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Speaker says Amir to return soon; Assembly term begins on Oct 29

Defense minister vows impenetrable security • 5 MPs demand debate on situation



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets top military officials at Seif Palace yesterday. - KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is in good health and will return to the country from the United States following a period of recuperation. His Highness the Amir travelled to the US a few weeks ago for medical tests and is currently recuperating there before returning to Kuwait.

Ghanem, who visited the Amir in New York, said that it was agreed with Sheikh Sabah that the start of the new Assembly term will be on Oct 29, meaning His Highness the Amir will be back before that date. The Amir inaugurates every Assembly term by delivering a key speech that tackles political and economic affairs.

Meanwhile, five lawmakers yesterday submitted a motion demanding a general debate at the start of the next term to clarify the government's policy over the breaching of Kuwaiti airspace and the readiness of security and military services to deal with such intrusions. The motion, signed by MPs Riyadh Al-Adasani, Osama Al-Shaheen, Mohammad Al-Dallal, Abdullah Al-Kandari and Thamer Al-Suwait, was based on the highly explosive regional situation, especially after the devastating attacks on Saudi oil installations on Sept 14.

The lawmakers want to know the reasons for the intrusion,

which some MPs said included a drone and 16 cruise missiles, and the parties responsible for it with the aim to deal with it professionally and objectively. MPs also want to know the government's readiness to safeguard the security situation in the country. Kandari said a debate is necessary over these serious developments and the initial results of the investigation into how the intrusion happened and which country or side is behind it.

The motion coincided with a high-level meeting of the supreme defense council chaired by Acting Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and attended by top army commanders. The meeting at Seif Palace reviewed regional developments and precautionary measures taken, including raising the readiness level of part of the armed forces. The Kuwaiti military will do everything in its power to adopt stringent security measures to ensure the protection of the country's borders, Sheikh Nasser said. He urged media outlets to perform their duty at this critical time and called on the public not to pay heed to rumors.

Meanwhile, the Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee yesterday discussed in the presence of the finance minister amendments to the pensions law in a bid to make the legislation more beneficial for retired people. More meetings will be held to finalize the amendments.

MoE, MoH to sack hundreds of expatriates

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission urged the education and health ministries to report the names of expat employees they wish to terminate before the end of the year so that it could complete the needed procedures and replace them with Kuwaitis in the new fiscal year. In this regard, informed sources said statistics had shown that MoE and MoH have the largest numbers of expats, and that the former is expected to terminate 450 employees, while the latter is expected to terminate 300.

The sources said MoE has already started making its list including English, Computer and Literature teachers and administrative staff members, starting with the eldest. "The list will also include supervisors, namely in subjects where expats can be replaced by citizens," the sources stressed.

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Trump joins rally in Modi bromance

HOUSTON: Tens of thousands of Indian-Americans packed into a Houston stadium yesterday for a rally with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, joined by US President Donald Trump, in a rare mass show of support for a foreign leader on US soil. The event gives Modi, a nationalist facing international criticism over a recent crackdown in disputed Kashmir, a chance to energize his relationship with Indian-Americans who are active political supporters. Trump, meanwhile, faced a largely foreign-born audience that may not prove receptive to his typical strident anti-immigrant messages.

Jubilant supporters dressed in everything from ornate saris to simple dhotis and even a few cowboy hats waved American and Indian flags, chanted "Modi! Modi!" and munched on concession stand snacks that included Indian staples of samosas and naan breads - along with nachos. "His presence is an indication of his support and endorsement of the strengthening of India's relations with America," said Preeti Dawra, a spokeswoman for the Texas India Forum that organized the event. "This event is about strengthening those ties."

Members of India's religious minority Sikh and Muslim groups held noisy gatherings near the stadium to protest Modi's Kashmir policy. A Kashmiri-American group called a demonstration, saying that India has violated basic human rights and cut off contact with relatives.

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HOUSTON: US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attend the "Howdy, Modi!" rally at NRG Stadium yesterday. — AFP

Five-year period ending 2019 set to be hottest: UN

UNITED NATIONS: A damning new UN report published yesterday said the world is falling badly behind in the race to avert climate disaster as a result of runaway warming, with the five-year period ending 2019 set to be the hottest ever. It comes ahead of a major UN climate summit today that will be attended by more than 60 world leaders, as Secretary-General Antonio Guterres pushes for countries to increase their greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The report "highlights the urgent need for the devel-

opment of concrete actions that halt global warming and the worst effects of climate change," said its authors, the Science Advisory Group to the summit. Average global temperature between 2015-2019 is on track to be the hottest of any five-year period on record, according to the report, which was compiled by the World Meteorological Organization. The period "is currently estimated to be 1.1 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial (1850-1900) times and 0.2 degrees Celsius warmer than 2011-2015," it said.

The past four years were already the hottest since record-keeping began in 1850. Guterres said last week the world was "losing the race" on climate change, with the latest report spelling out the extent to which the gap between what is required and what is happening is widening. Rather than falling, carbon dioxide grew two percent in 2018, reaching a record high of 37 billion tonnes.

More importantly, there is also no sign yet of reaching what is known as "peak emissions," the point at which levels will start to fall, though these are not growing at the same rate as the global economy. The 2015 Paris Agreement saw countries lay out national targets to reduce their emissions in order to limit long term temperature rise by either 2 degrees Celsius or 1.5 degrees Celsius. These are benchmarks that will limit in important ways the impact of warming on world weather systems.

But even if all countries meet the goals they set themselves, the world will warm by 2.9 degrees Celsius to 3.4 degrees Celsius, the report found. The current levels of ambition would need to be tripled to meet the 2 degrees Celsius goal and increased five-fold to meet the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal - technically still possible.

"This reads like a credit card statement after a 5-year

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News in brief

Card skimming gang sentenced

KUWAIT: The court of cassation yesterday sentenced an international gang with members from Kuwait, UAE, Syria, Jordan and Egypt to 10 years in jail with labor and fined them KD 198,000 for the sums they had illegally withdrawn from some bank accounts and money laundering operations they had conducted using fake credit cards and special equipment they had imported for this purpose. — Meshaal Al-Enezi

Divorce proves costly

KUWAIT: Lawyer Fatima Al-Shatti said the family court ordered a Kuwaiti to pay his ex-wife KD 700 in monthly expenses, KD 600 in monthly rent, KD 1,200 to recruit two housemaids, KD 220 for the maids' monthly salaries, KD 10,000 to buy a car, KD 800 to recruit a driver and KD 120 for the driver's monthly salary. — Meshaal Al-Enezi

UAE to open synagogue

DUBAI: Construction on the United Arab Emirates' first official synagogue will begin next year and be completed by 2022, according to local media reports. The synagogue will be part of the multi-faith "Abrahamic Family House" complex in Abu Dhabi, which will also feature a mosque and church of which full construction will be completed in 2022. Abu Dhabi newspaper the National reported yesterday. — Reuters

Iran slams foreign forces for raising Gulf 'insecurity'

TEHRAN: President Hassan Rouhani yesterday denounced the presence of foreign forces in the Gulf and said Iran will put forward a peace plan, after arch-foe the United States ordered reinforcements to the tinderbox region. "Foreign forces can cause problems and insecurity for our people and for our region," Rouhani said before a massive military parade marking the Iran-Iraq war. Rouhani also said Iran would present a peace plan to the United Nations within days.

"In this sensitive and important historical moment, we announce to our neighbors that we extend the hand of friendship and brotherhood to them," he said. Rouhani and top military brass saluted as row after row of soldiers

marched past them in tight unison followed by an array of homegrown military hardware. The parade showcased tanks, armored vehicles, drones and missiles - including the Khorramshahr said to have a range of 2,000 km.

Tensions between Iran and the US and its allies have threatened to boil over since May last year when President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from a 2015 nuclear deal and later began reimposing sanctions. The tensions escalated in the wake of devastating September 14 attacks on Saudi oil installations that Washington and Riyadh have, to varying degrees, blamed on Tehran. Following the attacks, which caused global oil prices to spike, Trump

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TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and top military commanders attend the annual "Sacred Defense Week" military parade yesterday. — AFP

Local

Kuwait Amir congratulates Saudi King on national day

Sheikh Sabah commends 'noticeable development' in the kingdom

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah addressed a cable of congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on the 89th anniversary of the kingdom's national day. His Highness the Amir, in the cable, commended the noticeable development and civil accomplishments in the kingdom in various spheres, boosting further its aloft regional-international status. His Highness the Amir has affirmed that the Kuwaiti-Saudi relations have been deep-rooted and historic, wishing the monarch lasting wellbeing and the kingdom as well as the graceful Saudi people further prosperity and promotion under the sagacious leadership.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent an identical cable to the Saudi King. Furthermore, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah addressed a similar cable to King Salman, while Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem sent a cable congratulating Abdullah Al-Sheikh, President of Al-Shura Council of Saudi Arabia.

In the meantime, Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Saudi Arabia Deputy Prime Minister Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

Abdulaziz Al Saud marking the kingdom's 89th national day. In a statement, the Ministry of Defense said Sheikh Nasser expressed best wishes for the kingdom and prosperity under the wise leadership of the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — founded by the late King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud — marks today its 89th anniversary of establishment via celebrating its long history of achievements and progress. Saudi Arabia has pursued its prosperous march since establishment with

current King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud continuing the legacy of development on all possible domains. King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman were chiefly responsible for Vision 2030, a plan focused on utilizing the potential of the Saudi people, namely the youth, in bolstering the Kingdom's economic sector.

On international recognition on Saudi's economic ambition, the hosting of the G20 in November of 2020 is an indication that the world is paying attention to Saudi Arabia's strive to become a well-known

economic entity through diversifying output to include commodities other than oil. Saudi Arabia is best known for its strength in the oil sector with the Saudi Arabian Oil Company (ARAMCO) being a recognizable force in the international scene able to adapt to any situation or urgent matter. Politically, Saudi Arabia played an integral role — especially within the Arab and Islamic contexts — in protecting and preserving security in the region and also the world. Saudi Arabia's hosting of the GCC and Arab summits in the city of Makkah during the month of Ramadan this year is a great indication of the political importance the Kingdom plays and continues to carry out.

Within the social sphere, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud made it paramount to push Saudi women to the forefront of society during his reign, enabling them to hold senior positions, which were mostly dominated by men. Women in Saudi Arabia are now able to drive and own their vehicles and are given more social privileges than before all thanks to the wise decisions and decrees ushered by the current King. While Saudi Arabia is going forward within the social context, the Kingdom is acknowledged for its juggernaut effort carried out during the Umra and Hajj as well as its custodianship of the two holy mosques in Makkah and Madinah. Saudi Arabia spends a fathomable amount of money to host pilgrims from around the globe, an honor,

which Saudis continue to offer for years.

In education, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia put in great effort to educate its subjects with some six million students heading this year to schools and universities throughout Saudi Arabia to receive free education. The wellbeing of Saudi citizens is also a priority with some 2,393 primary health centers and 282 major hospitals — at a capacity of 43,000 beds — providing topnotch healthcare and treatment for the people. As for the mass transportation system, Saudi Arabia constructed 66,000 kilometers of main roads linking the kingdom's cities in addition to 10, 13, and 28 airports taking people to local, regional and international destinations respectively.

The Kingdom also set plans to excel in various fields whether it was in military manufacturing, tourism attractions, youth services and development, and so on. While Saudi Arabia as distinguish relations with neighbors and the world, Saudi-Kuwaiti relations in particular is exemplary in terms of brotherhood and mutual respect. The leaderships in both nations are keen on prosperity of their own respective people, the region, and the world and that is all due to the strong links between His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his brother King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, two leaders working for the betterment of their countries, their neighbors, and the international community. — KUNA

Sheikh Nawaf receives Speaker, senior officials

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. His Highness also received at Seif Palace Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Furthermore, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Interior Anas Khaled Al-Saleh. — KUNA



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



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Interior Anas Khaled Al-Saleh.



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Takashi Ashiki hosted a reception recently on the occasion of the Self-Defense Forces Day at his residence. Higher officials, diplomats, defense attachés and media persons attend the event. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Defense Minister meets Saudi Ambassador



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah discussed yesterday with Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Kuwait Sultan bin Saad Al Saud issues of mutual concerns. A state-

ment by the Defense Ministry said Sheikh Nasser hailed during the meeting at Seif Palace the bilateral relations between the two countries. The minister asserted on his keenness to bolster relations between the two sides. — KUNA



VIVA celebrates Saudi National Day

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, celebrated the 89th National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia along with its employees, to share the joy and emotions of the Saudi people in this precious national occasion.

The celebrations included a video production that features Kuwaiti youth delightfully singing the Saudi national

anthem from inside the highest tower in Kuwait, reflecting the high peaks of successes and collaborations between the two countries. The production also displayed photos and events representing the authenticity of the historical and fraternal relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait. VIVA extends its heartfelt and sincere tributes to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its kind people on this happy occasion.

Local

Amir authorizes Kuwait Parliament to hold session on Oct 29: Speaker

Ghanem visits Kazakhstan for Euro-Asian Conference

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem announced yesterday that he had obtained approval of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to open the next parliamentary session on October 29. The parliament speaker, in a statement to reporters at Abdullah Al-Salem Hall inside the National Assembly's building, affirmed that His Highness the Amir is well by Allah's will "and he is in the best condition as you have seen him."

“ Amir is in the best condition ”

"His Highness the Amir has asked me to relay his greetings to all Kuwaiti citizens and I have informed him about the Kuwaiti people greetings prayers (for him)," he added. All people "around His Highness have urged him to abstain from cutting short his vacation because he needs more rest," the parliament speaker said, adding that he would return home after recuperation, "safe and well by Allah's will." His Highness the Amir, who hosted Ghanem at his residence in the United States of America on

Friday, had asked the speaker to convey his greetings to all citizens in Kuwait.

In other news, Ghanem departed to Kazakhstan yesterday heading a parliamentary delegation to partake in the fourth meeting of the Speakers of Euro-Asian Countries' Parliaments, held from September 23-24. Ghanem is scheduled to address the Kuwaiti delegation to the meeting entitled, 'Greater Eurasia: Dialogue, Trust, Partnership,' Al-Dustour News Network reported. Ghanem was seen off at the airport by Deputy National

Assembly Speaker Essa Al-Kandari, Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Fahad Al-Afasi, National Assembly Secretary-General Alam Al-Kandari and Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Kuwait Daulet Yemberdiev. Ghanem is accompanied by MP Rakan Al-Nisf, Treasurer MP Mohammad Al-Dalal, MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie, MP Safa Al-Hashem, MP Mubarak Al-Hurais and MP Farraj Al-Arbeed. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and his delegation are seen off at the airport before they headed to Kazakhstan yesterday to partake in the fourth meeting of the Speakers of Euro-Asian Countries' Parliaments. — KUNA

Kuwait appreciates UN's 'dynamic role'

NEW YORK: His Highness the Amir's Representative, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah arrived in New York on Saturday to head Kuwait's delegation at the 74th United Nations General Assembly session. Receiving him at JFK International Airport was Director of His Highness the Amir's Office Ahmad Al-Fahad, Amiri Diwan Advisor Mohammad Abulhasan, Amiri Ceremonials Director Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Media and Cultural Affairs Secretary Yousef Al-Roumi, Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Kuwait's Permanent UN Representative Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, along with Kuwait embassy and mission staff.

In a press statement released upon his arrival, His Highness expressed Kuwait's appreciation of the dynamic and effective role currently being assumed by the

United Nations to tackle increasing global challenges and threats, its ongoing efforts aimed at attaining global peace and security and its close monitoring of the implementation of sustainable development goals worldwide. He hailed the efforts of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in support of the goals and principles of the UN Charter, aimed at ensuring stability, a peaceful coexistence and international cooperation.

Kuwait is committed to cooperating with the UN's various bodies, agencies and programs on facing the various challenges and dangers that threaten the world, he added, praising these joint efforts as exceptional. He went on to urge the international community to bear its responsibility in putting a stop to conflicts and crises, witnessed in some parts of the world, and for further combined efforts to tackle fundamentalism and terrorism, the resulting dangers of which have increased in recent



NEW YORK: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah arrives in New York to head Kuwait's delegation at the 74th United Nations General Assembly session. — KUNA

years and have mostly affected the Middle East. Kuwait is also keen to resume its leading role to encourage global peace and stability, support efforts for development that provides

decent living conditions for people worldwide and to continue its exceptional humanitarian role in coming to the aid of nations affected by hazards, crises and poverty. —KUNA

Army Chief, US military officer discuss cooperation



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Chief-of-Staff of the Armed Forces Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khodhor meets with the US Under Secretary of the Army-designate Ryan McCarthy. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Chief-of-Staff of the Armed Forces Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khodhor discussed with the US Under Secretary of the Army-designate Ryan McCarthy means of mutual cooperation. Talks between the two touched upon issues of mutual signifi-

cance, specifically in relation to military aspects, according to a Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense statement on Saturday. Lt Gen Khodhor praised both countries' depth of bilateral relations and the two sides' keenness to further these ties. — KUNA

Kuwait's 3rd development plan envisions 'qualitative leap'

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait's third development plan (2020-2025) envisages a qualitative leap, compared to the two previous schemes, a senior official said yesterday. Implementation of the first such plan had concluded and that of the second one remained in the execution phase, said Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel, in a statement during a meeting for promoting the new plan, organized by the Secretariat General of the Supreme Planning and Development Council. Care for human resources' development is a significant basis in the new plan, she said, indicating that it also included international indices "that have been employed for improving our international rating." Meanwhile, Hamed Al-Eidan, the head of the government development division, said the third plan is partially designed to enhance the private sector participation in the development process. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel (left) speaks during the meeting. — KUNA

Sixteen Kuwaiti projects at Milset Expo

KUWAIT: Twenty Kuwaiti student from Ministry of Education and Special Education Schools are participating at the Milset Expo-Sciences International (ESI) 2019 held in Abu Dhabi, with 16 technical and applied projects. Head of Kuwaiti students delegation Shaikha Al-Zoubi, said that this Expo is a great opportunity for the students to meet with about 1350 worldwide young people representing more than 58 countries between the ages of 9-25 years, in addition to a selection of experts, teachers, educators and creators in the largest non-competitive global exhibition that supports cooperation and scientific research among all countries of the world. The Kuwaiti participation reflects the great interest and keenness in qualifying students through programs and activities, she said.

The formation of the student delegation has gone through several stages through which for selecting outstanding students, to give them the opportunity to represent Kuwait in this international scientific expo,



KUWAIT: Members of the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the Milset Expo-Sciences International (ESI) 2019. — KUNA

Zoubi said. The Expo would highlight students' efforts and provides them with great opportunities to gain more experience at international level, she said. Adding it would enhance the visibility of their personal knowledge and raise the flag of Kuwait globally. The Milset Expo-Sciences International (ESI) 2019 is the largest event in UAE focusing exclusively on the scientific creativity of

young aspirant scientists from all over the world. ESI is an initiative of the International Movement for Leisure Activities in Science and Technology (MILSET), a non-governmental, non-profit and politically independent youth organization, which aims at developing scientific culture among young people through the organization of science-and-technology programs. —KUNA

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: High-rise buildings spread across Kuwait City's landscape. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Istanbul hosts Kuwait Cultural Days to further cement bonds

Kuwaiti artists to display their work at the famous Taksim Square

ISTANBUL: The Turkish city of Istanbul will be hosting the 'Kuwait Cultural Days' today, an event aimed at further cementing bonds between Turkish and Kuwaiti people, and to highlight culture of the Arab Gulf country. "This is a very important event because it bolsters interaction of knowledge and culture, as well as strengthens relations with Turkey, and promotes the culture and civilization of Kuwait," Mohammad Al-Mohammad, Kuwait Consul General in Istanbul, said yesterday.

The event - co-organized by Kuwait Consulate, Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL) and Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism - will emphasize Kuwait's keenness on culture as a major tool to spread awareness about civilizations among peoples, Mohammad said. Kuwaiti artists will be displaying their work at the famous Taksim Square.

he said, like paintings, photos, sculptures, traditional clothes and food, as well as books. The diplomat said officials from the NCCAL would meet with Turkish officials to discuss cultural exchange programs.

Tahani Al-Adwani, NCCAL's Assistant Secretary General for Financial and Administrative Affairs, said the Council was keen on reaching out to peoples of the world to enrich culture in Kuwait and promote the country's own culture and heritage. Adwani, also Acting Assistant Secretary General for Antiquities and Museums, said in a statement that the Kuwait Cultural Days reflected strong relations with Turkey and its people. Kuwaiti and Turkish bands will be performing throughout the event, she noted. NCCAL works on preserving culture and heritage of the State of Kuwait, as well as promoting them in other countries. — KUNA



Officials to discuss cultural exchange programs



ABK marks Int'l Day of Sign Languages

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is celebrating the International Day of Sign Languages today, with the bank highlighting that it currently provides services for customers with hearing disabilities at seven branch locations across Kuwait.

The International Day of Sign Languages is celebrated globally and aims to raise awareness of the importance of sign language and the importance of being able to communicate with people that have a hearing impediment. According to the World Federation of the Deaf, there are approximately 72 million deaf people worldwide.

In a move to improve communication with its customers with hearing disabilities, ABK holds sign language training courses on a regular basis for branch staff. The courses focus on providing specialized training to staff responsible for assisting the bank's special needs customers with their banking needs.

ABK is committed to playing an active role in the communities it operates in, and to encourage a stronger sense of belonging among all individuals in those communities. The bank currently provides sign language services at its Head Office, and at the Shaab, Jabriya, Qurain, South Sabahiya, Al-Firdous and Jahra 1 branches. ABK provided 23 staff with specialized training so that they could assist special needs' customers with their banking needs, and all trained staff wear badges showing that they know how to communicate with sign language.

Ibtkar's Women Leadership, Dialogue program launched

KUWAIT: Ibtkar's Women Leadership and Dialogue program was formally launched recently at an event hosted by the German Embassy. Ambassador Designate Stefan Mobs shared insights on current affairs in Germany, while Ruth Brodesser, Head of Cultural Affairs, disseminated information on Germany for the participants. Oliver Oehms, CEO of AHK German Industry and the German Business Council in Kuwait, spoke on the German economy and entrepreneurship. Dr Fabian Blomberg from the Konrad Audenauer Foundation gave a brief introduction to the institute and an overview of the upcoming trip highlights. Ibtkar's Director Dr Alanoud Alsharekh congratulated the 10 participants on being chosen for this competitive program, which had over 110 applicants, and hoped that this initiative will bring closer understanding of the importance of women's leadership in Kuwait. This event was attended by Khalifa Al-Ghanim, CEO of Fouad Al-Ghanim and Sons Automotive company, whose kind support made this program possible.



Kuwaiti Sheikha joins US museum's executive board

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Sheikha Hessa Al-Sabah will soon become a Board of Trustees member in the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH) in the US state of Texas, said a Kuwaiti museum of ancient Islamic antiquities. In a statement released by the Kuwaiti museum yesterday, Sheikha Hessa, who is the facility's director, said she intends on using her new position as a platform to familiarize the outside world with Kuwait's rich history and culture. Enlisting the services of Sheikha Hessa is a testament to MFAH's "storied relationship" with the Kuwaiti Islamic museum, the statement cited MFAH chairman Richard D Kinder as saying. The partnership, which dates back decades, has yielded a number of pivotal deals over the years, he added, which have proved equally beneficial to both sides. As one of the largest museums in the US, MFAH's collection spans more than 6,000 years of history, with approximately 64,000 works from six continents. — KUNA



Sheikha Hessa Al-Sabah

Arab League shines light on media's role 'amid trying times'

CAIRO: The Arab League said yesterday that the media's role has become increasingly significant given the tumultuous situation in the region. The remarks by the bloc's assistant secretary general for media and communications Bader El-Din Alalali came amid talks involving media personalities from across the wider Arab region. On the

gathering, he said it was a chance for participants to exchange views on the latest media trends, in addition to existential challenges facing the Arab media industry. The media's role entails such initiatives as "fighting extremist ideologies and promoting virtues such as tolerance," added the official, besides depicting Arab civilization in a positive light. The talks are significant given the unrest that has plagued a number of Arab nations, according to the Arab Media Forum's secretary general Madhi Al-Khamees, who expressed hope that the event would prove beneficial for the Arab media industry. Some of the Arab world's most recognizable journalists and media personalities, including KUNA's Deputy Director General for the Editorial Sector and Editor-in-Chief Saad Al-Ali, have turned up for the talks. — KUNA



CAIRO: Arab Media Forum's secretary general Madhi Al-Khamees (left) speaks during the meeting. — KUNA

Local

Ministries must pay airline tickets for deported employees: Interior

Woman seduced victims to steal their money

KUWAIT: The interior ministry wrote to another ministry with regards to paying for airline tickets of its employees who are being deported, Al-Rai daily reported yesterday. Informed sources said the 10 are of Syrian, Indian, Egyptian and Bangladeshi nationalities. It said ministries and government departments bear the cost if their employees are deported. The sources said the interior ministry demanded that traffic fines be paid and transferred to the interior ministry.

Thief busted

Criminal detectives solved cases of thefts that were committed during two years by a woman who used to seek help from individuals to carry her things, then seduced and kissed them, during which she stole their belongings. The woman kept changing her facial features with makeup. Detectives found gold purchase invoices with her. A police source said the woman took advantage of being good looking and approached men seeking help. When someone volunteered, she used to take him to a secluded corner and get close to him, and did not let go until she took his money and other valuables before disappearing. Most of the victims did not lodge complaints to avoid problems, except for six who accused her of theft and debauchery, reported Al-Rai. The source said detectives determined the place the suspect target-

ed the most over the two years, then identified and arrested her. The woman was identified by several victims in a lineup. They also found the woman used to purchase gold with the money she stole.

Policeman assaulted

A bedoon woman and her Kuwaiti boyfriend, who had a sword and a knife, beat a traffic policeman and hit his



Couple assault traffic policeman

patrol car with their vehicle. A security source asked the girl to pull over following a violation, but she ignored him, so he pursued the car. A man seated next to her then made obscene gestures. The source added the woman stopped the car all of a sudden in the middle of the road, and both were found under the influence. The suspects'

vehicle then collided with the patrol car and the woman attacked the policeman. Backup came in and controlled the situation. Police found a Taser, a knife, a sword and brass knuckles, along with drugs with the suspects. The two were charged with resisting arrest as detectives are carrying out further investigations.

Student attacked

A Kuwaiti doctor lodged a complaint against a school dropout for beating his adopted son and breaking his collarbone. The citizen told police that he is the guardian of a 13-year-old Syrian boy and fully responsible for him. The doctor first went to the school to submit a complaint at the school administration, only to find out that the student who attacked his son had been kicked out of school. Criminal detectives are investigating.

Grocer mugged

Three thieves stole products from a mobile grocery as one dragged the Indian grocer by the neck for a distance before letting go. The three took things worth KD 28, and when the grocer asked them to pay, one of them grabbed him by the neck, causing him injuries when he fell. Detectives took over the case.

— Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa



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Health ministry regulates aid distribution

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Ministry of Health's (MoH) assistant undersecretary for food and medicine control Dr Abdullah Al-Bader said Minister Sheikh Dr Basel

Al-Sabah formed a special committee to set a work plan for the aid presented by various companies and NGOs to treat patients and regulate the purchase, storage and prescription of medicine for them. In another concern, Bader announced that the

maternity hospital's pharmacy will work 24/7 to provide the medicine needed for casualty patients checking in after official working hours. Bader added that the same system will be soon applied in other hospitals.



ABU DHABI: The Kuwaiti delegation participating in the 79th International Conference for Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. — KUNA



A general view of the audience at the 79th International Conference for Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Pharmacy integral part of health system: Kuwaiti pharmacist

ABU DHABI: Kuwaiti Pharmacist Moudhi Al-Shuwaihan said yesterday that pharmacy as a profession vital in tackling the appropriate treatment and care for patients, stressing that such profession is an integral part of the integrated health system. Shuwaihan's statement came in a speech during the Kuwaiti Pharmaceutical Society remarks at the 79th International Conference for Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, which kicked off at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Center.

Shuwaihan highlighted Kuwait's interest in the profession of pharmacy and related sciences in order to achieve greater pharmaceutical service and contribute to the development of health care for the community. She said that the pharmacy profession in Kuwait recently attracted many graduate students, noting that the number of its associates in the period from 2001 to 2010 reached 653 pharmacists, while the number doubled from 2011 to 2019 to 1,266 pharmacists. Founded in 1974, the Kuwaiti Pharmacy Association aimed at raising the awareness to the profession that combines medical practice with scientific discoveries in order to reach advanced medical high-level standards.

The Kuwaiti delegation to the con-



Kuwaiti Pharmacist Moudhi Al-Shuwaihan speaks during the conference.

ference includes Chairman of the Pharmaceutical Society Walid Al-Shammari, representatives of Kuwait University and the management of medical warehouses at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health, in addition to a group of Kuwaiti pharmacists. The conference, organized by the International Pharmacists Union and the Emirates Pharmacy Association, will include interactive sessions, panel discussions and workshops highlighting the latest concepts, news and trends in the field of pharmacy and healthcare globally. — KUNA

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'Don't open the door':
 Activists to thwart ICE

Bangladesh couple challenge wedding tradition



IOWA: Guests arrive at an LGBTQ presidential forum at Coe Colleges Sinclair Auditorium on September 20, 2019 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The event is the first public event of the 2020 election cycle to focus entirely on LGBTQ issues. —AFP

Digital threats multiply ahead of US elections

The newest threat may be 'deepfake' video and audio

WASHINGTON: It could be a manipulated video embarrassing a candidate. Or a computer voting system locked by ransomware. Or doubts about electronic voting machines with no paper backups. As Americans prepare for 2020 elections, digital threats to election security are multiplying, stoking fears of a tainted outcome. Worries are running high following revelations of a wide-ranging misinformation campaign on Facebook and other social platforms, largely directed by Russian operatives, in 2016.

