutsche continues to suffer from low interest rates, market volatility and its ongoing restructuring plan.

The consensus among economists surveyed by Bloomberg is that losses could grow to 4.3 billion euros by December 31. "We're planning and working towards a breakeven or a better year" in 2020, finance chief James von Moltke told reporters in a telephone conference.

Over the full year 2018, Deutsche scraped together a meager profit of 300 million euros, following three successive years of losses. Its worst-ever year came in 2016, when it lost 6.8 billion euros, mostly related to its investment bank's

activities in the years around the financial crisis.

Shrinking investment bank

Once the Deutsche flagship, the investment bank has since become a burden on the group. It is planned to be hit most heavily in chief executive Christian Sewing's restructuring plan announced in July. Across the whole bank, around 18,000 staff-one-fifth of the total-are set to depart by 2022.

Share trading activities, which had turned unprofitable and required big capital reserves, have already fallen away at the investment bank. But even the remaining activities, largely in bond trading and issuance and currency trading, saw profits fall 13 percent year-on-year in the third quarter.

Deutsche cannot at present compare with the glowing performances notched up by American rivals like JP Morgan or Goldman Sachs. "You expect some degree of revenue loss when you're involved in a significant repositioning of the company," CFO von Moltke said. Deutsche's worldwide revenues also fell sharply in July-September, losing 15 percent to reach 5.3 billion euros.

Despite the losses, chief executive Sewing highlighted that the so-called "core bank" of four businesses Deutsche plans to maintain into the future was profitable.

His reimagined lender should refocus its activities on Europe and its corporate bank, where it serves clients ranging from Germany's "Mittelstand" small- and medium-sized firms to multinationals listed on the blue-chip DAX index. — AFP

Carmaker tie-ups and break-ups

PARIS: With US-Italian auto giant Fiat Chrysler and France's Groupe PSA in merger talks, here is a look at other major auto tie-up deals-or attempted deals-since the 1990s.

Fiat, Renault tie-up aborted

In May 2019 Fiat Chrysler presented a proposal for a 50/50 merger with French leader Renault that would have created the world's third-largest automaker. But Fiat abruptly withdrew the offer in June, frustrated with tensions between Renault's executives and the French state, which holds a 15 percent stake in the company and double the voting rights. Renault's partners in Japan's Nissan were also furious at having been kept in the dark about the plan.

Renault-Nissan, tensions

In 1999 Renault acquired a 36.8 percent

stake in Nissan, which was close to bankruptcy, and the Romanian brand Dacia. Renault boss Carlos Ghosn succeeded in pulling the three together and became head of all of them in 2005.

A cross-shareholding deal put 43 percent of Nissan's shares in Renault's hands, while the Japanese group owns 15 percent of Renault. In 2016 Nissan threw a lifeline to scandal-hit Mitsubishi Motors, buying a 34 percent stake giving it effective control. Under Ghosn the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance became the top-selling carmaker in 2017 with 10.6 million vehicles worldwide. The auto chief's arrest in Tokyo in November 2018 on multiple charges of financial misconduct was a major blow to the already tense alliance, leading to a major leadership overhaul.

PSA buys Opel

In 2017 France's PSA-which owns the Peugeot, Citroen and DS brands-said that it would buy General Motors' European subsidiary, which includes Opel and Vauxhall, to create the second-biggest European

automaker behind Volkswagen. PSA immediately embarked on a major overhaul that helped the business book its first profit in 2018 after years of losses.

Fiat rescues Chrysler

In 2009 Fiat struck a deal to rescue Chrysler by starting to purchase shares in the US group, originally taking a 20-percent stake in the third largest US automaker. In 2014, when Fiat already owned 58.5 percent of Chrysler, it said it would buy up the remainder for \$4.35-billion. The company became Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA). While it was struggling itself in 2000, Fiat agreed to hand over 20 percent of its shares to US giant General Motors but GM bailed out of the deal in 2005.

Volvo: Ford, then Geely

In 1999, when Ford was the most profitable US automaker, it bought Sweden's storied Volvo brand for \$6.45 billion. A few years later, however, a combination of Japanese competition and rising oil and steel prices convinced Ford that it was time to look for a new buyer. — AFP



This file photo shows then International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde (right) and the President of the Deutsche Bundesbank (German Central Bank) Jens Weidmann attending a conference on "Global Outlook and Policy Priorities" at the Goethe university in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.400
Euro	339.710
Sterling Pound	393.280
Canadian dollar	233.440
Turkish lira	53.260
Swiss Franc	307.790
US Dollar Buying	296.950

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.797
Indian Rupees	4.290
Pakistani Rupees	1.963
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.673
Nepali Rupees	2.677
Singapore Dollar	224.320
Hongkong Dollar	38.829
Bangladesh Taka	3.563
Philippine Peso	5.955
Thai Baht	10.091
Malaysian ringgit	77.852

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.227
Qatari Riyal	83.661
Omani Riyal	791.163
Bahraini Dinar	808.820
UAE Dirham	82.931

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.900
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Egyptian Pound - Transfer

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	111.500
Jordanian Dinar	429.670
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.178

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY

	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.384332	0.398232
Czech Korunc	0.005213	0.014513
Danish Krone	0.041172	0.046172
Euro	0.330532	0.344232
Georgian Lari	0.102015	0.102015
Hungarian 0.000933	0.001123	
Norwegian Krone	0.028901	0.034101
Romanian Leu	0.054100	0.070950
Russian ruble	0.004750	0.004750
Slovakia	0.009099	0.019099
Swedish Krona	0.027302	0.032302
Swiss Franc	0.299625	0.310625

Australasia

Australian Dollar	0.200460	0.212460
New Zealand Dollar	0.186850	0.196350

America

Canadian Dollar	0.227071	0.236071
US Dollars	0.300300	0.305600
US Dollars Mint	0.300800	0.305600

Bangladesh Taka

Chinese Yuan	0.041731	0.045231
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036737	0.039487
Indian Rupee	0.003675	0.004447
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002710	0.002890
Korean Won	0.000250	0.000265
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069357	0.075357
Nepalese Rupee	0.002625	0.002965
Pakistan Rupee	0.001317	0.002087
Philippine Peso	0.005722	0.006022
Singapore Dollar	0.217899	0.227899
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001319	0.001899
Taiwan	0.009865	0.010045
Thai Baht	0.009736	0.010286
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013

Bahraini Dinar

Egyptian Pound	0.801278	0.809332
Iranian Riyal	0.018636	0.021377
Iraqi Dinar	0.000084	0.000086
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.000214	0.000274
Jordanian Dinar	0.424432	0.433432
Lebanese Pound	1.000000	1.000000
Moroccan Dirhams	0.000151	0.000251
Omani Riyal	0.020832	0.044832
Qatar Riyal	0.785521	0.793416
Saudi Riyal	0.082955	0.083789
Syrian Pound	0.080087	0.081387
Tunisian Dinar	0.001290	0.001510
Turkish Lira	0.103368	0.113368
UAE Dirhams	0.046094	0.055939
Yemeni Riyal	0.082244	0.083070
	0.000989	0.001069

Credit Suisse doubles third-quarter profit

ZURICH: Credit Suisse said yesterday it more than doubled its third quarter net profit, largely due to its wealth management activities, and despite losses in its investment bank unit. Switzerland's second largest bank said its net profit soared 108 percent in the third quarter year-on-year to 881 million Swiss francs (\$888 million, 798 million euros) despite a "challenging environment".

Net revenue meanwhile swelled nine percent to 5.3 billion Swiss francs, it said. The results beat the expectations of analysts polled by the AWP financial news agency, who on average anticipated net profits of 776 million francs on revenues of 5.1 billion. But investors did not appear impressed with the results, with the bank's share price plunging by nearly 2.5 percent to 12.40 Swiss francs a piece in late morning trading as the Swiss stock exchange's main SMI index remained basically flat. During the three-month period, Credit Suisse's investment bank unit meanwhile suffered a pre-tax loss of 15 million, compared to a 70-million-profit a year earlier, as the sector was "impacted by continued challenging market conditions". — AFP

Business

Consumers prop up US economy as business spending retrenches

US Q3 GDP increases at 1.9% rate, but business investment declines

WASHINGTON: US economic growth slowed less than expected in the third quarter as declining business investment was offset by resilient consumer spending and a rebound in exports, further allaying financial market fears of a recession.

The Commerce Department's report yesterday was, however, unlikely to discourage the Federal Reserve from cutting interest rates again amid lingering threats to the longest expansion on record from uncertainty over trade policy, slowing global growth and Britain's imminent departure from the European Union. The Trump administration's trade war with China has eroded business confidence, contributing to the second straight quarterly contraction in business investment. The fading stimulus from last year's \$1.5 trillion tax cut package is also casting a shadow on the expansion, now in its 11th year.

The GDP report, which was published hours before Fed officials wrapped-up a two-day policy meeting, showed the overall trend in inflation remaining moderate last quarter.

The US central bank was expected to cut interest rates for the third time this year yesterday. The Fed cut rates in September after reducing borrowing costs in July for the first time since 2008.

"Nothing in today's report will surprise the Fed," said Sal Guatieri, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets in Toronto. "The capital expenditure crunch stemming from the trade war will motivate a third rate cut. However, a still-sturdy consumer could give reason for pause at future meetings." Gross domestic product increased at a 1.9 percent annualized rate in the third quarter, also as businesses maintained a steady pace of inventory accumulation and the housing market rebounded after contracting for six straight quarters, the government said in its advance estimate of GDP.

The economy grew at a 2.0 percent pace in the April-June period. Economists estimate the speed at which the economy can grow over a long period without igniting inflation at between 1.7 percent and 2.0 percent. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast GDP increasing at a 1.6 percent rate in the July-September quarter. Recession fears have subsided in

recent months. President Donald Trump this month announced a truce in the trade war with China, delaying additional tariffs that were due in October. A Trump administration official said on Tuesday the interim trade agreement might not be ready for signing in Chile next month as expected.

Despite last quarter's better-than-expected performance, the economy is expected to again miss the White House's ambitious goal of 3.0 percent annual growth this year. It grew 2.9 percent last year.

The dollar firmed to a session high against a basket of currencies after the data, while US Treasury prices fell. US stock index futures rose.

Healthy consumer spending

Growth in consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, slowed to a still-healthy 2.9 percent rate last quarter after surging at a 4.6 percent pace in the second quarter, the fastest since the fourth quarter of 2017. Consumer spending is being powered by the lowest unemployment rate in nearly 50 years. But some economists are starting to question the resilience of the consumer after retail sales fell in September for the first time in seven months.

Consumer confidence has also been trending lower and wage growth is stalling. Income at the disposal of households rose at a 4.5 percent rate in the third quarter compared to a 4.8 percent pace in the prior period. Concerns about the health of the consumer were highlighted by a separate report yesterday showing private payrolls increased by 125,000 jobs in October after rising 93,000 in September. Job gains have been slowing this year, but still remain enough to keep up with growth in the working-age population. Trade tensions are undercutting business investment, which fell at a 3.0 percent rate in the third quarter, the sharpest contraction in more than 3-1/2 years, after falling at a 1.0 percent rate in the second quarter. It was pulled down by declines in spending on equipment and nonresidential structures such as mining exploration, shafts and wells.

Design problems at aerospace giant Boeing have also hurt business investment. The world's largest



NEW YORK CITY: In this file photo, people walk past the Oculus, designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, and One World Trade Center (right), at World Trade Center in New York City. American consumers were less optimistic about the US economy in the near term in October as confidence slipped for the third consecutive month. — AFP

planemaker last week reported a 53 percent drop in quarterly profit because of the grounding of its best-selling 737 MAX jets. The planes were pulled out of service in March following fatal crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia. The rebound in exports blunted a surge in imports, leading to a narrowing in the trade deficit. Trade subtracted a negligible 0.08 percentage point from GDP growth in the third quarter after cutting 0.68 percentage point in the prior period.

US private employment growth showed modest acceleration in October on the strength of service-sector gains, but goods producers cut jobs for a second straight month, a report by a payrolls processor showed yesterday. Employers added 125,000 jobs last month, the ADP National Employment Report showed,

slightly topping the median forecast in a Reuters poll for a gain of 120,000 jobs. The increase came as private payrolls growth in September was revised down to a four-month low of 93,000 from an originally reported 135,000 increase. The report is jointly developed with Moody's Analytics.

All of the gains in October came from the service sector, which added 138,000 jobs, while production jobs fell by 13,000 as the manufacturing, construction and natural resources sectors each lost about 4,000 positions. "Job growth has throttled way back over the past year. The job slowdown is most pronounced at manufacturers and small companies," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics. "If hiring weakens any further, unemployment will begin to rise." — Reuters

Woolworths underpaid staff by up to \$200m

SYDNEY: Woolworths Group Ltd said it had underpaid thousands of supermarket workers for years and will need to repay as much as A\$300 million (\$200 million), the latest and most high-profile company to be caught up in wage scandals across corporate Australia. The admission from the country's biggest company by revenue prompted a government agency to say it would investigate Woolworths, as well as a call from an opposition politician for a parliamentary inquiry into what he called "wage theft" in Australia.

The underpayment of workers has emerged as a hot-button issue this year but Woolworths' disclosure is the biggest by far, increasing the odds that the government will be prompted into more action. Woolworths said a routine internal review found the salaries it had paid to about 5,700 permanent employees failed to take into account an allowance for overtime which they should have received under industrial laws. "We're unequivocally sorry and we're going to repay the money, no questions asked," said Woolworths CEO Brad Banducci on an earnings call, overshadowing a robust rise in first-quarter sales.

Woolworths added that the underpayments may date back to 2010, and said it would contact staff who had left. It plans to start making the repayments by the end of the year.

The grocery giant estimates it will have to repay between A\$200 million and A\$300 million. At the top end of the range, the amount is equivalent to around A\$52,600 per person.

Government agency the Fair Work Ombudsman said it was "shocked that yet



Supermarket chain Woolworths says it underpaid workers as much as \$200 million since 2010.

another large, publicly listed company has ... admitted to breaching Australia's workplace laws on a massive scale".

It will investigate Woolworths, which reported the breach itself and "hold them to account", it added. Shadow industrial relations minister Tony Burke of the center-left Labor party said in a statement he wanted a parliamentary inquiry into "the reasons for wage and superannuation theft, the cost of wage theft to the economy, the best means of uncovering and deterring such theft, and the taxation treatment of those affected." "While Woolworths has today come forward and committed to paying its workers what they're owed, it should not have taken this long to uncover these underpayments," the statement said.

A spate of scandals

Other companies embroiled in wage scandals this year include Super Retail Group Ltd, a seller of auto, sports and outdoor goods. It said in February it had underpaid managers by A\$43 million, an acknowledgement that forced

cut is widely factored in," said Scott Brown, chief economist at Raymond James in St. Petersburg, Florida. "Most people are looking for some sort of a hint that this will likely be it for a while."

A Commerce Department report showed US economic growth slowed less than expected in the third quarter as declining business investment was offset by resilient consumer spending and a rebound in exports, further allaying financial market fears of a recession.

Nearly half of the S&P 500 companies have posted quarterly results so far, of which 77.1 percent have beaten profit estimates. Still, analysts are expecting a 1.9 percent drop in third-quarter earnings, according to Refinitiv data.

General Electric Co jumped 10 percent after the industrial conglomerate beat quarterly profit estimates and raised its cash forecast for the year. Yum Brands Inc slid 9.8 percent after it missed quarterly profit expectations, hit by a write down in the value of its investment in delivery company GrubHub and unrelenting troubles at its Pizza Hut chain.

Shares of tech heavyweights Apple Inc and Facebook Inc also fell marginally ahead of their earnings reports after markets close. At 9:59

the departure of its CEO.

Since then, one of Australia's best-known celebrity chefs, George Calombaris, admitted to underpaying restaurant staff nearly A\$8 million while jeweler Michael Hill International Ltd has said it underpaid staff A\$25 million. Retail conglomerate Wesfarmers said this month that about 6,000 staff at its industrial and safety business were underpaid by about \$15 million since 2010, while its Bunnings unit last month said there was a payroll issue relating to pension payments.

Business groups have argued that because the wage system is complex, they shouldn't be penalized for errors. Some of the companies caught up in underpayment problems have also blamed software or technical errors. The Australian Industry Group, a group representing more than 60,000 companies, said in a discussion paper this week there was an important distinction between "employers that have made genuine mistakes which have led to miscalculations and underpayments, and employers that deliberately underpay their employees." — Reuters

a.m. ET the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 11.51 points, or 0.04 percent, at 27,059.91, the S&P 500 was down 2.84 points, or 0.09 percent, at 3,034.05 and the Nasdaq Composite was down 9.97 points, or 0.12 percent, at 8,266.88.

Among other stocks, Mattel Inc surged nearly 17 percent after the US toymaker reported a surprise jump in quarterly revenue on higher demand for newer models of its flagship Barbie brand and dolls based on Korean pop-sensation BTS. Johnson & Johnson rose 2.5 percent as the company said 15 new tests found no asbestos in a bottle of baby powder that the US Food and Drug Administration says tested positive for trace amounts of asbestos. FDA said it stands by its finding.

Health insurer Centene Corp gained 6.4 percent after WellCare Health Plans, which it is buying, posted third quarter earnings well ahead of Wall Street targets. Declining issues outnumbered advancers for a 1.61-to-1 ratio on the NYSE and a 1.75-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq. The S&P index recorded four new 52-week highs and no new lows, while the Nasdaq recorded 27 new highs and 34 new lows. — Reuters

Bolsonaro says would like to see Brazil an OPEC member

RIYADH: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said yesterday that he would like Brazil to join the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a move that would add the most significant new producer to the oil cartel for years. OPEC groups top exporter Saudi Arabia and 13 other countries and since 2017 has had a deal with several non-member producers, excluding Brazil, to limit supply and bolster prices. "I personally would very much like Brazil to become a member of OPEC," Bolsonaro said at an

Workers at risk in S Korea's dangerous shipyards

SEOUL: Park Chol-hee was working the holiday shift at Samsung Heavy Industries' Geje shipyard on Labor Day, 2017, when a giant crane collided with another and crashed to ground, killing six people, including Park's younger brother. "It was as if a bomb was dropped," Park said. "Bodies were too damaged to describe." Park and his brother Sung-woo were among nearly 1,500 subcontracted employees - 90 percent of the shipyard workforce that day - building an oil and gas platform for French energy giant Total.

