



10 Persistence pays off for Iraqi Kurd women entrepreneurs



24 Seven children killed, scores hurt in Kenya school collapse



25 Wales open Rugby World Cup campaign with win over Georgia



CBK: Global uncertainty, trade tensions, fintech impact banks

Central Bank chief lays out multipronged strategy to face these challenges

Zain and Boubyan Bank announce plan for first Islamic digital bank in the region

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its sponsorship of the fintech exhibition as part of the International Banking Conference: Shaping the Future, organized by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

During the exhibition, Zain showcased its digital capabilities in supporting the ecosystem and offering the latest and most innovative fintech platforms. Being a leading mobile telecommunications provider, the company plays a pivotal role when it comes to

generating positive economic impacts, as well as supporting the efforts of economic growth and creating direct job opportunities within the market.

The conference witnessed a strategic partnership between Zain and Boubyan Bank to announce the first digital platform for Islamic banking services, which is the first digital partnership in the region's markets, and comes between one of the biggest telecommunications companies in the Middle East and Africa, and one of the most innovative banks in offering advanced digital banking facilities. — (See Page 11)



KUWAIT: Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi receives Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Zain's booth at the fintech exhibition yesterday.



KUWAIT: (From left) Central Bank of Kuwait Governor Mohammad Al-Hashel, Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf, Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan attend the International Banking Conference on Shaping the Future yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Jamie Etheridge

KUWAIT: Financial technologies are disrupting the global banking industry, creating concerns across the globe for what the future holds at a time when the global economy is facing many challenges. To address this issue and hear what senior regulators, policymakers and industry leaders think, the Central Bank of Kuwait organized the International Banking Conference on Shaping the Future yesterday.

In his keynote speech, Central Bank of Kuwait Governor Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel addressed the challenges facing the global banking sector today. "Three challenges are particularly worth highlighting: The state of the global economy; the revolution in financial

technology; and the rapidly evolving needs and expectations of customers," Hashel explained.

He noted that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) twice lowered its global growth projections for 2019 to 3.2 percent, with

See Pages 11-14

developed economies expected to grow at a much slower rate of 1.9 percent. A key driver of this slowdown is economic uncertainty brought about by rising trade tensions and protectionist policies. "If trade tensions continue, the IMF may further revise down its economic growth projections," he said.

The Central Bank chief also explained that

"global debt over the past 20 years has grown on average by 6 percent annually, compared to 3.5 percent for global GDP. If these rates continue, we could see global debt over the next 20 years reaching \$780 trillion, or 500 percent of GDP. This is clearly unsustainable, and requires urgent action by both governments and financial institutions."

The threat from Big Tech is also a looming concern for regulators and the banking industry. "What would happen when the likes of Facebook, Amazon, WhatsApp and Alibaba start competing with banks to provide financial services? These technology giants come with large and captive user bases, low online acquisition costs, and a better understanding of their customers through their utilization of big data."

Continued on Page 24

MoH imposes new fees for sick leaves, certificates, licenses

KUWAIT: The health ministry has implemented a new fee scheme that includes a KD 2 fee for authentication of sick leaves issued by the private sector. The new fees are for services offered by the medical council to expats, including KD 20 for medical examination for those applying to work in the public and private sectors; KD 5 for medical examination for those seeking disability aid and age estimation; KD 10 for "medically unfit", "to whom it may concern" and proportion of disability due to injury certificates; and KD 5 to approve sick leaves issued by non-government doctors inside or outside Kuwait.

The health ministry also imposed fees for approving advertisements - KD 50 for three months for licensing

Continued on Page 24

Lawmaker calls to ban drones for security reasons

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Saadoun Hammad yesterday called on authorities to ban the import, purchase and use of drones because of their high risk to national security and stability of the country, saying that drones are capable of obtaining confidential information that could harm the country's national interests.

Khan presses Trump on Taliban, Kashmir

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday pressed US President Donald Trump to restart talks with Afghanistan's Taliban and said Washington has a "duty" to calm the Kashmir standoff with India. "Stability in Afghanistan means stability in Pakistan," Khan said at the start of a meeting with Trump on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. He also pleaded for help in Kashmir, a disputed Muslim-majority territory, part of which

has been placed under a military clampdown by neighboring India, restricting many basic freedoms.