This was described in detail by special counsel Robert Mueller, whose office obtained several indictments for election interference. Cyber interference and disinformation operations surrounding elections "are part of a much larger, ongoing challenge to democracies everywhere," said a report from Stanford University's Cyber Policy Center. Maurice Turner, an election security specialist with the Washington-based Center for Democracy & Technology, said these threats could lead to "a negative impact on voter confidence" in 2020.

Deepfakes, nudes

The newest threat may be "deepfake" video and audio manipulated with artificial intelligence which can put words in the mouths of candidates. It might even show "unflattering or abusive images of women and minority aspirants in an effort to discredit them," said Darrell West with the Brookings Institution's Center for Technology Innovation, in an online report.

"It is easy to manipulate still images or video footage to put someone in a compromising situation," West wrote. Danielle Citron, a Boston University online safety expert,

told a recent TedSummit talk that deepfakes "can exploit and magnify the deep distrust that we already have in politicians, business leaders and other influential leaders." Deepfakes "can reinforce an idea for those who want to believe it and be a distraction in the news cycle" even if they are debunked, Turner said.

Hardening defenses

Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter will be closely scrutinized on how well they counter misinformation. Experts say it will be increasingly difficult to counter automated accounts or "bots" that can amplify false news. The failure to take a hard stand against manipulation in 2016 has likely "emboldened Russia to try again in 2020," wrote Stanford professor and ex-Facebook security chief Alex Stamos. Other efforts might come from China, Iran or North Korea, he said.

Facebook, Google, Microsoft and Twitter security teams met this month with FBI, homeland security and intelligence officials to discuss collaboration on election threats. It will be important to anticipate new threats, and not simply use methods from the past. Facebook's visual platform Instagram could become the most important "disinformation magnet" in 2020, a report by New York University's Center for Business and Human Rights suggests.

The report also said Russian organizations may try to recruit "unwitting" Americans to help spread propaganda. The researchers call on social platforms to remove "provably false" information - a delicate task for platforms seeking to avoid becoming truth "arbiters." It is

"tremendously difficult" to moderate content "at scale that allows users to speak freely and have that vigorous public discourse," Turner said. Rights group Freedom House warned that it's hard to prove content is "unequivocally false," and that banning all foreign content "could harm press freedom."

Digital suppression

Some interference is aimed at "voter suppression," or dissuading people from voting through intimidation or lies, a technique likely to rise in 2020. The Kremlin-linked Internet Research Agency ran Facebook ads to suppress non-white voter turnout in 2016 by urging people to "boycott the election," arguing that neither presidential candidate would serve black voters, according to research led by University of Wisconsin professor Young Mie Kim.

Some messages gave the wrong election date, encouraged people to bring guns to the polls, or suggested improbably that people could vote by text message. It's a daunting task to weed out fake and foreign accounts, Kim said. "There are still a lot of groups that don't have a verifiable online identity" and may be controlled by foreign actors, Kim said. "If we identify the foreign sources, and deal with those, it would be much easier than discussing what is false and how we correct it," she said.

Vulnerable voting machines

Electronic voting machine vulnerabilities have been known for years, but at least eight US states will have paperless machines which might not be auditable if results are questioned, according to NYU's Brennan Center. "We



IOWA: Volunteers for former Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden make pancakes during the Democratic Polk County Steak Fry in Des Moines. —AFP

will have a patchwork of strengths and weaknesses, and attackers who want to discredit the election will pick the weakest places," said University of Michigan election security specialist Alex Halderman.

Many local governments use aging computer systems, so threats of hacking voter databases and ransomware which locks up election rolls are also worrisome. Without paper backups and forensic audits it might be impossible to tell if some electronic voting machines were tampered with. "A well conducted attack that changed the result wouldn't necessarily raise alarm bells." —AFP

Amazon rainforest burns as world leaders gather

RIO DE JANEIRO: The fires that burned through the Amazon rainforest last month sparked international outcry and offers of help, but as world leaders meet in New York, the planet's largest rainforest remains engulfed in flames. The latest satellite data from Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE) shows 131,600 fires burning since January within the country, where 60 percent of the Amazon lies.

The fires, which are mostly caused by humans with the goal of clearing land for farming and cattle ranching, are having a grievous effect on the forest: the rate of deforestation in the Amazon has nearly doubled since far-right President Jair Bolsonaro came to power on January 1, with the equivalent of 110 football fields of land being cleared every hour.

"It's sad to see Brazilians attacking me for fires in the Amazon, as if they hadn't always existed," Bolsonaro wrote on Facebook Thursday. "We remain below the average of the last 15 years. But I'm accused of being a Nero, who sets fires everywhere." Yet fires are at a seven-year high, according to INPE data, and despite a slight drop at the start of the month, the number of active fires recorded in Brazil

from the start of the year to September 19 was up 56 percent over the same period in 2018. Nearly half of the blazes are in the Amazon.

Bolsonaro is a climate change skeptic, but last month he sent soldiers to help put out fires in the Amazon region after Brazil came under criticism at the G7 summit, with the host French President Emmanuel Macron among the most outspoken detractors. Under that deployment, which was renewed Friday for another month, nearly 7,000 soldiers and 16 aircraft are fighting both the flames and "deforestation and illegal mining," Brazil's defense ministry said.

'I'm going to get hit'

Marcio Astrini, a Greenpeace official in Brazil, said the deployment is making little difference. "We did a lot of fly-overs. We did not see anything happening on the ground, apart from the deforestation that is progressing. It's tragic," he said. Experts sent by the United States, logistical equipment from Japan, and four aircraft from Chile are all fighting the blazes, while firefighters sent from Israel have departed, the defense ministry said.

Bolsonaro however has blushed at other international offers to help put out the fires, rejecting \$20 million from the G7 and accusing members France and Germany of "buying" Brazil's sovereignty. Today, Macron will launch a "call for mobilization" on the Amazon together with his counterparts Sebastian Pinera of Chile and Ivan Duque of Colombia during a meeting on the sidelines of the UN General

Assembly in New York.

Brazil won't attend the meeting, but Environment Minister Ricardo Salles, also a climate change skeptic, will appear at the UN's climate summit today, before traveling to Europe. Tomorrow, Bolsonaro will make the opening speech at the UN General Assembly, in which he is expected to focus on the Amazon. "I am preparing a rather objective speech, unlike my predecessor," he wrote on Facebook, adding, "I'm going to get hit, you can be sure. The media always finds something to complain about."

No end in sight

Environmental groups have little faith that Bolsonaro will change tack. The government "wants to show that it is doing the best for the forest. In fact, it is doing its utmost for deforestation," said Greenpeace's Astrini. "Brazil is running a campaign to show that it is taking care of the Amazon. It's a lie," he said. And there's little to suggest that the fires are abating.

Between September 18 and 19, the number of forest fires in Rondonia state jumped to 242 from 12 just the day before, an increase of 1,915 percent, according to the INPE. Fears are also rising over the number of blazes in the Cerrado savanna, which account for a third of all the fires in Brazil. And on Friday the World Wide Fund for Nature warned of an "emergency situation in the biome" of the Pantanal wetland. Fires have risen 351 percent since January in the Pantanal region, some 90 percent of which were set illegally.—AFP



MUMBAI: Activist Dadarao Bilhore stands wearing a dress made from banana leaves and flowers found in the Aarey forest as he protests against the destruction of Aarey forest which they call 'Mumbai's Amazon', after the government approved cutting down 2,700 trees for constructing a metro train car shed, in Mumbai yesterday. —AFP

International

Rohingya 'bandit' couple shot dead in Bangladesh gunfight

Latest killings amid growing tensions between refugees and authorities

DHAKA: A Rohingya couple was shot dead during a gunfight in a border town camp hours after they were detained by Bangladesh police, officials said yesterday, the latest killings amid growing tensions between the refugees and authorities. Police in Teknaf town said the refugee couple - Dil Mohammad, 32, and his 26-year-old wife Jaheda Begum - were members of a Rohingya "bandit group". Authorities claim the gang killed a local ruling party official, Omar Faruk, in a refugee settlement in southeastern Bangladesh last month.

At least 13 Rohingya refugees have been killed in

alleged gunfights between criminals and officers since Faruk's murder on August 22, police inspector Ali Arshad said. "Eleven of them were involved in Faruk's murder," he said, but said that while part of the gang, the couple were not accused of carrying out the shooting. Police officer Mohammad Babul told AFP the pair were detained by investigators late Saturday and led officials to a suspected gang hideout in search of other alleged members.

He said the officers were ambushed by the group hours later. "We retaliated with gunfire. The couple sus-

tained severe bullet injuries during the shootout," Babul said, adding that they were later declared dead in a hospital. Rights groups have previously accused Bangladesh police of staging gunfights as a cover for the extrajudicial killings of Rohingya, mainly suspects in drug smuggling.

Early this week, UN human rights experts called for an impartial investigation into Rohingya being killed in gunfights after being named as suspects in Faruk's killing. Following the Faruk murder, local residents vandalized refugee shops and staged protests in one of the

camp. The settlements are home to nearly a million of the stateless minority who fled oppression in neighboring Myanmar. At least 33 Rohingya have been killed by Bangladeshi security forces in gunfights and another nine killed in internal gang clashes since July last year, according to the police. UN experts have also expressed "serious concerns" new restrictions and a virtual internet blackout in the camps. The ongoing clampdown came after the failure of a fresh attempt to repatriate some of the refugees, the second effort in less than a year. — AFP

Residents flee as strong earthquake rattles Albania

TIRANA: Albania was rattled by its strongest earthquake in decades Saturday, officials said, sending people fleeing into the streets in several cities, damaging buildings and triggering power cuts in the capital. The epicenter of the shallow 5.6-magnitude quake, was near Durres, less than 40 kilometers west of the capital Tirana, according to the US Geological Survey. Albania's defense ministry said it was the "strongest earthquake in the country in the last 20 to 30 years".

"There are no deaths," defense ministry spokeswoman Albana Qajaj said. Some 80 people sought medical help in both Tirana and Durres, 21 of whom were hospitalized due to injuries caused by falling objects or parts of walls as well as for panic attacks. Health Minister Ogerta Manasterili said. Qajaj told AFP that houses and buildings in Tirana had been damaged but were still standing and that the ministry was assessing damage in other towns and villages.

Prime Minister Edi Rama cancelled his scheduled trip to the United States following the quake, which cut electricity and telephone lines in Tirana and a number of other towns and villages. Many people remained outside their homes for several hours in the capital, fearful of aftershocks. "I fear to return because such a strong earthquake could be followed with others," Drita Lohja, a resident in her fifties said. Falling debris pulverized parked cars in parts of the city. AFP reporters and witnesses saw windows broken and deep fissures in the facades of buildings in Durres, as well as in the capital. Media reported that a large building



TIRANA: A man walks on the debris from a damaged building in Tirana after two earthquakes over 5.0 magnitude struck the coastline Adriatic coastline of Albania. — AFP

in Tirana was seriously damaged and that residents were being evacuated. A University of Tirana building was also damaged, witnesses said. According to local media reports, at least two people were lightly injured and a dozen houses collapsed in the village of Helmes, 10 kilo-

meters from Tirana. Two other earthquakes followed the strong one that occurred at around 4:00 pm (1400 GMT) and was felt in neighboring Montenegro and Italy, but also on the Greek island of Corfu according to some Twitter users. — AFP

High stakes for Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party

TUNIS: Snubbed by voters in the first round of Tunisia's presidential election, the Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party must overcome an "identity crisis" to secure its political future in upcoming legislative polls, experts say. Last week saw the first round of the country's second free presidential elections since the 2011 ouster of autocrat Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who died in exile days after the poll.

It was the first time Ennahdha has contested the presidency, putting forward as its candidate interim speaker of parliament Abdelfattah Mourou, who is seen as a moderate and advocates more openness in the party. Mourou came third with 434,000 votes - 12.88 percent - a disappointing result for the largest party in parliament. That compared with 1.5 million votes won by Ennahdha in 2011 in the country's first free election, for a constituent assembly, that marked the party's political comeback.

Ennahdha was not alone in its recent setback. All the candidates who have been at the forefront of the political scene in recent years, such as Prime Minister Youssef Chahed, were also knocked back in the first round. The vote reshaped the political landscape, as two outsiders came out ahead, having campaigned against the system: constitutional law professor Kais Saied and imprisoned media mogul Nabil Karoui.

'Identity crisis'

After failing to reach the presidential run off, the stakes are high for Ennahdha in October 6 legislative polls. In an attempt to entice its base, on Friday the party pledged its support for Saied, who is considered socially conservative and siphoned off many of its votes, particularly among young Tunisians.

Ennahdha "could not support Nabil Karoui because it has already been accused by its base of having worked within the system to the detriment of its principles," said political scientist Slaheddine Jourchi. Ennahdha governed as part of a coalition with the Nidaa Tounes party, which Karoui helped found and which won 2014 elections on an anti-Islamist platform but later splintered. For political scientist Hamza Meddeb, the decline of Ennahdha can be explained by internal conflicts within

the movement over its direction. By participating in the coalition and "acquiescing to neoliberal economic policies" that did not lower unemployment or prices, Ennahdha "lost its ability to activate socioeconomic reform and anticorruption arguments to rebuild its legitimacy and support base", Meddeb said in a report for Carnegie Middle East Center published in early September. Since Ennahdha made the "landmark" decision in 2016 to "abandon preaching and focus on politics" the party has experienced "an identity crisis", he said.

By focusing on building support on a foundation beyond religion, Ennahdha must now regain legitimacy by positioning itself as "an effective governing force and propose viable policy solutions to Tunisia's social and economic challenges", he added.

Election challenge

As an indication of its internal shake up, Ennahdha - one of Tunisia's most structured parties, where disagreements rarely surface - in recent months has seen a series of resignations and public challenges to its candidate choices for the legislative and presidential elections. Lofli Zitoun, advisor to the head of Ennahdha Rached Ghannouchi, announced his resignation in July, a decision triggered, according to local media reports, by a conflict over the strategic choices of the movement.

Zoubeir Shehouldi, former director of Ghannouchi's cabinet, also resigned, calling for the departure of the old guard and lamenting that "Ennahdha, now a normal party, integrated in the system and mechanisms of the state, has become incapable of finding social and economic solutions." In view of the fact that 15 to 20 percent of pro-Ennahdha youth did not vote for Mourou, Ghannouchi, himself a candidate in a heavily disputed Tunis constituency, has called for mass mobilization for the October legislative vote.

Ennahdha hopes to keep its 69 seats in the 217-seat parliament. The change in the electoral calendar to bring forward the presidential election after the death of president Beji Caid Essebsi posed an extra challenge. The presidential poll pushed the legislative elections, for which Ennahdha is better armed, into the background. And this vote, three weeks after the first round of the presidential election, could see voters reinforce the first-round anti-system choices. "Maybe Ennahdha will lose big... maybe the party will even lose its position at the heart of power," said Jourchi. — AFP



MAIDUGURI: Soldiers stand beside truck to close offices of humanitarian group, Action Against Hunger (ACF) in the restive Maiduguri, northeast Nigeria. The Nigerian army has shut down the offices of a humanitarian group in the restive northeast with no explanation as tensions simmer with aid organizations in the region. — AFP

Targeting militants, Nigeria to require ID cards in the northeast

ABUJA: Nigeria will require anyone moving through three northeastern states to carry identification cards in an effort to root out members of Boko Haram and Islamic State, the army said yesterday. The new requirement follows credible information that members of the two militant groups were hiding among civilians in the towns and villages of the states, an army statement said.

The army said it would "strictly check" the identification cards of those moving or passing through the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Those found without identification would "attract further scrutiny and comprehensive investigation to determine his or her activities with the insurgents or otherwise", it said.

Last week, the army forced non-profit Action Against Hunger to close its office in the region, accusing it of aiding groups such as Boko Haram and Islamic State by providing members with food and medicine. The decade-long insurgency led by Islamist militant group Boko Haram has killed some 30,000 people and forced more than 2 million to flee their homes. Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) split from Boko Haram in 2016.

UN report on violence

In another development, Nigeria has rejected the findings of a UN report on violence in the country accusing it of simply blaming the government of President Muhammadu Buhari. "While we agree that there is a major concern and that there is a rippling effect, we are disappointed that the rapporteur was silent on intra-group violence," presidential spokesman Garba

Shehu said in a statement. Shehu said he defended the government saying it was trying its best to end the violence. "There is absolutely no doubt that violence between farmers and herders, which has a long history in our country spiked in recent years but the effectiveness with which the federal and state authorities responded made a big difference," he said.

Calm has virtually returned to all parts affected by the peculiar violence, he added. Shehu called for the support of the UN rapporteur in reporting government efforts to end the conflicts, rejecting a report that he said "scratches the surface of the subject then ends up blaming the government under the able leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari".

In a preliminary report at the end of a 12-day visit to Nigeria, Special Rapporteur Agnes Callamard accused the government of not doing enough to end the violence between herders and farmers in central Nigeria as well as the kidnappings for ransom and banditry in the northwest which have claimed thousands of lives in recent months.

The report also called on Nigeria to stop extra-judicial killings by security forces in the country. Local and global rights groups, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have accused Nigerian security agents of abuses and summary executions of suspects. Hundreds of Boko Haram detainees have been killed over the decade-long jihadist uprising, while dozens of civilians have died in police custody. The security forces have repeatedly denied the allegations. — Agencies

News in brief

Pakistan bus accident kills 23

PESHAWAR: At least 23 people were killed and 18 others injured yesterday when a bus hit a rock and plunged into a ravine in northwestern Pakistan, officials said. Local administration official Aurangzeb Haider told AFP four women and six children were among the dead, while senior police official Zaibullah Khan said six of the injured were in critical condition. The accident happened in the Babusar Top area, bordering Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with Gilgit-Baltistan. Pakistan has a poor traffic safety record, with frequent fatal accidents blamed on reckless driving, bad roads and shoddily maintained vehicles. — AFP

Tapah approaches Japan

TOKYO: Typhoon Tapah approached southwestern Japan yesterday, with heavy rain and strong winds grounding hundreds of regional flights. Tapah, with gusts up to 162 kilometers per hour, was expected to draw near Nagasaki prefecture overnight, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. It was on course to travel through the channel between Japan and the Korean Peninsula before moving toward northern Japan today, when it is expected to weaken and be downgraded, the agency said. The storm prompted cancellations of more than 400 domestic flights, according to national broadcaster NHK. "Serious caution is warranted for violent winds, high waves and landslides," said Japan's Fire and Disaster Management Agency in a statement. So far the typhoon has caused 21 minor injuries, mostly in a southern island region of Okinawa that was hit by the storm earlier. — AFP

Al Shabaab loots weapons

MOGADISHU: Fighters belonging to Somali Islamist militant group Al Shabaab stormed an army base near the capital Mogadishu yesterday, looted it for weapons and then withdrew, a military source, residents and the group said. The assault began when a suicide bomber rammed his explosive-laden car into the base in El Salini, 60 kilometers southwest of Mogadishu, at around 5:30 am local time, al Shabaab said. A local elder, Ahmed Cali, told Reuters he had been woken by the sound of a huge blast followed by gunfire. He said that later Al Shabaab fighters were seen leaving the base, some in trucks loaded with ammunition. A major in the Somali military who didn't want to be named said the military has sustained some casualties, without giving details. He said the army had received reinforcements and was back in control of the base. Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for the assault and said they had killed 23 soldiers. — Reuters

Dutch and British commemorate Operation Market Garden

EDE: Operation Market Garden, the ultimately failed attempt to liberate the north of the Netherlands from Nazi Germany in September 1944, was commemorated by veterans and royalty in the Netherlands on Saturday. Under a clear blue sky, Britain's Prince Charles and Dutch Princess Beatrix watched over a thousand parachutists re-enact the landing of British, American and Polish paratroopers on Ginkel Heath on Sept 17, 1944.

The landing marked the start of Operation Market Garden, one of the largest allied operations of World War Two - famously depicted in the 1977 film "A Bridge Too Far", starring Sean Connery. Market Garden was meant to clear the path for allied troops into Germany, by liberating the north and east of the neighboring Netherlands, isolating German troops in the west of the country.

Tens of thousands of paratroopers were instructed to seize bridges up and down from the Dutch-German border, but after three days of heavy battles and initial success, they failed to take the city of Arnhem. Around 15,000 allied soldiers and thousands of German soldiers lost their lives in Operation Market Garden, which culminated in the loss of the Battle of Arnhem - prolonging World War Two in Europe until the final liberation came in May 1945. "The battle was tough, brutal and vicious," Dutch defense minister Ank Bijleveld said at the commemoration of the battles.

"We all know that Operation Market Garden did not bring the liberty that everyone was hoping for," the mayor of Ede, Rene Verhulst, said. "But these were days of great courage, that were decisive for the future of our continent." Among the thousands of spectators on Saturday were veterans who survived the harsh battles in 1944. Some of them even took part in the commemorative parachute jumps. "This was terrifyingly thrilling," 97-year-old veteran Sandy Cortman told Dutch TV after his jump. "I won't be doing this again tomorrow." — Reuters

International

Trump, Biden spar over Ukraine after whistleblower complaint

Biden accuses US president of 'overwhelming abuse of power'

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden has accused Donald Trump of "an overwhelming abuse of power" and called for an investigation into accusations the US leader pressured his Ukrainian counterpart to investigate the presidential candidate's son. Biden's allegations prompted a swift rebuke from Trump, who himself accuses the Democratic frontrunner of wrongdoing in Ukraine during his time as vice president under former president Barack Obama.

The back-and-forth recriminations stem from a Washington Post report stating a whistleblower complaint had been filed over Trump's communications with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, and a "promise" allegedly made by the US leader. Trump allegedly pressured Zelensky to investigate possible corruption involving Biden and his son Hunter, who had worked with a Ukrainian natural gas company while his father was vice president.

Trump has urged media to "look into" Biden's comments in early 2016 when the then US vice president said the Obama administration would freeze \$1 billion in US loan guarantees unless Kiev fire its top prosecutor, who was looking into the gas company. "This appears to be an overwhelming abuse of power,"

to get on the phone with a foreign leader who is looking for help from the United States and ask about me," Biden told reporters on the campaign trail in the state of Iowa.

"I know what I'm up against, a serial abuser. That's what this guy is," Biden continued. "If he sees any threat to his staying in power, he'll do whatever he has to do. But this crosses the line." Biden had on Friday demanded Trump immediately release the transcript of a July 25 call with Zelensky while saying reports that the president sought to coerce his Ukrainian counterpart, if true, amounted to "clear-cut corruption."

Trump slammed the allegations as "ridiculous," and on Saturday accused Biden on Twitter of having demanded, during his time as vice president, "that the Ukrainian Government fire a prosecutor who was investigating his son." He also accused news outlets of fabricating "a story about me and a perfectly fine and routine conversation I had with the new President of the Ukraine. Nothing was said that was in any way wrong, but Biden's demand, on the other hand, was a complete and total disaster."

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko denied that there was any pressure

from Trump in an interview on television station Hromadske. "I know what they were talking about and I think there was no pressure," he said. "It was a long and friendly discussion, and it dealt with many questions that in many cases needed serious answers," he said.

'Abuse of power'

On Saturday, Trump posted a video montage of media reports, which included a clip of Biden saying he'd asked that the prosecutor be dismissed. Biden has said the call had nothing to do with his son. "I've never spoken to my son about his overseas business dealings," Biden said. "Everybody looked at it and said there's nothing there."

"Trump is doing this because he knows I'll beat him like a drum and using abuse of power and every element of the presidency to try to do something to smear me," Biden, who is leading Trump in most polls, said. Trump also excoriated media outlets whose reporting brought the alleged events to light. "The Fake News Media nowadays not only doesn't check for the accuracy of the facts, they knowingly make up the facts. They even make up sources in order to protect their partners, the Democrats," he posted on Twitter. — AFP



DES MOINES: Former Vice President and presidential candidate Joe Biden clinches his fist as he arrives during the Democratic Polk County Steak Fry in Des Moines, Iowa. — AFP

Trump to boast to UN about US success, but troubles mounting

UNITED NATIONS: US President Donald Trump will stand before the United Nations tomorrow to declare his country top of the world. But with diplomatic troubles building, his annual boast may ring hollow. Trump's political brand is as well known inside the United Nations as his businessman version is to the rest of New York: brash, unabashedly self-promoting, and all about claiming the win. At this year's UN General Assembly, the former real estate tycoon won't disappoint. "We'll say the United States is the greatest country in the world. It's never been stronger and it's never been better," he said in a mini-review of his speech.

Oh - and that Americans "certainly have one of the great presidents in our history," Trump's declaration last year that he had "accomplished more than almost any administration in the history of our country" triggered laughter in the cavernous UN hall. Headlines like "The Whole World Laughed at Trump" followed, to which Trump insisted that diplomats were chuckling with, not at him. A year later, with Trump beset by setbacks from North Korea to Iran and Venezuela to China, will his Big Apple braggadocio get a better reception?

Going it alone

A senior administration official told reporters ahead of the assembly that Trump would want to "affirm America's leadership role in the rules-based international system." But the US president prefers to go it alone, preferring bilateral deals to coalitions, negotiating with enemies and clashing with friends. Today, he'll skip a big climate change summit organized by the UN secretary general. Trump, who promotes fossil fuels and derides the need for renewable energy, also missed climate change talks at the recent G7 summit in France.

While at the UN, he'll meet separately with around a dozen leaders. But of them, the only European representative currently on the list is Boris Johnson, the prime minister running the chaotic Brexit process of trying to pull Britain out of the EU. There will be intense scrutiny of a meeting on Wednesday with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky. Trump is alleged to have attempted to persuade the Ukrainian to investigate one of his 2020 presidential challengers, Joe Biden.

Personality test

A larger-than-life figure, Trump believes that his personality enables him to succeed where conventional diplomacy fails. He has tested this most spectacularly in North Korea, holding an unprecedented three summits with dictator Kim Jong Un to try and persuade him to abandon his flourishing nuclear weapons program. However, Kim shows no signs of budging on the central demand, leaving Trump open to criticism that he has been played. On the explosive standoff with Iran, Trump has taken the opposite route by piling pressure on the crumbling economy and seeking to wreck an international deal meant to defuse tension over the country's nuclear industry. Speculation is rife over whether he will order military strikes on Iran to respond against the bombing of Saudi oil facilities last weekend. Trump has left everyone guessing, announcing still more US sanctions on Friday - but so far resisting war.

Leaving a vacuum

In Afghanistan, Trump hoped for a big, dramatic win. His diplomats spent months in painstaking negotiations over getting nearly all the last US troops out of the country after two decades of war. But earlier this month, Trump tried to bring Taliban leaders over to the United States for face-to-face talks, only to cancel the whole thing at the last minute.

On the economic front, Trump's all-or-nothing battle with China has the whole world holding its breath. As usual Trump has sought to develop close relations with his counterpart, President Xi Jinping, but neither that friendship nor his aggressive use of tariffs has produced decisive results so far. At the United Nations, the US president might want to consider the risks of his instincts to tear up the old rules books, said diplomacy expert Jeffrey Feltman at the Brookings Institution. Because "if the US leaves a vacuum in the leadership of the UN, others will fill it." — AFP

'Don't open the door': US activists organize to thwart ICE

LANGLEY PARK: Though she speaks little English, Yoana was calm when two officers from the US federal agency tasked with deporting undocumented people such as herself appeared outside her apartment. Reading from a card that said, "This is to advise any law enforcement officer that I cannot answer any questions," she parried their demands until the agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) left.

"I didn't have fear. I knew what my rights were," said Yoana, 36, a native of Mexico who works on the apple farms of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and spoke to AFP on condition that her full name not be published. That she knew what to do when approached by ICE was due to the efforts of activists across the United States, who are finding novel ways to thwart President Donald Trump's crackdown on migrants — ranging from educating undocumented people like Yoana about their rights under US law to filming immigration agents in public.

Trump has pushed wide-ranging immigration law reforms, while tasking ICE with carrying out mass deportations of people in the US illegally. Rights groups, in turn, have criticized the agency for making indiscriminate arrests and terrorizing immigrants. "The immediate and extreme impact an immigration enforcement action has on an individual and their family is not lost on our officers," ICE wrote in an open letter released in September. "Our officers do their jobs professionally, humanely, and treat those they encounter with dignity and respect."

'Know Your Rights'

Amid the crackdown, immigrant rights groups have set up hotlines for people to call if they think ICE may be in



LANGLEY PARK: Nick Katz, Senior Manager of the Legal program for CASA, poses for a photo at the office of the Immigrants rights group CASA in Langley Park, Maryland. — AFP

their neighborhoods, while dispatching lawyers and camera-wielding activists to record the activities of agents in public. After Trump threatened in June to deport "millions" of illegal immigrants, the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights formed "ICE Chasers," a group that looks for ICE in immigrant neighborhoods early in the morning - when agents often target people as they head to work.