All six killed and 25 workers who were injured were subcontractors, who receive lower pay, fewer employment protections and less training compared to full-time employees. Samsung and other big Korean conglomerates acknowledge they



SEOUL: Park Chol-hee, whose brother was killed in a crane collapse in 2017 at a Samsung shipyard, poses for photographs in Seoul. — Reuters

Wall Street dips as focus shifts to Fed

NEW YORK: Wall Street struggled for direction yesterday as investors geared up for a policy decision by the Federal Reserve later in the day. The central bank was widely expected to cut interest rates for the third time this year to counter any fallout from a protracted US-China trade war on the domestic economy. After a modestly higher open, US stocks slipped into the red. The interest rate sensitive banking subsector shed 0.6 percent. Five of the 11 major S&P 500 sectors were lower, with losses in the financial sector weighing the most.

Traders have fully priced in a quarter percentage point rate cut, up from a nearly 40 percent change a month earlier. Hopes of a rate cut and optimism around trade talks had pushed the benchmark S&P 500 to record highs in the last two sessions. "Certainly a rate

Business

Zahran: KFH is on track in promoting synergy among the Group's banks

Q3 2019 earnings conference call

KUWAIT: Shadi Zahran, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) & Group Chief Financial Officer (GCFO) at Kuwait Finance House (KFH) said that KFH Group reported net profit of KD 190.5 million until end of Q3 2019 for KFH Shareholders compared to KD 169.1 million for the same period last year represent an increase of 12.7 percent.

He added in the third quarter 2019 earnings conference call for Kuwait Finance House Group that total Financing Income for Q3 this year reached KD 701.2 million an increase of 10.2 percent and Net Operating Income for Q3 this year reached KD 393.0 million with a growth of 7.0 percent compared to the same period last year. Cost to Income Ratio dropped to reach 36.1 percent for as at the end of Q3-2019, compared to 37.7 percent for the same period last year.

Earnings per Share for the third quarter of 2019 reached 27.67 fils, compared to 24.58 fils for the same period last year i.e. an increase of 12.6 percent.

Zahran said that: "Our double-digit growth in net profits and the bank's positive financial indicators are results of the successful sustainability strategy of focusing on core banking activities, exiting non-strategic investments, and improved assets quality. Also, the ongoing increase in net operating income backed by the increased

operating income and controlled costs had a positive impact on net profit."

"We are on track in promoting synergy among the Group's banks in line with the strategies aimed to utilize the strength of the markets we operate in." He confirmed.

Zahran pointed out that "KFH is a major player in financing mega projects and supporting the National Development Plan, Kuwait Vision 2035 to transform the country into a regional and global financial and commercial hub. We financed many projects including energy, water, power, infrastructure and construction. We also have a global leading role in Sukuk issuances for local and international companies and governments."

Meanwhile, he said that KFH Capital launched the first REIT Fund to be listed in Bursa Kuwait with a capital of up to KD 100 million with monthly distributions to diversify investment opportunities for its customers, by providing new tools that contribute to achieving profitable returns and take advantage of market developments locally and regionally.

Regarding the financial performance, Zahran said that Net Operating income at KD 393.0 million increased by KD 25.6 million or 7.0 percent compared to Sept-18, and the increase is mainly from the Investment Income by KD 43.1 million offset by the decrease in NFI by KD 9.2 million. The increase in investment income by KD



Shadi Zahran



Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

43.1 million is mainly attributable to finalization of projects and divestments which led to increase in investment income to total operating income to reach 15.6 percent compared to 9.0 percent last year.

He added that cost to income ratio improved by a further 157bps to reach 36.11 percent. Displaying an improved efficiency and optimized operating expenses.

Qualitative move

On his part, Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem, Group Chief Strategy Officer (GCSO) said that GDP growth in Kuwait is expected to pick up in 2020 to reach 3.1 percent after a bit of a slowdown expected in 2019. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is expected to reach 1.8 percent in 2019 as the IMF expects inflation to increase to 3 percent in 2020. He added that Fitch recently affirmed Kuwait Finance House's (KFH) Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'A+' with a Stable Outlook. Fitch has also affirmed the bank's Viability Rating (VR) at 'bb+'.

"KFH won Best Islamic Financial Institution in the world for 2019 from Global Finance which confirms KFH's leadership and success globally," Al-Mukhaizeem mentioned.

He continued: "Currently KFH's branch network exceeded 509 branches around the world, thus continuing our key

strengths which include Strategic distribution channels in addition to our robust financial performance."

Al-Mukhaizeem explained that: "The success of the digital transformation strategy in the Group, pointing to a qualitative move in rolling out digital financial solutions, such as the self-service banking services and AI-enabled robotics. KFH launched the first ever Mobile Deposit of Cheques service to customers where they can simply log into their KFH mobile app, go to the cheque deposit menu and take a picture of both sides of the cheque using their smart phone camera. The funds will then be deposited directly into their accounts through the KFH Online app."

"KFH also succeeded in enhancing security and data analysis, upgrading the infrastructure and e-service platforms in order to improve customer experience which becomes a strategic factor in continuing or actually in confronting the challenges of digitalization and adapting to fast-paced and competitive environments in the banking sector in accordance with the highest standards. KFH aims to expand its operations in the Middle East and Europe through the services of the "digital bank" in Turkey and the "Jazeel" platform in Bahrain, in addition to the modern, sophisticated and highly efficient online services," he added.

Sustainability & growth

Shadi Zahran answered a question about the driver behind the growth in investment income: "The divestment, the group made is around KD 75 million and that brought profit of gain of almost KD 25 million versus last year for the same period only KD 6 million, so mainly coming from the divestment. AUB-merger and acquisition: "With regards to merger and acquisition, everything is disclosed in the market, as well as to the regulators and we don't have any other updates. Once we have updates it will be disclosed in the market."

Shadi Zahran answered a question on main reasons for increase in cash and other asset: "Reason for increase in cash as you know reflecting the balance sheet development increase when we had increase in deposits by KD 1.5 billion for the nine months compared to December, as you see the development in the financing receivable is 1.8 percent, and if you exclude the Turkish Lira devaluation it is 2.9 percent, and then the Sukuk, so KFH always is at healthy liquidity position."

Answering a question if the decrease in funding cost achieved in 3Q19 sustainable, Zahran said: "The net financing margin is sustainable and started actually to improve as compared to first and second quarter, and I explained the reasons behind the decrease cost of funds."

Zahran answered a question about the reason behind the increase in deposits, saying that "the increase in deposits KFH witnessed in the first half and continued in the 3rd quarter, it came from all subsidiaries with no exception... all banking and as I said the largest portion is just reflecting the confidence from our depositors and that's what we used to have a growth in our deposits. However, this year the additional incremental on that came from our investments in the... or reflecting the results in investments of digitalization mainly in Turkey we have very successful -digital- experience in digital banking in Turkey and as well in Bahrain (Jazeel)."

- **Al-Mukhaizeem:** The success of the digital transformation strategy in the Group is a qualitative move in rolling out digital financial solutions
- KFH succeeded in enhancing security and data analysis, upgrading the infrastructure
- KFH aims to expand its operations in the Middle East and Europe
- KFH is a major player in financing mega projects and supporting the National Development Plan

Boubyan Bank rolls out digital assistant Msa3ed

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank has successfully rolled out its Digital Assistant (Msa3ed) with WhatsApp Business API in Kuwait. This was achieved in collaboration with Infobip, a global leader in omnichannel engagement, as a part of the bank's constant efforts towards providing excellent services and a unique banking experience to customers.

Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri, the bank's Deputy CEO, stated: "Now, Msa3ed can respond to all customers and non-customers' inquiries via WhatsApp using Boubyan Bank's verified WhatsApp number 1820082 and they will find answers to all their queries."

"Carrying out banking functions on the go and having 24/7 support is a valuable benefit for Boubyan Bank's customers and will provide a further unparalleled digital experience for both financial and non-financial needs", he added.

Al-Tuwaijri went on to add: "Through WhatsApp, Msa3ed will provide customers with quick responses to many inquiries and is set to allow customers to explore the bank's various products and services, locate bank branches, convert currencies and very soon to add more services for customers such as account balance check, last five transactions



Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri

from the account, share IBAN and more.

Simple Service

Al-Tuwaijri stated that chatting with Msa3ed (the first Chatbot in Kuwait) via WhatsApp is very simple same as any WhatsApp chat conversation between two normal persons.

"As is the case with other services of Boubyan Bank, the new service enjoys the highest levels of information security. WhatsApp messages are encrypted and the green badge next to the Boubyan Bank name in the chat window ensures customers are engaging with a business verified account, ensuring a secure and reliable communication between customers and the Bank", Al-Tuwaijri explained.

Al-Tuwaijri concluded: "At Boubyan, we aim to create innovative solutions that help

reinforce our relationship with customers, and provide an outstanding level of service for them, and being the most used chat app in the world, WhatsApp is the one channel that customers already trust and enjoy."

Kemal Kece, Infobip's MENA Regional Manager, stated that he was delighted to enable WhatsApp Business API for Boubyan Bank in support of its digital transformation creating a seamless digital banking environment for its customers. "Keeping up with new trends in digital communication is a challenge many businesses face, but also a crucial part of enhancing customer experience. We are thrilled that Boubyan Bank turned this challenge into an opportunity to deliver even better banking services to their customers", Kemal added.

He went on to add: "At Infobip, we aim to create innovative solutions that help businesses continuously improve customer engagement - and being the most used chat apps in the world, WhatsApp is the one channel that customer already trust and enjoy."

Infobip powers enterprises to deliver messages across any channel, any device, at any time and anywhere worldwide. Infobip's technology creates seamless mobile interactions between businesses and people as well as simplifying the integration of almost all communication capabilities. Infobip offers its services through 60 offices around the globe with the capacity to reach over six billion mobile devices in 190+ countries. The company serves and partners with leading mobile operators, messaging apps, banks, social networks, tech companies, and aggregators.

Ooredoo Kuwait, Burgan Bank collaborate for staff offers

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait and Burgan Bank provided Ooredoo Kuwait employees with exclusive offers over a span of a week by a placing a special booth at Ooredoo Kuwait headquarters in Kuwait City. Ooredoo Kuwait employees enjoyed exclusive offers on a myriad of Burgan Bank products which included Qatar Airways Prepaid Cards, MasterCard Titanium Credit Cards, Visa Signature Credit Cards, and Time Deposits. A draw was also held in which Ooredoo Kuwait employees won Qatar Airways prepaid cards from Burgan Bank topped with KD 50.

Ooredoo Corporate Communication Senior Director Mijbil Al-Ayoub commented on this by lauding Burgan Bank's efforts in providing Ooredoo employees with exclusive offers. He stated "We are proud to have Burgan Bank providing our employees with their leading products and services".

Commenting on this collaboration, Haneen Alrumaihi, Assistant General Manager- Marketing and Product Development from Burgan Bank said "We are very happy that we got the chance to showcase our bank's products and services to the employees of Ooredoo, we had direct access to them which allowed us to listen and talk to our customers, thus enhancing and deepening our relationship with them. I would like to sincerely thank the man-



Mijbil Al-Ayoub



Haneen Alrumaihi

Sony sees H1 net profit drop but lifts full-year forecast

TOKYO: Japan's Sony said yesterday half-year net profit fell nearly 15 percent, but it upgraded its annual forecast on solid growth in its image-sensor and music sectors.

The PlayStation manufacturer said net profit dropped 14.9 percent to 340 billion yen (\$3.12 billion) for April-September, and tipped annual net profits of 540 billion yen, compared with an earlier 500 billion yen forecast. The company said it saw sales jump in the image-sensor sector, thanks to a growth in demand due to mobile phones.

"We think the demand will continue to grow also for the next fiscal year with the increase of smart phones with multiple lenses and large-sized sensors," CFO Hiroki Totoki said. Hideki Yasuda, an analyst at Ace Research Institute in Tokyo, also said before

the results were announced that "demand for image sensors is expected to grow further" due to the reasons Totoki explained.

"Sales of image sensors remain strong," Yasuda told AFP. Sony currently operates four image sensor plants in Japan and is looking to increase production capacity by March 2021. "In order to respond to the demand after March 2021, we decided to invest in steps into the construction of a new plant in Nagasaki" in southern Japan, Totoki said.

Music business sales rose

Last week, the CEO of US hedge fund Third Point, which holds a key stake in the Japanese conglomerate, reportedly expressed frustration at its rejection of a proposal to spin off its semiconductor operations including image sensors. Sales for Sony's music business also rose, the firm said yesterday, helped by its integration of EMI Music Publishing and an increase in streaming revenues. "The streaming business is enjoying high sales growth," the CFO said, adding sales for the movie sector were brisk.

"Spider-Man: Far From Home," which became Sony's record smash hit movie by earning more than 1.1 billion dollars at the international box office, contributed to the

movie sales."

Sony's half-year sales dipped 2.1 percent to 4.04 trillion yen while operating profit jumped 17.3 percent to 510 billion yen. Sony has spent years struggling to recover from deep financial trouble, a process that entailed aggressive restructuring, the loss of thousands of jobs, and the sale of business units and assets. It has seen a slowdown in its games and network businesses, and has said it expects revenue from the core sector to sag owing to a continued fall in game hardware sales, and the cost of developing a next-generation console. In the six-month period, the company posted a drop in sales for the sector, citing a decline in both software and PlayStation 4 hardware sales.

"Sales of PS4 consoles, which had spearheaded the company's recovery, are slowing down further as users' interest is now shifting to PS5," Yasuda said. "Sales of its electronics products remain weak due to tough competition in the global market," he added.

The firm said earlier this month its next-generation PlayStation 5 console, which will be equipped with new immersive features, would launch for the 2020 holiday season. — AFP



What's On



Burgan Bank supports 'autism partnership Kuwait' for the second consecutive year

Burgan Bank, one of the leading contributors to social inclusion in Kuwait, is proud to announce its support to Autism Partnership Kuwait (APK) for the rehabilitation and treatment of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Driven by the aim to improve the lives of children with autism spectrum disorders by aiding their successful integration into society, Burgan Bank signed a partnership agreement with Autism Partnership Kuwait for the second consecutive year 2019-2020.

This ongoing initiative falls in line with Burgan Bank's commitment to support many humanitarian causes that reinforce its role as a catalyst for positive change in society. Through the partnership with Autism Partnership Kuwait, Burgan Bank aims to raise awareness about the seriousness of autism and highlight the importance of early diagnosis

and early intervention. Going beyond traditional banking operations and a strong performance, we strive to play an active and inspiring role within the community by supporting core causes that will make a lasting difference.

Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah, Manager-External Affairs at Burgan Bank said: "We are very proud of this unique partnership that has extended for the second year in a row. Autism Partnership Kuwait (APK) is one of the most prominent centers that care for children with autism, in the Arab region and Kuwait. APK provides high quality treatment for children with Autism and is managed by highly qualified specialists and consultants.

Burgan Bank, through its care, seeks to alleviate the emotional and financial burden on the parents to help their children continue the journey of rehabilitation and treatment

inside the center. The ongoing funding ensures the continuity of the treatment services that would sustain their advancement and contribute to the social inclusion of the children with their peers in society."

"We are pleased to renew our partnership with Burgan Bank; one of the most important supporter of Autism Partnership Kuwait in specific and autism cause in general. The objective of our partnership is to help raise autism awareness and highlight the importance of early diagnosis and intervention. Based on our great belief that each child deserves to have a meaningful life, together with Burgan Bank, we organize fun activities for children and their families throughout the year, giving our children the opportunity to integrate with their peers in the community" said Heidy Abdel Gawad, Senior Marketing Manager, Autism Partnership Kuwait.

By renewing our partnership with Burgan Bank, we emphasize our support to children who receive treatment at our center and their families, aiming to reduce the financial and emotional burdens on parents and secure a better future for their children". Added Heidy Abdel Gawad, Senior Marketing Manager, Autism Partnership -Kuwait

Autism Partnership Kuwait provides a wide range of services for children with ASD and their families, in addition to nationwide awareness campaigns, workshops and courses that can benefit specialists as well for professionals involved in the treatment and education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Autism Partnership Kuwait is the only branch in the Arab and Middle East region that represents Autism Partnership Foundation in the United States among nine other global branches.

It is worth mentioning that Burgan Bank had previously sponsored "The 2016 Autism Walkathon" organized by Autism Partnership Kuwait. The event was held to emphasize the value of voluntary work, highlighting autism cause and the inclusion of children with autism in the community. Burgan Bank's support to this initiative falls under its recently launched full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.



ACK holds third annual blood drive

As a part of its corporate social responsibility, the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Department at the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) organized the 3rd annual blood drive. The campaign entitled "Every Drop Matters," was held from the 15th to the 17th of October, 2019 and was sponsored by Online Institute and ACK MyPrint.

Following with the success of the previous blood drives held by ACK over the past two years, this year's blood drive was extended to 3 days to meet the popular demand. The objective of the event was to propagate the significance of blood donation in saving lives, and to generate awareness about receiving and donating blood from different blood types. In order to do so, the event was themed with "Every Drop Matters."

The event included different activities to raise awareness regarding blood donation, and these activities were organized by volunteering students under the guidance of Mariam Al-Maraghi, Healthy and Safety Business Development Manager, at ACK. During the first activity, donors were welcomed with an interactive quiz matching each blood type with the types they could donate from and to.

The event was massively successful in attracting donors which included ACK students, staff and alumni. Overall, the Central Blood Bank of Kuwait collected a total of 260 blood bags from the event; however, donors who were willing to donate before the screening were a total of 304 people. Showing her gratitude to those who made the success of the event possible, Al-Maraghi said "The rank of humanitarian is a rank only a few can achieve, and our dear students and staff were able to achieve it through this campaign". ACK would like to thank its community for participation. The drive would not have been successful without the collaboration of departments and volunteering students who were an added value to the event.

Kuwait Medicines Information Center organizing campaign

Kuwait Medicines Information Center at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Kuwait University, has announced launching an awareness campaign with the intent to prevent medication poisoning. In which the campaign will take place from Thursday 31st of October till Saturday 2nd of November, from 10 am to 10 pm at 360 Mall - Main Atrium.

This campaign comes within the framework of Kuwait Medicines Information Center's keenness to educate the community about the hazards of unintentional medication poisoning among children in Kuwait and the proper methods that should be adopted to prevent such cases from happening. Furthermore, this campaign will also offer beneficial training for visitors, which include first aid and CPR training demonstration, in collaboration with the Kuwaiti Board of Pediatrics.

In this regard Dr Bedoor Qabazard, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics and the Head of the Campaign at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Kuwait University, stated: "Through this campaign we seek to raise awareness in the community on how to deal with cases of medication poisoning and ways to prevent them. This step comes to address the rapidly growing cases of medication poisoning that the ER in government hospitals have received recently. The reason for these rampant cases of medication poisoning is attributed to poor storage conditions of medicines at home, which allows the child to easily access the medications and consume them."

Qabazard then added: "We hope that this initiative will help us in preventing incidents of medication poisoning.



Dr. Bedoor Qabazard

As we intend to raise awareness among visitors on how to keep medicines stored safely at home, and how to resuscitate the child. As well as, enabling visitors to be more mindful of the importance of medication-safety."

From her end, The Campaign Coordinator Dr Eman Abahussin confirmed that this campaign came after several researches that confirmed the importance of awareness-raising as a precautionary strategy to protect children from the hazard of medication poisoning and its complications on the child's physical or psychological state.

Also, this campaign tackles the economic aspect that has to do with reducing the economic cost to the state due to hospitalization, secondary to medication poisoning. Dr Abahussin also emphasized the importance of working hand in hand to make Kuwait free of medication poisoning incidents among children by 2030, and to make our homes safe for our children at all times in line with Goal 3 on health and Goal 11 to make our cities safe and other goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Kuwait Medicines Information Center (KU - MIC) urges the public to visit its booth at 360 Mall to learn more about the details of the campaign and be part of the change. Moreover, (KU - MIC) expressed its gratitude to Advanced Technology Company, Al Mojl Drug Company, and Tamdeen Company for their generous sponsorship in hosting the event. As well as, the volunteers, pharmacists and students of the Faculty of Pharmacy at Kuwait University, and thanked the Kuwaiti Board of Pediatricians.



PAAET's director office recently organized a special ceremony to honor a number of outgoing senior officials who had concluded their tenures. The ceremony was attended by director, Dr. Ali Al-Mudhaf, deputy director for financial and administrative affairs, Hajraf Al-Hajraf, deputy director for assisting academic services, Dr. Jassem Al-Tunaib, deputy director for training affairs, Tareq Al-Omairi, deputy director for planning, Dr. Fatima Al-Kandary and a number of PAAET officials.

Health & Science

Climate-fuelled flooding to imperil 300 million by 2050

Increasingly powerful cyclones and rising seas will hit Asia hardest

PARIS: Coastal areas currently home to 300 million people will be vulnerable by 2050 to flooding made worse by climate change, no matter how aggressively humanity curbs carbon emissions, scientists have warned. In the second half of the 21st century and beyond, however, choices made today will determine whether the global coastlines on maps today will remain recognizable to future generations, they reported in the journal Nature Communications.

Destructive storm surges fuelled by increasingly powerful cyclones and rising seas will hit Asia hardest, according to the study. More than two-thirds of the populations at risk are in China, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand. In each of several dozen major cities — including Bangkok, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Taizhou, Surabaya, Dhaka, Mumbai, Ho Chi Minh City and Osaka — millions will find themselves in flood zones.

Using a form of artificial intelligence known as neural networks, the new research corrects ground elevation data that has up to now vastly underestimated the extent to which coastal zones are subject to flooding during high tide or major storms. "Sea-level projections have not changed," said co-author Ben Strauss, chief scientist and CEO of Climate Central, a US-based non-profit research group. "But when we use our new elevation data, we find far more people living in vulnerable areas than we previously understood," Strauss said.

With the global population set to increase by two

billion by 2050 and another billion by 2100 — mostly in coastal megacities — even greater numbers of people will be forced to adapt or move out of harm's way. Already today, more than 100 million people live below high tide levels, the study found. Some are protected by dikes and levees, but most are not.

“Climate change has the potential to reshape cities”

Rising tides, sinking cities

"Climate change has the potential to reshape cities, economies, coastlines and entire global regions within our lifetime," said lead author and Climate Central scientist Scott Kulp. "As the tideline rises higher than the ground people call home, nations will increasingly confront questions about whether, how much and how long coastal defenses can protect them." Even a rapid

drop today in greenhouse gas emissions will have scant impact on the course of sea level rise in the coming decades.

"Sea level responds slowly to warming, just like ice doesn't all melt when you unplug your freezer," Strauss said. "But as we get late into the century, the cumulative difference between high and low pollution scenarios gets much bigger." Many factors conspire to threaten populations living within a few meters of sea level. One is the expansion of water as it warms and, more recently, ice sheets atop Greenland and Antarctica that have shed more than 430 billion tons per year over the last decade. Since 2006, the waterline has gone up nearly four millimeters a year, a pace that could increase 100-fold going into the 22nd century if carbon emissions continue unabated, the UN Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) warned in a major report last month. If global warming is capped below two degrees Celsius — the cornerstone goal of the Paris climate treaty — sea level is projected to rise about half a meter by 2100. At current rates of carbon pollution, however, the increase would be nearly twice as much. A second ingredient is tropical storms — typhoons, cyclones or hurricanes — amplified by a warming atmosphere.

Rooftops and trees

"It doesn't take a big rise in sea level to lead to catastrophic problems," said Bruce Glavovic, a pro-

fessor at Massey University in New Zealand who was not involved in the study. "Sea level rise is not a slow onset problem — it's a crisis of extreme weather events." Major storms that until recently occurred once a century will, by 2050, happen on average once a year in many places, especially in the tropics, the IPCC report found.

Annual coastal flood damage is projected to increase 100 to 1,000-fold by 2100, it said. Finally, many of the one billion people living at less than nine meters above sea level today are in urban areas literally sinking under their own weight. Researchers studying the impact of rising seas on human settlements have long known that the Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) data provided freely by NASA has a fairly wide margin of error.

But about five years ago Kulp and Strauss realized that — compared to more accurate data for the US gathered by laser-based systems on aircraft — SRTM was systematically showing elevations to be higher than they actually were. A big part of the problem was that the NASA system mistook rooftops and trees for ground level. "It turns out that for most of the global coast we didn't know the height of the ground beneath our feet," Strauss said. Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, a professor of climatology at Belgium's Universite Catholique de Louvain and a former IPCC vice-chair, said the new method represented "very significant progress" in understanding the risks posed by rising seas. — AFP

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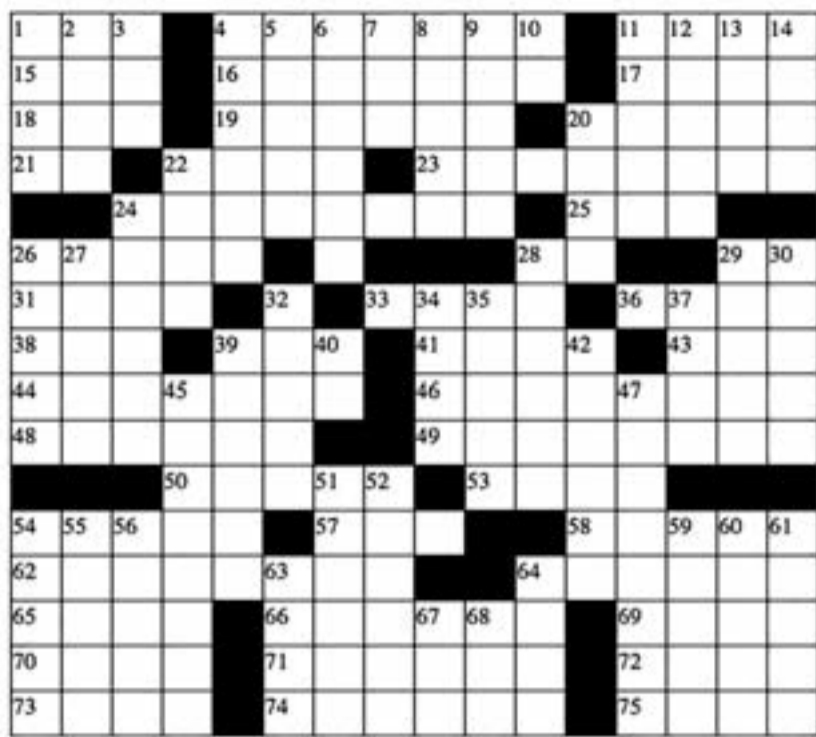
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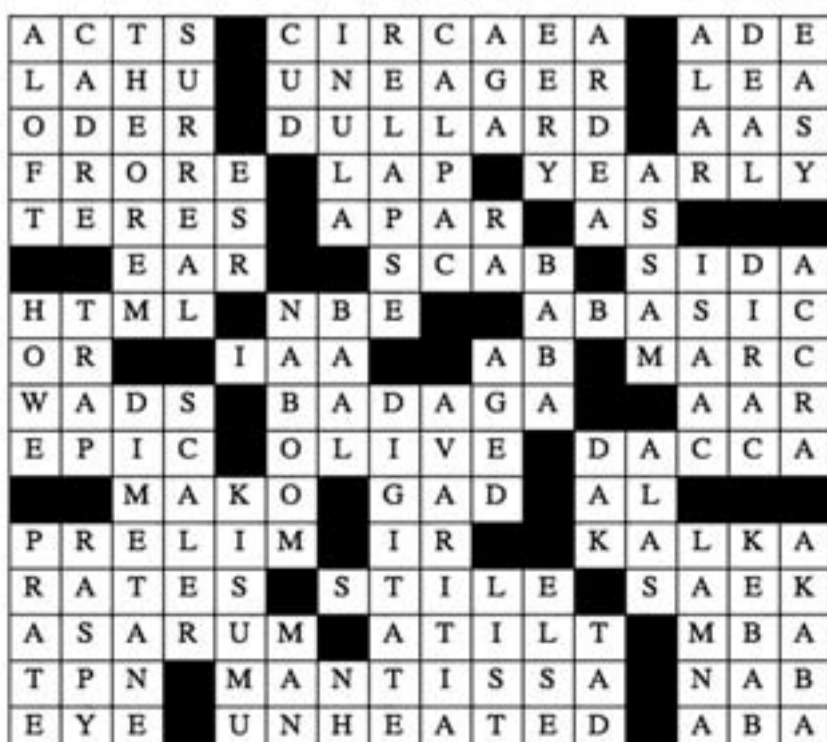
ACROSS

1. Take in solid food.
4. A flask for carrying water.
11. The Fate who spins the thread of life.
15. Psychoactive substance present in marijuana.
16. Provided with something intended to increase its beauty or distinction.
17. Chief port of Yemen.
18. A period of time spent sleeping.
19. A person who travels through the water by swimming.
21. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
23. A substance that colors metals.
25. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
26. Jordan's port.
31. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
33. An endorsement.
36. Fallow deer.
38. Injured by bites or stings.
41. Evergreen trees and shrubs having oily one-seeded fruits.
43. 36th President of the United States.
44. Small creeping evergreen shrubs.
46. The driver of a team of horses doing hauling.
48. Japanese mathematical physicist who proposed that nuclear forces are mediated by massive particles called mesons which are analogous to the photon in mediating electromagnetic forces (1907-1981).
49. Octopuses and paper nautilus.
50. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
53. (Greek mythology) The Titaness who was mother of Helios and Selene and Eos in ancient mythology.
54. (computer science) American Standard Code for Information Interchange.
57. A proportion multiplied by 100.
58. French anthropologist who studied the craniums and brains of different races of people.
62. Round-tailed muskrat.
65. Being one more than seven.
66. A genus of Scolopacidae.
69. Not widely known.
70. English prelate noted for his pessimistic sermons and articles (1860-1954).
71. Undergo resorption.
72. A visual representation of an object or scene or person produced on a surface.
73. Of a quality, as in.
74. Talks a great deal about uninteresting topics.
75. A small cake leavened with yeast.

DOWN

1. An inactive volcano in Sicily.
2. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
3. A protocol developed for the internet to get data from one network device to another.
4. A small tent used as a dressing room beside the sea or a swimming pool.
5. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
6. Someone legally empowered to witness signatures and certify a document's validity and to take depositions.
7. Hormone released by the hypothalamus that controls the release of thyroid-stimulating hormone from the anterior pituitary.
8. The Uralic language spoken by the Yeniseian people.
9. Suggestive of the supernatural.
10. A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
11. Italian chemist noted for work on polymers (1903-1979).
12. The sensation that results when olfactory receptors in the nose are stimulated by particular chemicals in gaseous form.
13. Not far distant in time or space or degree or circumstances.
14. (prefix) In front of or before in space.
20. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
22. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
24. The eighth month of the Hindu calendar.
27. Calculator consisting of a cord with attached cords.
28. A protective covering for a knife or sword.
29. To fix or set securely or deeply.
30. Indra's thunderbolt.
32. A formal expression of praise.
34. Japanese stringed instrument that resembles a zither.
35. Selected as the best.
37. Of or being the lowest female voice.
39. A state in the United States in the central Pacific on the Hawaiian Islands.
40. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
42. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
45. Converted into a gas or vapor.
47. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
51. South American cavy.
52. Placed crosswise.
55. A French river that flows through the heart of Paris and then northward into the English Channel.
56. Expandable metal or wooden wedge used by printers to lock up a form within a chase.
59. Port city on southern Honshu on Osaka Bay.
60. Long pod containing small beans and sweetish edible pulp.
61. A particular environment or walk of life.
63. A large mass of ice floating at sea.
64. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
67. An easy return of a tennis ball in a high arc.
68. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Mental organization and discipline may fall apart or be challenged at this time. This is a busy day and the input from others may cause you to change your plans and just follow the feelings of the day. Phone calls to or from a loved one at this time will find you guiding or advising. Others sense an interest in their welfare when they are near you. You are eloquent in communication skills and it is possible for you to smooth out a difficult situation with just your sense of humor. Chances are your social skills mean that you are popular with almost everyone and the evening may be full of opportunities to be with neighbors, friends or loved ones in a social gathering of sorts.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are up early this morning, cleaning and preparing for an evening of fun with friends. Some activity like a progressive dinner, or just snacks, sandwiches and some card games may be enjoyed. You may, in fact, have been preparing for this get-together for some time. The workday runs fairly well but you look forward to the closing of the day. You may learn a bit of wisdom in the workplace. You tend to see the people at work in a different light... Practical, necessary and without judgment. A no-nonsense application to the day cuts right through to the most important and quickly accomplishes what is necessary.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your innate sense of responsibility, or the actual duties that come your way, may prevent you from fulfilling your own real desires. For some reason you may find difficulty in moving forward with your work, but patience will win out over any frustration you may be feeling. Your knack for public relations can place you in personnel management, retail sales, or advertising. You can be effective when others need counseling and may find your skills very important when it comes to an unhappy customer. Compliments from higher-ups or superiors are very important to you. Your confidence is likely to increase and you may feel much more optimistic. There is still time for some fun activity with loved ones this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may find yourself frustrated today. Patience... Remember, some of us just do not understand the universal rule: what goes around will come around. You could be standing in long lines today or driving on a crowded highway—patience is important. You could find yourself getting overemotional. Close relationships have a big impact on your life and old or discontented relationships will be transformed or perhaps even ended—new ones will come on like gangbusters. Those of you who are not involved with a love partner will have many opportunities opening up to you now. Your love life becomes fast-paced. A partner has a mesmerizing impact on you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You will use your creative abilities to the utmost today. Showing off your talents will add a special touch to your work, as well as bring you the respect that you so often seek. You express a knack for organizing things and people, as a sense of ambition and practicality takes hold. Work, achievement and ambition are the things that mean a lot to you now. You enjoy your work and may discover that a co-worker is willing to lend a helping hand when you are overloaded. This could mean that you are in most any type of profession. You may alternate between feeling energized and exhausted. This evening seems to be your time—enjoyment of friends, food and life in general is good.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are coming into a period of change concerning your values. There is some indecision on your part. Losing sight of the practical and the mundane can move you toward a more artistic vent, but might not be so good for the bankbook. There is a need for caution and practicality on the material and financial level. There are new accomplishments now as well as new insights and breakthroughs in organization and determination. There is a revolution within the established order, when new ideas and ways to do and use things become clear. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends this afternoon. Some activities that start out rather tediously end up with lots of fun experiences and good memories. Do you keep a diary?



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Communicating your message to others is at a high just now. You are successful in your efforts to round people up and organize a group. Timing is important and those around you should find you most insightful. You find that you can really use your mind to make clear choices and think things through. You make your way through ideas, concepts and your ability to communicate and express them to others. A strong need for nurturing is a bigger than usual element in your life. You may feel the need to care for others or to have them care for you—perhaps on a public rather than private level. This could involve some volunteer service. You have needs and you sense the needs of others: fitting the two together well makes it work.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You could be most persuasive with others and expressive in speech. People listen to what you have to say. The situation is a natural for self-expression. Listening to the other person, you may be able to add to your own ideas and thoughts. A good conversation with loved ones this afternoon is fun. An outgoing and very expressive cycle of experience has begun. Now more than ever, you want to be admired and create things like poetry or music that stirs their hearts. This is child's play: this is romance: this is taking a chance. There is a yearning to broaden horizons and reach for the ultimate at this time in your life.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Ideas and interaction with older people may be in the works this Thursday. Working with, rather than against, the energies should be easy to do now. You communicate with exquisite skill. There are plenty of people willing to help you in whatever you want to accomplish: put them to work. An eccentric relative attracts some notice this afternoon. Your home and your family scene are likely to be in a state of change just now. This may mean moving, preparing for a new addition to the family or a late summer cleanup project. High-tech equipment invades the domestic environment somehow.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Ideals and a sense of belonging to something bigger than the merely personal become a greater focus in your life at this time. You attach more importance to friendships and taking part in group activities that center on idealistic goals. Quick answers, great wit and a surplus of insights and solutions are accessible. You can write and communicate with real originality. Inventions and breakthroughs are possible today. This afternoon you may find yourself working with music, color, fabric and the arts—whatever is beautiful and genial. You would make a superb decorator of homes and, in general, all kinds of environments.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

There is an emphasis on improving communications. There is the possibility of learning new software programs for your work computer. Also, there may be some type of robot or mechanical device that appears to be productive. All of this can help your work flow as well as increase your financial wellbeing. If you are in sales, you will find a new communications program worth your time and technically, worth your evaluation. There is an expression of ideas and the connections between things, places and people. Amazing little creatures in nature may be what are mimicked in this new communication tool.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You do not mind getting your hands dirty and you do not mind hard work, especially if it is in an area that can help you make a positive difference. Extra effort into any business project adds a touch of class to your work situation. The secret to your professional success is in the planning. Good jobs, contracts, sales, upgrades, etc., don't just fall into our laps—without the personal responsibility for making things happen, you would never grow. Everything conspires to reveal you at your most elegant, particularly in social situations this afternoon. You will have a grasp for new ideas as well as the ability to present or communicate these to others. This day is a natural for self-expression and lends itself to your particular ideas.