"In case we encounter any ICE official doing an arrest, we want to document and observe the proper usage of the civil rights," the group's executive director Adelina Nicholls said in an interview. Rights groups across the country are also encouraging immigrants like Yoana to attend training on law dubbed "Know Your Rights."

At a recent session held by Washington-area group CASA in Langley Park, Maryland, an instructor told a dozen immigrants what they could and couldn't do when encountering law enforcement. Chief among them: "Don't open the door," in case it's ICE agents who are outside. In the neighborhood where she lives with her two undocumented siblings, Lidamar Escorcia described an atmosphere of dread. "There's just constant fear and anxiety

when there's knocks on the door," said the 32-year-old Nicaraguan, who is in the US legally.

Armed with cameras

Elsewhere, advocacy groups have disseminated on social media photos of suspected ICE agents staking out neighborhoods or courthouses, while setting up hotlines for people to call for help if federal agents come to their door. "Law enforcement acts differently when it knows it's being witnessed and watched," said Laura Williamson, an organizer with Washington-area group Sanctuary DMV, whose volunteers go out and film arrests.

ICE's acting press secretary Bryan Cox told AFP that people film officers "routinely" and said the agency "fully respects the rights of all people to peacefully voice their opinion without interference." Immigrant advocates say they don't encourage people to obstruct officers or resist violently. "If ICE really wants to go after someone, the chances are, they'll get them," said Nick Katz, senior manager of legal services for CASA.

Standoff

When agents tried to arrest a father and son in their car in a suburb of Nashville, Tennessee in July, a crowd of neighbors gathered, giving the pair food and putting gas in their idling car so they could run the air conditioning in the summer heat. After several hours, ICE, lacking a warrant to force them out of the car, withdrew, and the family fled to safety. "They made an environment where the family was able to outlast the ICE agents," said Lisa Sherman-Nikolaus, policy director for the Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition.

That episode took place days after the Trump administration announced it would launch large-scale immigration raids aimed at 2,000 undocumented migrants in 10 cities. There was little evidence of those roundups happening, but weeks later, 680 undocumented migrants were arrested in mass raids in the southeastern US. "The administration is trying to scare the community in whichever way they can," Katz said. "Our Know Your Rights training is how you fight." — AFP

No-deal Brexit: How EU members are preparing

PARIS: With the spectre of a no-deal Brexit looming on October 31, EU members are taking measures to cushion their economies, safeguard trade with Britain and protect citizens' rights. The prospect of trade barriers being re-erected on November 1 between Britain and its EU neighbors has led to fears of nightmarish tailbacks at borders, with potentially huge losses for exporters. An end to freedom of movement could also spell anguish for some of the 3.5 million EU citizens living in Britain and the around 1.2 million Britons living in other EU countries. Following is a summary of the preparations taken by various EU members:

Britain: Fears of public disorder

Britain says it will scrap tariffs on most imports, while keeping a reduced rate for some agricultural products to protect farmers. The EU, for its part, says it will treat Britain as a "third country", imposing tariffs that are generally low but could run to 10 percent on cars, for example. A leaked government report on the potential impact of a no-deal Brexit set alarm bells ringing in August. It warned that that tailbacks at Channel ports could lead to drug shortages and food price hikes which could in turn trigger "public disorder". Britain, meanwhile, has already received applications from over a million Europeans for "settled status", around a third of whom have been turned down for permanent residency.

Ireland: On the Brexit frontline

Ireland is expected to be worst affected by a disorderly departure from the EU of its largest trading partner in the bloc. More than half of all Irish beef exports go to

Britain, and in the event of a no-deal Brexit, could be priced out of the market by steep tariffs. With Ireland importing most of its food from or through Britain, retailers have also warned of potential shortages of fresh produce. Meanwhile, Britain and the EU are still at odds over how to avoid border checks or infrastructure between Ireland and British-controlled Northern Ireland, seen as key to upholding a 1998 peace deal that ended three decades of sectarian conflict.

Germany: 'Ready for anything'

The German government says it is ready for "all imaginable exit possibilities" and has passed around 50 laws and regulations aimed at limiting the impact of a no-deal scenario. Berlin says its biggest priority is protecting the interests of citizens on either side of the Channel "who took advantage of the free movement and made life decisions based on its existence". British citizens living in Germany will have nine months after Brexit to apply for residence permits. Trade-wise, Germany has hired an extra 900 customs officials to help smooth trade with its fifth-biggest export market.

France: Fears of Channel logjams

France has insisted it is ready for no-deal and will this week carry out a dress rehearsal in the Channel port of Calais - a major hub for trade between Britain and the Continent - to showcase new technology aimed at avoiding long tailbacks. Paris has hired hundreds of extra customs officials and devised a barcode system for trucks crossing the Channel to help customs detect their contents and determine whether or not they need to be checked on arrival. Britons in France, home to the second-biggest British expatriate community in the EU (at least 150,000 people) will have a year after Brexit to apply for residency status.

Spain: Between Rock and hard place

The country with the largest number of British residents in the EU has tasked 875 civil servants with working out issues such as customs and border controls and residency rights after Brexit. But many ques-



MALAGA: People and British nationals wave European Union and Spanish flags as they take part in a protest against Brexit in Malaga yesterday. — AFP

tions remain, including how Spain will cooperate with the tiny British territory of Gibraltar, situated on its southern coast. Spain has pledged freedom of movement with the territory known as "The Rock" after Brexit and said it will grant residency to 400,000 Britons.

Italy: Prosecco sales could lose fizz

Italy has said that Britons who have spent at least six months a year over the five years leading up to Brexit will be eligible for permanent residency. Among those most worried about a no-deal Brexit are prosecco producers, whose British clients knock back a staggering 120 million bottles a year. "The uncertainty worries us but we are confident that the British will not ditch their guilty pleasure," Innocente Nardi, president of the Conegliano Valdobbiadene prosecco producers consortium, said.

Poland: Roadblocks ahead

Poland has a big stake in keeping trade between the EU and Britain flowing after Brexit: Around 25 percent of the goods shipped between Britain and its EU neighbors are transported by some 2,500 Polish hauliers. Poles also make up the biggest foreign-born community in Britain. The Polish ambassador to Britain has written to the around 1 million Poles in Britain advis-

ing them to apply for Britain's settlement scheme. Vaunting the rude health of the Polish economy he also asked Poles to consider returning home.

Netherlands: Big send-off party

The Dutch government has spent two years preparing for a no-deal Brexit, announcing plans to recruit 900 extra customs officers and add hundreds of extra parking spots for trucks backed up in the busy port of Rotterdam. But the Dutch have also been hoping to benefit from the uncertainty caused by Britain's exit from the EU. The Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency (NFA) said in August that nearly 100 international companies have decided to establish a base in the Netherlands to guarantee their access to the European market.

Greece - fears for tourism

With Britain supplying the second-biggest number of tourists to Greece last year (3 million), the government in Athens is worried about the impact of post-Brexit border controls on the country's tourist sector. Athens is also desperate to avoid any disruption in the operation of its influential merchant shipping sector. Greek shipowners have had a presence in Britain since the 19th century. — AFP

International

UN basks in climate spotlight, amid global conflict clouds

Guterres mobilizing the movers and shakers against climate change

UNITED NATIONS: Today, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will position himself on the frontline against climate change as he presides over a UN emergency summit, a role some say he turned to after difficulties in resolving global conflict. Speaking about rising temperatures, the 70-year-old recently told journalists, smiling discreetly: "I don't pretend I rule the world. My main objective is to make as much noise as I can."

In May, he traveled to the South Pacific where rising sea level threatens entire island nations and more recently to the hurricane-ravaged Bahamas, witnessing a devastation the likes of which he said he had never seen. Mobilizing the globe's movers and shakers against climate change is paramount in the eyes of Guterres, who served as Portugal's prime minister from 1995 to 2002 and often mentions not wanting to leave his grandchildren a destroyed planet.

However the focus on climate change marks an evolution for Guterres, who arrived in the role in early 2017 under the belief that his predecessor, South Korea's Ban Ki-moon, had already achieved great things with the 2015 Paris climate accord. "Guterres wanted to focus instead on crisis management," said Richard Gowan of the International Crisis Group, noting in the same breath that Guterres' "crisis management failed first in Cyprus, then this year in Libya."

Severe humiliation

In Libya, Guterres' humiliation was severe. He traveled to the country to personally advance prospects for a political solution, only to have one of the negotiating parties launch a deadly offensive to seize the capital of Tripoli in the wake of his departure. The secretary-general's human

rights efforts around the world have resulted in meager gains, with many NGOs believing he could do much more. While the UN helped broker the end to a decades-old dispute between Greece and Macedonia, which resulted in the latter country's name change to the Republic of North Macedonia, little has come of efforts to halt conflict in Syria and Yemen or ethnic cleansing in Myanmar.

Behind-the-scenes diplomacy

Following the climate summit, Guterres will steer the UN General Assembly, herding 91 heads of state, six vice presidents, 45 heads of government and more than 40 ministers through "diplomatic fashion week" or "diplomacy speed dating" as the New York gathering is often called at headquarters.

Potential conflict in the Middle East between the United States and Iran will dominate discussion at the General Assembly, where Guterres will adeptly work his skill at behind-the-scenes diplomacy to reduce tensions, in sharp contrast with his flashier center-stage efforts on climate change. On a daily basis, Guterres, who sets his watch ahead by three-quarters of an hour - deeply disturbing to some dignitaries who have visited him - says he strives to manage jetlag and admits that he doesn't sleep on airplanes.

The practicing Catholic said that one of the difficulties of his job is doing "everything I can for the billions of people that live in very difficult circumstances in the world." It's these sorts of interpersonal skills that have earned him praise from the majority of ambassadors working at the UN. Even amid a push by US President Donald Trump to slash UN funding, Guterres has persevered, only just beginning to make sense of an organization he might like to head for a second term. — AFP



BRUSSELS: People take part in a demonstration for the climate called 'Act Now or Never' to raise awareness for climate change, organized by 'Rise for Climate Belgium' yesterday in Brussels. — AFP

Sri Lanka orders fresh probe into bombings

COLOMBO: A fresh inquiry into the Easter suicide bombings that hit Sri Lanka killing at least 258 people was ordered by president Maithripala Sirisena yesterday, after concerns from the Catholic Church that current probes are not independent. The government has blamed a local jihadi group, the National Thowheeth Jama'ath (NTJ) for the April 21 attacks on three churches and three luxury hotels, while the Islamic State group also claimed responsibility.

Sirisena said the commission has wide judicial powers to gather evidence on those responsible for the bombings, and to probe security and intelligence lapses. The five-member panel is headed by a Court of Appeal judge and includes three other judges and a retired civil servant. It is to report back with recommendations within three months.

The inquiry was launched amid fears voiced by the country's Catholic Church that a parliamentary probe and police investigation into the attacks are not sufficiently independent. While the newly-launched inquiry is being carried out by a cross-section of MPs, many opposition members are boycotting it. They say the commission is being used by political parties to deflect any responsibility for failing to stop the attacks. Sirisena, who is also the minister in charge of law and order, has said that all those responsible for the attacks were either killed or under arrest.

A parliamentary public inquiry has heard evidence from intelligence and senior police officials that Sirisena neglected national security issues and failed to convene regular national security council meetings. The president has also been accused of failing to act on precise Indian intelligence that jihadists were about to hit Christian churches



COLOMBO: This photograph shows the view of Sri Lanka's rapidly changing skyline in Colombo. — AFP

and other targets in Sri Lanka. Sirisena has denied the accusations, and sacked his top defense official and the intelligence chief after blaming them for the lapses.

The Police chief, Pujith Jayasundara, was also suspended, and he - along with the secretary to the ministry of defense - are both facing criminal prosecution over their failure to prevent the bombings. Sri Lankan authorities

failed to arrest the known jihadist who led the attacks - Zahran Hashim - before they occurred, the country's top intelligence official has said. Ten days before the bombings, Jayasundara warned that Hashim's NTJ group could target prominent churches. But this was not followed up. The government has admitted there were intelligence failures before the attacks. — AFP

Bangladesh couple challenge wedding tradition

DHAKA: A 19-year-old bride has challenged Bangladesh Muslim wedding tradition by taking a groom to her home to marry him, with the ceremony going viral on social media and sparking debate about women's rights in the conservative nation. In what local media are describing as a first, Khadiza Akter Khushi led hundreds of guests to the wedding ceremony at her groom Tariqul Islam's residence in the western rural district of Meherpur on Saturday, before taking him to her home.

It overturned a longstanding tradition where a groom kicks off the festivities by first going to the house of the bride. "Yes, it is uncommon. But I did it so that other women can follow me," Khushi said yesterday. Islam, 27, said the couple faced no resistance or criticism from families and friends. "We did it as part of our efforts to end gender discrimination and to establish equal rights for women," he told AFP. "I am sure our marriage will send a message that a woman can do whatever a man can." Footage of their wedding went viral online, generating heated debate on social media.

The marriage also made national headlines in the Muslim majority country of 168 million people, where conservative values remain strong. "Definitely it's a big news in our culture," Sadaq Hasan wrote on the Bengali daily Prothom Alo's website, while others wrote "courageous women" and "I want to marry like this". — AFP



MELS: People take part in a ceremony to mark the 'death' of the Pizol glacier (Pizolgletscher) yesterday above Mels, eastern Switzerland. — AFP

Climate activists hold event to mark vanishing glacier

MELS: Hundreds of climate activists paid their respects to a Swiss glacier yesterday that is due to disappear over the next decade, the victim of a warming environment. The Pizol glacier, now at less than a tenth of a square km, in the Glarus Alps in eastern Switzerland has been retreating as temperatures climb. Located about 2,600 meters above sea level, the glacier is due to vanish completely by 2030.

"I have climbed up here countless times," said Matthias Huss glaciologist at ETH Zurich university, addressing the people who joined the march. "It is like the dying of a good friend." At roughly 0.06 square km (0.02 square miles), the glacier is just a fraction of its area in 1987 when scientists

recorded it at 0.32 square km. Just four years ago, its area was put at 0.1 square km, according to the Global Glacier Change Bulletin.

The gathering in Switzerland, which has about 1,500 glaciers, mirrors an action in August when activists and others in Iceland commemorated a melted glacier there. In Switzerland, climate change activism has been rising, including action this year in which dozens of people were arrested after blocking entrances to Swiss banks some people blame for their role in financing energy projects that are reliant on fossil fuels.

Moreover, the country famous for its direct democracy may soon vote on going climate neutral, after organizers of a petition drive called "The Glacier Initiative" collected 120,000 signatures needed to put the measure on the ballot. "We can't save the Pizol glacier anymore," said Huss. But if people acted now, many of the negative effects of climate change could be contained. "Let's do everything we can, so that we can show our children and grandchildren a glacier here in Switzerland a hundred years from now." — Reuters

India seizes one ton of ketamine on boat

NEW DELHI: India's coast guard has arrested six Myanmar men and seized \$42 million worth of ketamine after spotting a suspicious vessel in the Indian Ocean near the Nicobar Islands. The 1,160 kilogram (about 2,500 pounds) drug haul came after coast guard aircraft spotted the boat, which had its lights off, on Wednesday in India's Exclusive Economic Zone, the defense ministry said in a statement. The boat's crew did not respond to radio calls and the coast guard eventually boarded it, with officials finding "57 gunny bundles of suspicious substance" on Friday.

"Preliminary analysis... revealed that the suspicious substance was ketamine and there were 1,160 packets of 1kg each onboard the vessel," the ministry added. The

six Myanmar men and cargo were taken to Port Blair, the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where they were questioned by investigators. They claimed they left Myanmar on September 14 and were due to rendezvous with another boat "operating near the Thailand-Malaysia maritime border line" on Saturday, the statement said.

The Nicobar Islands are located near Southeast Asia, off Myanmar's coast. Parts of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand are in the lawless "Golden Triangle" zone, the world's second-largest drug-producing region after Latin America. Large amounts drugs such as heroin and methamphetamine are churned out in remote jungle labs each year and smuggled across Asia and beyond. — AFP



CAR NICOBAR: Indian Coast Guard personnel (up) pose for photographs as they keep watch on a Myanmar ship's crew after seizing 1160 kg of Ketamine drug from their boat near Car Nicobar islands, part of the Indian union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. — AFP

Analysis

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'Show me the money': Dollar-hungry businesses squeezed in Lebanon

Cars line up to fill their tanks but the worker at the gas station in Lebanon's capital city waves them off, standing by the 'Strike!' signs. "No fuel today," he shouts. The day of industrial action, replicated at petrol pumps across the country, was not really about fuel, it was about the dollars needed to pay for it, or rather the lack of them. "We don't want a crisis ... the sector is bleeding," said Fadi Abu Chakra, a spokesman for fuel distributors who led the strike this week. "We (get paid) in Lebanese pounds, and we need dollars to pay importers. Where are we supposed to get dollars if the banks are not giving them?"

A stagnant local economy and a slowdown in cash injections from Lebanon abroad have reduced the central bank's foreign currency reserves, making it difficult for businesses to buy the dollars they need from banks. Some say they are being forced to go to money exchange houses which charge rates above the official peg of 1,507.5 pounds to the dollar.

Lebanon has not seen such financial strains since its 1975-1990 civil war. The steady pressure has raised concerns for the stability of a country where political tensions - local and regional - are never far from the surface, and which hosts around a million Syrian refugees. Banks in the Middle Eastern state still sell dollars at the official exchange rate but some business owners say they are not able to get the quantities they need from them.

Saddled with one of the world's heaviest public debt burdens at 150 percent of annual gross domestic product, Lebanon's government has declared an economic emergency to try and get its finances under control. "The economic situation is tough but we are not a collapsing country at the financial level," Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil told a news conference this week. "Yes, there is not much liquidity in foreign currencies in people's hands in the market, but the dollar exchange rate is still maintained in the banks."

Lebanon's banking association said banks were satisfying demand for foreign currency and dollars were available. The central bank said lenders were able to tap its supply of US dollars to meet customer requests. "When they are in shortage they buy (dollars) from the central bank," Governor Riad Salameh told Reuters. However, three bankers contacted by Reuters said they were rationing the amount of dollars they could sell for Lebanese pounds.

"The central bank gives a daily quota of dollars for each bank, but people are asking the banks for more dollars than the quota," said one senior banker, who asked to remain anonymous to speak freely. The central bank did not respond to a request for comment. "It's the first time in the history of the Lebanese banking sector that the demand in the dollar market is not being met in this way," the banker said.

The banking sources said there was no problem withdrawing from dollar or Lebanese pound deposit accounts. "It's not an issue of dollar shortage but rather higher demand," said another banker, declining to be named because she was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly. Seven importing companies contacted by Reuters said they were finding it harder or more expensive to obtain dollars. They asked to remain anonymous out of concern that speaking publicly would damage their businesses. A leather importer said banks were taking a few days longer to turn pound cheques into dollars, "and sometimes they tell us sorry, we can't exchange them."

Financial strains

The Lebanese pound has been pegged at its current level against the US dollar for more than two decades and the government has pledged to keep it there. It wants to avoid a devaluation that could hurt people's savings and spending power. Salameh, who has run the central bank for a quarter of a century, has since 2016 boosted reserves through a series of measures, including attracting inflows with high interest rates on long-term, high-value deposits. But this has absorbed liquidity from banks.

And amid anaemic economic growth and political instability, traditional sources of foreign exchange including tourism, real estate and money sent home by citizens abroad have slowed. The central bank's foreign assets, excluding gold, fell around 15% from an all-time high in May last year to \$38.7 billion in mid-September. The central bank said it had received a \$1.4 billion dollar boost in late August from private depositors. Reflecting the increased pressure on Lebanon's finances, Fitch ratings agency recently downgraded it deep into junk territory. Rival ratings agency S&P Global kept Lebanon's credit rating at B-/B but warned that it could be lowered, saying it considered its foreign exchange reserves sufficient to service government debt in the "near term". — Reuters

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This photograph taken Aug 1, 2019 shows people from Dala township arriving by boat in Yangon after crossing the Yangon River. — AFP

Yangon's boom falls short across river

On her scruffy, downtrodden bank of the river, tea-shop-owner Khin works just a few hundred metres across the muddy water from Yangon and dreams of the riches promised by a new bridge linking to Myanmar's commercial heart. "The quicker, the better," 58-year-old Khin Than Myint tells AFP of the construction of the \$168 million bridge, from her shop in Dala township. Spanning the Yangon River, the project is due to be completed in 2022, easing the commute for thousands crossing the waters by boat from rural, underdeveloped Dala.

Currently the sick sometimes cannot even reach hospital before it is too late, Khin Than Myint says. But with the bridge, "people will be able just to walk to Yangon," she says smiling. Residents of Dala have witnessed the changes over the river as foreign investors poured billions of dollars into Yangon. Five-star hotels and gleaming shopping malls, brimming with luxury brands, now punctuate the skyline, competing for space with Shwedagon Pagoda's golden spire.

In Dala, goats wander between rice paddies and resi-

dents negotiate potholed roads on fume-belching motorbikes and tuk-tuks - forbidden in downtown Yangon. A regular ferry service and a fleet of small wooden boats have long been the only link between the two worlds.

Future riches?

After nearly half a century of military rule, Myanmar started opening up in 2011. Over the next seven years, Yangon attracted almost half of the country's foreign investment, some \$25.8 billion, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers. While living standards are improving for many, a third of people languish in poverty, infrastructure remains patchy and much of the country is affected by conflict. Still Yangon's boom has brought jobs for many of Dala's residents too - including the boatmen maneuvering vessels through the river's busy freight traffic.

Aung Myo Win has spent 14 years shuttling people across the river and is torn about the new bridge. The 45-year-old knows it will likely leave him - and dozens of oth-

ers - jobless, but he also sees the bigger picture. "The bridge is for the people," he tells AFP at a jetty near the South Korean-funded construction site. "We must sacrifice ourselves for the sake of development."

Yangon's southern districts were historically swamp-land, the reason the city grew northwards away from the river, says David Ney, urban specialist at The Asia Foundation. "Dala was kind of put on the backburner," he says. But this now looks set to change. An enormous industrial zone spanning the area south and west of the river, largely funded by money from Korea and China, is under consideration.

But some are wary about the realities of rapid development. Yangon taxi driver Chit Nyunt, 68, says on the north bank the rich have got richer, leaving the poor behind. "Rising costs of rent and food mean families can barely cover their costs," he says. In Dala, however, Khin is pinning her hopes on the bridge. "I want to build a nice house and I'll open a bigger restaurant and some shops - just like in Yangon." — AFP

Despite Saudi turmoil, new oil shock unlikely

The past week's sudden surge in oil prices brought to mind the nightmare of shortages, but it's not too likely motorists will be queuing to fill up around the world, analysts say. All it took was a September 14 strike on key oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia to abruptly leave the world's main supplier producing just half its normal amount. That sent the price of Brent crude flying 15 percent higher in a single day. The price on a barrel of crude has come back down since then and by Friday was trading around \$65.

Given the slowdown in the global economy and the abundance of crude produced worldwide, the prospect of a \$100 barrel, for now, doesn't look too likely. "In essence, the world is far better equipped to handle oil shocks than it was in the '70s," explained Harry Tchilinguirian, the head of commodity research at BNP Paribas. In 1973, after an embargo by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) against Israel's allies in the

midst of the Yom Kippur War, and in 1979, after the Iranian revolution, crude oil prices soared in just a few months, bringing developed economies to their knees.

Reduced dependence

"Currently, an oil shock would hardly have the same devastating effects" because countries grew accustomed to such events, economists at Commerzbank said in a note. On top of that, "central banks would not react to a supply shock with massive interest rate hikes to combat rising inflation," they said. Most importantly, however, economies have reduced their dependence on oil. Consumption in the United States, for example, rose from 17.3 million barrels per day (mbd) in 1973 to 20.5 mbd in 2018, an increase of only 18 percent even as the country's real gross domestic product jumped 230 percent. In Germany, households spent only 2.6 percent of their budget on fuel in 2018.

Many economies have taken strides away from heavy oil consumption, thanks to transport and energy-efficient industries, and alternative sources such as natural gas or renewable energy. When oil prices held well above \$100 a barrel between 2011 and 2014, it did not lead to economic collapse. The world has also now become less dependent on a few huge producers. The first oil crisis led to the creation in 1974 of the International Energy Agency, which requires OECD countries to keep in

reserve the equivalent of at least 90 days of their net imports of crude.

On top of that, oil production has branched far beyond the Middle East, said Tchilinguirian, referring to North Sea oil exploited since the 1980s, deep-sea exploitation off the coast of West Africa and Brazil, and the oil sands of Canada. The United States, long deeply dependent upon imports, has become a major producer and exporter thanks to shale oil and new technologies. Such factors help smooth things out in the event of a major disruption like the attack on Saudi facilities.

As such, a country like Saudi Arabia would probably no longer decide to voluntarily suspend its exports "because it could lose its status as a reliable supplier," says Alan Gelder, refined products specialist for Wood Mackenzie. Even if an oil shock is unlikely, "you can never say there is zero risk," said Andrew Lebow, oil market specialist for Commodity Research Group. "Especially," he added "if there is a major war that closes the Strait of Hormuz," which a third of all petroleum products shipped by sea pass through.

The effects of a possible oil shock, however, "should not be underestimated," the Commerzbank economists warned. "Many economies are currently struggling with problems anyway and the central banks have little room for maneuver (...) to help the affected economies," they said. — AFP

Dream of reviving north Cyprus ghost town may turn sour

A wire fence on a Cypriot beach is all that separates Pavlos Iacovou from the hotel he owns but has not visited in decades - now a sudden decision from Ankara could change all that. The tourist resort of Varosha on the island's southeastern coast was once known as the pearl of Cyprus for its crystal waters and glitzy nightlife. A premier holiday destination with some 50 hotels offering 10,000 beds, it became a Mediterranean playground for Hollywood stars such as Sophia Loren and Brigitte Bardot. But since 1974, Varosha has fallen into disrepair, gradually turning into a ghost town, fenced off by occupying Turkish soldiers and abandoned to the elements. Now Turkey and the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) have announced the resort may soon be reopened and passed from decades of military control to the TRNC. It's a scenario which fills many Greek Cypriots like Iacovou and his wife Toulla with dread, but at least it could lead to some form of closure.

"I don't want to be here looking at my hotel from afar. I want to be on my terrace, sipping a lemonade and forgetting this nightmare," said Iacovou, who was 19 when he fled from the hotel his grandparents built. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu vowed earlier this month Varosha would be reopened, two weeks after Turkish Cypriot authorities organized the first ever press tour of the resort since the Turkish military invasion of northern Cyprus in the summer of 1974.

The intervention followed an Athens-engineered coup attempting to unite the island with Greece. Then in 1983 the North declared independence in a move recognized only by Ankara. The international communi-

ty still recognizes the government in Nicosia as the island's sole authority.

Price to pay

The Security Council has in several resolutions called for UN administration of Varosha and for its original inhabitants to return. And the European Court of Human Rights ordered Turkey to pay compensation to Varosha's dispossessed former inhabitants. "In total, Varosha could represent more than five billion euros compensation," according to Cypriot economist Costa Apostolides. "This is too much to pay for Turkey," he said, referring to the struggling Turkish economy.

To avoid reparations, Turkey could return Varosha's properties to surviving former inhabitants. But Apostolides suspects Turkey may just transfer its jurisdiction to the TRNC, in effect retaining de facto control. "If Varosha becomes a nice beach resort again, it would be an important economic driver for the TRNC," said Apostolides. "The TRNC won't let Varosha go easily." This would be a disaster for the original owners, says Iacovou. "Which bank will give me a loan to invest in rebuilding my hotel in an occupied zone?"

Before any rebuilding can begin, ownership of Varosha properties will need to be certified, a process which could lead to potential new disputes. The archives of land titles were lost during the Turkish invasion, said Greek-Cypriot architect Andreas Lordos. "Reconstructing Varosha will be a daunting operation," said Lordos, whose family owns six hotels in Varosha. "There is no water or electricity, and numerous walls are on the verge of collapse."

But after a freeze of more than four decades, Turkey may now be emboldened to act, said Amhet Sozen, a political science professor at Eastern Mediterranean University in Nicosia. "For 45 years, Greek Cypriots have been asking the impossible: An end to Turkey's presence on the island. Turkey is now saying to them: You need to negotiate or we will open Varosha on our own terms."

With UN-brokered peace talks at a virtual standstill, Sozen sees the sudden focus on Varosha as Turkish "retali-



Pavlos Iacovou, a Greek Cypriot owner of a hotel in Varosha, poses for a picture near the fenced-off touristic area of Varosha in the Turkish controlled ghost town of Famagusta on Sept 13, 2019. — AFP

ation" for a row over offshore energy resources being developed by the Greek Cypriots. Under a proposal from the north's foreign minister, Kudret Ozersay, reconstruction will be done in stages, starting with the part closest to Famagusta, a port city Varosha was part of before it was fenced off. Greek-Cypriot owners of Varosha properties hope Nicosia, which advocates for either the direct return of Varosha or for it to be administered by the UN, will take a strong stance. "We really need the (Greek Cypriot) government to stop being passive and start to find a compromise," said Lordos. "We cannot continue gambling, or we will lose everything." He hopes that as it has been untouched by human activity ever since 1974, Varosha could be redeveloped as an eco-resort.