Wordsearch Puzzle

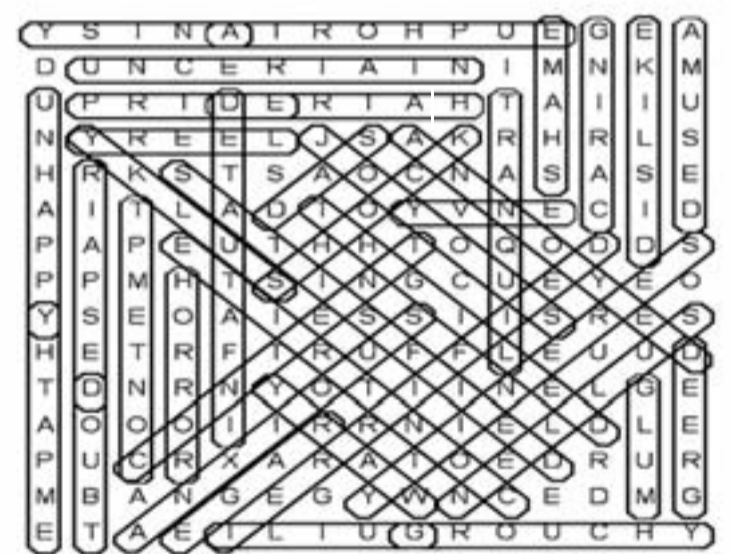
Moods & Emotions 3

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 13 letters spell an additional word.



- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| ANGER | EDGY | GRUMPY | OUTRAGE |
| APPRECIATIVE | ENVIIOUS | HAPPY | PUZZLED |
| ARROGANT | EXUBERANT | HOPE | REGRET |
| BITTER | FEAR | INDIFFERENT | SADNESS |
| CALM | FRANTIC | JEALOUS | SCARED |
| CHEERFUL | FRETFUL | JOLLY | SCORNFUL |
| CONFIDENT | GLEEFUL | JOYFUL | SORRY |
| CURIOUS | GRATEFUL | MOROSE | SURPRISE |
| DISGUST | GRIEF | MOURNFUL | TRANQUIL |
| DUBIOUS | | NERVOUS | WORRY |

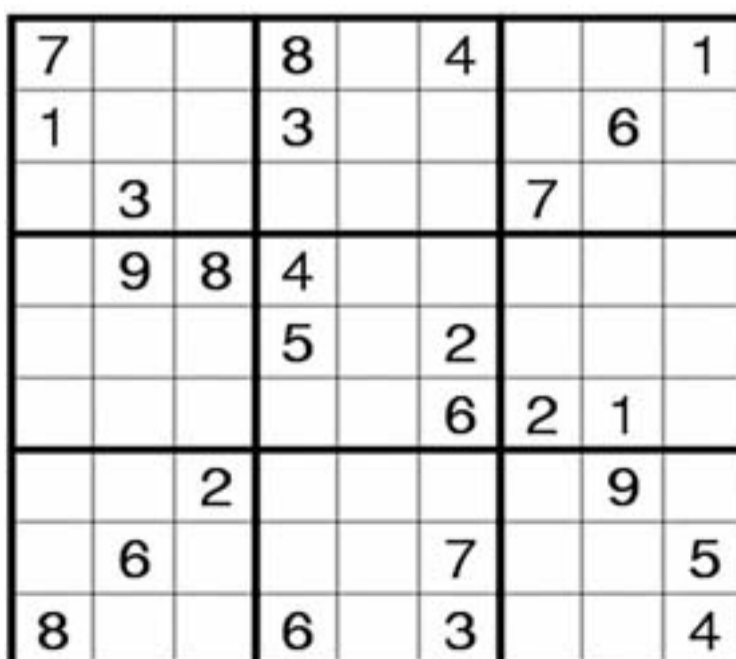
Moods & Emotions 2



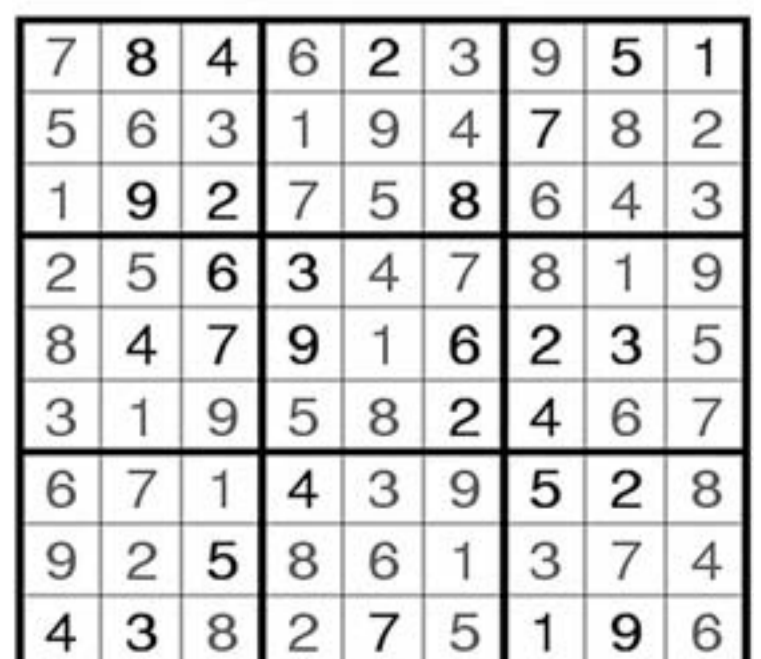
- | | | | |
|----------|----------|------------|-----------|
| AMUSED | DISLIKE | HORROR | SHOCK |
| ANNOYED | DOUBT | INFATUATED | SULKY |
| ANTSY | EMPATHY | JOYOUS | SULLEN |
| ANXIOUS | ENVY | LEERY | TERRIFIED |
| CARING | EUPHORIA | PRIDE | TRANQUIL |
| CONTEMPT | GLUM | RAGE | UNCERTAIN |
| CONTENT | GREED | SAD | UNHAPPY |
| CONTRITE | GROUCHY | SATISFIED | WARY |
| DELIGHT | GUILT | SERENITY | |
| DESPAIR | HATRED | SHAME | |

The hidden word is: DISCOURAGED

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2019



King penguins are seen at Volunteer Point, north of Stanley in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), a British Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic Ocean. — AFP (See Page 22)

'Game of Thrones' prequel on way as HBO Max launch revealed

A prequel series to global TV phenomenon "Game of Thrones" has been ordered, WarnerMedia announced Tuesday, as it set out launch details for its new HBO Max streaming service. The new show in George RR Martin's fictional world of Westeros will take place 300 years prior to fantasy epic "Thrones" and will be called "House of the Dragon." The series will be based on the book "Fire and Blood," which tells the story of the murderous, dragon-breeding Targaryen family.

"It's my pleasure to announce today that we are ordering 'House of the Dragon' straight to series for HBO," Casey Bloys, president of programming, told a Los Angeles launch event for HBO Max. "It tells the story of House Targaryen and the early days of Westeros." "Thrones," known for its graphic violence and sex as well as its unprecedented budget and production values, ended its eight-season run earlier this year with 59 Emmys—a record for a drama or comedy at television's equivalent of the Oscars.

The new prequel has been co-created by Martin and Ryan Condal ("Colony"), who will write the 10-episode series and serve as showrunner alongside Miguel Sapochnik.

Sapochnik directed multiple "Game of Thrones" episodes including the Emmy-winning "Battle of the Bastards." HBO Max, WarnerMedia's new Netflix rival, will launch in the United States in May, and will cost \$14.99 per month, it was also revealed.

The platform will feature original shows including a Ridley Scott sci-fi and exclusive streaming rights to satirical cartoon "South Park." It will offer around 10,000 hours of content at launch, including all 23 "South Park" seasons and three new seasons to follow.

Part of the zeitgeist

Original shows will be largely released on a weekly basis, rather than dropped in one go for binge-watching, because "we like creating cultural impact," said HBO Max COO Kevin Reilly. "Our creators also see the difference in rolling out shows gradually and letting them breathe," Reilly said. "HBO hits like 'Succession' and 'Chernobyl' became part of the zeitgeist with a weekly release schedule, rather than fading quickly after a binge and burn."

Original content will see Scott produce and direct new sci-fi series "Raised by Wolves,"

about "two androids tasked with raising human children on a mysterious virgin planet." Two new DC superhero series—anthology show "Strange Adventures" and a series inspired by "Green Lantern"—will be overseen by Greg Berlanti ("Arrow"). Another DC-themed show, comedy "DC Super Hero High," was announced from Elizabeth Banks ("Charlie's Angels"), while Mindy Kaling oversees a new college roommates-themed comedy.

The platform will feature from launch a library including "Friends"—described by Reilly as "the pinnacle of streaming titles" thanks to both its original network audience and Generation Z newcomers—and popular sitcom "The Big Bang Theory." Existing HBO subscribers will have immediate access to HBO Max at no extra charge.

Next great chapter

HBO Max users will be able to "follow" other users' profiles on the platform, to give them recommendations based on what "talent and influencers" enjoy. In previously announced content, JJ Abrams appeared on stage to confirm his sci-fi "Demimonde" is in the works. Jason Bateman will produce and star in Stephen King adaptation "The Outsider," while "Fleabag" creator Phoebe Waller-Bridge will produce and star in comedy "Run."

"Downton Abbey" creator Julian Fellowes will oversee "The Gilded Age" set in New York, while "The Wire" maker David Simon will adapt Philip Roth novel "The Plot Against America." The presentation ended with Bloys' surprise announcement of "the next great chapter in George's saga." No details of the "Thrones" prequel's launch date were announced. The news comes hours after reports in the Hollywood press that another, separate "Game of Thrones" prequel starring Naomi Watts had been cancelled.

A pilot had been made but HBO decided not to take the show to a full series, it was reported. HBO did not confirm the news. As many as five "Thrones" successor series have been put into early stages of development by HBO, but before Tuesday's announcement only the reportedly scrapped Watts pilot had entered production, and none had received a full series order. — AFP

Schwarzenegger and Hamilton keep promises in new 'Terminator'

The Terminator has come a long way since Arnold Schwarzenegger first portrayed the cyborg assassin in James Cameron's 1984 sci-fi classic. "In each movie, the Terminator is a little bit different—there's a certain evolution," Schwarzenegger told AFP. But the character's latest incarnation in "Terminator: Dark Fate," out on Friday, still comes as a surprise—he is now a drapery salesman.

"The first Terminator was just crushing everything and destroying everything. The second one was the protector," said the actor, 72. "Now I have grown a conscience in this one." But fans can rest assured that, even if he has become more human, the Terminator is a long way from laying down his weapons. The ingredients that made the original movie and its acclaimed sequel "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" such hits remain in place—breathless chases, spectacular shoot-outs and fight scenes laden with state-of-the-art special effects.

Glossing over the other, poorly received sequels and spin-offs that came after "T2," the latest film also reconnects with another key element from the first two films—Linda Hamilton, more angry than ever in her role as Sarah Connor. Most of the film takes place in 2022, but it begins where "Terminator 2" left off in 1991 — Connor has just prevented the future eradication of the human race by machines equipped with artificial intelligence known as Skynet.

'You're just afraid'

For Hamilton, the decision to return to this iconic role 28 years later was not an easy one. She told AFP how she had long since built a comfortable life for herself away from big Hollywood productions. "It took me a long time to agree to do it," she said. "I eventually started going, 'You're just afraid.' And when I'm afraid, then I have to do it." More than letting down the audience, "I was afraid I was going to disappoint Sarah Connor," admitted Hamilton, 63.

"All these years I sort of felt like the first two films were very complete and resisted doing any more, largely because Jim Cameron wasn't involved." Cameron

returns not just as a producer for "Dark Fate" but also participated in writing the script, while Tim Miller ("Deadpool") directs. Desperate and aimless, "Sarah Connor is no longer human," said Hamilton. "And the Arnold character is more human—I like that flip." Anxious not to reveal plot details, Hamilton said that beyond its action scenes, the film—like its predecessors—is about "what is it that makes us human."

Testosterone

The film sees Connor find a new raison d'être in protecting young Dani Ramos (Natalia Reyes), who is being pursued by the most sophisticated yet Terminator from the future (Gabriel Luna). A human "augmented" by technology and also sent from the future, played by Mackenzie Davis, is also part of the chase. For Hamilton, signing back up meant a year of strenuous physical training—and the even more unpleasant experience of taking testosterone prescribed by her doctor to help her build muscle.

"There came a day where I was angry about something and I couldn't sleep and my blood pressure is spiking and I'm kind of flying off the handle. And, I'm like, 'This is the hormones talking,'" Hamilton recalled. "If this is what it feels like to be a man, forget it!" Former "Mr Universe" winner Schwarzenegger, who continues to train every day, had it easier. "It's not as if I have to start all over again," he told AFP.

For him, the main challenge was acting in front of green screens used to later generate computer-driven special effects. "It gets a little bit more tedious, because you're now working a lot of times with stuff that doesn't exist," he said. "So when you have a Hummer fly towards you, when you're inside the airplane and you're crashing, it was really never there."

While Schwarzenegger has been repeating "I'll be back"—his famous line from the original—since 1984, it is Hamilton who steals the phrase in "Dark Fate." But will either of them sign up for more Terminator films? "If the fans want to see more of me, they will make the voices be heard... It's kind of like in politics—the people should decide," joked the former governor of California. "It depends on how this movie performs—it's a really very expensive film," said Hamilton, adding that the film was envisioned as the start of a new trilogy. "I might be back." — AFP



In this file photo a giant Iron Throne is on display ahead of the 'Game of Thrones' eighth and final season at Radio City Music Hall in New York city. — AFP



GLOBAL FASHION BRANDS, DESIGNERS ATTEND 16TH EDITION OF 'HEYA ARABIAN FASHION EXHIBITION'

By Nawara Fattahova

Fashion designers from different countries gathered again at the biggest fashion event in Qatar 'Heya Arabian Fashion Exhibition' that took place on October 23. This was the 16th edition of this successful fashion event, which became popular in the region. It was held at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC). Heya Arabian Fashion Exhibition is set to bring a series of events showcasing the latest in Arabian and modest designs from more than 250 brands around the globe, as well as inspiring discussions on the business of fashion, latest trends, beauty, textiles, and sustainable fashion. The launching ceremony was attended by model Halima Aden as special guest of the event.

Qatar Airways, the partner of Heya flew Halima Aden and other international guests and media personnel to the event. Flying with Qatar Airways was a great experience as they provided best services onboard and on ground. Also the aircraft was equipped with latest technology to ensure maximum comfort for passengers. Day one saw an inspiring line-up of designers who exhibited their latest creations with spectacular fashion shows including: Debaj and Al Baccarat Fashion, as well as Malo Italy, Faggioli Atelier, Atelier C Firenze and Positivity Couture.



The opening show was followed by a celebrity talk with Halima Aden, the first hijab-wearing model. In collaboration with Narges Raiss, contributing editor for Harper's Bazaar, Grazia Arabia and Esquire Qatar, Aden participated in the 'Celebrity talk: Breaking boundaries, a history of firsts', where she shared her journey to success and the rise of modest fashion on the international fashion scene. Day one also included a presentation by Cosmoprof, followed by hosting a talk in collaboration with Jeannie Lee, Head of Buyers at Galleries Lafayette, and Christopher Fink, VCU Arts Chair of Fashion, on: 'The International Fashion Scene in Parallelism to the Arabian Vogue'. The day concluded with a fashion show including designers: Tahani Al Otaibi, Apple Wang, Al Marya, Bebe Collection, Sweet Dolce, Lialy Line and Kyra.

Around 70 percent of the exhibitors were from Qatar. Kuwait had the largest number of international participants with many Kuwait female designers. Basayel Style from Kuwait participated in Heya from the first time. "I participate with different styles of Dara'as and occasion dresses. I only make one or two pieces of each design to keep it unique. Heya is one of the biggest fashion events in the region, so I've been on participating every year," Huda told Kuwait Times. Hanadi Al-Hinedi the designer and owner of Miss Dress Boutique from Kuwait also participated in Heya. "Heya is the most popular fashion exhibition in Doha, so I always participate in both editions: winter and summer every year. And due to the high interest of participants, the organizers only chose the best. During each edition I design suitable designs for that season," she pointed out.





Khawla Al-Khater from Khawla Al-Khater Haute Couture from Qatar was been participating in Heya exhibition since its first edition. Samiha Jamali the designer and owner of S-Cycle also from Qatar participated for the second time. "I'm displaying over 57 pieces including only 12 pieces from the old collection. Now I've made a capsule collection suitable for the winter and travel season. Leather is in now, so I included it in my designs. My pieces include Abayas, dresses, shorts, and tops that can be worn under Abaya. My designs are suitable for all occasions and all nationalities. Furthermore I designed special accessories like gloves and other accessories to match the Abayas," she stated.



Halima Aden

Commerce and Industry. In addition to the workshops, day two also showcased a talk by Elsbeth Blekkenhorst from Elisabetta fashion brand on 'How to create your own online fashion brand'.

Other workshops included skin care tips and facial whitening techniques, top three techniques on how to effectively use an eyeliner, student testimonies, creative makeup, your skin at 20s, 30s, 40s, and beyond, and women empowerment. Besides, fashion shows were held, in addition to awarding ceremonies and Tajmeel's Annual Graduation. Held annually, Heya sheds limelight on the largest display of Arabian designers. With more than 250 brands of abayas and modest fashion designs, the event offers visitors an assortment of unique collections, from high-street apparel, couture and luxury, to the latest modest evening gowns, leather accessories as well as perfumery and make-up.

This edition will also showcase haute couture modest fashion from 11 different countries, representing four continents including neighboring countries Kuwait and Oman as well as India, Turkey, Lebanon, Morocco, China, Indonesia, Italy and Georgia. Heya is delivered by Design Creationz with the support of QNTC as part of its efforts to empower the private sector to attract and host global events. The event is delivered by Design Creationz, with the support of the Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC), as part of its effort to empower the private sector to attract and host global events.

The 16th edition of the exhibition has collaborated with several key partners and high-profile stakeholders in Qatar, the region and globally including a partnership with Virginia Commonwealth University - Qatar (VCUQ), one of the best fashion schools in the world, Qatar Business Incubation Center (QBIC), Bedaya Center, Maison de Joelle, W Doha, Tajmeel Academy, Intercontinental Doha the City, VCUArts Qatar, Bioskin Spa, Qatar Red Crescent, Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC), IDAM, H.E.N.K.S and Kaafe.

Modest fashion, workshops and more

Manal from Moda Mania participated for the fourth time, whereas Atelier.c Firenze, an Italian brand participated for the first time in Heya exhibition. On the second day, visitors enjoyed an array of fashion-forward events including a beauty workshop presented by Bioskinspa with tips on skincare, a workshop by VCUArts Qatar, and a workshop by the Ministry of





Falklands banking on king penguins to drive nature tourism



Waddling up the beach in single file, their heads held high with an almost self-important demeanor, king penguins are a major draw in the Falkland Islands' tourism industry. Their fluffy brown chicks are nearly fearless of humans, meaning tourists at Volunteer Point, a peninsula on East Falkland Island, might get almost close enough to touch one. "We're the furthest location north in the world that you can see king penguins," said Tony Heathman, a former sheep farmer who has spent the last 16 years taking tour groups to Volunteer Point, where a thousand pairs of the islands' signature species go to breed.

"We get lots and lots of people who... love to come here and get as close to the king penguins as they possibly can," the 70-year-old told AFP. Kings are just one of five penguin species in the Falklands, alongside the wacky-looking rockhoppers which have yellow tassels sprouting from the side of their heads, gentoos, macaronis and the burrowing magellanic. The Falklands have incredibly rich biodiversity, including more than 25 species of whales and dolphins, but it is the guaranteed ability to get up close with penguins that makes it a particularly enticing destination.

Tourism is a growing industry in the Falklands despite their remote location in the South Atlantic some 480 kilometers off Argentina and occasional political and economic hostility from Buenos Aires. In 2018, there was a 6.3 percent increase in tourist arrivals and a 29.4 percent surge in tourist expenditure to almost £8.8 million. "One of the key attractions for us was the king penguins at Volunteer Point, so we saw plenty of those," said Flavia Tang, 29, from London, who came for a week with her partner.



Volunteer Point is one of the islands' most popular destinations, accessible from the capital Stanley by a three-hour ride in a four-wheel drive vehicle, including 11 miles of bumpy, boggy, off-road track. The peninsula is also home to gentoos and magellanic penguins-known locally as jackasses because of their braying-like call-as well as oystercatchers, South American terns and ruddy-headed geese.

Like a Hitchcock film

Another of the Falklands' stunning locations for wildlife watching is Kidney Island, where rockhoppers use their claws and beaks to help them get to the top of cliffs where they will mate. In order to see the birds, visitors must trek a half hour through tall, three-meter tussock grass while avoiding ground bird nests. But a bird called the sooty shearwater is what makes the island truly unique.

"Kidney Island is home to 140,000 breeding pairs of sooty shearwaters that are just rafting off the coast here ready to come in," Denise Blake, the Falklands government's envi-

ronmental officer, told AFP during a visit to the outlying island. "So as night falls you really see them swooping in over the heads a bit like the Hitchcock movie where all the birds start circling in: It's incredible for that." While many nature-lovers head to places such as Antarctica and South Georgia, an island in the South Atlantic, Sally Ellis, the manager at International Tours and Travel, feels the Falklands are a better option.

"Antarctica and South Georgia are nothing compared to the variety and accessibility of wildlife in the Falkland Islands and it costs about a quarter," she said, adding that there was nearly a "guarantee" to see whatever wildlife is desired. Beyond birds the endangered sei whale is found off the coast of the Falklands while the distinctive black and white Commerson's dolphins swim near Yorke Bay and Gypsy Cove.

Leap of faith

In addition to nature watching, adventure tourism is also growing on the islands, where enterprising locals are branching into the industry. Tom and Jane Chater recently launched a business offering helicopter trips and tours. The married couple is hoping to attract some of the 60,000 people a year who arrive in the Falklands from cruise ships by offering the chance to explore the islands from their four-seater Robinson R-44 helicopter. "It's been a very busy and exciting time for us," said Tom Chater, 43. "It's something we thought about for a long time," added 46-year-old Jane. "It's a leap of faith but we're keen to see how it works out." — AFP



Kremlin-backed falcon project sparks smuggling fears

The king motions for the white falcon to be brought closer and reaches out to stroke its chest, smiling as the bird blindly swivels its head, a hood covering its eyes. Russia's Vladimir Putin this month engaged in some falcon diplomacy on a Middle East tour, gifting prized gyrfalcons to Saudi King Salman and Emirati Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, a falconry enthusiast.

In Russia, however, Arab interest in falcons has a dark side, with out-of-control poaching and smuggling to the Gulf region, where they find an eager market thanks to deep-rooted hunting traditions. Gyrfalcons, the largest species of the predator once prized by Russia's tsars, breed in northern climates and are sought after for their size and intelligence. Now a massive Kremlin-backed project to breed and export gyrfalcons, or gyrs, has alarmed scientists as a possible future scheme to smuggle wild birds.

Forbidden fruit

Gyrs are not endangered, but trade in the birds and their cross-border shipment require permission from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). They are protected in Russia, where the illegal capture of gyrs can lead to a four-year prison term. Poachers lure falcons to snares with live bait, then swaddle and hood them. Smugglers stuff the birds into old radios, car seats, or even down their trousers, before boarding a plane or crossing the border by car, according to official reports.

Many of the birds do not survive the trip to the Gulf. Others die from disease in the desert climate, but enough reach buyers-not at fairs but at invitation-only sales in private homes, says US-based breeder Brad Wood,



Alexander Borodin, chief of a falcon centre of the All-Russian Research Institute of Environmental Protection, holds a peregrine falcon in Moscow.

who sells falcons to Arab clients. "Wild-trapped gyrs are the forbidden fruit" and fetch up to \$100,000, he said. "Most of us breeders know that many young Russian gyrs have been smuggled from Russia to the Middle East" to hunt and breed, often to produce heat-resistant hybrids.

Gyr specialist Yevgeny Lobkov said poaching on an "industrial scale" has gone on for decades in Russia's far-eastern Kamchatka region, where a higher percentage of gyrs are white, fetching higher prices. Lobkov estimated that hundreds are taken every year from Kamchatka, where he works. Poachers are well-equipped and work out in the open, parking their cars along major roads. Smuggling cases rarely reach trial. In 2013 a man was caught by Russian customs with 29 birds but disappeared after the United Arab Emirates (UAE) embassy paid his bail, local media reported.

Factory farm

Russia's environment ministry in October announced that a new centre will be built in Kamchatka with the goal of breeding 1,000

gyrfalcons a year, with plans for five more to "replenish Russian gyr populations" decimated by poaching. A facility this size would be the biggest in the world, effectively a "factory farm", said UK-based biologist and falcon breeder Nick Fox, who has worked in the Gulf region. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov praised the centre as "fantastic", calling it a "business project"-which suggests the falcons will be exported to the Gulf.

Emirati Environment Minister Thani al-Zeyoudi told the Russian RT channel last month that construction will start "in the coming months" in what he called a "partnership" with Russia. Shukhrat Razakov, who is set to head the new centre, handled the two white birds on Putin's Gulf trip. But for a facility of such size and government involvement, the project is mysterious, with the environment ministry declining to provide details when contacted by AFP. Several Russian ornithologists said it could adversely affect endemic falcons' gene pool.



A picture shows a gyrfalcon at a falcon centre of the All-Russian Research Institute of Environmental Protection in Moscow.



A northern goshawk is seen in an enclosure at a falcon centre.

Falcon contraband

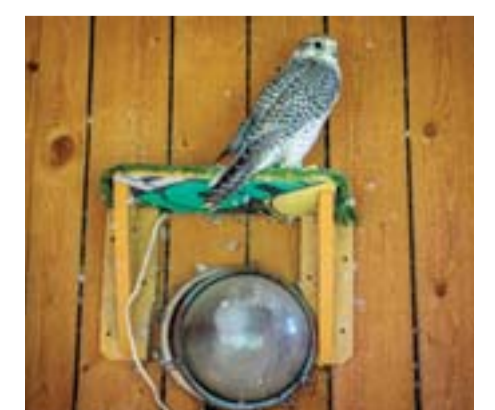
Internationally, commercial trade of gyrfalcons is allowed only of birds bred in CITES-registered facilities. It is not clear where the Kamchatka centre would get such birds. Razakov also runs a breeding facility in Kyrgyzstan, where 200 gyrfalcons were flown in from the Emirates in 2017, according to its Instagram account. He owns the Muras facility, which is not CITES-registered, with Rashid Al Kindi of the UAE and Russian Oleg Sharykin, who runs a cement business, according to the Kyrgyz justice ministry.

The company has no website, and did not respond to questions sent via Instagram. Fox, the UK breeder who worked on falcon conservation in Kyrgyzstan, has not heard of Muras, but called the Central Asian state a "perfect place for bending CITES regulations". Sergei Ganusevich, a gyrfalcon specialist who advises Russian customs on smuggled birds, said the new centre will likely be launched with birds from Kyrgyzstan, in violation of CITES rules. He called the project "corruption-prone, environmentally dangerous and biologically unfounded."

If Razakov's gyrfalcons are indeed natives of Kamchatka, they can only be contraband as

"there have never been legal shipments of gyrfalcons from Russia." If the gyrs are from elsewhere, Ganusevich said bringing them to Kamchatka would introduce their genes to the native local birds, which goes against conservation ideals. Ganusevich added that locating a breeding centre in rugged Kamchatka smells like a plan to "launder" more desirable wild birds from local nature.

A known smuggling trick is using fake export papers to pass off wild falcons as birds from breeding facilities. Russia is the only country that has failed to stop the smuggling of wild gyrfalcons, said Ganusevich, who has sent two letters to Putin protesting the planned breeding centre. Instead of building huge falcon farms, "all you need to do is to eradicate poaching and contraband, and the gyrfalcon will be fine," he said. — AFP



A saker is seen in an enclosure at a falcon centre. — AFP photos

Classifieds

Thursday, October 31, 2019



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Relatively hot and Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times north easterly wind to variable wind, with speed of 10 - 45 km/h causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate variable wind changing to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for scattered light rain.

WEATHER WARNING			Thunder Rain		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 30/10/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	31 °C	25 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	33 °C	24 °C			
ABDALY	32 °C	19 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	33 °C	23 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	30 °C	26 °C			
AHMADI	29 °C	27 °C			
NUWASIB	32 °C	26 °C			
WAFRA	32 °C	23 °C			
SALMY	31 °C	19 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	10/31	Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will appear	33 °C	22 °C	NW-N	12 - 32 km/h
Friday	11/01	Relatively hot and some high clouds will appear	30 °C	21 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Saturday	11/02	Relatively hot	32 °C	20 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Sunday	11/03	Relatively hot and Clouds will increase gradually	32 °C	20 °C	NE-VRB	06 - 26 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:39
Sunrise	06:00
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:40
Sunset	17:04
Isha	18:22

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	32 °C
MIN. Temp.	24 °C
MAX. RH	73 %
MIN. RH	39 %
MAX. Wind	NE 25 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

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CHANGE OF NAME

I Farooq Mohammed S/o Mohammed Khaja R/o Farwaniyah Block No. 3, street No. 30, Avenue No. 4621, first floor, room No. 3. Henceforth I change my son name from Husain to Husain Farooq Mohammed. (C 5468)

Indian Passport No. R8275312 having permanent address "LIG Colony 36/4, Kurla (W), Pipe Road, Mumbai - 400070, Maharashtra." Residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as Given name: Mohammed Yousuf Mohammed Ishaq. (C 5467) 28-10-2019

MATRIMONIAL

I Merl Elizabeth Mathew (Mathilunkal House Kuttapuzha Tiruvalla Pathanamthitta Kerala) holder of Indian Passport No. Z5184743 issued at Kuwait on 30-01-2019 presently residing at Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: Meryl Elizabeth Mathew. Objections if any and may be forwarded to Embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait city, 13015. (C 5469) 30-10-2019

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

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the
Civild card is **1889988**



Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 31/10/2019					Departure Flights on Thursday 31/10/2019				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35		
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	JZR	212	Jeddah	13:45		
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	IRA	607	Mashhad	13:55		
QTR	8276	ZAZ	00:20	ZAV	4133	BSR	14:00		
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	UAE	877	Dubai	14:00		
KAC	102	Riyadh	00:50	KAC	672	Dubai	14:00		
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	14:00		
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10		
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15		
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15		
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20		
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	QTR	1078	Doha	14:25		
PGT	828	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	792	Madinah	14:40		
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:45		
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:35	JZR	222	Riyadh	14:45		
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	618	Doha	14:50		
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	KAC	562	Amman	14:50		
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55		
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	118	New York	15:00		
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05		
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:10		
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15		
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20		
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35		
RBG	1559	Alexandria	03:45	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45		
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	546	Cairo	15:50		
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KNE	531	Jeddah	16:05		
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	FDB	051	Dubai	16:10		
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	JZR	732	Doha	16:10		
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:25	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15		
MSR	0516	Cairo	04:25	KAC	502	Beirut	16:15		
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	KAC	198	Baku	16:20		
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	FEJ	241	Alexandria	16:45		
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	SAW	705	Damascus	17:00		
IGO	1759	Delhi	05:10	JZR	116	Doha	17:05		
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15		
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30		
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:35		
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	JZR	124	Dubai	17:40		
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	JZR	104	Bahrain	18:00		
KAC	362	Colombo	06:05	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10		
KAC	157	London	06:10	KAC	158	Istanbul	18:10		
JZR	702	Asyut	06:10	JZR	612	Tbilisi	18:15		
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	302	Cairo	18:20		
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30		
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	IRA	667	Esfahan	19:00		
KAC	106	London	06:40	FDB	063	Dubai	19:05		
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	RJA	640	Amman	19:05		
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05		
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	07:05	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05		
IRA	601	Tehran	07:10	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20		
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	KAC	744	Dammam	19:25		
QTR	8511	Doha	07:15	NIA	161	Cairo	19:30		
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40		
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45		
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	FDB	057	Riyadh	19:45		
KAC	352	Kochi	08:05	KAC	174	Dubai	19:50		
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KNE	381	Taif	20:00		
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	KAC	174	Munich	20:00		
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05		
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	NIA	1505	Asyut	20:10		
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:10		
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15		
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	JZR	126	Dubai	20:20		
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	RBG	213	Sohag	20:30		
GOW	061	CNN	09:30	KAC	620	Doha	20:30		
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	QTR	8446	LGg	20:40		
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40		
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:00		
IRA	675	Lar	09:55	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10		
SVA	1372	Riyadh	10:00	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15		
IAW	137A	Al Najaf	10:00	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15		
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	168	Paris	21:20		
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	THY	764	Istanbul	21:30		
OMS	223	Muscat	11:00	KAC	164	MXP	21:40		
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	676	Dubai	21:45		
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50		
JZR	1342	Al Najaf	11:20	KAC	564	Amman	21:55		
NIA	1407	Sohag	11:35	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05		
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15		
AHY	119	Baku	12:05	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:20		
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25		
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	RBG	555	Alexandria	22:30		
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	JZR	128	Dubai	22:50		
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	GEC	8486	Frankfurt	22:55		
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	BBC	043	Dhaka	23:00		
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	MSC	501	Alexandria	23:10		
				MSC	415	Sohag	23:15		
				MSR	614	Cairo	23:30		



BEIRUT: A Lebanese protester walks draped in a national flag along the Fuad Chehab Avenue, near the Martyrs' Square, in the center of the capital on Tuesday. — AFP

Lebanon protesters turn on leaders, breaking taboos

NABATIYEH, Lebanon: In the protests sweeping Lebanon, nothing is sacred. Political leaders, who a few weeks ago enjoyed the loyal support of core followers despite worsening economic conditions, are now the target of many of those people's ire. That show of irreverence towards senior figures who have long commanded respect has broken taboos, setting these demonstrations apart from previous waves of dissent.

Saad Al-Hariri stepped down as prime minister on Tuesday in the face of mass protests fuelled by resentment against the ruling elite, whom people blame for the dire state of the economy. The son-in-law of President Michel Aoun, Gebran Bassil, who is also foreign minister, has become a figure of ridicule among many on the streets of the capital Beirut.

Hezbollah, the heavily armed Shiite group widely recognized as the most powerful force in the country, has not been spared. Chants against its leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah would have been unthinkable last month. Now they are common. In Nabatiyeh, a mainly Shiite town in the south of the country, protesters have set their sights on Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, one

of Lebanon's most powerful politicians whose Amal Movement dominates the area.

"I have come down to protest to bring down Berri who is a symbol of corruption," said Koussay Charara, a Shiite teacher who was one of thousands of people occupying the town square and surrounding streets. When hundreds of protesters chanted against Berri in one of the town's main streets, residents say they were attacked by groups of baton-wielding mobs believed to be supporters of Amal and its ally Hezbollah. At least eight people were hurt, some of whom were hospitalized.

In other places in Nabatiyeh and elsewhere in the south, posters of Berri that adorned government buildings were damaged by angry demonstrators. The politician himself has sided with protesters, telling MPs from his party last week that the crowds had achieved some of the changes that Amal itself had been demanding for decades. A source within Amal said the tens of thousands of people taking to the streets had made legitimate demands for greater transparency, accountability and action against corruption. "The Amal movement and its leader were not surprised by the social explo-

sion that took place," he said.