Just 14 km south of Varosha on the Greek-Cypriot side, the beach resort of Ayia Napa welcomes millions of tourists each year - to the detriment of its fauna and flora. "The history of Varosha is tragic, but this could allow us to avoid the mistakes of the past decades," said documentary maker Vasia Markides. — AFP

Business

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Zain inks MoU with Dell Technologies

Agreement aims to deliver innovative cloud services



KUWAIT: Eaman Al-Roudhan, Mohammed Amin and executive management representatives from Zain and Dell Technologies during the signing of the MoU yesterday.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Dell Technologies that will enable the service operator to implement a variety of technological solutions that will benefit clients operating in Kuwait. The MoU aims to achieve heightened levels of productivity, efficiency and profitability for clients as Zain continues its digital transformation journey and further enhances its role as a key supporter of the New Kuwait Vision 2035.

The MoU signing ceremony, held at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's Shuwaikh headquarters, drew attendance from Eaman Al-Roudhan, Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer; and Mohammed Amin, Senior Vice-President, Middle East, Russia, Africa and Turkey (MERAT) at Dell Technologies; as well as executive management representatives from both partners.

Eaman Al-Roudhan commented, "Dell Technologies offers a comprehensive suite of solutions that meet our requirements to provide quality offerings to our clients. This strategic alliance will help solidify our position as a leading active partner of the New Kuwait Vision 2035, further enabling us to set the foundation to capitalize on the abundant opportunities presented by digital transformation."

Mohammed Amin said, "Our partnership with Zain Kuwait reflects our shared ambitions to drive transformation in the region's telecom sector. By modernizing the IT infrastructure and implementing advanced technology solutions, organizations can break down silos to unlock new discoveries by building an environment conducive to inno-



Eaman Al-Roudhan and Mohammed Amin



Eaman Al-Roudhan (right) and Mohammed Amin sign the MoU.

- Agreement solidifies Zain's position as a leading active partner in Kuwait Vision 2035
- Zain becomes a Metal Partner for Dell Technologies in a bid to drive business coverage and go-to-market initiatives across its B2B and B2C platforms

vation. We are therefore committed to dedicating time and expertise to support Zain Kuwait's vision of establishing a strong digital foundation, which will create lucrative opportunities for themselves and their customers." As part of the agreement, Zain will imple-

ment a multi-cloud IT strategy to leverage a range of cloud-based services. Dell Technologies will also enable Zain to provide value-added cloud services to customers, who will be able to benefit from modern enterprise technologies such as

Infrastructure-as-a-Service, Platform-as-a-Service, workforce transformation, and more. Zain will also benefit from the seamless integration of a wide range of Dell Technologies' solutions with Zain's internal applications. This will not only unify user

data and facilitate accurate user profiling, but will also develop unique processes given the solutions' ability to create more focused and targeted reports and campaigns.

In addition, as market and consumer demands evolve, telcos today are implementing solutions that are easy to deploy and drive down infrastructure costs and complexity. Dell Technologies' Network Functions Virtualization (NFV) solutions enables Zain to access databases remotely in an intelligent, agile and secure fashion in a bid to further strengthen the service operator's network infrastructure.

UK travel giant Thomas Cook faces collapse

LONDON: Thomas Cook's 178-year existence was hanging by a thread yesterday after the iconic British travel firm struggled to find further private investment and is now relying on an unlikely government bailout. The operator said Friday that it needed £200 million (\$250 million) or else face administration, which could affect 600,000 holidaymakers and require Britain's largest repatriation since World War II.

A source close to the negotiations told AFP on Saturday that the company had failed to find the cash from private investors and would collapse unless the government intervened.

But ministers are unlikely to step in due to worries about the pioneering operator's longer-term viability, the Times reported on Saturday, leaving it on the brink. "We will know by tomorrow (Sunday) if agreement is reached," the source said.

The firm's shareholders and creditors were due to meet early yesterday, with a meeting of the board of directors to be held in the afternoon. The Transport Salaried Staffs Association, which represents workers at the company, called on the government to save the firm.

"The company must be rescued no matter what," said TSSA General Secretary, Manuel Cortes.

Shadow business secretary Rebecca Long Bailey called on the government to step in by "taking an equity stake to avoid this crisis". Foreign minister Dominic Raab promised tourists affected that they would not end up stuck abroad.

"I can reassure people that in the worst-case scenario, the contingency planning is there for people to avoid being stranded," he told BBC's Andrew Marr

Show. Two years ago, the collapse of Monarch Airlines prompted the British government to take emergency action to return 110,000 stranded passengers, costing taxpayers some £60 million on hiring planes.

The government at the time described it as Britain's "biggest-ever peacetime repatriation".

But holidaymakers were already reporting problems, with guests at a hotel in Tunisia owed money by Thomas Cook being asked for extra money before being allowed to leave, according to a tourist interviewed by AFP. "After an hour they left the hotel and are currently at the airport," said a spokesman for the Tunisian interior ministry.

The group's activities would cease immediately in the event of bankruptcy, forcing its travel agencies to close, grounding its planes and leaving the group's 22,000 global employees — 9,000 of whom are in Britain-out of a job. Chinese peer Fosun, which was already the biggest shareholder in Thomas Cook, agreed last month to inject £450 million into the busi-

ness as part of an initial £900 million rescue package. In return, the Hong Kong-listed conglomerate acquired a 75 percent stake in Thomas Cook's tour operating division and 25 percent of its airline unit.

Thomas Cook in May revealed that first-half losses widened on a major write-down, caused in part by Brexit uncertainty that delayed summer holiday bookings. The group, which has around 600 stores across the UK, has also come under pressure from fierce online competition.

Cabinet maker Thomas Cook created the travel firm in 1841 to carry temperance supporters by train between British cities. It soon began arranging foreign trips, being the first operator to take British travellers on escorted visits to Europe in 1855, to the United States in 1866 and on a round-the-world trips in 1872. The company was also a pioneer in introducing "circular note"-products that would later become traveller's cheques. It now has annual sales of £9 billion, serving 19 million customers in 16 countries. — AFP

Business

Samsung Kuwait roadshow takes fans into Note10's world of limitless possibilities

Exclusive offers from Ooredoo available at roadshow in The Avenues

KUWAIT: To celebrate the launch of Galaxy Note10 with next-level power, Samsung Gulf Electronics is bringing the Galaxy Note10 roadshow to Kuwait. The stand is located at The Avenues mall Kuwait from September 19-28.

Inspired by a generation that flows seamlessly between work and life, the Galaxy Note10 range combines elegant design with powerful performance and productivity tools to give users the freedom to work the way they want and showcase their creative spirit, all on-the-go. The unique activities will serve as experience spaces that will be open for everyone.

Guests who visit the roadshow will each receive a passport to carry with them throughout their Note10 journey. They will get to experience the

latest Note10 technology first-hand - including Live Focus video, Cinematic Infinity Display, AR Doodle, S Pen Handwriting to Text and S Pen Air Actions as well as next-generation wearable including the Galaxy Watch Active2 and Galaxy Buds. Those wanting to push the boundaries of self-expression can create instantly their customized content at the stand to share on their social media platforms.

Visitors who complete three activities out of five will be eligible to enter a raffle draw and get a chance to win amazing prizes, including a holiday package for two to Thailand. Also, for the roadshow duration only, exclusive offers from Ooredoo are available on the purchase of the Galaxy Note10/Note10+.



Wall Street Week Ahead

Fund managers gird for long trade war after FedEx slide

NEW YORK: A profit warning and muted outlook from package delivery company FedEx Corp is prompting some high-profile fund managers to prepare for the trade war between the United States and China to last longer than many had originally anticipated.

Shares of the shipping company, whose business is often seen as a proxy for growth in the global economy, tumbled 13 percent Wednesday, a day after it said it planned to

ground some planes and cut costs due to the effects of the trade war between the world's two largest economies.

"We were hopeful of a trade deal and some sort of return to normalcy and that has not taken place," FedEx's chief executive, Frederick Smith, said on its earnings call. Companies ranging from parts supplier O'Reilly Automotive to network gear maker Juniper Networks have said the trade war is weighing on their earnings. Yet investors have focused more on FedEx because the nature of its business touches several industries across the globe, including consumer spending.

An extended trade war could take the wind out of the sails of the rally in the S&P 500 benchmark index, which has advanced in line with expectations for an imminent breakthrough in the trade war. High-level talks between the two countries are expected to resume again in October. The conflict between

the two countries could take a decade to resolve, White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow warned on Sept. 6.

As a result, fund managers are moving away from US industrials and technology companies that may be most affected by higher tariffs and instead are looking to pick up some out-of-favor companies and assets that offer long-term opportunities despite the trade war. "It's obvious that China will try to drag this out as long as it can and hope it disappears after the (2020 presidential) election," said Brian Yacktmann, whose YCG Enhanced Fund is up nearly 31 percent for the year to date.

Yacktmann is moving more into the shares of European luxury goods makers such as Kering SA, whose brands include Gucci and Bottega Veneta, that have pricing power but have fallen on concerns about a slowdown in the Chinese economy. Shares of Kering are up

12.4 percent for the year to date, including a 10 percent drop over the last three months. "These are companies that can just pass tariffs on because people want to buy the status symbol," he said.

Emily Roland, co-chief investment strategist at John Hancock Investment Management, said her firm has been increasing its "measures of protection" against an economic downturn caused in part by an escalating trade war. Despite a 20.1 percent gain in the sector this year, she said she still sees opportunities in utilities companies due in part to their above-average dividend yields and growth potential.

"Rather than reacting and getting whipsawed by the sudden shifts in sentiment, we believe that investors can create diversified portfolios that seek to minimize downside risks from the trade war, however long it may last," she said. Not all fund managers are con-

vinced the trade war is here to stay. "We still think one way or another Trump will end it before the election," said Lamar Villere, a portfolio manager at New Orleans-based Villere & Co.

As a result, he has been moving more assets into sectors such as semiconductors, an industry which will be included in \$50 billion worth of goods that will be subject to 30 percent tariffs starting Oct. 1. "The market is giving you opportunities because we think that this is more of a blip than anything else," he said. Emmanuel Roman, chief executive officer at bond giant Pimco, said Thursday at the CNBC Institutional Investor Delivering Alpha Conference that he is seeing opportunities in emerging market bonds due to the pessimism from the trade war. "Obviously the big elephant in the room is the trade war with China and how it will resolve itself," he said. —Reuters

NBK Economic Report

OECD slashes world growth outlook; Brexit deadline nears

KUWAIT: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) claimed that the global economy risked entering a new, long-lasting low-growth phase if governments continued to hesitate over how to respond to the latest pressures.

The trade war between the US and China has plunged global growth to its lowest levels in a decade, leading the OECD to slash its forecasts for growth. "The global order that regulated trade is gone and we are in a new era of less certain, more bilateral and sometimes assertive trade relations," OECD chief economist Laurence Boone said. The US would grow 2.4 percent this year and 2.0 percent next year, versus earlier projections of 2.8 percent and 2.3 percent respectively. China would also take a hit as the second-largest economy, growing 6.1 percent in 2019 and 5.7 percent in 2020, outlooks the OECD previously cut from 6.2 percent and 6.0 percent.

Meanwhile, as Britain nears its exit out of the EU, forecast for growth is at 1 percent in 2019 and 0.9 percent in 2020 - only if it leaves the EU smoothly with a transition period which is far from certain. If Britain opts to leave without a deal, its economy will be 2 percent lower than otherwise in 2020-2021. The euro area would not be immune to such negative spillovers and would see its GDP cut by 0.5 percent over 2020-2021, also aided by a slowdown in its biggest economy - Germany. Looking at the broader picture, the global economy is now expected to slow to 2.9 percent this year from 3.6 percent last year before a predicted 3.0 percent in 2020.

A divided central bank

The US Federal Reserve has lowered its interest rate by 25bp to a range of 1.75-2 percent. The cut, marking the second in 2019, was highly anticipated by markets and failed to drive the greenback lower. The move comes just a week after the ECB's decision to cut its deposit rates and launch a new QE program. The Fed's language mirrored that of its July's policy statement pointing to weakening exports and business investments, with the bank claiming the cut is aimed at aiding the US economy amid "uncertainties" about future growth. President Trump reacted in a way which seems to have become customary - critiquing Powell for lacking "guts" as he has repeatedly criticized the Fed for cutting rates too slowly. Markets are now pricing in at least one more interest rate cut from the Fed this year. However, officials were divided regarding the decision and the need for future cuts. Seven members voted in favor of

Wednesday's cut, while two members wanted to hold rates steady and one sought to cut even further. Though there are some points of weakness in the economy and inflation remains lower than desired, consumers are still spending resulting in solid retail sales and a stable job market. Despite cutting rates twice this year, interest rates in the US remain far higher than those in other countries and are even negative in parts of Europe and Japan.

Repo turbulence

The Fed meeting followed several days of market disruption as the repo rate spiked last Tuesday, forcing the central bank to intervene. Borrowers in the repo market paid as much as 10 percent versus rates of just 2 percent seen just a week prior, prompting the Fed to pour billions of dollars into the financial system. The bank initially pumped \$53 billion of cash into the system, and later announced two other doses to follow. The move reveals a lack of liquidity, though has been warranted as Powell explained due to companies needing a lot of cash for tax payments and for investors buying government bonds. He later added that these issues have no larger implications for the economy, and that the bank played its role appropriately.

Trade talks back on the table

The Trump administration has rolled out tariffs on Chinese imports since 2018 in an attempt to gain leverage in talks, while Chinese officials insist on wiping them out before they agree to any broader deal. The US has so far placed 35 percent tariffs on \$250 billion of Chinese products, while China retaliated with tariffs on \$110 billion of US imports. Looking ahead, the US is scheduled to raise existing tariffs to 30 percent on Oct. 15, and tax another \$156 billion of products in December. Both sides recently showed signs of goodwill by suspending some planned tariffs as talks resume this week between US and Chinese officials, though a lasting peace between the world's two largest economies seems obscure.

Equities rise and treasury yields fall

Global stocks posted minor gains on Friday after central banks decisions hinted new easing measures. The S&P 500 is up 3.34 percent since the beginning of September, currently at 2,992 - near its all-time high of 3,027 seen a few months back. The Dow Jones Industrial Average followed a similar path rising 3.4 percent in the same period, currently trading at 27,094. US Treasury yields fell following the announcement as the 10-year note dropped to 1.768 percent though later edged higher. The two and ten year yields came close to inversion, with shorter term yields rising as the long end fell.

BOE copes with the Brexit era

The Bank of England unanimously voted to keep interest rates on hold at 0.75 percent as it awaits further clarity regarding the

Brexit debacle. In its statement, the bank said inflation will likely become weaker if Brexit uncertainty persists, while data revealed just a few days prior that annual inflation dropped to a three year low of 1.7 percent from 2.1 percent. In its meeting minutes, the MPC said delays to an agreement on the UK's relationship with the EU would harm consumer and business confidence - made worse by the trade war between the US and China which has lowered economic growth rates in both countries this year. The UK economy contracted in the second quarter of the year by 0.2 percent. Looking ahead, the bank expects the economy to expand by 0.2 percent in the third quarter in hopes of avoiding a technical recession defined as two consecutive quarters of decline.

Most notably - for the first time the minutes recognized an outcome of a no-deal Brexit, stating it would lead to weakened growth, higher inflation, and a further drop to the pound. Policymakers signaled that rates are likely to rise gradually back from its post-2008 crisis lows only if there was a "smooth Brexit". Under a no-deal - the pound falls, inflation rises, and the economy slows leading to either cuts or rises according to the BOE. Looking ahead, PM Boris Johnson has said a deal is possible at the crucial summit of EU leaders on October 17th, but has insisted that the UK will leave on October 31st deadline with or without a deal. EU commission president Jean-Claude Juncker offered confidence that the EU and UK can reach a Brexit agreement before the October deadline, sending the pound back over the \$1.25 mark.

SNB lends a hand to commercial banks

Switzerland's National Bank also held its interest rates steady irrespective of rising global pressures and a lowering of their own growth forecast for the year. The key rate was kept at -0.75 percent and the bank cited weaker prospects abroad. Furthermore, the bank is adjusting the basis for calculating negative interest by increasing the exemption threshold above which commercial banks who park their money with the central bank have to pay negative interest. Moving forward, banks can now store more money with the SNB before negative rates apply to 25 times their minimum reserves from 20 times now. In 2018, bank's paid nearly 2bn Swiss francs in negative rates which have remained for nearly five years now. For this year, the central bank dropped its inflation prediction to 0.4 percent from its earlier forecast of 0.6 percent. Additionally it predicts a rate of 0.2 percent in 2020 compared with the 0.7 percent it had forecasted in the previous quarter.

Last hawk in town

Continuing its path against the general trend in global monetary policy, Norway's central bank opted to raise interest rates for the fourth time in the past year. The bank increased rates by 25bps to 1.5 percent and indicated it was more likely to hike in the next year than cut. Most of the world's major central bank delivered a dovish

position of either cutting or holding interest rates. However, Oystein Olsen - Norges Bank governor - insists that forces such as the petroleum and related industries are driving the present growth which other countries lack. He added that the bank "had to do the right thing for the Norwegian economy now" leading to the rate increase. Though later, he added that the uncertainty over global growth was the main reason for indicating that the increase could be the last of the cycle. Looking at inflation, the annual rate declined to 1.6 percent in August from 1.9 percent in the previous month - it's slowest since January 2018.

Japan's stubborn inflation

Crossing over to Asia, Japan's central bank held its overnight interest rate at -0.1 percent as it attempts to manage the impact from US interest rate cuts and a slowing global economy. The bank remains reluctant to add more monetary stimulus itself, promising a review at its next meeting and gave an explicit warning that it was concerned about risks to the economic recovery. Lower US interest rates reduce the yield gap between Japanese and US bonds which could lead to the appreciation in the yen, causing further harm to Japanese exports already under immense pressure from a slowdown in China. The BOJ has been struggling for the past 6 years to drive inflation closer to the 2 percent target, and many current officials believe that further cuts would pose a risk to financial stability and could even backfire - undermining inflation rather than driving it closer to its 2 percent target. Still, Governor Kuroda has repeatedly promised to act if necessary to maintain momentum towards the inflation goal. The USD/JPY pair has risen around 1.62 percent this month, currently trading at around the 107.58 level.

A sudden disruption for oil markets

Last week, oil prices posted their largest intraday jump following a strike at a Saudi Arabian oil facility which wiped nearly 6 percent of global supplies. State energy producer Saudi Aramco lost about 5.7 million barrels per day of output after aerial vehicles struck the world's biggest crude-processing facility. The attack suddenly raised geopolitical risks in global energy markets and sent safe-haven assets higher. Brent crude rose more than 20 percent to a four-month high of 71.95, later recovering to the 64.28 level seen today. The movement characterizes the fragility of the world's oil market - an intricate system which delivers 100mio barrels a day to consumers all around the world. Aramco's plant has since restored 2mio barrels that were lost, and the energy minister Abdulaziz bin Salman claims production will reach 11mio barrels by the end of September.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar
USD/KWD opened at 0.30370 yesterday morning.

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.550
Euro	339.270
Sterling Pound	384.800
Canadian dollar	231.950
Turkish lira	53.380
Swiss Franc	311.400
US Dollar Buying	297.250
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.832
Indian Rupees	4.295
Pakistani Rupees	1.961
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.679
Nepali Rupees	2.680
Singapore Dollar	223.400
Hongkong Dollar	38.878
Bangladesh Taka	3.593
Philippine Peso	5.856
Thai Bhat	10.013
Malaysian ringgit	77.890
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.268
Qatari Riyal	83.702
Omani Riyal	791.553
Bahraini Dinar	809.220
UAE Dirham	82.972
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.500

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.690
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	110.750
Jordanian Dinar	430.120
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.330
Rate for Transfer	
US Dollar	304.190
Canadian Dollar	230.813
Sterling Pound	373.865
Euro	337.075
Swiss Frank	301.815
Bahrain Dinar	808.955
UAE Dirhams	83.220
Qatari Riyals	84.460
Saudi Riyals	82.015
Jordanian Dinar	430.328
Egyptian Pound	18.398
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.683
Indian Rupees	4.233
Pakistani Rupees	1.944
Bangladesh Taka	3.602
Philippines Peso	5.861
Cyprus pound	18.097
Japanese Yen	3.850

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.373616	0.387516
Czech Korune	0.004993	0.014293
Danish Krone	0.041045	0.046045
Euro	0.328602	0.342302
Georgian Lari	0.132109	0.132109
Hungarian 0.001148	0.001338	
Norwegian Krone	0.029902	0.035102
Romanian Leu	0.065272	0.082122
Russian ruble	0.004580	0.004580
Slovakia	0.009106	0.019106
Swedish Krona	0.027463	0.032463
Swiss Franc	0.301385	0.312385
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.198314	0.210314
New Zealand Dollar	0.184818	0.194318
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.224581	0.233561
US Dollars	0.300450	0.305750
US Dollars Mint	0.300950	0.305750

Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002933	0.003734
Chinese Yuan	0.041569	0.045069
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036955	0.039705
Indian Rupee	0.003692	0.004464
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002746	0.002926
Korean Won	0.000245	0.000260
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069394	0.075394
Nepalese Rupee	0.002649	0.002989
Pakistan Rupee	0.001341	0.002111
Philippine Peso	0.005740	0.006940
Singapore Dollar	0.216223	0.226223
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001319	0.001899
Taiwan	0.009702	0.009882
Thai Baht	0.009650	0.010200
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.801672	0.809732
Egyptian Pound	0.018646	0.022006
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000211	0.000271
Jordanian Dinar	0.424644	0.436444
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021390	0.045390
Omani Riyal	0.785908	0.793809
Qatar Riyal	0.082996	0.083830
Saudi Riyal	0.080127	0.081427
Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
Tunisian Dinar	0.102558	0.110558
Turkish Lira	0.046495	0.056340
UAE Dirhams	0.082284	0.083112
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

Business

Global mining industry seeks to polish tarnished reputation

Wildcat miners, including children, risking lives to unearth metals, minerals

LONDON: The global mining industry is increasingly showing a commitment towards greater respect for human rights and the environment, but is accused of wanting to improve its reputation without seeking real progress. Wildcat miners, including children, are risking their lives daily to unearth metals and minerals they sell to mining companies. In return, they earn a subsistence wage but not the working rights of a legal and salaried mining group employee.

"While industry initiatives on certain minerals and metals are helpful, companies are still responsible for undertaking comprehensive human rights due diligence across all minerals and metals in their supply chains," Eniko Horvath, senior researcher at the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC), told AFP.

In June, dozens of illegal miners died when part of a copper mine collapsed in southeastern DR Congo. The mine was in the Kolwezi area operated by Kamoto Copper Company, a subsidiary of the Swiss giant Glencore. Meanwhile at the start of the year, a dam collapse at a mine operated by Brazilian group Vale unleashed a tsunami of mud that killed more than 200 people while around 100 more went missing.

China, also the scene of fatal mining accidents, has additionally been in the spotlight for its dumping of toxic waste in Baotou, Inner Mongolia, as Beijing drives global production of rare earth elements used in key technologies such as smartphones. Faced with rising criticism, the mining industry says it wants to adopt standards of good governance. The London Metal Exchange, the global center for trading in industrial metals, recently adopted new ethical standards to ensure better traceability of raw materials, especially those most at risk such as cobalt used heavily in high-end technology.

"As metals play an increasingly important role in society with increased focus on ethical supply chains,

the LME's role and responsibility is vital," the exchange's incoming and first female chair Gay Huey Evans said on her appointment. Earlier this month, the World Gold Council (WGC) issued "Responsible Gold Mining Principles", although the guidance is non-binding.

The industry body calls upon its members to "respect the human rights" of workers and communities affected by mining activities. "We will work to ensure that fragile ecosystems, critical habitats and endangered species are protected from damage and we will plan for responsible mine closure," according to another directive.

A spokesman for Barrick Gold, the world's largest producer of the precious metal, told AFP that the group was already meeting or exceeding the new WGC guidance, while Glencore has laid out a similar charter to that provided by the World Gold Council. Elsewhere, BMW along with German chemical giant BASF and Samsung last week announced a joint project to ensure "responsible" cobalt mining in DR Congo. "It's great to see these statements of purpose and expressions of a willingness to meet these standards, but they have to be matched with action," Amnesty International official Lucy Graham told AFP.

"What we really want to see is laws that are going to legally require industry to mine minerals responsibly and transparently."

'PR whitewash'

Jamie Kneen, from MiningWatch Canada, said he believed companies and industry bodies were simply providing "yet another effort at PR whitewash". He added: "The standards that they are incorporating are... self-administered and audited by unaccountable third parties; and they are explicitly focused on providing confidence to investors and buyers with not even a



BRUMADINHO, MINAS GERAIS, Brazil: In this file photo, a sniffer dog locates body parts as emergency crews continue the slow process of picking through the mud looking for bodies, 99 days after the collapse of the Corrego do Feijao dam of mining company Vale in Brumadinho, Minas Gerais State, Brazil. —AFP

mention of host or affected communities." Kneen said there was a need for "enforceable... legal and regulatory standards at all levels". To help companies face their responsibilities, human rights group BHRRC has this month launched a dedicated website, the Transition Minerals Tracker.

"It seeks to improve the human rights practices of companies that produce the minerals vital to the renewable energy and electric vehicles sectors, by shedding light on the key human rights risks in the geographies where they operate", noted Horvath. —AFP

Sun-seekers feel the strain of Thomas Cook crisis

LONDON: The possible collapse of Thomas Cook has "ruined" the holidays of thousands of tourists, who fear being trapped far from home despite official reassurances that they will be looked after.

Some 600,000 holidaymakers are currently abroad on trips organised by Thomas Cook, including 150,000 British tourists. The mass travel pioneer is mainly active in Europe and around the Mediterranean, with Antalya in Turkey and Mallorca in Spain its flagship destinations. Jackie and Amy Ward, a mother and daughter on holiday in Mallorca, told Britain's Sky News that their holidays in the sun had been "ruined" by uncertainty over their return. Jackie Ward said that she had heart disease and would run out of medicine if she did not return home on Monday, as planned.

A stranger had offered to buy a ticket for the Newcastle tourist to ensure that she could return safely if the firm collapsed, Sky News reported. Thomas Cook's hundreds of service providers were also wracked with anxiety over the company's troubles, with some facing

closure themselves if the tour operator goes under.

Managers of the hotel Les Orangers in Hammamet, Tunisia, briefly delayed the departure of a group of tourists until they could verify that payments owed by Thomas Cook had been made, a Tunisian interior ministry spokesman told AFP. The resort managers requested additional payments even though the group had already paid the costs of their stay in full, a tourist told AFP.

"After an hour they left the hotel and are currently at the airport," said the government spokesman.

"There are other Thomas Cook groups in Hammamet, Sousse, Mahdia and Djerba — all payment procedures have been settled," he added.

Plans dashed

In addition to travellers worried about their return, others are concerned that their much-anticipated holiday plans are about to collapse. Briton Chloe Hardy told the BBC that she was scheduled to fly to Greece on Thursday to get married on a Thomas Cook trip she booked more than a year ago. "Our wedding is costing almost £12,000 with things we have bought here, the wedding package, everything we have organised with the resort wedding coordinator," she said. "We've had constant questions from our family that we are unable to answer," she added. "This is causing great concern, worry and stress to all of us involved."

Others poured out their frustrations



HAMMAMET: British tourists walk outside the Orange Beach hotel in Tunisia's coastal town of Hammamet yesterday. Thomas Cook's 178-year existence was hanging by a thread on Sunday after the iconic British travel firm struggled to find further private investment and is now relying on an unlikely government bailout. —AFP

on Twitter. "I'm supposed to fly on Tuesday and would really appreciate some info," complained @JoshSmith1990. "Very stressful flying out on 15 October for a wedding spent almost 2 years paying for the holiday will be so gutted if we can't go please someone help them," added @bullyforyou180. British authorities sought to reassure travellers, saying that all tour packages purchased in Britain and the European Union were protected by law.

In Britain, the "ATOL guarantee" covers repatriation and refunds for holiday-

makers if the company goes bust, with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) responsible for getting them home.

The CAA has got experience, orchestrating the repatriation of some 85,000 people following the bankruptcy of the British airline Monarch two years ago, but the collapse of Thomas Cook would be of a completely different magnitude. The crisis comes six months after thousands of travellers were left stranded in Europe and the United States by collapse of Icelandic low-cost airline Wow. —AFP

Airbus irked by Spain's choice of fighter jet partner

MADRID: Airbus has sharply criticized Madrid for choosing defense systems specialist Indra to coordinate Spain's participation in a Franco-German project to develop a new-generation fighter jet, in which the aviation giant is deeply involved. The decision, which was taken by the defense ministry in late August, saw Indra chosen to coordinate Spain's work on a stealth fighter whose development is being led by Airbus and France's Dassault Aviation.

Airbus chief executive Guillaume Faury told online business journal El Confidencial the group "didn't see the decision coming" as it was expected to be selected. He said that Indra was a sensors and equipment producer but had no capabilities in air-planes, drones nor satellites.