That explosion is pitting people once aligned in a single faction against each other, adding to the sense of chaos in Lebanese towns and cities. In Nabatiyeh, those backing Berri chanted their support. "With our blood and lives we offer ourselves as a sacrifice for you Nabih," they shouted. New posters appeared of the smiling politician, accompanied by the words "We are With You".

Some Amal and Hezbollah supporters wearing black clothes and carrying sticks and pipes attacked and destroyed the anti-government protest camp in Beirut, believing the protesters were tarnishing their leader Nasrallah. It was the most serious strife in the capital since 2008, when Hezbollah fighters seized control in a brief eruption of armed conflict with Lebanese adversaries loyal to Hariri and his allies.

Analysts are taking particular note of dissent in the south of Lebanon, because of the political dominance long enjoyed there by Amal and Hezbollah. "There are more daring voices in the south. Demonstrations were breaking the previous taboos in politics," said Mohamad Hage Ali of the Carnegie Middle East Center.

The north has not been spared either. In the mostly Sunni Muslim city of Tripoli, one of Lebanon's poorest, protesters turned on their leaders by burning tyres near a villa owned by former Sunni prime minister Najib Mikati. "You are one of them!" they chanted, referring to the political elite they despise.

Ali Omar, a Sunni university teacher, said that a brief walk around Tripoli was more than enough proof that parliamentarians and Sunni leaders had done nothing for the city over the years. "Go look in the city and see the unemployment rate, look at the electricity ... go to the social security offices, look at the roads with their potholes, at the oppression."

Tripoli has seen some of the biggest, liveliest demonstrations of the past two weeks. People have gathered daily in the city square, chanting and dancing deep into the night. Omar said people were sick of spending their lives asking for favors or begging officials for their basic rights. "Where are all these taxes going? Into their bank accounts," he said. "For 30 years we've been screaming ... that half the youth are unemployed. What do we have to do for you to hear us?" — Reuters

Ticket collector held after ordering men off moving train

CAIRO: Egypt's public prosecutor has ordered the detention of a ticket collector after one of two vendors he allegedly told to get off a moving train because they had no tickets died jumping from a carriage. The incident early on Monday near the Nile Delta city of Tanta sparked outrage among social media users, many of whom saw it as an example of how the authorities treat poor people as well as the use of harsh, military-style discipline.

The ticket collector, Magdi Ibrahim, "opened the door and asked them to pay, or submit their IDs for a (police) report, or get off the train," the public prosecutor said in a statement late on Tuesday. The two men jumped, and one, Mohamed Eid, was decapitated by the train, while the other, Ahmed Samir, "suffered abrasions and bruises in different parts of his body", the statement said.

Ibrahim has been ordered to remain in custody for four days pending investigations on charges of "committing

actions that endangered the safety of two train passengers and led to the death of one of them", it added. He denied the accusations, and said he had tried to prevent the men jumping, the statement said.

Transport Minister Kamel Al-Wazir said the men had jumped as the train was driving through a disused station and that Eid had fallen between the train and a platform. He told MBC Masr that Eid's family would be given 100,000 Egyptian pounds (\$6,200) in compensation as well as a job for a relative at the Railway Authority, and 20,000 pounds for Samir.

The Railway Authority said the two men were vendors who declined to pay for tickets and jumped from the train when it slowed down. It made no mention of Ibrahim ordering them off the train. On social media, users shared a post reading: "How much is the ticket? = Your life!", and the Arabic hashtag meaning "the ticket martyr" was trending on Facebook and Twitter.

Some blamed Wazir, a former army general who took the post after a deadly train crash that left more than 20 dead at Cairo's main station in February, or linked the incident to an austerity drive under President Adel Fattah Al-Sisi. The Railway Authority has said it is working on "an urgent and immediate rehabilitation and training program" for all railway staff who have direct contact with the public.— Reuters

Khamenei urged protesters to seek changes in a lawful way in Iraq and Lebanon, where Iran has powerful allies among Shiite government factions. "The enemy wants to disrupt the legal framework. When in a country there is no legal framework and a vacuum is created, no positive action can be taken," he added.

The Americans and Western intelligence services "backed by the money of some reactionary countries in the region are causing turmoil... to destroy security", he said. "I seize this opportunity to tell those who care about Iraq and Lebanon to remedy insecurity as their priority," Khamenei said, without elaborating. "The biggest damage that enemies can inflict on a country is to deprive that country of security."

In an apparent warning, Khamenei praised Iran's crackdown against street protests at home in 2018. "They (US and Saudi Arabia) had similar plans for our dear country, but fortunately the people... came out in time and the armed forces were ready and that plot was neutralized," Khamenei said, in a reference to the protests which were put down by security forces while authorities held pro-government rallies.

Iran's weeks-long unrest in 2017-2018 began as protests about economic hardship and corruption but grew into political rallies, some of which criticized Khamenei by name. They were the boldest challenge to Iran's leadership since 2009, when security forces crushed a pro-reform uprising and killed dozens of protesters.

"Our advice has always been to call for peace and (stopping) interference by foreign forces in these countries (Iraq and Lebanon)," President Hassan Rouhani's chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi was quoted as saying earlier by state media. The United States, Saudi Arabia and Israel were riding a wave of popular demands and providing those forces with financial support, he added. — Agencies

US House recognizes...

Continued from Page 1

"This step which was taken is worthless and we do not recognize it," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in a televised speech. "A country whose history is full of the stain of genocide and slavery neither has the right to say anything nor to lecture Turkey," he said. Ties between Washington and NATO member Turkey have been strained by Ankara's offensive against Kurdish fighters in northern Syria, which came after US forces withdrew from the area.

The House also passed a measure on Tuesday imposing sanctions on senior Turkish officials involved in the Syria offensive. The international recognition of the killings as genocide has long been the top priority of Armenia's foreign policy, supported by vigorous campaigning by Armenian diasporas around the world.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan hailed the House move, tweeting that it was a "bold step towards serving truth and historical justice that also offers comfort to millions of descendants of the Armenian Genocide survivors." The Armenian foreign ministry said the resolution was of "profound significance" and thanked US lawmakers for "their overwhelming commitment to truth, justice, humanity and solidarity, and to universal values of human rights."

The sentiment was shared by Armenians on the streets of the capital Yerevan. "I am so happy that the US has

finally recognised the Armenian genocide," said 69-year-old cobbler Koryun Hakobyan. "Other countries will now follow suit." The hilltop genocide memorial that dominates Yerevan's skyline draws hundreds of thousands on April 24 each year to mark the anniversary of the start of the tragedy.

In April 2015, on the centenary of the killings, the Armenian Church conferred sainthood on victims of the massacres. Kim Kardashian, the US reality star who is a prominent member of the Armenian diaspora and visited Yerevan for the 2015 anniversary, hailed the Washington vote on social media. "WOW LOOK AT THESE INCREDIBLE NUMBERS!!! THE U.S. JUST RECOGNIZED THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE!!!!" she wrote in a Tweet to her 62 million followers.

Turkey's foreign ministry suggested the House measure was the result of domestic politics in the United States, where people of Armenian origin number between 500,000 and 1.5 million. "Its sole addressees are the Armenian lobby and anti-Turkey groups," the ministry said. In 2017, newly inaugurated US President Donald Trump criticized the killings as "one of the worst mass atrocities of the 20th century", but in keeping with longstanding US practice he stopped short of using the word genocide.

Before being elected in 2008, Trump's predecessor Barack Obama had pledged to recognize the killings as genocide, but ultimately did not do so during his two terms in office. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Tuesday that the truth of the "staggering crime" had been denied too often. "Today, let us clearly state the facts on the floor of this House to be etched forever into the Congressional Record: The barbarism committed against the Armenian people was a genocide." — AFP

Kuwait, US, Gulf sanction Hezbollah...

Continued from Page 1

"The TIFTC's coordinated disruption of the financial networks used by the Iranian regime to fund terrorism is a powerful demonstration of Gulf unity," said US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in a statement. "This action demonstrates the unified position of the Gulf nations and the United States that Iran will not be allowed to escalate its malign activity in the region," said Mnuchin, who addressed a business forum in Riyadh yesterday.

Earlier this month, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) - the international body that sets standards on combating terrorist financing - said it had given Iran the final deadline of Feb 2020 to comply with international norms, after which it would urge members to apply counter-measures. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo yesterday welcomed the move by Paris-based FATF, saying in a statement that the Revolutionary Guard "continues to engage in large-scale, illicit, financing schemes to fund its malign activities".

In a related development, Iran's supreme leader yesterday accused the United States and Saudi Arabia of stoking unrest in Lebanon and Iraq, saying Tehran understood the situation in those countries because it had had to suppress similar foreign interference at home. "The US and Western intelligence services, with the financial backing of reactionary countries in the region, are spreading turmoil," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was quoted by his official website as telling graduating army cadets.

WhatsApp sues Israeli firm over...

Continued from Page 1

their tracks were not entirely successful," Cathcart said in an opinion piece published in the Washington Post, noting that the investigation found internet-hosting services and accounts associated with NSO. The suit calls on court to order NSO Group to stop any such attacks and asks for unspecified damages.

WhatsApp in May called on users to upgrade the application to plug a security hole that allowed for the injection of sophisticated malware that could be used for spying at the messaging app used by 1.5 billion people around the world. The malicious code was transmitted through WhatsApp servers from about April 29 to May 10, targeting devices of attorneys, journalists, human rights activists, political dissidents, diplomats, and other senior foreign government officials, according to the complaint.

"A user would receive what appeared to be a video call, but this was not a normal call," Cathcart said of the

cyberattack. "After the phone rang, the attacker secretly transmitted malicious code in an effort to infect the victim's phone with spyware. The person did not even have to answer the call."

The NSO Group came to prominence in 2016 when researchers accused it of helping spy on an activist in the United Arab Emirates. Its best-known product is Pegasus, a highly invasive tool that can reportedly switch on a target's phone camera and microphone, and access data on it. The firm has been adamant that it only licenses its software to governments for "fighting crime and terror" and that it investigates credible allegations of misuse, but activists argue the technology has been instead used for human rights abuses.

Danna Ingleton of Amnesty International said the results of the WhatsApp investigation "underscore that NSO Group continues to profit from its spyware products being used to intimidate, track, and punish scores of human rights defenders across the globe, including the Kingdom of Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Mexico". Ingleton said Amnesty and other groups are seeking in the Israeli courts to block NSO for exporting the technology. "WhatsApp deserves credit for their tough stance against these malicious attacks, including their efforts to hold NSO to account in the courts," she said. — AFP

Sports

Visiting Hawks lose point guard Young, then lose to Miami Heat

Mavericks lean on bench late, edge Nuggets

MIAMI: In a game marred by an injury to star Atlanta point guard Trae Young, the Miami Heat and Jimmy Butler defeated the visiting Hawks 112-97 on Tuesday night. Atlanta's John Collins led all scorers with 30 points. Miami rookie Tyler Herro had 19 of his 29 points in the second quarter, and Butler — making his Heat debut — added 21 points. Goran Dragic also had 21 points for Miami. Young, who entered the game ranked second in the NBA in scoring (34 points per game) and tied for fifth in assists (9.0), injured his right ankle with 9:57 left in the second quarter and did not return. Shortly after the injury, the Hawks announced Young sustained a sprained right ankle and would not return to the game. ESPN reported that X-rays taken immediately after Young left the court were negative and that the team is optimistic the injury is not serious.

According to the report, Young will undergo an MRI exam soon.

LAKERS 120, GRIZZLIES 91

Anthony Davis scored 40 points and grabbed 20 rebounds in 31 minutes, and host Los Angeles used a third-quarter burst to roll past Memphis for its third straight win. Davis set a franchise record for free throws made by hitting 26 of 27 attempts, converting 18 in the third quarter to spark a 22-0 run that allowed the Lakers to blow away the Grizzlies. Memphis failed to score in the final 5:47 of the third. Davis, who was 7 of 17 from the floor, played despite a sore shoulder he hurt in a Sunday win over the Charlotte Hornets. He exhibited discomfort throughout the game but played through it. LeBron James had 23 points and eight assists for the



MIAMI: Tyler Herro #14 of the Miami Heat shoots the ball against the Atlanta Hawks at American Airlines Arena in Miami, Florida. — AFP

NBA results/standings

Eastern Conference				Western Conference			
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division			
	W	L	PCT		W	L	PCT
Philadelphia	3	0	1.000	Minnesota	3	0	1.000
Toronto	3	1	.750	Utah	3	1	.750
Boston	2	1	.667	Denver	3	1	.750
Brooklyn	1	2	.333	Portland	2	2	.500
New York	1	3	.250	Oklahoma City	1	3	.250
Central Division				Pacific Division			
Milwaukee	2	1	.667	LA Clippers	3	1	.750
Detroit	2	2	.500	LA Lakers	3	1	.750
Cleveland	1	2	.333	Phoenix	2	2	.500
Chicago	1	3	.250	Golden State	1	2	.333
Indiana	0	3	.000	Sacramento	0	4	.000
Southeast Division				Southwest Division			
Miami	3	1	.750	San Antonio	3	0	1.000
Atlanta	2	2	.500	Dallas	3	1	.750
Orlando	1	2	.333	Houston	2	1	.667
Washington	1	2	.333	Memphis	1	3	.250
Charlotte	1	3	.250	New Orleans	0	4	.000

Lakers. Rookie point guard Ja Morant scored 16 points and Jonas Valanciunas had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Grizzlies.

MAVERICKS 109, NUGGETS 106

Tim Hardaway Jr. and Maxi Kleber scored 14 points apiece off the bench. Kristaps Porzingis had 10 points and 14 rebounds, and visiting Dallas beat Denver. Luka Donic

was held to 12 points but nine Mavericks players scored in double figures in handing the Nuggets their first loss of the season. Paul Millsap had 23 points and eight rebounds, Will Barton had 19 points and 11 boards, and Nikola Jokic had 10 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for Denver. Jamal Murray and Gary Harris had 16 points each for the Nuggets, who lost the lead two minutes into the fourth quarter and never recovered. — Reuters

13th Kuwait Open Bowling for men, women begins today

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Bowling Center will be the venue today for the launch of the 13th Kuwait Open Bowling for men and women, which is the last round in the international league this year. The competition will see an elite group of world champions, professionals and internationally ranked players from various countries.

The number of players who confirmed their participation so far is more than hundred, to compete for top place in 2019, with a total prizes of \$218,000,

\$50,000 of which is for top place.

The open contests of three categories men, women and juniors which is for Kuwaitis only.

It is known that the international league which allows professionals and amateurs to participate, has world championships and open tournaments and trophies, and has very good international reputation, and prizes must not be less than \$200,000. The league this year has 13 competitions around the world, three of which are for women only, and most of them are organized in the United States, the strongest country in the world in addition to the Amir of Qatar Cup, Lucky Larson Masters in Sweden, Kuwait and Thailand Open.

The international league is held with joint supervision since 2011, between professional bowlers association and the international bowling federation headed by Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad.

The Americans currently dominate the men's and women's international league, with Jacob Butturff tops the men



standings with 1,240 points, followed by A.J. Johnson with 1,088 points and Kyle Sherman with 1,076.

The women's list is headed by

Danielle McEwan with 2192 points followed by Liz Johson with 2,084 and Indonesia's Tannya Roumimper with 1,720.

Sulaibikhat Sports Club wins Liberation Boxing Championship for juniors

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Sulaibikhat Sports Club won first place in the Liberation Boxing Championship for juniors, as it got five gold and one bronze medals, while Jahra boxers took second place with one gold and four silver. Qurain and Fahaeel clubs won one gold, two silver and three bronze landing them in third place. The championship saw 63 boxers distributed over 10 various categories. The championship closing ceremony was attended by Chairman of Kuwait Boxing Federation Mohammad Mansi and several board members.

Mohammad Mansi appreciated the participation of 11 clubs in the first championship of the season and said "we have seen strong competitions in various categories during the championship which confirms the interest of all clubs", and "this makes us optimistic towards a bright future of the game in the few coming years".

He said the return of Jahra club to boxing and get-



KUWAIT: Chairman of Boxing Federation Mohammad Mansi and Chairman of Jahra Club Nawaf Judayed with Sulaibikhat boxers.

ting second place will give the game an important push at all levels.

He said the championship was good as far as the

technical level and physical preparation of most players, and he appreciated the efforts that brought several talents in boxing.

NBK sponsors Battle Fitness Festival

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is the main sponsor of Battle Fitness Festival Fitness Festival, for the second year. The festival takes place on the 1st and the 2nd of November at the Green Island-Gulf road. This year, NBK partnered with Omniya Project management to provide recycling containers to collect plastic during the two days event. All visitors are requested to be part of this awareness initiative and encourage recycling in Kuwait.

The sponsorship of the Battle Fitness Festival comes in line with NBK's commitment to support youths' health. This sponsorship aims to spread physical awareness and attract youth to participate in sporting events.

Talal Al-Turki, NBK Public Relations Manager, said: "NBK's sponsorship to this sports event comes in line with the bank's customary and ongoing spirit of corporate citizenship as well as the vital role it plays in supporting youth and their health. NBK always strives to empower youth to realize their potentials, providing different supportive opportunities". "NBK will be having an interactive booth to engage with the visitors through the competitions and activities organized and announced on the banks social media

channels", Al-Turki added. "The purpose of this event is to increase fitness awareness for all Kuwait citizens. This event sheds light on the potential of youth in regards to fitness and sport awareness".

The Battle Fitness Festival Fitness Festival will include sports challenges that are expected to attract more than 2,000 spectators as well as more than 2,500 athletes from around the world. The competitions in this festival comprised a range of physical challenges that depend on the strength, flexibility and endurance. All of which contribute to raise the spirit of positive competition among student circles. NBK has always considered supporting youth an essential part of its social and philanthropic outreach which comes in line with the bank's commitment to encourage



Talal Al-Turki

a merit-based system in health, education and environment that promotes the best and the brightest the country has to offer.

Defiant governor says Olympic marathon should stay in Tokyo

TOKYO: Tokyo's governor insisted yesterday she still wants to see the Olympic marathon held in the capital next year, despite plans to move the event to northern Japan over heat concerns. The location of the marathon and race-walking events in next year's 2020 Summer Games has become a major sticking point between Tokyo officials and the International Olympics Committee (IOC).

The body said earlier this month it would propose shifting the events to Sapporo in northern Japan after disastrous scenes at the Doha world championships where dozens of athletes needed medical attention in hot and humid conditions.

Last week, the chair of the IOC's coordination commission John Coates, made clear the decision to move the events was final, but Tokyo officials have not backed down. "Let me clearly speak as the leader of the host city and the representative of the people of Tokyo, it is my wish for marathon and race walk to be held in Tokyo," Governor Yuriko Koike said at the start of a three-day meeting between IOC officials, Tokyo government and 2020 organisers.

Koike noted IOC chief Thomas Bach after an IOC executive meeting on October 3 said he had never seen a host city so well prepared. The plan to move the events came two weeks later and was a "tremendous shock" to Tokyo, she said. "This proposal was made with no explanation at all to the Tokyo government or the Tokyo metropolitan assembly until the last moment." She said angry local residents had called the local government asking about the decision.

PUBLIC ANGER

There have been reports suggesting Tokyo wants to see the events start at 5am, or even earlier, as a way to keep them in the city. But Coates again yesterday described the move as a done deal.

"This was a decision that was taken quickly. It was a decision that was taken as consequences of what we saw in Doha," he said. Coates said he was in Tokyo "to explain to her (Koike) the reasons, the detailed reasons for those changes." "We absolutely recognise and we are so very thankful to the people of Tokyo," he added. Speaking to reporters afterwards Koike said "mutual trust" was indispensable for a successful Games, and said there were "no plans to spend Tokyo taxpayer money for another venue".

Part of the anger over the decision appears to stem from the IOC's abrupt announcement, which came without prior consultation with either Tokyo or Sapporo officials. The marathon is generally considered one of the key events of the Olympics, with its route carefully designed to show off landmarks in the host city. It is also one of the few opportunities for ordinary citizens to see an Olympic event for free, and is seen as an important way to drive engagement with the Games.

The proposed move has thrown up various questions, including who will bear the additional costs of the decision. Koike's party Tomin First, the biggest force in the Tokyo Assembly, estimates the venue move will cost an extra 34 billion yen (\$315 million), including expenses to build temporary facilities and lay mass-media transmission lines. Local media has said Tokyo organisers plan to demand the IOC shoulder those extra expenses. — AFP

Sports

Warner and Smith on fire as Australia thump Sri Lanka

Wrap up the series with second Twenty20 win in Brisbane

BRISBANE: David Warner and Steve Smith each smashed half-centuries as Australia hammered Sri Lanka by nine wickets to win the second Twenty20 in Brisbane yesterday and wrap up the series.

It was another massive wake-up call for the Sri Lankans, who arrived in Australia on the back of a 3-0 series win against Pakistan but have now been outplayed twice, after being crushed by 134 runs in Adelaide on Sunday. They must now regroup for the third and final match in Melbourne on Friday. Warner and Smith came together after Aaron Finch was caught down the leg side off Lasith Malinga for a golden duck, and the pair produced a batting masterclass. Warner was unbeaten on 60 and Smith not out 53.

Chasing 118 to win after Sri Lanka were restricted to 117 all out off 19 overs, they reached their target with 42 balls to spare. "The bowlers did a terrific job, we bowled in the right areas and created chances and restricted them to 117, which wasn't enough on this wicket," said Smith. "It's nice and easy batting at the other end from Davy," he added. "He's doing a terrific job. Played beautifully the other day and backed it up tonight as well." Warner scored his first-ever T20 century when Australia crushed Sri Lanka on Sunday, and he brought that scintillating form into Brisbane. In his first knock in the short format at international level since 2016, Smith was also firing — producing some glorious drives and clever singles as he and Warner raced each other to see who could make 50 first. The explosive Warner won the battle, with his 14th T20 half-century coming off 30 balls, with seven fours. Smith soon followed, grabbing his third 50, off 32 balls, with six boundaries. There was nothing the Sri Lankan bowlers could do against such quality batsmen, who were never troubled.

MORE RESPONSIBLE

"It's a tough side and I think with this kind of batting line-up our score wasn't enough," said Sri Lanka skipper Malinga. "We didn't get the score we expected and the batsmen will have to be more responsible. Shot selection is not that great and we didn't get any partnerships in the middle overs." Two wickets from the towering Billy Stanlake, in for Mitchell Starc who was attending his



BRISBANE: Australia's David Warner (L) runs between the wickets next to Kusal Perera of Sri Lanka during the Twenty20 match between Australia and Sri Lanka at the Gabba in Brisbane yesterday. — AFP

brother's wedding, and a brace each for Ashton Agar, Adam Zampa and Pat Cummins kept Sri Lanka in check after they won the toss and batted.

Australia got an early breakthrough in the second over when Kusal Mendis was run out after a mix-up with Danushka Gunathilaka, who called for a run after hitting the ball then didn't move. He attempted to make amends by opening his bat, clubbing a huge six off Stanlake, before his luck ran out and he was clean-bowled by the lanky paceman for 21. Spinner Agar then enticed rising star

Avishka Fernando into a big hit when on 17 and he skied it straight to Cummins, who took a difficult catch. When Niroshan Dickwella fell to Cummins for five, Sri Lanka began to crumble. Kusal Perera chopped onto his stumps on 27 and Dasun Shanaka went for just one, feathering a catch to wicketkeeper Alex Carey off Stanlake. It left them in deep trouble at 75 for six after 11.2 overs and the wickets kept tumbling as Australia tightened the screws. After Sri Lanka in Melbourne, Australia face Pakistan in three T20s in Sydney, Canberra and Perth. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Full scoreboard in the second Twenty20 international between Australia and Sri Lanka in Brisbane yesterday:

Sri Lanka	
D. Gunathilaka b Stanlake	21
K. Mendis run out (Agar)	1
A. Fernando c Cummins b Agar	17
K. Perera b Agar	27
N. Dickwella c Turner b Cummins	5
D. Shanaka c Carey b Stanlake	1
W. Hasaranga st Carey b Zampa	10
I. Udana c Richardson b Cummins	10
L. Sandakan run out (Cummins)	10
L. Malinga st Carey b Zampa	9
N. Pradeep not out	2
Extras (lb1, w3)	4
Total (all out, 19 overs)	117
Fall of wickets: 5-1 (Mendis), 2-29 (Gunathilaka), 3-53 (Fernando), 4-65 (Dickwella), 5-75 (Perera), 6-75 (Shanaka), 7-93 (Hasaranga), 8-98 (Udana), 9-109 (Malinga), 10-117 (Sandakan)	
Bowling: Stanlake 4-0-23-2, Richardson 3-0-17-0, Cummins 4-0-29-2, Zampa 4-0-20-2, Agar 4-0-27-2.	

Australia	
A. Finch c Perera b Malinga	0
D. Warner not out	60
S. Smith not out	53
Extras (lb2, w3)	5
Total (one wicket, 13 overs)	118
Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Finch)	
Did not bat: G. Maxwell, A. Turner, A. Carey, A. Agar, P. Cummins, M. Starc, K. Richardson, A. Zampa	
Bowling: Malinga 3-0-23-1, Pradeep 3-0-26-0, Sandakan 4-0-33-0, Hasaranga 1-0-18-0, Udana 2-0-16-0.	

Result: Australia won by nine wickets

NBK Annual Walkathon

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced the launch of its 25th Annual Walkathon titled "One Step Can Change Your Life" on the 7th December 2019.

Participants can register for this event starting from Friday 1st of November, online, through NBKWalkathon.com. NBK will be giving away two new Renault cars from Al Babtani Group as the grand prizes during the Walkathon along with many other valuable prizes. Referees assigned by the Kuwait Amateur Athletic Federation (KAAF) will be present to arbitrate the race. The first ten winners from each of the ten categories will be rewarded with valuable cash prizes.



Manal Al Mattar

"As part of the bank's dedication to corporate social responsibility, NBK regularly supports events which encourage healthier lifestyle for members of the community", said Manal Al Mattar, NBK Public Relations Assistant General Manager. "NBK's annual walkathon event is a major component of the bank's corporate social responsibility program. Over the years, it has garnered huge success and public recognition as being one of the much awaited and anticipated nationwide health and entertainment-related activity."

"NBK looks forward to welcoming participants and giving away many exciting prizes. The Walkathon event will host various functions, activities and competitions", she added. Ten winners will be selected from each category of participants. The walk for both the female and male participants will start from the Green Island on the Gulf Road to the Shuwaikh Beach Park, parallel to the Gulf Road, next to KPC building for a distance of 11 Km.

Also, NBK opened a racing category for participants aged 60 years old and above in addition to the special needs category to encourage a healthier lifestyle among all members of the society. NBK strongly supports sporting events and encourages sporting activities as means to promote a healthier and more active lifestyle for members of the community. Throughout the years, NBK also organized several social awareness programs including educational, environmental, health and many other active initiatives.

Aussie Keightley appointment as England women's cricket coach

LONDON: Former Australian international Lisa Keightley became the first woman to be appointed full-time coach of the England women's cricket team yesterday the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced.

The 48-year-old who played nine Tests and 85 One Day Internationals succeeds Mark Robinson and will take up her post in January. Keightley — who coached the England Women's Academy between 2011 and 2015 — takes over a team that like their male counterparts are world champions in the 50 over format. "I'm massively excited. It's a huge opportunity," said Keightley, who went on to win the World Cup as a player in her swansong season in 2005. "It's a team full of world-class players and to be given the chance to work with some of the players who I worked with a few years ago is really exciting."

"I can't wait to get started and see where we can get to. "England are the current 50-over world champions and they made it to the final of the last ICC Women's T20 World Cup. "They're a very competitive side and they wouldn't be in big matches like that if they didn't have a really strong group of players who can perform on the big stage."

Former Australian men's coach Darren Lehmann welcomed her appointment tweeting: "Great news" Keightley — who is presently coaching the Perth Scorchers in the Women's Big Bash in Australia — will step down from her role as head coach of Hundred franchise London Spirit.

Clare Connor, the ECB managing director of women's cricket, said Keightley had impressed the selection panel with her vision. "Lisa was the stand-out candidate from a varied and highly talented group of applicants," said Connor.

"The interview panel were unanimously impressed by Lisa's demonstration of her suitability for the role, her impressive knowledge of the game and her passion for coaching and developing players."

"She outlined clear plans as to how she believes she can take the team and this group of players forward. — AFP



CHIBA: File photo shows Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland checks a line at the 17th hole green during the final round of the PGA 2020 Championship golf tournament at the Narashino Country Club in Inzai, Chiba prefecture on October 28, 2019. — AFP

'Motivated' McIlroy headlines loaded WGC field in Shanghai

SHANGHAI: World number two Rory McIlroy said his strongest season in years has "motivated" him to recapture golf's top ranking, as he leads a field packed with Major winners into this week's WGC-HSBC Champions in Shanghai. Asia's biggest event tees off today without world number one Brooks Koepka, out with a knee strain, nor a rejuvenated Tiger Woods, who electrified golf with a record-tying 82nd PGA Tour win in Japan on Monday.

But an event dubbed "Asia's Major" still features plenty of star power including 15 past Major winners such as Justin Rose, Bubba Watson, Sergio Garcia, Phil Mickelson, Jordan Spieth, Patrick Reed, and Adam Scott.

But few are playing as well as McIlroy, the 2019 FedEx Cup champion and PGA Tour Player of the Year, who won the Tour Championship event in August and tied for third behind Woods at the Zozo Championship in Japan two days ago. The 30-year-old Northern Irishman's stellar season has propelled him up the world golf rankings, and although a victory in Shanghai won't push him past the absent Koepka, McIlroy said he's not finished.

"I want to get as many world ranking points as I possibly can and try to close that gap on No. 1," he said at Sheshan International Golf Club. "So you know, pretty motivated coming into the week." That motivation might

have been juiced by Koepka, who this month dismissed the notion of a burgeoning rivalry by pointing out that McIlroy hadn't won a Major in five years. McIlroy, who last sat on golf's pinnacle four years ago, subsequently played down the comments, saying that Koepka had a point, and that the two were "good friends".

McIlroy burst into golf's top ranks with four Majors before the age of 25, but a succession of younger stars eclipsed him. "But if I play well the next few weeks, you know, I'll have a great platform going into next year. I've achieved most things that I've wanted to this year," he said in Shanghai. "I'm happy with where everything is, and yeah, just want to finish the year off strongly because I feel the year that I've had deserves a finish like that." The \$10.25 million Shanghai event, with a winner's prize of \$1.7 million, is the third and final leg of the PGA Tour's Asian swing, after the Zozo Championship and the CJ Cup in South Korea the week before. In Japan, McIlroy led the field in par-five scoring, which should serve him well on the lengthy Sheshan course, widely considered one of the toughest on the Tour. Also in the mix in are a slew of past HSBC winners including Xander Schauffele, who beat current PGA Tour driving distance leader Tony Finau in an exciting playoff duel last year. Schauffele, however, arrived in Shanghai badly under the weather and expressed some doubts about much strength he would have.

Rose, Watson, Garcia, Francesco Molinari and Mickelson also have tasted success in Shanghai. Another to watch is 2016 winner Hideki Matsuyama, whose mojo is working after finishing second to Woods on home soil in Japan at the weekend and third in Korea the week before. — AFP

Protests in Bangladesh over captain Shakib's ban

DHAKA: Hundreds of supporters of Bangladesh's cricket captain Shakib Al Hasan protested yesterday after he was banned for two years by the sport's governing body for not declaring attempts to bribe him.

The ban on the 32-year-old superstar was announced Tuesday by the International Cricket Council (ICC), which suspended one year of the punishment after Shakib "accepted three charges of breaching the ICC Anti-Corruption Code".

Shakib made a public appeal for support after being banned, unleashing a flood of angry anti-ICC social media posts from his fans. Police said about 700 people took to the streets in Shakib's hometown of Magura, demanding the ICC revoke the ban which came on the eve of Bangladesh's departure for a tour of India. "The protesters shouted slogans and marched along a highway. They also formed a human chain as part of their action against the ICC decision," said Saiful Islam, police chief in the western town. Protesters carried placards saying that Shakib was the victim of a "conspiracy". Smaller protests were held in the capital Dhaka, police said. The Test and T20 captain accepted charges that he had failed to disclose details of approaches made over a tri-nation series between Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe in 2018 as well as the 2018 Indian Premier League (IPL).

Shakib will be eligible to return from October 29 next year but he is ruled out of the T20 World Cup in Australia which starts October 8.

"Those who have supported me over the years, I hope they, the fans, Bangladesh Cricket Board, the government, the journalists will continue to support me in my bad and good time," Shakib told reporters after the ban was announced.

"I am hopeful I will come back to cricket soon. I will be stronger and will perform my responsibilities with more sincerity," he said. Shakib, who has played 56 Tests, 206 ODIs and 76 Twenty20 internationals, is Bangladesh's biggest sporting hero and has regularly topped the ICC rankings for all-rounders since 2009.

At this year's World Cup in England, Shakib scored more than 600 runs and picked up 11 wickets. He also became the fastest cricketer to reach 5,000 runs and 250 wickets in one-day internationals.

After the ban, Shakib stepped down from the MCC World Cricket committee, which said it was "sorry" to lose him but supported his resignation, which was "the right decision". Bangladesh's new Twenty20 captain Mahmudullah said he had full sympathy for Shakib.

"We all are sad for him because we know how important a player he is for the team," Mahmudullah said before leaving for India for the tour. "Maybe he made a mistake. But he did not commit any crime. We still support Shakib. We will continue to love him the way we used to," he said.

Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan said Shakib's suspension was "shocking" as he was the team's centrepiece. "We have no substitute (for Shakib)... I was angry when I first heard about it and asked why he didn't inform me. We planned our India tour keeping Shakib in the team," Nazmul told reporters. Bangladesh will play two Tests and three T20 internationals in its Indian tour that starts November 3. — AFP

Sports

Bonino's hat trick carries Predators past Blackhawks

Hurricanes' Svechnikov scores both goals to beat Flames

NASHVILLE: Nick Bonino scored three goals for his third career hat trick, and the Nashville Predators pulled away for a 3-0 win over the visiting Chicago Blackhawks on Tuesday night. Pekka Rinne stopped all 20 shots he faced for his second consecutive shutout and the 57th of his career. Nashville improved its season-high winning streak to four games in a row.

The Blackhawks were blanked for the second time in three games. They allowed 51 shots but stayed within reach for the majority of the game because goaltender Robin Lehner made 48 saves, five off his career high. Rocco Grimaldi assisted on all three of Bonino's goals. Craig Smith had two assists, and Dante Fabbro had one.

DUCKS 7, JETS 4

Troy Terry and Derek Grant scored 1:10 apart to take control of what was a tie game as host Anaheim used a four-goal outburst in the second period to rally and take down Winnipeg. Ducks veterans Ryan Getzlaf and Adam Henrique also scored in the second period as Anaheim set a season high for goals scored. Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck was pulled from the game after Grant scored the Ducks' fourth goal of the second period. A total of five goals were scored by both teams in the second period with four of them coming in a chaotic 2:52 span. Nikolaj Ehlers scored a pair of goals for the Jets, who were coming off a victory over the Calgary Flames in the outdoor Heritage Classic but have now lost five times in their past seven games.

PENGUINS 7, FLYERS 1

Seven Pittsburgh players scored, and the Penguins rode a four-goal first period to a walloping of visiting Philadelphia. Dominik Kahun, Sidney Crosby and Dominik Simon each had a goal and two assists, and the Penguins also got goals from Justin Schultz, Jared McCann, Jake Guentzel and Zach Aston-Reese in winning their second straight game and seventh in their past 10. Pittsburgh goaltender Matt Murray, coming off a shutout, gave up one goal on 30 shots. Oskar Lindblom scored for the Flyers, who lost their second in a row.

HURRICANES 2, FLAMES 1

Andrei Svechnikov scored twice in the third period, including one on a surprising maneuver, as Carolina topped Calgary in Raleigh, N.C., to finish one of the

best Octobers in team history. Svechnikov's winning goal came on a power play with 7:25 remaining. It was his second straight two-goal game. The Hurricanes improved to 8-3-1 to match their most victories and points in October in franchise history. Svechnikov's first goal was unorthodox as he scooped the puck and held it on his stick from behind the net, taking a lacrosse-style shot and putting the puck past Calgary goalie David Rittich.