"You don't want someone who makes wheels or computers designing your car. You want a carmaker," he told El Confidencial on a visit to Spain to convince the government to rethink its decision.

Indra is a Spanish technology and defense group which had sales of 3 billion euros (\$3.3 billion) in 2018. Airbus group sales in the same year totalled 63.7 billion.

The ambitious Future Combat Air System (FCAS) project will combine a new generation fighter plane with drones, satellites and other aircraft to help reduce the EU's long reliance on US planes and equipment. It aims to have the new plane operational by 2040, when it will replace the current generation of Rafale and Eurofighter jets.

Speaking to El Confidencial at the start of his visit, Faury said it was "difficult to imagine" anyone coming in for the design phase who didn't have the same expertise as Airbus "in planes, drones or satellites, but only in systems and sensors". But in a separate interview with El Confidencial on the same day, Defence Minister Angel Olivares showed no willingness to reverse the decision.

"This is not a circumstantial decision, which can be changed overnight. We have decided on Indra, and we will continue to insist that they work together with Airbus and the rest of the industry."

He also expressed the government's frustration at its weakening influence within the Airbus Group, in which it holds a four percent stake, compared with the 12 percent held by France and by Germany.

"The relative importance of Spain within Airbus is shrinking," he said. "In the latest restructuring, Airbus Spain's management no longer has an active role on the executive committee of the Group, for the first time." Since 2015, Spain's representative on the board of directors has been chosen by Airbus itself, against the wishes of the Spanish government. —AFP



The combat fighter is to go into service in 2040

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Anwar Abdulkareem Altafar
2. Abrar Mohsen Eissa
3. Sameh Talaat Bader Mohamed
4. Saeed Subhi Jerjes
5. Mariam Saad Lilo Alsaraji

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

Deutsche Bahn sees big windfall from climate change package

BERLIN: Germany's Deutsche Bahn expects the government's 50 billion euro climate change package to generate the railway company's biggest growth spurt in its 180-year history, the state-owned firm's boss said yesterday. In a telephone press conference, Richard Lutz said the measures announced on Friday, including a cut in value-added tax (VAT) on train tickets, would give it an additional 20 billion euros in revenue by 2030.

Although the package, in response to growing public concern about the impact of climate change, disappointed climate activists, individual measures such as surcharges on domestic flights and the VAT

Thousands of Swiss protest 5G wireless over health fears

BERN: Thousands of people protested in the Swiss capital Bern Saturday over the roll-out of a 5G wireless technology across the country, which they fear could damage people's health.

The protesters, many carrying placards, gathered in front of the Swiss parliament building, in a bid to stop

cut are expected to have an impact on the companies concerned.

"We are now on the attack and rebuilding," he said. Europe's railway companies are expected to be major beneficiaries of a shift away from car and air transport towards public transportation offerings that emit proportionally less carbon. The company planned to buy 30 new high-speed trains by 2023 to cater for the expected growth in passenger numbers, a one billion euro bonanza for train-building companies. The railway's current ICE-4 trains are built by Siemens and Bombardier, but Lutz said the new units would not be of the same type. France's Alstom is another potential supplier.

Financially strained Deutsche Bahn, which has been under fire over delays and for having insufficient capacity, said it would invest 11 billion euros of the extra cash in recapitalising. Despite running at a profit, the company has had to take on extra debt to finance investment.

Deutsche Bahn operates Europe's largest railway by track length, though at 39,000 km it is far shorter than at its peak length of 58,000 km. —Reuters

the construction of more 5G-compatible antennae. "The fact that so many people turned out today is a strong sign against the uncontrolled introduction of 5G," said Tamlin Schibler Ulmann, co-president of Frequencia, the group that organized the rally. The tiny principality of Monaco became the first country in Europe to inaugurate a 5G mobile phone network in July based on technology from Chinese firm Huawei, which is seen by the US as a major security risk.

But critics in Switzerland argue that the electromagnetic radiation the new system emits poses unprecedented health and environmental risks compared to previous generations of mobile technology. Online petitions have helped persuade several Swiss cantons—in Geneva, Vaud, Fribourg and Neuchâtel—to postpone the construction of antennae as a precaution. —AFP

Business

Huawei rethinks the smartphone with its ground-breaking Huawei Mate 30 series

Iconic handset features flagship Kirin 990 5G SoC and amazing Quad camera system

KUWAIT: Huawei unveiled its ground-breaking Huawei Mate 30 Series at an exclusive launch event in Munich on 19, September 2019. Setting new standards in every area from aesthetic design through to hardware engineering and software innovation, the Huawei Mate 30 Series is the world's first second generation 5G smartphone and the pinnacle of mobile technological development.

Benefiting from Huawei's 32-years of expertise in communication technologies and a decade in design innovation, the Huawei Mate 30 looks and performs like no other smartphone. Inspired by the design principle of minimalism, the Huawei Mate 30 Series showcases the perfect example of how aesthetic design fuses with technology. Its unique, iconic OLED Huawei Horizon Display offers an immersive viewing experience, while the Kirin 990 5G SoC - the first to integrate processing units and a 5G modem on the same chip using the 7nm+ EUV process - affords unrivalled levels of performance and efficiency.

A revolutionary integrated quad-camera includes the SuperSensing Cine Camera, a dual main camera system designed for amazing photographic and videographic results, while the Huawei SuperCharge and EMUI10 offer long-lasting battery life for heavy mobile users and an enhanced user experience.

Richard Yu, CEO of Huawei Consumer Business Group, said: "The Huawei Mate 30 Series unleashes the full potential of the smartphone. Designed to stand out, it challenges convention while delivering an unrivalled user experience. The era of 5G is an opportunity to rethink smartphone technology and the Huawei Mate 30 series is the ultimate expression of what's possible."

Rethink design: Futuristic iconic handset

The HUAWEI Mate 30 Series builds upon the aesthetic of the Huawei Mate 20 Series with a futuristic design that is sure to make a lasting impression. With an ultra-narrow notch design and the thinnest of bezels, the Huawei Mate 30 Pro features the Huawei Horizon Display, which curves at an angle of 88 degrees to maximize the display area to provide an unparalleled, edge-to-edge immersive viewing experience.

Huawei Mate 30 Pro introduces the Intuitive Side-touch Interaction feature to replace the side volume buttons with invisible virtual keys. This feature also allows users to customize the volume key position on either sides of the device and makes Huawei Mate 30 Pro the most integrated, all-in-one design smartphone currently available. Together, Huawei 3D Face Unlock and In-Screen Fingerprint provide high levels of biometric security and convenience.

Turn the device over and the iconic ring design of the quad-camera system immediately stands out, surrounded by a metallic 'halo'. Mirroring the design of a DSLR camera and designed to be held comfortably, the beautiful Huawei Mate 30 Series makes the user the focus of the crowd, attracting all the attention. The Huawei Mate 30 Pro also features Huawei Acoustic Display Technology to deliver high-quality audio through a sound emitting display.

Rethink performance - World's first 2nd generation 5G smartphone

The Huawei Mate 30 Series is powered by the Huawei Kirin 990 series chipset, Huawei's most sophisticated smart-



phone chipset launched to date. The Huawei Kirin 990 5G challenges the limits of silicon-based physics by incorporating a three-level power efficiency architecture for the CPU, Huawei's self-developed Da Vinci NPU architecture (large dual-NPU + tiny NPU cores) as well as a supersized 16-core GPU to deliver super-fast performance and high-power efficiency.

Manufactured with the cutting-edge 7nm+ EUV process, the disruptive Huawei Kirin 990 5G supports 2G/3G/4G network and 5G Non-StandAlone (NSA) and StandAlone (SA) modes, along with Dual SIM, Dual Standby and FDD/TDD full frequency bands to deliver seamless connectivity. The Huawei Mate 30 Series has also been optimized for ultimate OS performance. As the world's first 2nd generation 5G smartphone, the Huawei Mate 30 Pro 5G features 14 antennas for 5G, delivering ground-breaking speed with unrivalled connectivity.

The Huawei Mate 30 sports a large battery of 4200mAh, while Huawei Mate 30 Pro has an even bigger battery of 4500mAh. With TUV Rheinland certified wired and wireless Huawei SuperCharge Technology, the 27W Wireless Huawei SuperCharge and the 40W Huawei SuperCharge provide users safe and fast charging, while wired and wireless in-car charging and a wired powerbank ensure a seamless experience across all scenarios.

Additionally, the Huawei Mate 30 Series provides upgraded reverse wireless charging bringing users a quick and convenient way to recharge other devices. Rethink Photography and Videography - SuperSensing Cine Camera for Stunning Images and Videos

The Huawei Mate 30 is equipped with a SuperSensing Triple Camera, comprising a 40MP SuperSensing Camera, 16MP Ultra Wide-angle Camera and an 8MP Telephoto Camera. Coupled with an ISP 5.0 Image Signal Processor, the Huawei Mate 30 enables users to capture high quality photographs and videos. The Huawei Mate 30 sports a revolutionary quad camera system with the 40MP Cine Camera, 40MP SuperSensing Camera, an 8MP Telephoto Camera and a 3D Depth Sensing Camera.

The SuperSensing Cine Camera is a Dual-main camera system capable of taking stunning photos that rival high-end cameras. The Cine Camera features a large 1/1.54-inch sensor size with a high maximum Video ISO of 51200 to capture videos with an extended dynamic range at 4K/60fps as well as ultraslow-motion at the highest 7680 fps. It also supports 4K Low-light Ultra-wide time-lapse video. The Huawei Mate 30 Pro also offers pro-bokeh capabilities while recoding for professional looking results.



Huawei launches Watch GT 2 range of wearables

KUWAIT: Huawei launched its much anticipated Huawei Watch GT 2 range of wearables. Equipped with the self-developed Kirin AI chip, the Huawei watch GT 2 range offers class-leading battery life and a host of new features and functions including 15 sports modes, 10 training modes specifically for running, an enhanced music player and Bluetooth voice calls. Huawei Watch GT 2 also provides new wellness features that allow for hassle-free monitoring of a user's heart rate, daily sleep and other attributes.

Additionally, Huawei also announced the availability of its Huawei FreeBuds 3 true wireless Bluetooth earphones which won 11 Best of IFA media awards at the recent IFA consumer electronics show. The black and white versions of FreeBuds 3 will be available in



China, Europe, Middle East, Russia, Asia Pacific and Latin America starting from October 2019.

Colors and availability

The 6.53-inch Huawei Mate 30 Pro and 6.62-inch Huawei Mate 30 come in various color variants and materials: Emerald Green, Space Silver, Cosmic Purple, Black, while Forest Green and Orange are available in vegan leather.

Additionally, the second of the dual-camera system is a 1/1.7-inch Huawei SuperSensing Camera which attracts 40 percent more lights to deliver stunning results in low light conditions with an impressive light sensitivity of ISO409600, making it the best low light one-shot device ever even for ultra-wide shots.

The 8MP Huawei Telephoto Camera offers 3x optical zoom, 5x Hybrid Zoom and up to 30x digital zoom. Optical Image Stabilization (OIS) + AI Stabilization (AIS) and 3D depth sensing, complete the package making the Huawei Mate 30 Series the most capable handset for smartphone photography and videography available to consumers. A front-facing 3D depth sensing camera delivers pro-bokeh effects with accurate depth-of-field information for selfies and portraits.

Rethink interaction: A faster, safer and more engaging experience

The Huawei Mate 30 Series features a range of new features that deliver an amazingly smooth and engaging user experience. Including:

- EMUI10 operating system featuring a contemporary magazine inspired layout.
- Always-On-Display (AOD) where the color of the lock screen changes throughout the day;
- Dark Mode brings enhanced legibility making the screen look gentler and more comfortable when night falls;
- Intuitive Side-touch Interaction to customize invisible virtual keys for volume adjustment, gaming and camera setup as well as being ideal for both right and left-handed users;
- AI gesture control for contactless screen interaction, whereas AI Auto-Rotate and AI Private View are all designed to improve users experience;
- HiCar smart travel for advanced, seamless connectivity between device and a car's communication and entertainment system;
- Multi-screen Collaboration allows users to transfer data and control multiple screens between Huawei devices;
- Huawei 3D Face Unlock and In-Screen Fingerprint to provide advanced data security and privacy protection with (Huawei Mate 30 Pro only);

Greater offers to end the year from Peugeot!!

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Company, Kaico Al Shaya & Al Sagar, the authorized distributors of Peugeot cars in Kuwait, launched its competitive offer for the new school season for admirers of excellence and modern lifestyle planning to acquire the distinctive Peugeot SUV cars with installments starting from only KD 94 without a down payment. The offer includes valuable gifts for those who choose to buy new Peugeot models.

The launch of the Peugeot offer comes as Kaico aims to enrich the experience of owning the French-made car and enjoying excellence. Exclusive benefits include up to KD 1000 over the trade-in cars plus a five-year or 100,000km war-



US-Japan trade talks will bring peace of mind to farmers, automakers

TOKYO: Japanese foreign minister Toshimitsu Motegi said trade talks with the United States will bring peace

of mind to farmers and automakers, according to an interview with public broadcaster NHK aired yesterday ahead of a key bilateral meeting this week.

Motegi handled talks with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer under his previous role as economy minister and is expected to meet him ahead of a summit between US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. "We have been holding negotiations on the basis of trust," Motegi told NHK in the interview. "I don't have any worry at all about the things ahead." Trump and Abe are expected to secure a deal on farm tariffs and digital trade when they meet in New York this week. Full details of the prospective

trade agreement have not been disclosed.

One unresolved issue relates to auto exports. Motegi has said he wants a written assurance that Trump will not impose tariffs on US-bound auto exports from Japan. However, any promises arising from this week's talks will still need Trump's final approval, adding uncertainty to the prospects of a deal, Japanese sources familiar with the matter told Reuters recently.

Autos make up about two-thirds of Japan's trade surplus with the United States and such tariffs would hurt its trade-reliant economy. Japanese manufacturers have already come under heavy pressure this year from slowing overseas demand. —Reuters

Gulf Bank to announce winner of KD 500,000 Al-Danah quarterly prize Wednesday

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank will be announcing the winner of its third quarterly Al-Danah draw of the year this Wednesday (September 25, 2019). The announcement, which will take place live on air on FM 88.8 'Q8 Pulse' (Nabd Al-Kuwait) during the "Diwanyat Al Yaqout & Al Ansari" program, will award one lucky winner a cash prize of KD 500,000. The draw will be held in the presence of, and approved by, a representative from the Ministry of Commerce.

Gulf Bank customers also have until October 31, 2019 to enter the fourth and final quarterly Al-Danah draw of the year, which will take place on January 16, 2020. The fourth and final draw of the year will culminate in the announcement of the 2019 Al-Danah millionaire, who will receive a grand prize of KD 1 million.

To participate in this year's quarterly and annual draws, customers must keep the balance required by the Al-Danah account. To deposit into an Al-Danah account, customers can visit any one of Gulf Bank's ATMs or ITMs, as well as any of the 58 Gulf Bank branches around the country. Customers also have the option to deposit through Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services, including Selfpay, or by creating a free standing order from other Gulf Bank accounts. Al-Danah also offers several unique services to its clients, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their daily, weekly and yearly chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Finally, customers can also be notified via a free SMS alert with every transaction, a feature all Al-Danah account holders can activate by visiting their nearest branch.

What's On

Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait act Jointly with Omniya Kuwait

The Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait, A Radisson Collection hotel continues to secure a sustainable future and has signed a cooperation agreement with Omniya to recycle plastic waste used at the hotel. This initiative includes the distribution of recycle bins in the Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait, one large container in front of the building, which will help collect the used plastic water bottles or any other plastic containers.

Omniya is a national environmental project aimed at spreading the culture of waste recycling both: locally and regionally. The Omniya Project was founded in 2015, as an initiative of Farah Shaban, Saud Al Fozan and Sanna Al Ghemlas, to spread awareness about recycling in Kuwait.

The Radisson Hotel Group is well known for its responsible business ethics and strives to work with local people and businesses to ensure that the operations are responsible, sustainable and create lasting benefits for the communities. As a company and as individuals, we have a responsibility to support the preservation of our environment.

"We welcome the Symphony Style Kuwait, A Radisson Collection Hotel to our growing portfolio of corporate supporters who are aligning themselves with the #new-Kuwait vision for a better future," said Farah Shabaan - Executive Director of Operations at Omniya. "We would be happy to provide similar services to other supporters throughout GCC who are keen to be part of positive change," she added.



LuLu Hypermarket launches South Africa Fest 2019



LuLu hypermarket, the largest hypermarket chain in the region, launched the 'South Africa Fest 2019' at their Al-Quraini outlet on 18 September. The South African Charge D'Affaires to Kuwait Her Excellency Mrs Pule Bosilong inaugurated the event, in the presence of top LuLu Hypermarket management in Kuwait, and a large presence of shoppers, well-wishers and media personnel.

A highlight of the inauguration ceremony was the display of several traditional cultural programs of South Africa. Adding to the festival attraction, the LuLu Hypermarket outlets are decorated with large cut-out images and posters of interesting places and monuments to visit and exciting things to do for visitors to South Africa.

During the 11-day promotional period, from 18 September to 28 September, all LuLu Hypermarket outlets in the country, located in Al-Rai, Al-Qurain, Al-Dajeej, Salmiya, Egaila, Fahahel, Jahra, and Khaitan, are offering special promotional prices on a variety of South African products. Special food sampling counters set up throughout the hypermarkets also provide visitors with

an opportunity to taste the authentic flavors of several popular South African dishes and foods.

During the festival period, a whole range of South African products and especially foods, including groceries, fresh foods and meat are being offered at unbeatable prices. Among the leading South African food brands at hand at very special prices are: All Gold, Bakers, Bokomo, Blue Diamond, B Well, Cape Cookies, Cape Foods, Cape Herb & Spice, Cake Delights, Caraba, Crosse & Blackwell, Dewlands, Freshpak, Good Hope, Great Heart Africa, Heartland, House Of Coffee, I Love Himalaya, Ina Paarmans, Koo, Marina, Montagu, Nando S, Nicoletta, Nola, Robertsons, Rugani, Steers, Superbar, Vital, Yum Yum, Zari and ZzZ.

The South Africa Fest once again reiterates that LuLu Hypermarket is the destination of choice for discerning shoppers in the country, when it comes to accessing the best products from around the world, under one roof. The customer-centric approach and commitment to providing the widest range of high-quality products at attractive prices, only adds to the allure of shopping at LuLu Hypermarkets in the country.



Leadership camp in ICSK Amman

ICSK Amman organized a leadership camp on Saturday 14th September 2019 for the Senate and class prefects. Its main objectives were teaching practical leadership methods, communication skills and positive mindset. The daylong session consisted of several activities starting off with a vibrant one hour rejuvenating, fun filled and exciting Zumba session by Nishad PR.

During breakfast time, homely food was served in the healthy cafeteria to drive in the idea that junk food is not always the tastiest food. Dr Jaffar Ali Parol, Scientist with Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research conducted an inspiring and motivating personality development workshop "Harnessing the Best in You" giving insight in to the various career opportunities available in this modern era.

Sanaa Hamza Kutty, blogger, presented the session "Cook Smart with Sanaa" teaching students fireless smart culinary skills to become independent and to develop healthy eating habits. During the session the students got to taste a number of delicious recipes. To inculcate the habit of charity in the young leaders, the campers were involved in a noble cause. Lunch was provided to 25 people in the labor camp in Mangaf. Finally the program ended with a talent exposure enabling students to showcase their amazing talents. Participation certificates were distributed to all the senate members.



Recipe

Basil pesto isn't just for pasta - try it on grilled chicken

Grilled Pesto Chicken

Ingredients

Servings: 4

Start to finish: 1 hour, 30 minutes

4 cups fresh basil leaves

3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

5 garlic cloves, peeled

1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice

Salt and pepper

2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated (1 cup)

4 (12-ounce) bone-in split chicken breasts, trimmed

Preparation

Process basil, 1/2 cup oil, garlic, lemon juice, and 3/4 teaspoon salt in a food processor until smooth, about 1 minute, scraping down bowl as needed. Transfer 1/4 cup pesto to a large bowl and set aside for marinade. Add Parmesan to pesto left in processor and pulse to incorporate, about 3 pulses; transfer 1/4 cup pesto to a small bowl and set aside for stuffing. Add remaining 1/4 cup oil to pesto left in processor and pulse to incorporate, about 3 pulses; set aside for serving. Starting on the thick side of the breast, closest to the breastbone, cut horizontal pocket in each breast, stopping 1/2 inch from the edge so halves remain attached. Season chicken, inside and out, with salt and pepper. Place 1 tablespoon pesto reserved for stuffing in each pocket. Tie each chicken breast with 2 pieces of kitchen twine to secure. In a large bowl, rub the chicken with pesto reserved for a marinade, cover, and refrigerate for 1 hour.



Tanzania not sharing information on suspected Ebola, says WHO

NAIROBI: The World Health Organization has accused Tanzania of failing to provide information on suspected cases of Ebola in the country, potentially hindering efforts to curb the spread of the deadly virus. East African nations have been on high alert over an outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has left 2,103 people dead. Four people were diagnosed with the virus in Uganda and later died.

The WHO said it had learned on September 10 of a suspected case of the disease in Tanzania's port city of Dar es Salaam, and information emerged that this patient's contacts had been quarantined, and that the person had tested positive for Ebola.

Two other suspected cases were also unofficially reported. "Despite several requests, WHO did not receive further details of any of these cases from Tanzanian authorities," the organization said in a statement issued Saturday. On September 14 Tanzanian authorities officially reported there was no Ebola in the country, but declined "secondary confirmation testing" at a WHO centre, the global body said.

Then on Thursday, the WHO was made aware that a contact of the initial patient was sick and in hospital. "To date, the clinical details and the results of the investigation, including laboratory tests performed for differential diagnosis of these patients, have not been shared with WHO."

'Very high risk'
The lack of information received by WHO meant it cannot determine the cause of the illness, it said. "The limited available official information from Tanzanian authorities represents a challenge for assessing the risk posed by this event."

The WHO determined that because the initial patient travelled widely in the country and due to uncertainty around the cases, the lack of information and the fact that, if confirmed, it would be the first-ever outbreak of Ebola in the country, "the risk was assessed as very high at national level".

"At this stage, WHO is not aware of signs of a widespread transmission of any illness related to these cases, however investigations, including with the support of WHO Collaborating Centres, should continue to reach a diagnosis and further inform the risk assessment," said the statement.

They also warned of a high risk for the region. The ongoing Ebola outbreak is the second-worst in history after more than 11,000 people died in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia between 2014 and 2016. But the



NAIROBI: Tanzania is refusing to provide detailed information on suspected Ebola cases, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in a rare public rebuke as the region struggles with an outbreak already declared a global health emergency. — Reuters

containment efforts have been hindered from the start by conflict in eastern DRC, as well as attacks on medical teams tackling the

hemorrhagic fever amid resistance within some communities to preventative measures, care facilities and safe burials. — AFP

Health investment needed to curb out-of-pocket spending: WHO

GENEVA: Governments must boost spending on primary health care by at least an additional 1 percent of their gross domestic product to widen coverage and stop impoverishing patients, the World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday.

Despite some progress, more people are having to pay out-of-pocket for often costly medicines and treatment, the U.N. agency said in a report compiled with the OECD and World Bank.

Public investment in primary health care close to home, including immunization, is key to extending coverage and saving lives, it said. "We believe it is achievable and affordable," Dr. Peter Salama, WHO executive director of universal health coverage, told a news conference. It would cost an additional \$200 billion per year to scale up primary health care in low- and middle-income countries, he said. "Even though it seems like a large sum, we know most countries can actually afford to do this based on their domestic resources." — Reuters

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Kuwait Times

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Stars

CROSSWORD 2314



ACROSS

- 1. A city in northern India.
5. Make or become free of frost or ice.
12. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies...

DOWN

- 1. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
2. Clarified butter used in Indian cookery.
3. A Hindu prince or king in India.

- upper movable part of a theodolite including the telescope and its attachments.
5. Atypically small.
6. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
7. Any wingless blood-sucking parasitic insect noted for ability to leap.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You can cruise from left to right and front to rear and back again, Aries. There's plenty of fuel for your fire today...



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your mind is buzzing like a busy bee today, Taurus. Keep things light and social. Don't get too wrapped up in details.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You're on top of the world today, Gemini, as you should be. You're on your way to conquering a domain that you once considered impossible.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Hop on board early today, Cancer, or you may get left behind. If you sit around and wait for someone to grant you an invitation...



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may sense a bit of conflict in your world today, especially when it comes to emotions, Leo. Keep in mind that your perception of a dispute may make or break the result.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You might be thrown off balance by the flightiness of today, Virgo. Perhaps it's difficult to make a decision about anything.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You're ready to soar like a bird, Libra. When the next gust of wind comes up, you'll take flight and send your beautiful presence all over the world.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You'll be pulled in many directions today, Scorpio. It could be like you're in a candy shop with only a dollar and everything looks delicious.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Thank your friends today, Sagittarius. Let them know how much they mean to you. It's important to show your appreciation to the people around you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

It's important to communicate your feelings today, Capricorn. You tend to hold them inside and wait until they build up and erupt like a volcano.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a terrific day for you, Aquarius, so make the most of every moment. You can accomplish a tremendous amount as you juggle a dozen different things at once.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may be asked to turn yourself inside out today, Pisces. People may bombard you in a way that makes you want retreat into your protective shell.

Wordsearch Puzzle

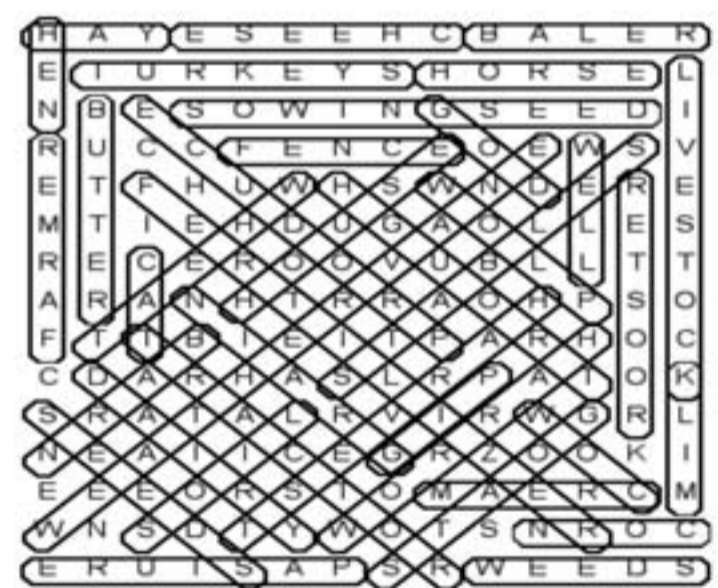
Fears and Phobias

Find and circle all of the things that some people are afraid of, hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional beach word.



Yesterday's Solution

Farm



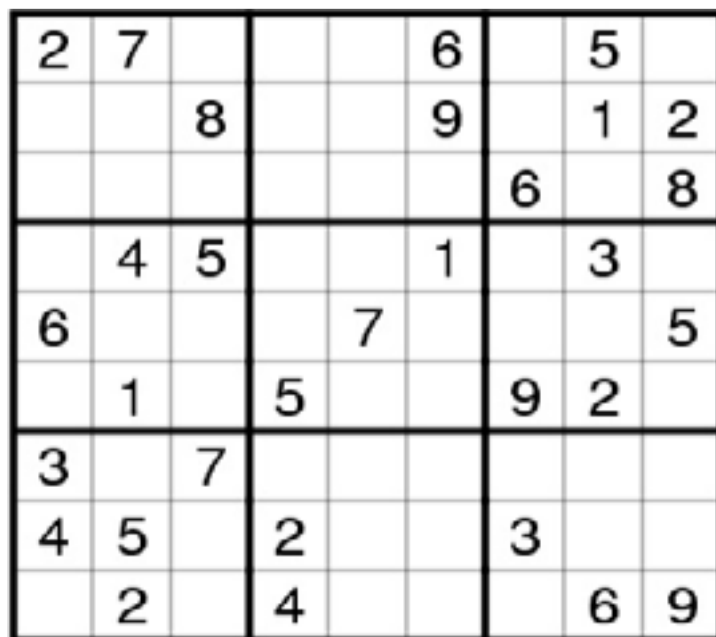
- BALER, FARMER, HOUSE, LIVESTOCK, SOWING SEED, BARN, FENCE, MILK, STABLES, BUTTER, FERTILIZER, PASTURE, TROUGH, CAT, GOATS, PIG, TURKEYS, CHEESE, GRAIN, PLOW, WEATHERVANE, CORN, HARROW, PRODUCE, WEEDS, COW, HARVEST, ROOSTER, WELL, CREAM, HAY, SEEDS, WHEAT, DAIRY, HEN, SOIL, DOG, HORSE.

The hidden message is: CHICKENS

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



easy

Yesterday's Solution



medium

Lifestyle

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2019



Acrobats perform as they parade through the streets of the city during the Oktoberfest festival in Munich, southern Germany. — AFP

Poetry in motion: Social media revives ancient art

Eighteen-year-old Londoner Danique Bailey is one of a new generation of poets using social media to revive the art. The teenager was among the 100 winners of last year's Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award, an international competition of 6,000 11- to 17-year-olds from 83 countries. She was rewarded for a mischievous ode to the plantain fruit.