RED WINGS 3, OILERS 1

Jimmy Howard made 31 saves, and Detroit scored twice midway through the first period to defeat visiting Edmonton, snapping an eight-game losing streak. Dylan Larkin, Patrik Nemeth and Filip Hronek scored for Detroit, which had seven regulation defeats and one overtime loss during the skid. The Red Wings also won at Little Caesars Arena for the first time since their home opener. Leon Draisaitl scored his 10th goal of the season for the Oilers, while Mikko Koskinen stopped 25 shots.

CAPITALS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 3 (OT)

Alex Ovechkin scored his second goal of the game on a power play at 4:00 of overtime, and visiting Washington defeated Toronto. The Maple Leafs had killed off William Nylander's tripping penalty in overtime, but Mitch Marner took a high-sticking penalty. This time, Ovechkin, who also had two assists, fired home his 11th goal of the season from the left circle.

John Carlson also scored twice for the Capitals, and Nicklas Backstrom added two assists. Auston Matthews had two goals and an assist for the Maple Leafs. Andreas Johnsson also scored.

STARS 6, WILD 3

Alexander Radulov had a hat trick and an assist, and Tyler Seguin and Joe Pavelski each added a goal and two assists as host Dallas rallied from a 3-0 second-period deficit with six consecutive goals to defeat Minnesota. Roope Hintz also scored a goal while Miro Heiskanen added two assists for Dallas, which won for the fourth time in five games. Anton Khudobin, taking over for Ben Bishop after the first period, finished with 11 saves for the Stars. Bishop stopped eight of the 10 shots he faced before Dallas coach Jim Montgomery pulled him. Eric Staal had a goal and an assist while

He has needed time, admitting earlier this month he was still short of sharpness even as goals flew in against Sevilla, Eibar and Slavia Prague. But this display sent a resounding message that Messi is back to his best even if Valverde feels there is more to come.

"He is still getting back to full fitness," Valverde said. "But he is getting better and better." Valladolid were perhaps unfortunate the 32-year-old was fresh after the postponed Clasico on Saturday meant Barcelona and Real Madrid were given the weekend off.

It meant this was the first game at Camp Nou since violent protests broke out across Catalonia after nine pro-independence leaders were sentenced to imprisonment on October 21. Giant yellow banners with 'Independencia' and 'Llibertat' written across them were unfurled before kick-off but there was no sign of unrest. Instead, the mood turned celebratory as Messi got to work.

It was his free-kick that Valladolid made a mess of clearing, as Sergi Guardiola lashed the ball against Joaquin Fernandez and Lenglet reacted fastest, his shot deflecting in before two minutes were on the clock.

The procession was briefly halted when Ter Stegen, perhaps unsighted, slapped a cross straight into the shin of Olivas but the remaining 30 minutes of the first half belonged to Messi. He switched the ball for Frenkie de Jong to slightly overhit a pass for Arturo Vidal and then replicated the Dutchman's effort but did it better, this time picking out Vidal perfectly to score at the back post.

Five minutes later he sent a free-kick curling away from Jordi Masip, who scuttled across his line but could never reach the ball as it nestled in the top right-hand corner. Messi flicked one through the legs of Oscar Plano, who threw his head back and for a moment stopped dead in frustration. Then it was Guardiola's turn, only this time the nutmeg doubled up as a pass. After half-time, Ansu Fati,

made me work harder and prepare better for big games," he added. "Mako, I have scrimmed quite a lot against him in training... It is a bit different, it's not a training field, it's a big Test so I'm quite excited about that."

England dethroned reigning world champions New Zealand with a stunning 19-7 semi-final win, whereas the Springboks ground out a 19-16 victory over Wales in their last-four clash. "We have played them (England) four times in the last 18 months and it is a draw," said South Africa forwards coach Matt Proudfoot.

"They were very efficient and very powerful against New Zealand, the trend-setters. We need to match that intensity. It wasn't just brute force, there was very intelligent play from their pack," he added.

"Up front I think they're a lot more confident in what they're doing. In terms of their efficiency of execution, it's a lot better. For myself, I am very pleased with our pack's performance." Proudfoot, however, summed up the scale of South Africa's task by saying of England's win over the All Blacks: "It was a great game to watch. Gaea, it was a great game." Victory in Yokohama



YOKOHAMA: File photo taken on October 27, 2019, shows South Africa's head coach Rassie Erasmus talks to his players before the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup semi-final match between Wales and South Africa at the International Stadium Yokohama in Yokohama. — AFP

on Saturday would mean South Africa had won the World Cup for the third time after their 1995 triumph on home soil and a win over England in the 2007 final in Paris.

"I think South Africa as a country has got a lot of challenges," said Proudfoot. "We are resilient people. What 1995 meant created a new opportunity for people in

South Africa." Springbok lock Lood de Jager agreed before sounding a warning note. "1995 had a massive impact and I think it will (winning the World Cup) have a massive impact," said the towering second row. "But we can't get caught up in that, we've got 80 minutes against a world-class team coming up." — AFP



ANAHEIM: Rickard Rakell #67 of the Anaheim Ducks controls the puck in front of Connor Hellebuyck #37 of the Winnipeg Jets during the first period of a game at Honda Center in Anaheim, California. — AFP

Jason Zucker and Ryan Suter also scored for Minnesota. Alex Stalock finished with 31 saves.

BRUINS 5, SHARKS 1

Boston scored two first-period power-play goals against the league's top penalty-killing unit and never looked back, dominating visiting San Jose. David Pastrnak and David Krejci scored on the man advantage, and Charlie Coyle, Chris Wagner and Brandon Carlo added even-strength tallies as the Bruins won their fourth straight. Pastrnak extended his points streak to 10 games (12 goals, 12 assists), and Brad Marchand had an assist to increase his run to 11 straight (seven goals, 14 assists). Krejci also had an assist in his first game off the injured list. Brent Burns scored a goal, and Martin Jones made 36 saves for the Sharks, who are on a 1-4-1 skid. Entering the contest, San Jose had

killed 93.2 percent of its short-handed situations. Boston's power play was No. 2 in the league, scoring on 32.4 percent of its chances.

RANGERS 4, LIGHTNING 1

Filip Chytil and Adam Fox scored within a five-minute span late in the third period — Fox's goal being the first of his career — as host New York earned a much-needed victory over Tampa Bay. Kaapo Kakko scored on the power play in the second period and Ryan Strome added an empty-netter with 45.2 seconds left in the third for the Rangers, who won for just the second time in the past eight games (2-5-1). Goalie Alexandar Georgiev made 29 saves. Nikita Kucherov scored in the first for the Lightning, who have lost two straight and three of four (1-2-1). Andrei Vasilevskiy recorded 38 saves. — Reuters

Messi fit and firing in Barca demolition of Valladolid

MADRID: Lionel Messi made it clear he is fit and back to his scintillating best by tearing apart Real Valladolid on Tuesday in a thumping 5-1 victory for Barcelona. Messi scored another spell-binding free-kick at Camp Nou after his sumptuous pass had already teed up Arturo Vidal for Barca's second. He then drove home his second late on before sliding through Luis Suarez to make it five.

Yet in truth his two goals and two assists were just the start of it, the defining moments of another mesmerizing all-round performance that was dotted with flicks, passes and dribbles, not to mention two humiliating nutmegs.

"I don't know what more I can say," said Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde. "There were wonders coming out of his foot," said Valladolid's Michel. "You can only applaud and enjoy it." Valladolid had threatened to make a game of it when Kiko Olivas benefitted from a rare Marc-Andre ter Stegen error to equalise, after Clement Lenglet had struck in the second minute.

But with Messi in this sort of mood, the result never felt in doubt as victory sent Barcelona back to the top of La Liga, after Atletico Madrid were held to a 1-1 draw by Alaves a couple of hours before.

Valverde's side have now won seven consecutive matches in all competitions, a run that began by beating Villarreal on September 24, when Messi returned from injury to make his first start of the season.

Saracens' Koch, Vunipola scrum face-to-face in World Cup final

TOKYO: South Africa prop Vincent Koch is relishing the prospect of facing Saracens team-mate Mako Vunipola when the Springboks play England in the World Cup final on Saturday.

English and European champions Saracens have supplied several key England players including captain Owen Farrell, powerhouse lock Maro Itoje and number eight Billy Vunipola. Saracens are also the club behind two-thirds of England's likely starting front row in hooker Jamie George and loosehead prop Mako Vunipola, Billy's brother.

But they have also played a pivotal role in the development of Springbok front-rower Koch, who has been making a huge impact off the bench at this World Cup as part of South Africa coach Rassie Erasmus's tactical plan to ensure the team maintains the scrum dominance that is key to their game-plan. "Moving to Saracens was quite a big decision for me," the 29-year-old Koch told reporters at South Africa's hotel in Tokyo yesterday. "As a player I have grown quite a lot. They have worked on me to try and make the perfect player."

"Over the last three years they have

Youth flying high at Chelsea under Lampard

LONDON: Frank Lampard's strategy of rewarding youth and discarding Chelsea's pattern of loaning them out has paid dividends and cheered disgruntled fans, says rising midfielder star Mason Mount. Mount, 20, and 21-year-old Fikayo Tomori had the good fortune to play under Lampard at Derby County where they were loaned out last season by Chelsea's then-manger Maurizio Sarri.

Both of them have now become regulars in the Chelsea line-up this term as Lampard — who was hired when Sarri left to take over at Juventus — has unearthed a rich seam of young talent with striker Tammy Abraham and Callum Hudson-Odoi among them. Sarri was criticised by Chelsea fans for overlooking home-grown talent such as Ruben Loftus-Cheek — who had sparkled for England at the 2018 World Cup — and Hudson-Odoi a chance. Mount — who has now won four England caps — told The Daily Telegraph Chelsea playing legend Lampard's knowledge of the club and its youth system had been a bonus for the young players.

"It does help having an English manager knowing all the young English players coming through the academy, knowing what we are about and having that confidence in us to perform," said Mount.

Chelsea's form has improved markedly since their opening day 4-0 humbling by Manchester United and are on a seven match winning run. Mount says this justifies not only Lampard's selection policy — he has told the young players that it is not down to the transfer ban imposed on the club — but also the fans desire to see young English talent on display. "It was such a big moment for the manager coming back," he said. "We can feel that goodwill from the fans, 100 per cent. "It's something they've been calling for a long time, young English players coming through and doing well for the club. "We can feel it on the pitch and we want to give that extra yard for the fans." Tomori, who like Mount was a member of the Chelsea side that won the 2016 FA Youth Cup, has taken longer than Mount to become a first team regular this season.

"I was basically seeing my friends playing for Chelsea and I was close so it spurred me on to keep working hard every day and keep training well," said the Canada-born defender. "We all talk to each other and on the Champions League nights, we are like 'wow, we are playing in the Champions League'."

"Stuff like that keeps us motivated and it means when the game comes we want to play well and win. At the moment it's working for us." Mount, who persisted at Chelsea despite his father's advice to leave, became the first academy graduate from the London club since John Terry to claim a regular first team spot. He said that having so many young players brought another quality to the team. "Having all the players around and the fact we are doing it together, we probably are feeding off each other and it's giving us that fearlessness going into games," said Mount.

"There is pressure playing for a massive club and you've got stuff to prove, but I think coming through with a lot of similar faces who you have known growing up, it does help a lot." — AFP

25 Visiting Hawks lose point guard Young, then lose to Miami Heat

26 Warner and Smith on fire as Australia thump S Lanka

27 Saracens' Koch, Vunipola scrum face-to-face in World Cup final



Astros one win away from title

One-game winner-take all showdown for 115th World Series championship



HOUSTON: Adam Eaton #2 of the Washington Nationals is hit by the pitch against the Houston Astros during the ninth inning in Game Six of the 2019 World Series at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas. — AFP

HOUSTON: Stephen Strasburg baffled Houston's batters and Anthony Rendon drove in five runs to power the Washington Nationals over the Astros 7-2 Tuesday, forcing a one-game winner-take all showdown for the 115th World Series championship.

Washington pulled level at 3-3 in Major League Baseball's best-of-seven final, setting up a seventh game today to decide the title.

Strasburg allowed two runs on five hits over 8 1/3 masterful innings while walking two and striking out seven Houston batters, improving to 5-0 in the playoffs after an 18-6 season.

"Big pitchers do what he did," said Nationals manager Dave Martinez. "I told him, 'You were tremendous. You picked us up and because of you we're going to game seven'," added Martinez, who was ejected late on after a disputed call.

Washington's Juan Soto and Adam Eaton blasted solo home runs in the fifth inning and Houston native Rendon hit a two-run homer in the seventh and a two-run double in the ninth.

"Rendon stepped up big," Martinez said. That was enough run production for the Nationals thanks to Strasburg mystifying the Houston hitters who had produced 19 runs over the prior three games.

"I saw an incredible pitcher," Astros manager A.J. Hinch said. "He was really good. We didn't put a lot of stress on him." Strasburg had been tipping his pitches to Houston hitters in the first inning, when Alex Bregman homered off him, but Martinez solved the problem. "I said, 'You're tipping you're pitches. We need to fix it,'" Martinez said. "After that he was lights out." Strasburg began to wiggle his glove to throw the Astros off. "Started shaking my glove so they didn't know what I was throwing. Obviously, they look for certain things," Strasburg said. "It's something that has burned me in the past and they burned me there in the first. "It's just a part of the game. You've got to do your best to stay consistent in your delivery on each pitch." Martinez became the first World Series manager ejected since Atlanta's Bobby Cox in 1996, needing to be restrained from angrily confronting umpires after a

controversial call in the seventh inning.

"I'm not going to criticize the umpires about anything," Martinez said. "I don't really want to make this about me and take away from what the boys did. It was a judgement call. I don't want to make it about one play."

The Nationals, who improved to 4-0 in playoff elimination games this month, will start three-time Cy Young Award winner Max Scherzer in game seven after neck spasms kept him out of game five. Fellow right-hander Zack Greinke will start for Houston.

"We have a great opportunity to play a game seven in the World Series in our ballpark," Hinch said. But a World Series in which Houston was one of the heaviest favorites in years has turned into a historic epic, the first World Series with road teams winning the first six games.

"It's weird," Martinez said. "You can't explain it." The Astros will try for their second title in three seasons while the Nationals seek the first crown in their franchise's 50-year history. It would also be the first World

Series title for Washington since 1924.

Houston's Justin Verlander, who won a season-best 21 games, surrendered three runs on five hits to suffer the loss and remain winless in seven career World Series starts, the most of any pitcher without a win. His 0-6 record is the all-time worst World Series mark.

Washington clung to a 3-2 lead in the seventh when controversy struck. Nationals shortstop Trea Turner was called out for interference on first baseman Yuli Gurriel and the decision was upheld after a 4 1/2-minute video review. It would cost Washington a run when Rendon smashed a homer to left field.

After the inning, Martinez angrily moved toward the umpires, bench coach Chip Hale restraining him. But Martinez yelled until home plate umpire Sam Holbrook ejected him, leaving Hale to take the team to the finish.

Rendon's two-run homer put Washington ahead 5-2 and his two-run double in the ninth added more insurance runs.

Jose Altuve's 25-game streak of reaching base safely was ended by Strasburg's supreme effort. —AFP

Eto'o, best African footballer of all time eyes move into management

PARIS: Samuel Eto'o is convinced that he is the best African footballer of all time and is now targeting more success as a coach, the Cameroon great told AFP in an exclusive interview. The 38-year-old is pondering his next step after hanging up his boots in early September, bringing the curtain down on his playing days with a brief spell turning out for Qatar Sports Club.

"There comes a point where you have to look for other challenges. That is what I have chosen to do. I have had a wonderful career," Eto'o told AFP during a visit to Paris.

His career spanned more than 20 years in which he won 18 major trophies, including two Champions Leagues with Barcelona and another with Inter Milan. He also won the Africa Cup of Nations twice with Cameroon as well as Olympic gold in 2000.

One prize that did get away from him, however, was the Ballon d'Or. Liberia's George Weah, in 1995, remains the only African to have claimed that award, but that does not change Eto'o's belief that he is the best player to have come out of the continent.

"I don't need to lay claim to anything, it's just a fact. Whether you accept it or not, it's a fact," he said, as frank and outspoken as ever. "Everyone is entitled to their opinion. You know, as an African, you are always being judged. What is unacceptable is that the first people to do it are always the Africans. They can't take anything away from me because I am proud to be African."

"When I look at where I came from and how far I got, I tell myself that I am entitled to be proud. That doesn't mean I am big-headed, far from it. It is just that, in this world, people like puppets and I don't accept being one."

Eto'o also turned out for the likes of Real Madrid and Chelsea, but for all he won in the game, it is his first major title with his country that sticks out when asked for his fondest memory.

"I would say my first Africa Cup of Nations (in 2000), because it was my first AFCON, an unforgettable moment, and I had come away from the 1998 World Cup in France with the hope of making history," he said.

"I wasn't a starter in that magnificent team but in the end I worked my way into the side and contributed. It is a beautiful memory." Eto'o also went to four World Cups but never got beyond the group stage with the Indomitable

Lions. "I told myself that, eventually, with all the magnificent players I played alongside for Cameroon, we could have won the World Cup," he said.

"It wasn't to be. That is the only trophy I didn't manage to win but I had some unforgettable moments with that team." Part of a golden generation that featured Rigobert Song, the late Marc-Vivien Foe and Geremi, Eto'o believes he has left a legacy by helping bring through the next generation. Ajax goalkeeper Andre Onana is one player to have emerged from the Eto'o Foundation.

He has also been asked to do work for the Confederation of African Football, but he says it is only a matter of time before he returns to football in a more hands-on role. "I know my next challenge will be to win at least as much as a coach as I did as a player," he said.

"I would like to coach in Europe, and then one day return to Africa and win there. I don't know how to lose."

"I am lucky to have made history at different clubs. I have a lot more doors open to me than others, but you need to be prepared. "I want to learn, have all the qualifications, understand how things work either in my own businesses or in my future career, in order to come back in 12 or 24 months and start a new career, which I hope will be just as beautiful." But having won the Champions League playing for both Pep Guardiola and Jose Mourinho, whose style is he more likely to be replicate?

"I am a fan of Guardiola. I love football and I think it's important to win in style. —AFP



Samuel Eto'o