"Social media made a lot more people interested in poetry, including myself," she told AFP, calling it a "really fun and satisfying way to express yourself in a short amount of space". She is not the only millennial getting into the art — sales of poetry books jumped 66 percent between 2012 and 2017, according to Nielsen BookScan, which gathers data for the book publishing sector. Around 1.3 million poetry books were sold last year, a 12-percent increase over the previous year, its figures show.

Two thirds of the buyers were aged under 34. Judith Palmer, director of the Poetry Society, suggested that people were turning to poetry because it grapples "with existential questions that people are trying to come to terms with... about our lives in uncertain times. "Of course there are long poems, but mainly, poems are short and it works really, really well to read on a phone, to swap around, to read, to find on social media," she added.

'Instapoets'

Her group's research found that Instagram was often the place that people were first introduced to poetry. Indian-born Canadian Rupi Kaur, 26, is one of the stars of this platform, boasting 3.7 million subscribers. Her collection, "Milk and Honey", which combines poetry, prose and illustrations, has grown in popularity in Britain, driving overall poetry sales. The youth and diversity of the "Instapoets" has made teenagers aware that not all poems are written "by dead white men from 200 years ago," said Palmer.

'More visual'

Young fans often set up poem playlists that they listen to on their phones and tablets which they also use to search for and share new material, she said. The National Poetry Library in London has already attempted to ride the wave, last year holding the first-ever exhibition devoted to poetry on Instagram. "There's a big audience in Instagram poetry but we were overwhelmed with the submissions" from budding poets, National Poetry Librarian Chris McCabe told AFP.

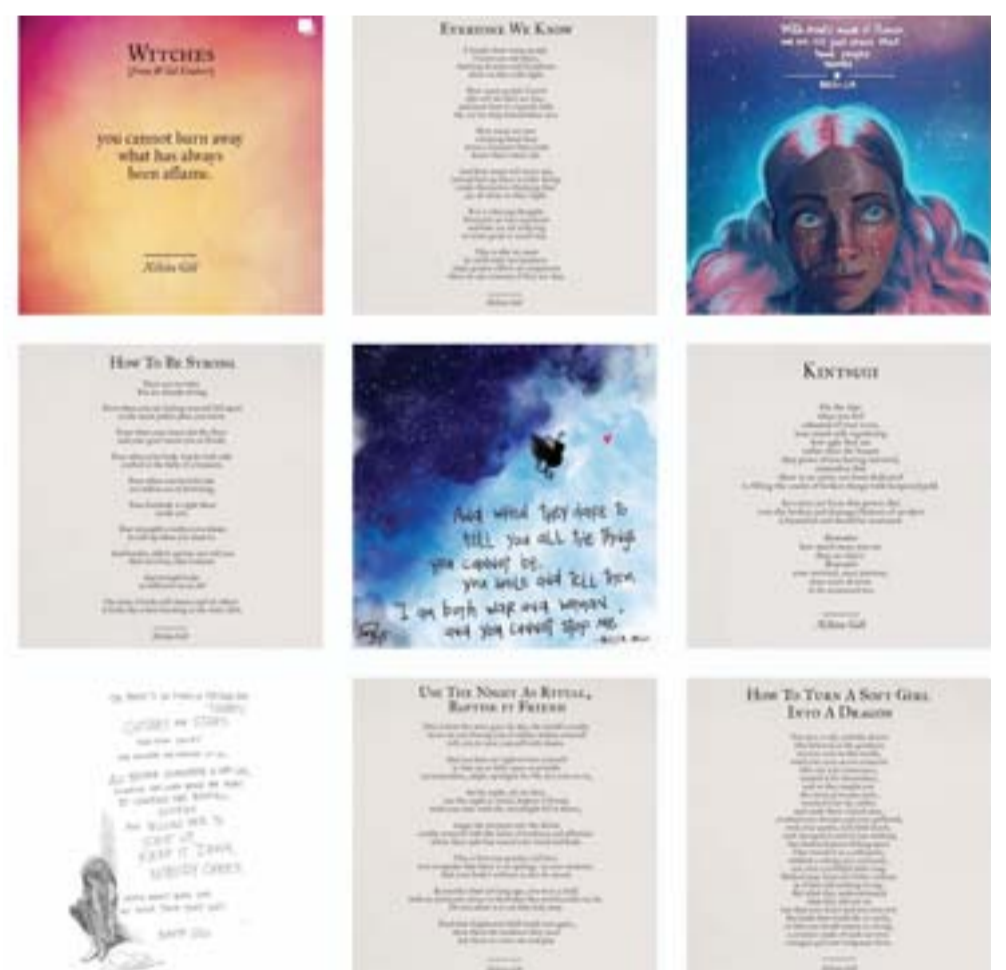


Kaveh Akbar, Paige Lewis, and John Green take questions from the audience at the Poetry Foundation and Complexly launch of Ours Poetica on September 12, 2019 in Chicago.

He was surprised by the ingenuity and creativity, he said, with poems inspired by subjects ranging from politics to nature, written with fridge magnets or on a typewriter, accompanied by photos, videos and even illustrations. "The language is often much simpler than you would get in a traditional poem. And it's much more visual as well," he said. It is a "totally new way of how an audience and the poet engage with each other," he added.

Instagram sensation Nikita Gill, 32, explained how she used the medium, telling AFP that she normally posts "very few lines of poetry... and it immediately makes an impact". The British-Indian author of "Great Goddesses", a collection of poetry and prose exploring myths and legends, said this new way of communicating "dispels that notion about poetry that you can only read poetry if you've got a literature degree."

Whether exploring the traditional Japanese form of haiku or expressing their deepest emotions, the one thing that the "Instapoets" have in common is "that we all add our own personal touch to what we share," said Gill, who also makes the illustrations for her work. She puts the success down to the idea that "it's really moving when someone shares something really personal with you". And she encouraged aspiring poets to "not be afraid" and get writing. — AFP



A screengrab taken from the Instagram page of Nikita Gill shows examples of her poetry. Whether exploring the traditional Japanese form of haiku or expressing their deepest emotions, the one thing that the "Instapoets" have in common is "that we all add our own personal touch to what we share," said Gill, who also makes the illustrations for her work. — AFP photos



Balqees concert in Kuwait University

By Nawara Fattahova

The Association of Faculty of Administrative Sciences at Kuwait University organized a musical concert of the popular singer Balqees on Saturday at the Raya Ballroom. Only female faculty students were invited to attend the concert which was organized by Mishari Al-Tararwa. Around 400 female students of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences were in attendance and the show began at 8:45 pm.

Balqees has become popular in the last few years. She is the daughter of the popular Yemeni

singer Ahmad Fathi, and currently lives in the United Arab Emirates. She released three albums since 2012, and she has also released around 50 single songs in the past eight years. She has received many awards including the 'Best Female Arab Gulf Singer' from Murex D'or.

At this concert, Balqees was warmly welcomed by the students who were very excited to see her and were singing along with her. She said she would like to visit them at the university. Besides her own songs, she also presented a popular song of the famous Lebanese singer Fayrouz, a song of the Kuwaiti singer Nabeel Suail, a song of the Emirati singer Husein Al-Jasmi, a song of the Bahraini singer Ahmad Al-Jumeiri, and a song by her father. Balqees concluded her performance at 11:00pm with a song about Kuwait.



At vast New York warehouse, preserving records in the digital age

The turntable needle drops and the reverbs of the obscure band The Motifs ring out, bouncing off mountains of records lining the dusty warehouse housing America's largest pop music collection. The cavernous independent private music library, known as the ARChive of Contemporary Music, on a non-descript street in lower Manhattan's Tribeca neighborhood claims more than three million recordings — mostly vinyl and some CDs and cassettes, not to mention a vast collection of memorabilia.

"You're just constantly discovering things that you wouldn't know," its co-founder B. George told AFP from his desk tucked behind the stacks. In an age dominated by streaming and the ephemerality of digital media, places like the ARChive can prove vital to preserving physical copies of music that can be key to future listening. News over the summer that some 500,000 recordings from legends like Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, Joni Mitchell and Eric Clapton were destroyed in a 2008 blaze at Universal Studios threw the importance of safeguarding physical copies into stark relief.

Some of the work lost included master recordings, the raw material for lucrative reissues and posthumous releases. While nothing can replace a lost master, George said labels have called on his archive to hear versions as close to the original as possible. Two discs of a reissue from the late Nigerian superstar Fela Kuti, for example, were made from vinyl belonging to the ARChive. "Trying to keep a collection intact is really important," George said.



NEW YORK: B. George, the Co-Founder and Director of the ARChive of Contemporary Music in front of the institution's vast collection that includes some 3 million recordings. — AFP photos

Star-studded board

George started the archive in 1985, when the area was just beginning to attract artists eager to colonize the old warehouses for cheap. At one point the archive scored 125,000 classic rock LPs — some 1,500 of them signed by artists including Jimi Hendrix — from a house in Boston that was condemned after it was found to be literally sinking under the weight of the vinyl.

Contrary to the snobbish reputation often ascribed to collectors and curators, the ARChive welcomes essentially everything related to pop music — which it defines as "not

classical" — with open arms. And it relies on philanthropy to pay the ever-increasing rent in one of the country's most expensive zip codes, especially from celebrity musicians. Early supporters included avant garde performer Laurie Anderson — who George introduced to her future husband, Lou Reed — and Nile Rodgers, known for hits like "Le Freak" by his disco group Chic, the original sheet music of which lives at the ARChive.

Current board members include Rodgers, Richards, Youssou N'Dour, Martin Scorsese and Paul Simon, while both Reed and David Bowie are emeritus. Today the mammoth col-



lection — maintained by George and a revolving door of volunteers and interns — is used primarily for research by the recording industry as well as filmmakers and researchers. The Grammy Museum, for example, once needed 3,000 record labels and covers for graphics, and turned to George.

"You can come to us and say I need 3,000 things in two weeks and there's a good chance we're going to have almost all of them," he said. But though George sees the preservation of the physical as a vital task, he says "everything is fugitive" to the prospect of disaster. The ARChive is working with the San Francisco-

based nonprofit Internet Archive to start digitizing, and keep "as many things in as many places as possible."

Some 130,000 78rpm records — brittle vinyls usually made of shellac resin, popular until the mid-20th century — have been digitized so far, for example, and are available for free streaming online, George said. "Libraries burn," he said. "Realistically in 5,000 years this will all be dust." "You do your best, you hope that the migration will happen, that it'll go to the next stage, it'll go to the next way of being preserved, but it's unpredictable." — AFP

South Africa cosplayers flock to African comic convention



Clad in an array of capes, masks, pointy elf ears and spectacular face paint, comics fans gathered in South Africa's biggest city this weekend for the second edition of Comic Con Africa. Dressed as their favorite superhero, fans of cosplay — a portmanteau for costume play — strolled around Johannesburg's Gallagher convention centre, meeting writers, illustrators and fellow enthusiasts.

"It's the first time I've been here. I have heard so much about it so I wanted to experience it," said Nishen Deepchand, peering out from a black Batman mask. "I've teamed up with Tinkerbell as well. It's a special love affair but nobody knows about it so make sure you don't tell Batgirl." Sponsors of the four-day event, which opened on Saturday, are expecting 60,000 attendees — a unique opportunity for new creators to showcase their work.

Guests of honor this year included Loyiso Mkize, the artist behind South Africa's first superhero. Mkize's three-volume illustrated story of "Kwezi" — a 19-year old boy in South Africa who discovers he has superpowers — has been a hit in the country. "The fan base has grown to now in the tens of thousands," Mkize told AFP. "That's an amazing feat, particularly for an industry in South Africa where we



thought there was no industry."

Mkize is among a growing movement of African illustrators striving to bring more diversity to the global comic scene. Since 2013, Nigerian start-up Comic Republic have created a series of superheroes referred to as "Africa's Avengers" by fans. And in 2015 Nigerian-born Royce Okupe launched the futur-

istic saga "E.X.O. - The Legend of Wale Williams". Last year, Marvel studios released the first superhero blockbuster featuring an entirely black cast. "Creating South Africa's first superhero was the first leg," said Mki. "But continuing that legacy and continuing the story and the narrative along with our readers has been the journey". — AFP



Taylor Swift pulls out of Melbourne Cup gig

Pop superstar Taylor Swift has pulled out of a performance at the Melbourne Cup, with animal rights activists taking credit after a campaign to highlight cruelty to racehorses. The Grammy Award-winner was announced as the headline act for the "race that stops a nation" earlier this month and was due to sing two songs from her latest hit album "Lover". But it sparked a backlash on social media and a push by the Campaign for the Protection of Racehorses, which claimed she had "put money before compassion" and was "endorsing animal abuse".

More than 6,500 people signed an online petition urging her to cancel. In a statement late Saturday, promoter Mushroom Events cited scheduling issues as the reason for Swift's no-show. "Changes to her Asian promo schedule have made it logistically impossible for her to be here," it said. The Campaign for the Protection of Racehorses applauded the decision. "The pressure on Taylor Swift to cancel her performance was significant," it said on Facebook. "Her fans did not want to see her supporting animal abuse. Whilst the reason being used by the racing industry is a scheduling mix-up, it appears to us that she has responded to those calls."

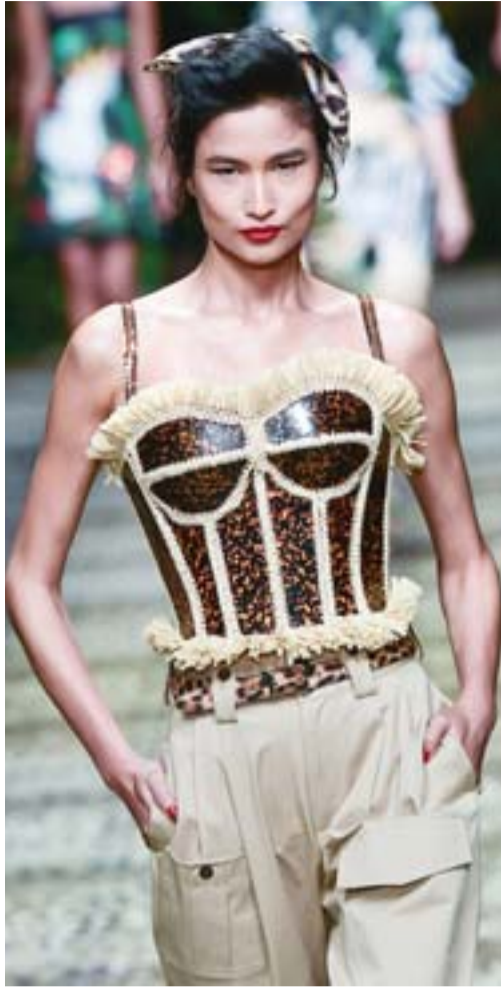
Six horses have died at the Melbourne Cup since 2013, including one last year when Irish five-year-old The Cliff of Moher was euthanised after suffering a fractured right shoulder during a race that has been run on the first Tuesday of November since 1876. "Obviously, this (Swift pulling out) is disappointing for everyone," said Victoria Racing Club chief executive Neil Wilson. "We understand how important the pre-Cup entertainment is and we look forward to providing an update (on other acts) shortly." — AFP

Iceland fined for Eurovision pro-Palestinian protest

GENEVA: Organizers of the Eurovision Song Contest said Saturday they had fined Iceland after the band it entered displayed scarves with Palestinian flags during the contest's final in Israel. Iceland's group Hatari brandished scarves with Palestinian flags when the final results were being announced at the end of the event, which was held last May in Tel Aviv.

Contest organizers the European Broadcasting Union said Saturday in a statement sent to AFP that the gesture infringed their rules banning political gestures. They declined to say how much they had fined Iceland's public broadcaster, but said it was "in line with the rules of the competition". The fine had also been upheld following an appeal it said. Hatari is known for their opposition to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Rule 2.6 of the competition stipulates that participants should do nothing to use it for political ends. During the same event guest performer Madonna also provoked controversy when her dancers carried Israeli and Palestinian flags on their costumes. "It was a mistake," said Israel's Culture Minister Miri Regev. "You cannot mix politics at a cultural event, with all due respect to Madonna." Israel hosted this year's event because of the victory of their singer Netta Barzilai the previous year. Next year's Eurovision Song Contest will be held in the Netherlands. — AFP



Milan

FASHION WEEK



MILAN: Models present the creations of Dolce & Gabbana's Women's Spring Summer 2020 fashion show presented yesterday in Milan. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Gossip

Mike Johnson thinks Demi Lovato is 'absolutely fantastic'

The 31-year-old TV star - who recently admitted to dating the pop star - has heaped praise on Demi, but also insisted he's not feeling under any "pressure". Speaking to E! News, Mike shared: "I'm just getting to know Demi. I think she's absolutely fantastic and I don't want no pressure on her, no pressure on me, we're just trying to get to know each other. That's all." Asked whether there were any other women in his sights, Mike - who has also sent flirty messages to the brunette beauty via Instagram - added: "No, it's just Demi. That's the only person I'm talking to." Demi has had a tough few months, but she recently admitted she was "sober and grateful to be alive" following her previous overdose. She wrote on Twitter: "If I feel like the world needs to know something, I will tell them

MYSELF. Otherwise people stop writing about my recovery, because it's no one's business but mine. I am sober and grateful to be alive and taking care of ME. Someday I'll tell the world what exactly happened, why it happened and what my life is like today ... but until I'm ready to share that with people please stop prying and making up stuff that you know nothing about. I still need space and time to heal. "I would love to set the record straight on all the rumors out there but I literally don't owe anyone anything so I'm not going to. All my fans need to know is I'm working hard on myself, I'm happy and clean and I'm SO grateful for their support. I'm so blessed I get to take this time to be with family, relax, work on my mind, body and soul and come back when I'm ready."



MILEY CYRUS AND KAITLYNN CARTER HAVE SPLIT

The 26-year-old pop star and Kaitlynn, 31, have decided to go their separate ways after less than two months of dating, although the high-profile duo intend to remain friends. An insider told PEOPLE: "Miley and Kaitlynn broke up. They're still friends." Miley started dating Kaitlynn following her much-discussed split from movie star Liam Hemsworth. And although her relationship with Kaitlynn has ended in abrupt fashion, she intends to remain on good terms with the blonde beauty. The source added: "They've been friends forever and were there for each other when they were both getting separated, but they're just not in a romantic relationship anymore." Meanwhile, Miley previously denied rumours she cheated on Liam prior to their split. The chart-topping singer confessed to making numerous mistakes during her young years, but insisted she was committed to trying to make their marriage work. She explained: "I can accept that the life I've chosen means I must live completely open and transparent with my fans who I love, and the public, 100% of the time. What I cannot accept is being told I'm lying to cover up a crime I haven't committed. I have nothing to hide. "It is no secret that I was into partying in my teens and early 20's. I have not only smoked, but advocated for weed, I've experimented with drugs, my biggest song to date is about dancing on molly and snorting lines in the bathroom. I lost a massive Walmart deal at 17 for ripping a bong. I swung on a wrecking ball naked. But the truth is, once Liam & I reconciled, I meant it, & I was committed. There are NO secrets to uncover here. I've learned from every experience in my life. I'm not perfect, I don't want to be, it's boring. I've grown up in front of you, but the bottom line is, I HAVE GROWN UP."



Kate Beckinsale takes her own Food to work

The 'Farming' actress is very "self-sufficient" and has learned it's easier to bring her own meals onto set than risk an allergic reaction from the catering provided. She said: "I'm incredibly self-sufficient and I always bring my own food. "I'm allergic to enough things that it's pointless for me to try the curry. "I have to just make sure I have protein every few hours or I'll keel over." The 46-year-old actress may sometimes have exhausting moments on set but she refuses to take a nap in her downtime in case she falls victim to a prank. She told Total Film magazine: "First of all, I would never, ever - I've thought about this - I would never fall asleep in front of other people. That's very risky. "You could wake up with no eyebrows or a moustache or a sanitary towel stuck to your head. "But when it's very early mornings... Sometimes when you're working at 3 in the morning, I don't care so much about eating but I really need to sleep." And as a result of her pledge, Kate found herself "hallucinating" on one of her early movie experiences because she spent so long filming. Asked the longest day she's had on set, she said: "24 hours. We were doing a French film. "It was very low budget, and I was about 19. I think I probably started hallucinating. "You really get quite giddy after 24 hours. It was very low budget and we were shooting in Paris in locations they hadn't paid for. "I think we were in the Gare du Nord, but completely illegally. We had to wait until nobody was looking."



Olly Murs is reportedly dating a city high-flier

The 35-year-old singer is said to be planning a romantic holiday with Amelia Tank - who works in the finance industry and moonlights as a body-builder - after they exchanged flirty messages on Instagram over the summer. A source told The Sun on Sunday newspaper: "Amelia's Instagram feed caught his eye and they started swapping flirty messages. "They met up at an Essex gym in July and the chemistry was instant. "Olly thought Amelia was gorgeous, and she was very impressed by him too. They agreed to a date and since then the romance has been going well. "They wanted to keep things quiet at first but three months down the line they are more relaxed about people knowing they are together. "They went for a low-key date at a pub recently and were spotted getting quite cosy there." Olly - who has upped his workout regime over recent months - has apparently invited his new girlfriend to some auditions of 'The Voice' next month. The insider shared: "Olly has told Amelia he'd like her to come along to support him. "At the end of the month they are planning a sunshine break. It is early stages but he seems really smitten." Meanwhile, Amelia previously admitted that her love of fitness had undermined her social life. She said: "My social life is at an all-time low while training. "Most nights I get into bed at 8.30pm to allow my muscles to grow and have enough energy for early starts before work. "It has been really tough not going out with friends. Every year my family hosts an Easter party. The first comp was two weeks before but I knew I'd be surrounded by food and prosecco."

Reese Witherspoon 'likes' her wrinkles

The 43-year-old actress - who has Ava, 20, and Deacon, 15, with ex-husband Ryan Phillippe and Tennessee, six, with spouse Jim Toth - enjoys seeing the signs of herself ageing on screen because she knows she has "worked hard" throughout her life. She said "One of the things that struck me about 'Big Little Lies' was how I saw my own life reflected in each of the characters because I was a divorced woman, I'd been a single mother, a married mother, and I had another child in a second marriage." "When I saw the first version of it in the editing room, I immediately noticed the little lines on my face and said to myself, 'I like them, I got them one by one... I worked hard to get these wrinkles. "Now I can play women who have lived more and gone through a lot of changes, not simply because I'm in my 40s but because I've gone through that kind of evolution myself." And Reese believes the 40s are the "best years" for women because they are more confident but also going through "great personal growth". She told Closer magazine: "I think the 40s are the best years for women. "You have a much clearer idea of who you are and you know exactly what you want. "So you surround yourself with the best people, you have a much better idea of what you want in a relationship and you're much bolder and less afraid. "It's a time of great personal growth where you have much greater self-awareness." The 'Cruel Intentions' star - who set up her production company, Hello Sunshine, five years ago - is thankful for the support of her husband. She said: "I've had a lot of encouragement from him. "He told me not to back down when it comes to asserting myself and fighting to get a project made. "For years he's been telling me I would make a good producer. And I finally did it!"



Harry Styles gave Liam Gallagher £3,000 worth of fish

The 25-year-old singer and Liam, 47, are good pals, and as a mark of his affection, Harry treated the former Oasis frontman to more seabass than he could dream of. Liam shared: "I was in the studio with Harry ... I love that geezer. "I was telling him about when I was in Marks & Spencer and I was getting seabass for a week. "This little old lady was in there and she was looking at all the seabass. She was about 90. She was taking all the fish. I couldn't have that..." At the time, Liam thought that Harry had been largely ignoring his story, joking that he was "just looking at his painted fingernails". But, as it transpired, Harry was paying very close attention to the tale. Speaking to the Daily Mirror newspaper, Liam added: "Anyway, two days later a big bag of seabass comes to my studio, the door goes, ding dong, and it's three grands worth of seabass. "It's from Panzer's Deli in St John's Wood. It's top fish. He's gone and got it and hand-delivered it. We weren't in the studio when he did it, so we got it sent over to the house. "I love that man but it was too much for our fridge, so I gave it to my brother Paul." By contrast, Liam recently slammed his older brother Noel, calling his former Oasis bandmate "an insecure little idiot".



Kim Kardashian has got two new puppies

The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star already has a tanned teacup pomeranian called Sushi, which she bought for her daughter North's fourth birthday two years ago, and has decided to add two other pet pooches - one white female and one black male - to her clan but she's struggling to name them. Taking to her Instagram account, the brunette beauty uploaded a photograph of her cuddling her new furry friends and wrote: "Meet our new babies! We just need names! North came up with names that go with our other Pomeranian Sushi. She wants white baby girl to be named Saki and the black baby boy either Soba (Noodle) or Soy Sauce. Please comment below any ideas you have!!!! (sic)." The 38-year-old reality TV star's decision to add two new fluff balls to her home will no doubt come as a surprise to fans as she really struggled to train Sushi when she first got her and ended up calling in celebrity trainer Cesar Millan - who is known as 'The Dog Whisperer' - to help her as her barking was driving her mad. In scenes from the an episode of 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' back in 2017, Kim told Cesar: "For my sanity, all I wanted was a really calm dog." The renowned animal trainer - who has helped celebrity clients including Jada Pinkett Smith and the late 'Playboy' tycoon Hugh Hefner - watched Kim and North playing with Sushi and quickly spotted the mistakes they were making. Cesar told Kim that Sushi's bad behavior was down to lack of structure and he offered her some guidance to help get the pup on the straight and narrow. Kim said at the time: "It's really exciting to know that Sushi's issues are fixable, and she's just a part of the family now, so we gotta work on it." — Bangshowbiz



Cramped Gaza zoo reopens, only months after closure

RAFAH: A lioness is beaten with sticks while her cubs are dragged away – a Gazan zoo closed after a long campaign has reopened, with conditions seemingly as bad as ever. The Rafah Zoo in the southern Gaza Strip was known for its emaciated animals, with the owners saying they struggled to find enough money to feed them. In April, international animal rights charity Four Paws took all the animals to sanctuaries, receiving a pledge the zoo would close forever.

But last month it reopened with two lions and three new cubs, penned in cages only a few square metres in size. Critics say the owners want to bully Four Paws or other animal welfare organizations into giving them thousands of dollars to free the animals into their care. Four Paws paid the zoo's owners more than \$50,000 in the year before its closure for medical treatments, food and caretakers. The zoo's owner insists the reopening is solely for the enjoyment of local residents.

When AFP visited the zoo recently, the badly stuffed corpse of a lion was displayed near the entrance. An ostrich in a three-metre-square pen pecked endlessly at the cage's bars, while two monkeys sat chewing on litter. At the far end the lion and lioness were kept in separate cages, each only a few square metres. The owners were seeking to remove the cubs from their mother to play with visiting children. To do so they hit the lioness with sticks and banged on the cage to confuse her, with staff later taunting her when the cubs had been taken out.

"A lion needs 1,000 square metres to play in. Here they have seven square metres," Mohammed Aweda, a prominent animal enthusiast in Gaza, told AFP. "The zoo won't survive during the winter, because they are lacking in daily goods which cost a lot. For you or I or anyone who owns a zoo (in Gaza), the economy is very tough."

Palestinian Gaza is run by Islamist movement Hamas

and has been blockaded by Israel for more than a decade. There have been three wars between them in that time. The enclave of two million people had negative eight percent economic growth last year. Around two-thirds of young people are unemployed, while nearly 50 percent are below the poverty line, according to the World Bank. Many Palestinians are desperate for ways to make money.

Amid international outcry over conditions at the zoo, last year Four Paws reached an agreement with the owners. In April nearly 50 animals, including lions, monkeys, peacocks and porcupines, were taken out of Gaza through Israeli territory to sanctuaries in Jordan and elsewhere. The NGO said in a statement it explicitly does not pay for animals but provided funding for "costs for medical treatments, food and caretakers so that the over 40 animals were strong and healthy enough for the rescue and transfer".

In total the amount paid over a year was \$55,000, the NGO said. Four Paws said the zoo's owner promised not to reopen. Critics suspect the owners of seeking to bully Four Paws into paying again. "Any international organization won't deal with this issue easily because it has become trade," Aweda said.

The newly reopened zoo's manager Ashraf Jumaa, from the same family that owned the old one, said they brought the new lions through tunnels from Egypt. However others suggested they were bought from another animal center in northern Gaza. He denied they wanted to blackmail Four Paws. "The first goal is entertainment, not trade. The main reason we reopened the zoo was people in the area that supported us," he said.

He said it would be less expensive because there were fewer animals, but admitted they would struggle to afford enough food once the cubs were fully grown. "Every day they will need between 22 and 30 kilos of meat costing between 100 and 150 shekels (between



RAFAH: Palestinian children and an employee pet three recently-born cubs at a zoo in the southern Gaza Strip on Sept 8, 2019. — AFP

\$28 and \$43)," he said. They currently receive around 50 visitors a day, he said, with tickets on average costing two shekels (around \$0.50).

Four Paws said footage it saw from the zoo was "very concerning". "The animals are not kept in species-appropriate conditions. They seem to be in bad

conditions and urgently need medical attention and proper food," it said. An official from the Gaza agriculture ministry, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there had been no coordination regarding the zoo's reopening. He said Gaza needed a large park meeting international standards. — AFP

Demonstrators clash with Egyptian forces

CAIRO: Egyptian security forces clashed with hundreds of anti-government protesters in the port city of Suez on Saturday, firing tear gas and live rounds, said several residents who participated in the demonstrations. A heavy security presence was also maintained in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the epicenter of Egypt's 2011 revolution, after protests in several cities called for the removal of general-turned-president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi.

Such demonstrations are rare after Egypt effectively banned protests under a law passed following the 2013 military ouster of Islamist ex-president Mohamed Morsi. But discontent over rising prices has been swelling in Egypt, where Sisi's government has imposed strict austerity measures since 2016 as part of a \$12-billion loan package from the International Monetary Fund. Nearly one in three Egyptians live below the poverty line on less than \$1.40 a day, according to official figures released in July.

On Saturday protesters headed to downtown Suez for the second night in a row, where they were met by security forces barricading the streets and armored vehicles. "There were about 200 or so people. They (security forces) fired tear gas, rubber and live bullets and there were injuries", a man who took part in the demonstration but declined to be named told AFP.

Another resident, who also preferred to remain anonymous,



SUEZ, Egypt: This combination of pictures created yesterday shows confrontations between Egyptian security forces and protesters in Al-Arbaeen Square in the center of this port city. — AFP

said the tear gas was so thick it had reached her apartment block a few kilometres away from the turbulent downtown area. "My nose started burning up. The smell was seeping through the balcony. I also saw some youth run and hide in our street", the woman said.

On late Friday, hundreds of Egyptians poured through the streets of Cairo, chanting slogans including "Leave, Sisi!" and demanding the "fall of the regime". At least 74

people were arrested after clashes between the crowds and police in the capital, a security source told AFP. The protests came after Mohamed Aly, an exiled businessman and opponent of Sisi posted calls online for demonstrations against Sisi.

He upped the pressure on Saturday in an expletive-filled video, imploring Egyptians to join a "million-man march" next Friday and to fill all "major squares" of the

country. "This is a people's revolution... We have to link up together as one... and organize going down to the major squares," he said in a Facebook appeal to his followers. The construction contractor has been posting videos that have gone viral since early September, accusing Sisi and the military of rampant corruption. The president denied the allegations last week, saying he was "honest and faithful" to his people and the military. — AFP

Trump joins rally in Modi...

Continued from Page 1

John Sifton, the Asia advocacy director of Human Rights Watch, said it was critical to raise concerns to Modi while he is abroad as, unlike previous Indian prime ministers, he has little back-and-forth interaction with the media. "He is really in a kind of bubble in Delhi," Sifton said. "This is a moment for Modi to burst outside of his bubble and hear some criticism of what's happening in Kashmir."

"Today we celebrate our community and its importance in Houston and all America," said Ketan Inamdar, who works in the administration of Houston's Democratic Mayor Sylvester Turner, and painted an American flag on his right cheek and an Indian one on the left. "Trump is very welcome here today. This event is to build harmony and love," he said, standing just in front of the dais where Trump and Modi spoke. "Race, religion and political parties don't matter today."

Houston is a rare Democratic stronghold in Republican-dominated Texas and serves as the economic anchor of a state that will be critical to Trump's 2020 re-election bid. Polls show tepid support by Indian-American voters, some 75 percent of whom voted for his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton, in 2016. But organizers of the "Howdy, Modi!" event that was kicked off with a 90-minute cultural program featuring 400 costumed dancers, say Trump can expect a receptive audience.

It will not be the first time Modi, who heads the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, has addressed a large crowd in the United States, which is home to about 4 million Indian-Americans including about 300,000 in Houston and nearby Dallas, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census data.

MoE, MoH to sack hundreds...

Continued from Page 1

On the other hand, the sources explained that MoH layoffs will include administrative staff members and the

Some 19,000 people turned out for a similar event in New York in 2014, and Indian-American volunteers living in US suburbs helped run a telephone blitz of voters in India in the run-up to his May re-election campaign.

Modi's visit to Houston comes ahead of this week's UN General Assembly in New York and amid a particularly tense time on the subcontinent. The Indian leader further strained long-simmering relations with Pakistan last month by revoking the partial autonomy enjoyed by Muslim-majority Kashmir, which both nuclear-armed countries claim. Modi's move has been met by international criticism. Pakistan has condemned the crackdown and its Prime Minister Imran Khan warned it would drive more of the world's Muslims into extremism.

The US-India relationship on trade and tariffs is rocky, though Trump and Modi appear to have strong personal ties. But Devesh Kapur, director of Asia Programs at Johns Hopkins University, who has written a book on Indian-Americans, said that while the rally has symbolic value for both leaders, "it's unlikely by itself to impact thorny trade issues ... but it can't hurt." Kapur also forecast little improvement regarding Trump's standing with Indian-Americans. "The Trump administration's hard-line policies on immigration ... have hardly endeared (him) to the community," Kapur said. "Appearing with PM Modi might mildly help but certainly not reverse the community's overall pro-Democrat leanings."

Sporting a matching vest and sari in yellow embroidery from Modi's home state of Gujarat as well as caps in the Indian tricolor, Bhavin Parikh of Sacramento, California said he and his wife Shipti wanted to show their support. "We are big fans of Modi and what he is doing for India and wanted to show our support," Parikh said. He called the gathering "historic" due to Trump's presence. But he demurred on whether the gathering also indicated backing for Trump. "It is not a question of Democrat or Republican. It's the American president supporting the Indian prime minister," he said. — Agencies

eldest doctors and nursing staff members. The sources said employees to be laid off will be notified before the end of the year, while teachers will be notified before the end of the school year.

Meanwhile, MoE's assistant undersecretary for administrative development affairs Fahd Al-Ghaiss said 67 newly-recruited teachers arrived from Jordan and 12 more are to arrive soon, while 58 teachers recruited from Tunisia had arrived, with 39 more to arrive soon.

Iran slams foreign forces for raising...

Continued from Page 1

initially raised the possibility of a military response, saying the US was "locked and loaded".

Washington later expanded its long list of sanctions against Tehran by further targeting its central bank, as Trump indicated he did not plan to strike back. On Friday, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said the US was sending reinforcements to Saudi Arabia at "the kingdom's request", while noting the forces would be "defensive in nature".

In his speech, Rouhani called on the foreign powers to "stay away" from the Gulf. "If they're sincere, then they should not make our region the site of an arms race," he said. "Your presence has always brought pain and misery... The farther you keep yourselves from our region and our nations, the more security there will be. We are even ready to ignore their past mistakes... since today the situation is such that the enemies of Islam and the region, meaning America and Zionism, want to abuse the rift between us. Our logic is the logic of a Persian Gulf whose security comes from within."

The annual military parade marks the start of the week commemorating Iran's 1980-1988 war with Iraq known as

the "sacred defense". Among the new weaponry debuting at yesterday's parade was an upgraded warhead for the Khorramshahr ballistic missile, the Kaman 12 drone with a range of 1,000 km and a mobile radar system capable of detecting landmines, local media reported.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted that Rouhani would announce details of the "Hormuz Peace Endeavour" at the UN General Assembly. Rouhani is expected to travel to New York today, a day before general debate kicks off at the UN gathering. Tensions have flared in the Gulf since May, when Iran began reducing its commitments to the nuclear deal and the US said it was sending forces to waters near the Islamic republic in response to "indications of a credible threat" from its forces.

The US deployed an aircraft carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the sensitive waterways, before sending B-52 bombers, an amphibious assault ship and Patriot missile battery. Following the deployments, commercial ships were mysteriously attacked, drones downed and oil tankers seized in Gulf waters. Trump in June authorized a military strike after Iran shot down a US drone, only to call off the retaliation at the last moment.

The crisis deepened with the September 14 attacks on Saudi energy giant Aramco's Abqaiq processing plant and Khurais oilfield which halved the kingdom's crude output. Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels claimed responsibility, but the US says attacks involved cruise missiles from Iran and amounted to "an act of war". — AFP

Five-year period ending 2019 set...

Continued from Page 1

long spending binge," said Professor Dave Reay, chair in Carbon Management at the University of Edinburgh. "Our global carbon credit is maxed out," he added. "If emissions don't start falling there will be hell to pay."

In 2018, global carbon dioxide was 407.8 parts per million (ppm), 2.2 ppm higher than 2017 and set to reach or exceed 410 ppm by 2019. "The last time Earth's atmosphere contained 400 parts per million CO₂ was about 3-5 million years ago," the report said. At that time, global mean surface temperatures were 2-3 degrees Celsius warmer, ice sheets at both poles had melted, and seas were 10 to 20 meters higher.

Other major takeaways include that the extent of

Arctic summer sea ice has declined at a rate of 12 percent per decade over the past 40 years, with the four lowest values between 2015 and 2019. Overall, the amount of ice lost from the Antarctic ice sheet increased by a factor of six each year between 1979 and 2017, while glacier loss for 2015-19 is also the highest for any five-year period on record.

Sea-level rise is also accelerating as is the process of acidification, with an increase in 26 percent in acidity today compared to pre-industrial periods, as a result of absorbing increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The report also found that heatwaves were the deadliest weather hazard in the 2015-19 period, affecting all continents and setting new national temperature records.

The summer of 2019, which included the hottest ever month on record (July), saw unprecedented wildfires in the Arctic. In June, these were responsible for emitting 50 megatons of carbon dioxide. The report also comes at a time of increasing mobilization over the question of climate change, with millions taking part in a youth-led global strike Friday, before the first UN youth climate summit on Saturday. — AFP

Sports

Ireland overpower Scotland in emphatic Rugby World Cup win

Bonus-point win puts Ireland level with hosts Japan in Pool A

YOKOHAMA: Ireland powered past Six Nations rivals Scotland 27-3 to put themselves in the box seat to reach the quarter-finals at the Rugby World Cup yesterday. Three push-over tries in the first half did the damage before wing Andrew Conway grabbed a fourth after the break to secure a bonus-point win, with games to come against Japan, Russia and Samoa in Pool A.

"We started really well — we were positive, we wanted to attack," said Ireland captain Rory Best. "Obviously with the conditions in the second half it became a bit more of an arm-wrestle but we know how good a team they are and we're delighted with that win."

With a sea of green-clad Ireland supporters dominating the stands at a packed but wet International Stadium Yokohama, Ireland were in no mood to be nice to their Six Nations rivals. In a brutally physical game, in which the medics were rushed off their feet, Ireland bossed the breakdown and held a commanding 19-3 lead at half-time.

As the rain's intensity increased in the second half it was Ireland who relished the deteriorating weather most with a further eight points. Conor Murray was given a dream ride behind a rampant forward pack, directing traffic with aplomb, particularly with an on-target kicking game, and pre-match concerns about Ireland's injury-hit backline quickly evaporated.

Scotland, meanwhile, did not help themselves with a weak defensive effort while being unable to penetrate the green wall in front of them. The bonus-point win put Ireland level with hosts Japan with their first-round victories in Pool A, and the two go head-to-head next weekend.

James Ryan, Rory Best, Tadhg Furlong and Conway scored for Ireland with Johnny Sexton and Murray landing a conversion each and Jack Carty kicked a penalty. For Scotland, Greig Laidlaw's first-half penalty was their only score.

EARLY ONSLAUGHT

There was concern in the Scotland camp about Hamish Watson who was stretchered off just before half-time with a knee injury. The outstanding flanker had made 14 tackles up to that point in the face of a constant wave of green attacks.

Bundee Aki and Josh van der Flier required blood-bin treatment with Aki failing a head knock assessment. Peter O'Mahony also required a head injury assessment and Murray took over Ireland's kicking duties when Sexton was being treated for a knock.

Scotland attacked hard at the start but once Ireland weathered the initial onslaught, Iain Henderson thundered upfield to set up fellow lock Ryan for the opening try.

Best scored the second for Ireland from a lineout drive and Scotland found themselves 12 points down before a Laidlaw penalty put them on the board.

But it was short-lived joy for Scotland as when they returned to Ireland territory from the restart, a wayward pass went to ground and was fly-kicked more than half the length of the field, where Stuart Hogg was caught in possession over the line.

From the resulting scrum, CJ Stander stormed forward to pave the way for Furlong to touch down and Ireland had their third try from their third foray into Scotland's 22.

Scotland were then 16 points in arrears, and the highest deficit ever overturned in a World Cup match is 15 by Romania against Canada in 2015. The Scots tried to claw their way back in the opening exchanges of the second half, no doubt inspired by their 31-point recovery to draw with England earlier this year.

But a 15-minute period of control went unrewarded and when Ireland regrouped, Conway scored the bonus-point fourth try and Carty sealed the game with a penalty. —AFP



YOKOHAMA: Ireland's wing Jacob Stockdale (2nd R) runs with the ball during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool A match between Ireland and Scotland at the International Stadium Yokohama in Yokohama yesterday. —AFP

Samoa draft eight World Cup newbies for Russia game

TOKYO: Samoa coach Steve Jackson has selected eight Rugby World Cup debutants for his side's first game of the tournament against Russia on Tuesday.

The New Zealander yesterday called up 10 of the starting line-up from their final warm-up game, a 34-15 defeat by Australia, for the Pool A clash in Kumagaya, north of Tokyo. Logovii Mulipola, Motu Matuu, captain Chris Vui, Dwayne Polataivao, and Ah See Tuala are those who come in from the Pacific islanders, who reached the World Cup quarter-finals in 1991 and 1995.

"The players that have been selected deserve their selection," said Jackson. "Some players really put their hands up and that was what it was all about really. We want to keep consistency within the group and especially the starting fifteen and I think we've done that."

Jackson's opposite number Lyn Jones has named an unchanged side to the one beaten 30-10 by hosts Japan in the tournament curtain raiser last Friday with flyhalf Yury Kushnarev poised to win a record-extending 11th cap.

"Everybody deserves an opportunity against Samoa," said the Welshman, hoping to lead Russia to a first World Cup victory in their second appearance in the tournament. "Samoa will be different in attack and defence than Japan. They are a very dangerous team. We will have to be at our best to get a positive result."

Kushnarev, one of Russia's standout players against the Japanese, starts alongside captain Vasily Artemyev as the

Bears look to bounce back against the hard-hitting Samoans. Artemyev, who has scored a record 29 test tries for his country, will demand greater support from his team mates against Samoa, particularly in defence after the Russians ran out of steam against the Brave Blossoms.

Meanwhile, at 37, mercurial flyhalf Tusi Pisi is set to become the oldest player to represent Samoa at the World Cup in a country he knows well after spells in Japan, notably with the Tokyo-based Sunwolves in Super Rugby. Tim Nanai-Williams, cousin of All Blacks superstar Sonny Bill, plays full-back for the Samoans, who are ranked four places higher than Russia at 16 and will expect to get off to a winning start, though neither side is given any serious chance of advancing from a group also containing Ireland and Scotland.

Samoa team (15-1)

Tim Nanai-Williams; Ah See Tuala,

Alapati Leiua, Rey Lee-Lo; Ed Fidow, Tusi Pisi; Dwayne Polataivao, Afaeseti Amosa, TJ Ioane; Chris Vui (captain), Kane Le'aupepe; Teofilo Paulo, Michael Alaaloa, Motu Matu'u, Logovii Mulipola.

Replacements: Ray Niua, Paul Alo-Emile, Jordan Lay, Senio Toalefoa, Josh Tyrell, Melani Mataavao, AJ Alatimu, Henry Taefu

Russia

Vasily Artemyev (captain); German Davydov, Vladimir Ostroshko, Dmitry Gerasimov, Kirill Golosnitskiy; Yury Kushnarev, Vasily Dorofeev; Nikita Vavilin, Tagir Gadzhiev, Vitaly Zhiyatov; Bogdan Fedotko, Andrey Ostrikov; Kirill Gotovtsev, Stanislav Selskii, Valery Morozov.

Replacements: Evgeny Matveev, Andrei Polivalov, Azamat Bitiev, Andrey Garbuzov, Anton Sychev, Dmitry Perov, Ramil Gaisin, Vladislav Sozonov. —AFP

Low-key England beat Tonga at Rugby World Cup

SAPPORO: Manu Tuilagi scored two tries as England launched their bid for a second Rugby World Cup title with a comfortable but error-strewn 35-3 bonus-point win over Tonga yesterday. The Samoa-born centre crossed twice under the Sapporo Dome roof in a first half that ended with England well ahead at 18-3.

And second-half scores from hooker Jamie George and replacement Luke Cowan-Dickie saw England secure a bonus point for scoring four tries, a result that could be crucial in a tight Pool C. In addition England, playing within themselves, also appeared to avoid any injuries to key players.

"We had to toil hard today and I was particularly pleased at the end of the game when we were under the pump a bit, we defended really well," said England coach Eddie Jones. "We'd like to be sharper with the ball and that will come. But I was really pleased with the efforts of my players. They worked hard and what a great effort by Tonga."

England captain Owen Farrell, who kicked 15 points, added: "To come away with a bonus-point win is always a good start to a World Cup. There are still some mistakes that we can look at and

that's the exciting thing. We've still got a lot more in us."

Tonga, who've lost more than 20 players to other World Cup nations, were vastly improved from the side that suffered a 92-7 warm-up thrashing by world champions New Zealand in Hamilton this month. "We didn't play well against the All Blacks and we caught them on a bloody good day," said Tonga coach Toutai Kefu. "Today's effort was a much improved effort. England are a good team, they squeezed us for territory in the first half and we couldn't get into their 30 (metre area) to throw any punches," added Kefu, who played under Jones for Australia.

England, whose humiliating first-round exit on home soil at the 2015 World Cup led to Jones's appointment, took an 11th-minute lead when inside centre Farrell landed a penalty. Tonga scrum-half Sonatane Takulua equalised three minutes later after a thumping hit by flanker Zane Kapeli on England number eight Billy Vunipola, whose father and uncle both played in the Tonga side thrashed 101-10 by England at the 1999 World Cup.

England thought they had scored the opening try when flanker Sam Underhill charged over after fullback Elliot Daly ran a loose kick back. But with the grounding unclear to the television match official, the score was disallowed.

From the resulting five-metre scrum, however, Tuilagi bundled over for a 24th-minute try which the TMO did award. Farrell missed the conversion but England led 8-3. England lock Maro Itoje then gave away a penalty to the obvious



SAPPORO: England's lock Maro Itoje (C) runs to evade Tonga's scrum-half Sonatane Takulua (L) and Tonga's fly-half James Faiva (R) during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool C match between England and Tonga at the Sapporo Dome in Sapporo yesterday. —AFP

fury of Jones, in charge of his native Australia when England beat the Wallabies in the 2003 World Cup final in Sydney. But Takulua missed, an error made worse for Tonga when Tuilagi scored his second try. Daly released Jonny May before the wing's inside pass to Tuilagi allowed the midfielder to charge in in the 31st minute. Farrell converted and England led 15-3.

England almost had another try before half-time but had to settle for a Farrell penalty that gave them a comfortable 15-point advantage at half-time. Farrell made it 21-3 early in the second half with a 39-

metre penalty. England scored their third try when a thunderous rolling maul saw hooker Jamie George power over in the 57th minute.

But England lost momentum as Jones rang the changes, although their fourth try arrived three minutes from time when wing Anthony Watson's surging run and pass released Cowan-Dickie.

England now have a quick turnaround before their next Pool C match against the United States in Kobe on Thursday, with Tonga playing Argentina, looking to bounce back from an agonising loss to France, on Saturday. —AFP

No deja vu as France spy a turn in fortunes

TOKYO: France prop Rabah Slimani thinks Les Bleus might have let their World Cup opener against Argentina slip away had it been played a few months ago and is hoping Saturday's dramatic win will signal a change in fortunes.

The French led Wales 16-0 at halftime in the Six Nations earlier this year only to lose 24-19, while last November South Africa overhauled a 23-9 deficit to beat them 29-26 with a last-minute Bongi Mbonambi try at Stade de France.

It looked like deja vu on Saturday at Tokyo Stadium when, after building a 20-3 lead at the break on the back of some brilliant attacking rugby, the French trailed 21-20 with 11 minutes to go. This time, though, replacement flyhalf Camille Lopez eased their nerves with a coolly taken drop goal which ultimately secured a 23-21 victory to send France top of Pool C.

"Not so long ago, we would have lost this match. But we kept our heads to win this opening game and make a good start to the tournament," Slimani said.

"It reminded me of a lot of matches. I thought about the game against South Africa at Stade de France, when we lost in the last seconds. For the first time in a while, today it went in our favour. It's not over, but, hey, at last it's turning in our favour." While most of the plaudits for France's purple patch in the first half on Saturday were handed to the backs — most notably dynamic winger Damian Penaud — Slimani and his fellow forwards also played their part, particularly just before halftime.

Argentina had been camped on the France line for a long period when they elected to take a scrum penalty. The French scrum got a huge shove going through Slimani's tighthead side, though, forcing Argentina loosehead prop Nahuel Tetaz Chaparro to stand up and securing a penalty that allowed them to break the siege.

The three-times World Cup finalists next face the United States in Fukuoka on Oct. 2 followed four days later by what will be another physical contest against Tonga in Kumamoto.

Their final opening-round match will be on Oct. 12 in Yokohama against arch rivals England, a contest which is now likely to decide which team tops Pool C.

"We cannot allow ourselves to relax ... we must win the next two games," fullback Max Medard said.

"England is an ogre for us. They are several levels above us. We can't overthink things and play one match ahead. It's a bit of a cliché, but it's the truth." —Reuters

Tampering doubts over Russian doping samples

PARIS: The World Anti-Doping Agency doubts the authenticity of files and samples

retrieved from Moscow's disgraced former drug-testing laboratory, a source close to the matter has told AFP.

The Compliance Review Committee (CRC) is preparing to recommend sanctions and is readying a report to present to WADA at a meeting in Tokyo on Monday, the source said Saturday.

This source confirms a tweet from journalist Hajo Seppelt from German TV station ARD saying Russia is "suspected of having tampered with the samples from the Moscow lab". Contacted by AFP, a

spokesman for WADA confirmed the results of the CRC report would be made public after the meeting today but said it was too early to discuss them.

Providing full WADA access to the Moscow lab's test files was a key condition of Russia's controversial reinstatement last September following a major state-sponsored doping scandal. If a fraud was revealed, this could possibly lead to sanctions like banning Russia from future competitions such as the Tokyo Olympic Games.

Russia has been suspended from all international athletics competitions since 2015, although many of its athletes are given special dispensation to compete under a neutral banner. But the International Association of Athletics Federations is due to reexamine the case for reintegrating Russian athletes ahead of the World Athletics Championships that start in Doha September 27.

WADA said in July they had started assessing the evidence provided "with a view to identifying those cases to take

forward as anti-doping rule violations". It added that, even if federations did not bring forward a case, WADA could.

WADA also said it aimed to analyse all the priority cases by the end of the year. In July, it said that it was "compiling strong evidence" of doping with 298 athletes in the immediate line of fire from files and samples retrieved from Moscow's disgraced former drug-testing laboratory. Those athletes represent 578 of the 2,262 total samples retrieved in Moscow. —AFP

Sports

Vettel ends long wait for victory with Singapore triumph

Championship leader Lewis Hamilton finishes fourth

SINGAPORE: Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel ended his year-long drought without a win at the Singapore Grand Prix yesterday, mastering a hazy circuit to claim a record fifth triumph in the city-state.

The German was chased home by teammate Charles Leclerc, who started on pole but lost the lead to the four-time world champion after making his pit stop, and Red Bull's Max Verstappen, who finished third. "It was a very late call on the pit stop and I just gave it everything on the out lap. I was surprised to come out ahead and it was difficult to manage the tyres but we controlled it to the end," Vettel told reporters.

Championship leader Lewis Hamilton finished fourth but extended his advantage over fellow Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas to 65 points, with six races remaining, after the Finn finished in fifth.

The race got off to a clean start with the top six retaining their grid positions despite Vettel putting immense pressure on second-placed Hamilton in the opening lap.

While a few drivers were shifting position further down the field, the frontrunners were maintaining a one-second gap between each other as Leclerc set a slow pace to make his soft tyres last as long as possible.

Ferrari and Red Bull were the first of the big teams to bring their cars in for pit stops as Vettel and Verstappen were fitted with the more durable hard

tyres on lap 20, with Leclerc following suit on the next lap. Leclerc, however, was dismayed to leave the pits behind Vettel. Hamilton stayed out on track in the lead to set about forging a big enough gap to retain the lead when it was his turn to come in.

But Vettel, Leclerc and Verstappen were lapping much quicker than Hamilton and when the Briton finally stopped seven laps after his rivals, he emerged in a distant fourth place.

Hamilton's only hope of victory was to capitalise on his rivals' degraded tyres late in the race. But three safety car periods — when both George Russell and Sergio Perez stopped on the track, and when Daniil Kvyat collided with Kimi Raikkonen — allowed the front three plenty of time to cool their rubber.

Ferrari will be delighted to have recorded a one-two finish at a circuit they were not expected to muster a podium finish.

But Leclerc was unhappy with the pit strategy that dashed his hopes of a hat-trick after wins in Belgium and Italy.

"I won't do anything stupid, I want us to finish one-two," Leclerc told Ferrari over the radio when he was behind the second safety car. "I just don't think it's fair."

Smog from forest fires in neighbouring Indonesia has shrouded Singapore over the past week, and yesterday air quality dipped to unhealthy levels ahead of the race. —AFP



SINGAPORE: Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel (R) holds up the trophy as second-placed Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc (L) looks on, after the Formula One Singapore Grand Prix night race at the Marina Bay Street Circuit in Singapore yesterday. —AFP

Naomi Osaka ends title drought at Pan Pacific Open

TOKYO: Japan's Naomi Osaka ended an eight-month title drought by winning the Pan Pacific Open in her home city yesterday, her first trophy since her second consecutive Grand Slam triumph at the Australian Open in January.

The former world number one overwhelmed Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-2, 6-3 in just over an hour to make it third time lucky in finals at the tournament after finishing runner-up in 2016 and 2018. The US-based star, winner of last year's US Open, was born in Osaka and it was clearly a happy homecoming for the 21-year-old who beamed and smiled her way through a dominant week on court. She became the first Japanese player to win the Pan Pacific title since Kimiko Date in 1995. "I have played finals here. This is my third time. So I am really glad that I was able to win, and for it to be in the city where I was born makes it really special," Osaka said.

"I think my nerves have been doing really well the last two matches," she said. "I think that definitely helped me out especially today since she (Pavlyuchenkova) is such a great returner," added the big-hitting world number four who stormed through the tournament without dropping a set. —AFP

Marquez one race away from MotoGP title after Aragon win

ALCANIZ: Marc Marquez moved to within one race of sealing his sixth MotoGP title yesterday after another dominant display saw him cruise to victory in Aragon. The 26-year-old's eighth triumph of the season is his fourth in a row at the Aragon Motorland, situated 160km from his home town of Cervera, and means he now sits 98 points clear in the World Championship standings with five races left.

Italy's Andrea Dovizioso, who crossed the line in second after starting the race 10th on the grid, remains Marquez's closest challenger in the standings — although the Honda rider can now seal the title in Thailand next month.

"I was convinced about my strategy and I felt good. I pushed in the beginning, opened a gap of four to five seconds and didn't push more," Marquez said afterwards. "I'm happy with this victory. It looks easy, but in the end we're working very hard. We crashed on Friday, so we are always pushing. We know that Dovizioso never gives up."

Marquez's victory in Spain also ends

any lingering hopes Danilo Petrucci, Alex Rins, Maverick Vinales and Valentino Rossi still had of lifting the trophy. One of Dovizioso and Petrucci, both of Ducati, needed to win to turn the tide but the team's last victory in Aragon came in 2010, while Marquez has made this 5,077km-circuit something of a home venue in recent years.

He finished the race in 41min.57.221sec, a considerable 4.836sec ahead of Dovizioso and 5.430sec in front of Australian Jack Miller, who snatched third and a spot on the podium. "We're really happy about that, we needed that result, especially when you start 10th," Dovizioso said.

Marquez had been quickest in both practice and qualifying and the dry track only enhanced his credentials as the out-standing favourite coming into the race.

Rins had to apologise afterwards for his early dash inside that forced Franco Morbidelli to crash out at the 12th turn, with Rins also affected and dropping down to 19th as a result. Marquez was more than a second clear after the opening lap but Vinales and Fabio Quartararo were both battling for a spot in the top three, with Miller establishing himself behind the leader in second. Valentino Rossi, Dovizioso, Cal Crutchlow and Andrea Iannone were all chasing Aleix Espargaro in fifth and Vinales made his move on the 16th turn to take third, with Miller now firmly in his sights.

Rins served a long-lap penalty, cost-



ALCANIZ: Repsol Honda Team's Spanish rider Marc Marquez celebrates on the podium after winning the MotoGP race of the Moto Grand Prix of Aragon at the Motorland circuit in Alcaniz yesterday. —AFP

ing him a few seconds but no positions, as the pack behind Marquez bunched, all in touch with the podium places. Having seen off Quartararo, Vinales now surged round the outside of Miller while Marquez moved almost five seconds clear, his success all-but secured with six laps to go.

Vinales came under late pressure from Dovizioso and was overtaken by the Italian, who opened up down the back straight. By then, Marquez's victory was complete. In the Moto2 Jorge Navarro

closed the gap on leader Alex Marquez, the younger brother of the 500cc class' top dog, after finishing less than a second behind yesterday's winner Brad Binder.

Spaniard Navarro is 38 points behind countryman Marquez, who finished third in Aragon despite starting the race in pole position. Aron Canet closed to within two points of top spot in the Moto3 after taking advantage of overall leader Lorenzo Dalla Porta finishing 11th by storming to a win and gaining a massive 20 points on the Italian. —AFP

Cubs' season on ropes as Cards stun Kimbrel

CHICAGO: Yadier Molina and Paul DeJong hit back-to-back homers off of hard-throwing closer Craig Kimbrel in the top of the ninth inning, and the visiting St. Louis Cardinals stunned the Chicago Cubs with a 9-8 win on Saturday afternoon. St. Louis (88-67) moved six games ahead of Chicago (82-73) in the National League Central with only seven games to go. The Cubs also fell three games behind the Milwaukee Brewers for the NL's second wild-card spot after the Brewers beat the Pirates later Saturday. Cardinals right-hander John Gant (11-1) got credit for the win after recording the final out of the eighth. He was one of eight relievers to follow starter Dakota Hudson, who gave up three runs in three innings. Molina evened the score at 8 on Kimbrel's first pitch of the game. He clubbed a high fastball over the wall in left-center field for his ninth homer of the season and 155th of his career. On Kimbrel's second pitch, DeJong put the Cardinals on top 9-8. He hammered another fastball an estimated 440 feet to center for his 28th homer, which added to his career high.

BREWERS 10, PIRATES 1

Keston Hiura's two-run home run propelled host Milwaukee past Pittsburgh, which lost its eighth straight game. Hiura's 18th home run of the season came with two outs in the bottom of the first, on a 3-2 pitch with Yasmani Grandal on base. The Brewers went ahead 2-1 and scored eight more unanswered runs to cruise to their seventh win in eight games and their 14th win in the past 16 games. Along with moving to three up on the Chicago Cubs — their closest competition for the second wild-card spot — the Brewers also ended their night still one game out of the top wild card, held by the Washington Nationals.

REDS 3, METS 2

Pinch hitter Christian Colon delivered a tiebreaking single off Seth Lugo with two outs in the eighth inning as host Cincinnati put a dent in New York's playoff hopes. The loss put New York (80-74) 4 1/2 games behind the Brewers in that wild-card race and also dropped the Mets' elimination number down to four. Colon batted for reliever Joel Kuhnel with runners at first and second after Justin Wilson (4-2) walked Jose Iglesias and Jose Peraza singled. After Lugo fanned pinch hitter Curt Casali for the second out, Colon grounded a full-count curveball up the middle and Iglesias scored the decisive run.

NATIONALS 10, MARLINS 4 (10 INNINGS)

Brian Dozier pulled a go-ahead RBI single in the top of the 10th

inning, leading Washington to a win over host Miami after the Nationals blew a four-run lead in the eighth. After Dozier's hit off reliever Jose Urena (4-10), the Nationals got RBIs by Adam Eaton (single), Juan Soto (walk) and Kurt Suzuki (three-run double). That rally made a winner of reliever Wander Suero (6-8). Washington's Stephen Strasburg pitched seven scoreless innings, allowing just three hits and three walks while striking out six. But Nationals reliever Fernando Rodney blew a 4-0 lead in the eighth, retiring just one of the six batters he faced.

ROYALS 12, TWINS 5

Chesler Cuthbert hit a two-run, pinch-hit home run to break a 5-5 tie and highlight a seven-run ninth inning as Kansas City beat Minnesota in Minneapolis. Cuthbert hit the first pinch-hit homer of his career off reliever Taylor Rogers (2-4), a 364-foot line drive down the left field line, to drive in Ryan O'Hearn. The Royals would go on to roll up eight hits and two walks while sending 13 batters to the plate in the inning. O'Hearn homered, doubled and had three hits and three RBIs. Jorge Soler finished with three hits and an RBI, and Ryan McBroom had two hits and scored twice for Kansas City (57-99), which snapped a four-game losing streak. Randy Rosario (2-0) retired one batter to end the eighth and pick up the win.

PHILLIES 9, INDIANS 4

Brad Miller hit two solo homers, and Bryce Harper slammed a three-run shot as visiting Philadelphia beat Cleveland to dent the Indians' playoff chances. The loss ended the Indians' five-game winning streak and dropped them a game back of the Tampa Bay Rays for the second wild card from the American League with seven games left. The Indians did remain four back in the AL Central, however, with the division-leading Twins' loss to the Royals. Jason Vargas (7-8) earned his first victory in 10 starts with Philadelphia since he was traded from the New York Mets on July 29. Vargas went 6 1/3 innings, allowing four runs (two earned) and five hits, striking out eight and walking two. Oscar Mercado had a two-run homer to help the Indians to an early 4-1 lead.

RAYS 5, RED SOX 4 (11 INNINGS)

Nate Lowe hit a two-run home run in the bottom of the 11th inning as host Tampa Bay continued its playoff push with a win over Boston in St. Petersburg, Fla. It was the third straight 11-inning victory for the Rays (92-63), who not only moved that one game ahead of Cleveland in the race for the second AL wild-card spot, but kept pace with Oakland to remain two back of the top wild-card spot. Willy Adames also homered for Tampa Bay. Rays right-hander Diego Castillo (5-8) got the victory for the second straight night despite allowing a go-ahead, solo homer to Boston's Mitch Moreland in the top of the 11th. Right-hander Josh A. Smith (0-3), the 11th Red Sox pitcher, took the loss.

ATHLETICS 12, RANGERS 3

Matt Chapman had two hits and two RBIs in a seven-run first

inning that helped left-hander Sean Manaea coast to a third straight win, as Oakland routed visiting Texas and won for the 10th time in its last 11 games. Manaea (3-0) remained unbeaten in four starts since making his season debut on Sept. 1 after missing 13 months following elbow surgery. He took a three-hit shutout and 11-0 lead into the sixth inning before serving up solo home runs to Elvis Andrus (his 11th) and Danny Santana (his 26th). Manaea left after 5 2/3 innings, walking one and striking out four. Today's series finale will also be Oakland's final home game in the regular season, as the A's finish the season in Southern California against the Angels, then in Seattle against the Mariners.

ANGELS 8, ASTROS 4

Luke Bard anchored a strong bullpen performance, and visiting Los Angeles made an early lead stand up in a victory over Houston. Bard (3-2) worked two perfect innings against the heart of the Astros' lineup, as five Angels relievers covered the final 18 outs and denied Houston a chance to clinch its third consecutive AL West title. The Astros will have to wait until the series finale today, after the Angels won for just the second time in their last 13 games at Minute Maid Park.

YANKEES 7, BLUE JAYS 2

Giancarlo Stanton homered and had an RBI double, and James Paxton allowed just an unearned run in six innings as New York beat Toronto at Yankee Stadium. Stanton doubled to drive in Aaron Judge and then scored on Mike Ford's RBI single in the fourth for the Yankees' first two runs. In the sixth, Stanton hammered an 0-1 changeup from Brock Stewart into the bleachers in deep left field for his second homer of the season. Stanton struck out looking in the first, and manager Aaron Boone was ejected by third-base umpire Joe West arguing the call. Paxton (15-6) won his career-high 10th straight start, allowing three hits with seven strikeouts and no walks. His ERA during the streak is 2.25 ERA, lowering his season ERA to 3.73.

ROCKIES 4, DODGERS 2

Ryan McMahon and Josh Fuentes hit home runs as last-place Colorado prevented host Los Angeles from reaching 100 wins on the season. It was the Rockies' first victory in eight tries at Los Angeles this season, and they also ended a 12-game losing streak at Dodger Stadium going back to last season. Walker Buehler (13-4), a possible No. 1 starter for Los Angeles when the playoffs open, gave up four runs on five hits with three walks and five strikeouts over six-plus innings. He has given up 17 earned runs over his last three starts against the Rockies, but he also had a career-best 16-strikeout game against them earlier this season.

BRAVES 8, GIANTS 1

Max Fried may have placed himself back in consideration for a starting spot in the postseason, throwing 5 1/3 scoreless innings as Atlanta hammered visiting San Francisco. Fried (17-6) was in



CHICAGO: Kris Bryant #17 of the Chicago Cubs reacts after striking out during the fourth inning of a game against the St. Louis Cardinals at Wrigley Field in Chicago, Illinois. —AFP

danger of being moved to the bullpen for the playoffs after back-to-back shaky outings. But the left-hander bounced back to blank the Giants on five hits. He struck out two and didn't walk a batter. Atlanta (96-60) improved to 50-30 at home and has won three in a row. San Francisco (74-81) has dropped three straight and has lost five of six meetings with the Braves this season.

DIAMONDBACKS 4, PADRES 2

Abraham Almonte had three hits and scored three runs, and Domingo Leyba and Eduardo Escobar each drove in two runs as visiting Arizona beat San Diego to ruin the debut of interim Padres manager Rod Barajas. Barajas, a former major league catcher, was the Padres' bench coach for Andy Green, who was fired Saturday just eight games shy of completing four seasons as Padres manager. Green had a 274-366 record as the 19th manager in Padres history. Things didn't improve Saturday as the Padres fell to 24-41 since the All-Star break and 1-8 over the last nine games. Eight Diamondbacks pitchers held the Padres to two runs on five hits. Over the last six games, the Padres have seven runs on 27 hits. —Reuters

Sports

Barcelona's poor start continues with surprise defeat by Granada

Atletico drop to third in the table, Celta climb to 14th

MADRID: Barcelona threw on their stars of the present and the future on Saturday but neither Lionel Messi nor Ansu Fati could save them from a dismal 2-0 defeat away at Granada. Messi was still not deemed fit enough to start at Los Carmenes while Fati, the 16-year-old who has lit up La Liga in recent weeks, also began the game on the bench.

But while both came on at half-time with Barca trailing to Ramon Azeez's opener, it was Granada that scored again, Alvaro Vadillo converting a penalty after Arturo Vidal was found guilty of a handball. Barcelona have now won only two of their opening five league games and none away from Camp Nou, this their second loss already, just one fewer than the three they suffered during the entirety of last season.

With seven points on the board, this is their worst start to a season since 1994. "Obviously I am worried," said coach Ernesto Valverde. "Because we are not getting good results and when that happens in two or three games, it means we are not playing well."

Instead, Granada go top of the table after capitalising on Atletico Madrid's goalless draw at home to Celta Vigo a few hours before. They will stay there until today, when Sevilla, Real Madrid or Athletic Bilbao could overtake them. Barcelona are sixth, grasping onto the consolation of Messi's second substitute appearance in five days that now suggests he has finally recovered from the niggling calf injury sustained at the start of August.

Their problems though are unlikely to be solved simply by their captain's return. Junior Firpo's error two minutes into his first start for the club gifted Granada their opening goal and set the tone for a chaotic night in defence.

And up front, Antoine Griezmann was quiet again, with little in any of the combinations to suggest Ernesto Valverde has yet worked out who will form his

best attacking trio and in what positions.

"In the end, the coach is responsible and I feel responsible," Valverde said. "I always think you can win or lose but at least you have to deserve to win when you lose, and today it hasn't been like that."

Firpo's mistake came early, as he shaped to play a long ball over the top back to his goalkeeper. Instead, the lively Roberto Soldado stole possession and slipped in Antonio Puertas.

MESSI IMPACT LIMITED

With Firpo on the floor, Gerard Pique scrambled across but Puertas' shot only looped up off the defender to the back post where Azeez headed in. Granada seemed hungrier than Barca and their dominance persuaded Valverde to make two changes at half-time, Messi and Fati replacing Carles Perez and Firpo.

Messi won a free-kick 30 yards out but hit it straight at the wall while Marc-Andre ter Stegen fumbled a cross and had to react quickly to claw it back off his own line. Any hopes of a Barca comeback were dashed in the 66th minute as Vidal handballed at the end of a scramble in the box and Vadillo made no mistake with the spot-kick.

One break saw Messi supply Fati but the teenager took too long and then Messi tried himself but his shot was straight at the goalkeeper. In the end, Granada were comfortable winners. Atletico could have returned to the top of La Liga but were frustrated by a determined Celta Vigo.

After coming from two goals down to salvage a point against Juventus in the Champions League on Wednesday, Atletico failed to sustain the momentum in a match of few chances at the Wanda Metropolitan.

Diego Simeone's side won their opening three league games but are now two without a victory, fol-



GRANADA: Granada's Spanish midfielder Antonio Puertas (2L) vies with Barcelona's Guinea-Bissau forward Ansu Fati during the Spanish league football match between Granada FC and FC Barcelona at Nuevo Los Carmenes stadium in Granada. — AFP

lowing last weekend's shock defeat away at Real Sociedad. This latest setback leaves Simeone with familiar questions to answer about his side's attacking threat.

Summer signing Joao Felix started before being replaced by Alvaro Morata in the second half, the

Spanish striker available again after recovering from a knee injury. But neither Felix nor Morata, or their partner Diego Costa, could conjure up the decisive opening, with full-backs Renan Lodi and Kieran Trippier by far the team's most creative outlets. Atletico drop to third in the table while Celta climb to 14th. —AFP

S Africa quicks set up series-levelling win against India

BENGALURU: South Africa fast bowlers Kagiso Rabada and Beuran Hendricks helped restrict India to a low total and set up a comfortable series-levelling nine-wicket win for the touring side in the third and final Twenty20 international yesterday.

The hosts, who won the second T20 to take a 1-0 lead in the series after a washout in the first match, managed a below par 134-9 in their 20 overs after captain Virat Kohli won the toss and opted to bat at the M.Chinnaswamy Stadium. South Africa captain Quinton de Kock scored a second straight fifty in the series and remained unbeaten on 79 to help his side chase down the target with 19 balls to spare. De Kock, who made 52 at Mohali, and Reeza Hendricks scored 76 for the opening stand to stub out India's hopes of early wickets and any chance of a fight.

Reeza was dismissed for 28 but the South Africa skipper put the hosts' bowlers to the sword, smashing five sixes and six fours in his 52-ball knock. Earlier, Hendricks dismissed dangerous India opener Rohit Sharma early and picked up another wicket to finish with impressive bowling figures of 2-14 from his four overs. Rabada did not have a great start, bowling wides on his first three deliveries, and conceded 17 runs in his opening over but recovered well to finish with 3-39. South Africa spinners Bjorn Fortuin and Tabraiz Shamsi also kept things tight, conceding 42 runs in seven overs between them while picking up three wickets.

Shikhar Dhawan, who top-scored for the hosts with 36, and Kohli appeared to have steadied the ship for India with a 41-run stand after the early loss of Rohit. But Dhawan and Kohli, who made nine, fell in quick



BANGALORE: Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli (L) and South African captain Quinto de Kock (R) share the trophy after the third Twenty20 international cricket match of a three-match series between India and South Africa ended with a draw, at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday. — AFP

succession and India needed their middle order to stand up and guide the side to a competitive total.

Left-arm spinner Fortuin put paid to those hopes by dismissing Rishabh Pant, who made 19, and Shreyas Iyer (5) in the same over. There were no heroics from the lower order either as India struggled to hit boundaries at a ground known to be a high-scoring venue. The two sides will next play three Tests, starting with the opening match at Visakhapatnam from Oct 2. — Reuters

FIFA study hails best-ever women's WCup in France

PARIS: FIFA's Technical Study Group (TSG) hailed this year's women's World Cup in France as the best-ever in the competition's history, with the tournament showcasing the tactical, technical and physical improvements in the women's game.

Soccer's world governing body released its analysis of the tournament in a 105-page report which their coaching and player development department head Branimir Ujevic said had confirmed the game's holistic development.

"From a technical, tactical, physical and mental point of view, France 2019 was the best women's World Cup seen to date," Ujevic said in a statement.

The United States won a record-extending fourth World Cup with a 2-0 victory over the Netherlands in the final in July, confirming their status as the leading power in the women's game. The report said headers accounted for 27 goals including 15 from open play, up from 23 at Canada 2015, and highlighted the players' ability to better use the width of the pitch to deliver crosses.

Goalkeepers had an overall save rate of 70%, five percentage points up from 2015. Only 9% of passes were played long in the 2019 tournament while 61% of all ball-regains occurred within seven seconds.

"This was the most fluid women's World Cup of all time as players showed a great ability to read the game and perform the right movements with and without the ball," TSG head April Heinrichs said. Heinrichs added that better coaching analysis and the use of technology had helped coaches give immediate and detailed feedback to players, thereby improving their performance. "Of course, we need to credit the coaches for the team's preparations. All in all, this is the result of teams playing more friendlies and shows the positive impact of under-20 and under-17 competitions," Heinrichs said. — Reuters

Iran 'assures' FIFA that women can attend qualifier

MILAN: FIFA president Gianni Infantino said yesterday that world football's governing body has been "assured" by Iranian authorities that women will be able to attend a World Cup qualifier in Tehran next month. FIFA had demanded Iran allow women free unlimited access to stadiums following the 'Blue girl' incident where a woman killed herself after being arrested trying to access a football stadium. "We have been assured, that as of the next international game of Iran, women will be allowed to enter football stadiums," Infantino told a FIFA conference on women's football in Milan yesterday.

FIFA wants Iran to end its ban on women entering stadiums that breaches international soccer statutes prohibiting discrimination. "We need to have women attending, we need to push for that with respect but in a strong and forceful way and we cannot wait anymore," Infantino added. "This is something very important, it is 40 years that this has not happened, with a couple of exceptions, but it is important to move to the next level and to the next stage." The Islamic republic has barred female spectators from football and other stadiums since

1981, with clerics arguing they must be protected from the masculine atmosphere and sight of semi-clad men.

FIFA officials have been in Iran to discuss preparations for the October 10 World Cup qualifier against Cambodia, their first home game of the 2022 qualifying competition. Sahar Khodayari, dubbed "blue girl" because of the colours of the team she supported, Esteghlal FC, was reportedly detained last year when trying to enter a stadium dressed as a man to watch them. She died of her injuries in a Tehran hospital after setting herself on fire outside a court in early September. The death of Khodayari sparked an outcry online, with many calling on FIFA to ban Iran from international competitions and for fans to boycott matches. "I think it's huge, that FIFA has enough of a pull and ability to influence change," two-time US women's World Cup winning coach Jill Ellis said on the sidelines of the Milan conference.

"It's absolutely right, I don't think there should be any discrimination, period. And not to allow women attend matches, I can't even wrap my brain around it," added Ellis. —AFP

Guangzhou defeat breathes new life into CSL title race

HONG KONG: Guangzhou Evergrande's lead at the top of the Chinese Super League was trimmed to a point yesterday after Fabio Cannavaro's side lost 1-0 to Wuhan Zall to allow the chasing pack to reignite the title race.

Second-placed Beijing Guoan cruised to a 3-0 win over Tianjin Tianhai to move to within a point of the lead while defending champions Shanghai SIPG kept their challenge alive with a late 2-1 win over Henan Jianye.

Li Shenglong's 90th minute winner - after Oscar had seen his opening free kick conversion cancelled out by Fernando Karanga - gave Vitor Pereira's 2018 champions just their second win in five league games and moved them to within three points of the summit.

Earlier in the day Norway-born John Hou Saeter - known as Hou Yongyong since gaining Chinese citizenship earlier this year - earned Beijing the lead in Tianjin with less than four minutes on the clock when he slotted past goalkeeper Sun Qibin to score his first goal for the club since joining from Stabek.

The 21-year-old gave Beijing the perfect platform to build on, with Zhang Yuning doubling their advantage 24 minutes later before Renato Augusto put the result beyond doubt with a coolly taken strike from outside the area that flew into

the top corner.

Guangzhou, meanwhile, have now lost two and drawn one of the three games they have played since their 13-game winning streak was broken last month and the latest loss came courtesy of a goal from Liu Yun, with the result moving Wuhan up to sixth.

"You can see that we were very anxious and many players wanted to try to use their individual ability to win the game," said Cannavaro. "We have to try to get out of the woods in the next five games in the league."

Elsewhere, Rafa Benitez's Dalian Yifang bounced back from last week's loss against Wuhan to hand Shenzhen FC a 2-0 defeat, with goals from Zheng Long and Dong Yanfeng keeping the Spaniard's side seventh in the standings.

Marouane Fellaini earned Shandong Luneng a point as the former Manchester United midfielder scored the decisive second as his side fought back after going two goals down inside the first 11 minutes to draw 2-2 with Shanghai Shenhua.

Hebei CFFC notched up a 2-1 win over Tianjin Teda while Jiangsu Suning sealed their third win in a row with a 2-1 victory against Chongqing Lifan that moves them to within one point of fourth-placed Shandong. — Reuters

Van Dijk threatens to eclipse Ronaldo-Messi in world's best

MILAN: Virgil Van Dijk threatens to eclipse fellow European stars Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi to lift FIFA's The Best Player award today, to set himself up as favourite for this year's Ballon d'Or. Van Dijk, Ronaldo and Messi are the three men's finalists for The Best Player award, with the winner to be announced on Monday in a star-studded ceremony in Milan's famous opera house La Scala. The towering Dutch defender helped Liverpool to the Champions League trophy last season and is well-positioned having already won the UEFA player of the year award.

Since The Best award was created in 2016, the winner has gone on to also lift the coveted Ballon d'Or, which will be unveiled on December 2. Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder Luka Modric won both awards last year to end Ronaldo and Messi's ten-year domination.

In the past three years the podiums for both awards have been almost identical apart from Egyptian Mohamed Salah's third place in The Best in 2018, a spot occupied by France's Antoine Griezmann in the Ballon d'Or.

Based on Liverpool's success last season it could be Van Dijk's turn to become the first defender since Italy's former World Cup winner Fabio Cannavaro in 2006. The 28-year-old proved himself among the best defenders in the world for Liverpool and the Dutch national side who reached the Nations League final.

Liverpool also missed out on the Premier League title by just one point behind Manchester City. Both Messi and Ronaldo have won FIFA's award in different guises five times each. Former Real Madrid star Ronaldo's six-year reign as the Champions League top scorer ended last season.

The 34-year-old scored six goals in Juventus's European campaign, including an incredible treble against Atletico Madrid, before they were eliminated in the quarter-finals. Ronaldo also won the Nations League with Portugal and his first Serie A title with Juventus.

Messi was top scorer in the Champions League last season with 12 goals before Barcelona were eliminated by Liverpool in the semi-finals. The Argentine was also the top European scorer with 36 goals and won La Liga title with Barcelona.

The 32-year-old helped Argentina to bronze at 2019 Copa America. Messi however could pay for his three-month suspension by South American football body CONMEBOL after alleging corruption at the Copa America.

Among the women, American World Cup winners Megan Rapinoe and Alex Morgan, are in the running along with England's Lucy Bronze. Rapinoe, 34, left France with a Golden Boot and Golden Ball award.

The three contenders for the men's coaching award are Liverpool's Champions League winning coach Jurgen Klopp, along with Tottenham's Mauricio Pochettino, who reached the European final, and Manchester City's Pep Guardiola. US women's coach Jill Ellis is in the running for the women's coaching award along with England's Phil Neville and Dutch coach Sarina Wiegman. —AFP

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Liverpool stay perfect with win at Chelsea

Dismal Man United overpowered by West Ham



LONDON: Chelsea's English striker Tammy Abraham (L) vies with Liverpool's German-born Cameroonian defender Joel Matip (C) during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Liverpool at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. —AFP

LONDON: Leaders Liverpool maintained their perfect start to the Premier League season as first-half goals from Trent Alexander-Arnold and Roberto Firmino secured a 2-1 win at Chelsea yesterday that left them five points clear at the summit.

It was a sixth straight league win from the start of the campaign for Jurgen Klopp's European champions and extended their club-record streak to 15 in total. Chelsea, who put up a spirited fightback in the second half, pulled a goal back with a superb effort from N'Golo Kante but a second defeat of the season left them 10 points adrift in 11th.

Liverpool took the lead in the 14th minute when Alexander-Arnold rifled the ball into the top corner after Mohamed Salah backheeled a free kick into his path on the edge of the box. Chelsea had been a clear second best in the early stages but were denied an equaliser by VAR after 26 minutes when Cesar Azpilicueta bundled the ball in only for replays to show that Mason Mount had strayed a fraction offside in the build-up.

Liverpool made the most of the reprieve as four minutes later Andy Robertson's cross from the left was headed powerfully into the net by the unmarked Roberto Firmino. Kante pulled one back in spectacular fashion, turning midfielder Fabinho, before attacking the heart of the visitors' defence and curling the ball into the far corner, but Mount and substitute Michy Batshuayi missed late chances to equalise.

Earlier, West Ham United beat a toothless Manchester United 2-0 at home yesterday to move into fourth place in the Premier League as Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side ended the game without an established striker after Marcus Rashford came off injured.

Ukrainian forward Andriy Yarmolenko put West Ham ahead at the end of a drab first half with a confident first-time finish into the bottom corner and Aaron Cresswell sealed victory with an outstanding free kick in the 84th minute.

The visitors, who were missing Paul Pogba, Anthony Martial and Luke Shaw through injury and lost teenage striker Mason Greenwood to illness, looked sluggish

throughout the game and lacked spark and creativity. United created no chances of note before the interval but Juan Mata missed a glorious opportunity early in the second half when he missed the target from close range, while Harry Maguire was later thwarted by West Ham keeper Lukasz Fabianski.

Their slim hopes of getting back into the game were rocked when Rashford came off with a suspected muscle injury, leaving winger Daniel James to operate as a lone striker for the final half an hour. West Ham have 11 points after six games, the same as third-placed Leicester City, while Man United are eighth on eight points.

Meanwhile, ten-man Arsenal twice battled back from a goal down to beat Aston Villa 3-2 with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's late effort securing the points in a thriller at the Emirates yesterday. John McGinn gave Villa a 20th-minute lead and Arsenal's task became even harder when Ainsley Maitland-Niles was shown a second yellow card 20 minutes later.

Despite being a man down, the hosts dominated possession and equalised on the hour when Nicolas Pepe converted from the penalty spot after midfielder Matteo Guendouzi was fouled in the area by Björn Engels.

Villa were ahead again almost immediately through Wesley but Calum Chambers replied again for the hosts in the 81st minute.

Aubameyang then pounced to complete a remarkable win for Unai Emery's side who moved into fourth spot with 11 points. Villa are third from bottom with four points. In another match, Diogo Jota's last-gasp equaliser earned Wolverhampton Wanderers a 1-1 draw at Crystal Palace yesterday as their wait for a first Premier League win of the season continued.

A mistake by Joel Ward five minutes into stoppage time allowed Jota to score from close range, earning Wolves a fourth draw from their six games. They had to do it the hard way though as they played the final stages with 10 men after Romain Saiss was shown a second yellow card for a foul on Wilfried Zaha.

Palace, who could have gone sixth with a win, took

the lead a minute after halftime when Ward's powerful shot was headed into his own net by Leander

Dendoncker. Wolves remain second from bottom with four points. — Reuters

Napoli thrash Lecce to move up to third, Roma grab late win at Bologna

LECCE: A Fernando Llorente double helped Napoli move into third place in Serie A with a 4-1 win at Lecce yesterday, while Edin Dzeko scored a last-gasp winner as Roma beat Bologna 2-1.

Spaniard Llorente struck the opening goal on his first start for Carlo Ancelotti's side before Lorenzo Insigne doubled their lead with a penalty before the break. Fabian Ruiz's curling strike made it three before Marco Mancosu pulled one back for Lecce from the penalty spot, but Llorente made sure of the points with a tap-in.

In Bologna, Roma defender Aleksandar Kolarov went from hero to zero in the space of five second-half minutes as he scored a superb free-kick before conceding a penalty to gift Nicola Sansone the equaliser.

Roma's Gianluca Mancini was shown a second yellow card with five minutes remaining but Dzeko powered home a header from point-blank range in the dying seconds to send the capital club fourth. Napoli are third on nine points, one behind Juventus and three off leaders Inter Milan, while Roma are one point behind them and Bologna occupy fifth place on seven points.

Elsewhere, Sampdoria earned their first points of the season with a 1-0 win over Torino, while Francesco Caputo scored twice in Sassuolo's 3-0 victory against SPAL. Former Tottenham Hotspur striker Llorente earned a starting spot for the first time since joining Napoli on a free transfer on

deadline day. The 34-year-old scored in the 2-0 Champions League victory over Liverpool during the week and was again decisive as he latched on to a deflected shot to roll in Napoli's opener after 28 minutes.

Insigne then scored from the spot at the second time of asking after goalkeeper Gabriel was pinged for coming off his line early when he saved the first effort, resulting in a retake. Ruiz struck a sublime third after the break before Mancosu gave the home side hope from the spot, but Llorente ended any suggestion of a comeback when he pounced on Gabriel's parry to tap in his side's fourth with eight minutes remaining.

Bologna and Roma were both unbeaten going into Sunday's meeting and Dzeko's last-minute header ended an eight-match winning home run for Sinisa Mihajlovic's side. Kolarov curled a wonderful free kick into the top corner from the edge of the area after 49 minutes to put the visitors in front. However, he then tripped up Roberto Soriano inside the box just four minutes later, allowing Sansone to send Roma goalkeeper Pau Lopez the wrong way.

Bologna threatened a shock win as Lopez was forced into a superb save on Soriano before Mancini was given his marching orders for throwing an arm in the face of Federico Santander. Dzeko rose to head in the winner in the final minute of added time to wrap up the points. — Reuters