"The most powerful country in the world has a responsibility," Khan said, calling India's clampdown "a siege" and warning that the "crisis is going to get much bigger". Trump responded that he would "certainly" help mediate between Pakistan and India as long as both governments asked for this.

Continued on Page 24

Australia resumes live sheep exports after ban lifted

SYDNEY: Australia has lifted a temporary ban on controversial live sheep exports, with the first ship due to depart for the Middle East this week with about 60,000 animals on board. The live export trade has been under scrutiny since horrific footage of dead and dying heat-stressed sheep on vessels bound for the Middle East was released in April 2018, prompting a public outcry and forcing sweeping reforms to the industry. Though the government resisted calls to outlaw the practice entirely, a review led to a temporary embargo on live exports during the northern-hemisphere summer from June to September this year.

Rural Export and Trading WA, an exporter, said the ship is due to leave Fremantle, in Western

Continued on Page 24

600,000 tourists stranded as Thomas Cook collapses

LONDON: British travel firm Thomas Cook collapsed yesterday, leaving some 600,000 holidaymakers stranded and sparking the UK's biggest repatriation since World War II. The 178-year-old debt-plagued group, which had struggled against fierce online competition for some time and blamed Brexit uncertainty

for a recent drop in bookings, declared bankruptcy after failing to secure £200 million (\$250 million) from private investors.

Yesterday's bankruptcy, which followed a lengthy period of chronic financial turmoil after a disastrous 2007 merger deal, left some 600,000 tourists stranded worldwide according to Thomas Cook, while its 22,000 staff are out of a job. The British government launched emergency plans to bring some 150,000 UK holidaymakers back home from destinations including Bulgaria, Cuba, Turkey and the United States.

Authorities have meanwhile launched an official investigation into the corporate collapse, according to

a Downing Street spokeswoman who also cautioned that there were "a number of complicated reasons behind the failure". Thomas Cook said in a statement that "despite considerable efforts", it was unable to reach an agreement between the company's stakeholders and proposed new money providers. "The company's board has therefore concluded that it had no choice but to take steps to enter into compulsory liquidation with immediate effect," it added. The long-troubled group has also been blighted by enormous costs arising from its disastrous 2007 merger with MyTravel, a deal which left it plagued with huge levels of debt.

Continued on Page 24



NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump shakes hands with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan during a meeting yesterday. — AFP

Local

Kuwaiti, Norwegian FMs exchange congratulations on IAEA membership

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled meets GCC counterparts ahead of UN General Assembly talks



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Norway's Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soreide sign a memorandum of understanding between the two countries.



Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Ireland Simon Coveney.— KUNA photos

NEW YORK: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Norway's Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soreide discussed issues of mutual concern and boosting ties. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's 74th session in New York late Sunday. The two sides also exchanged congratulations on receiving membership at the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) board of governors for the 2019-2021 term, for both countries. Moreover, they discussed boosting coordination for

their new IAEA membership, and Norway's candidacy for a non-permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2021-2022 term. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti and Norwegian ministers signed a memorandum of understanding on holding talks between the two sides' foreign ministries. The meeting was attended by senior officials from Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Ireland Simon Coveney, and both sides discussed ways to enhance the close bilateral

relations between the two countries on all levels. They also discussed the candidacy of the Republic of Ireland for non-permanent membership of the UNSC for the period 2021-2022, and other international and regional issues of mutual concern. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Affairs of the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Ambassador of Kuwait to the United Nations Mansour Ayyad Al-Otaibi, Ambassador Nasser Abdullah Al-Hayen, the

Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations' Affairs, and other senior officers at the Foreign Ministry.

Furthermore, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled headed Kuwait's delegation at Gulf Cooperation Council annual ministerial talks in New York on Sunday. The talks, headed by Oman's Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs Yousef bin Alawi, discussed GCC and global coordination ahead of the United Nations' General Assembly meetings. The discussions also focused on vital matters scheduled on the agenda of talks with other nations, including recent regional

and global developments, also set for the agenda of the General Assembly session.

In the meantime, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled attended the 14th annual banquet on Middle East peace. International Peace Institute's (IPI) President Terje Rod-Larsen, in coordination with the UAE, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, organized the event held Sunday on the sidelines of the 74th UN General Assembly. The meeting focused on the regional challenges facing the Middle East and the international efforts geared towards peace, including the Palestine cause.— KUNA

Kuwaiti Speaker meets with Gulf counterparts

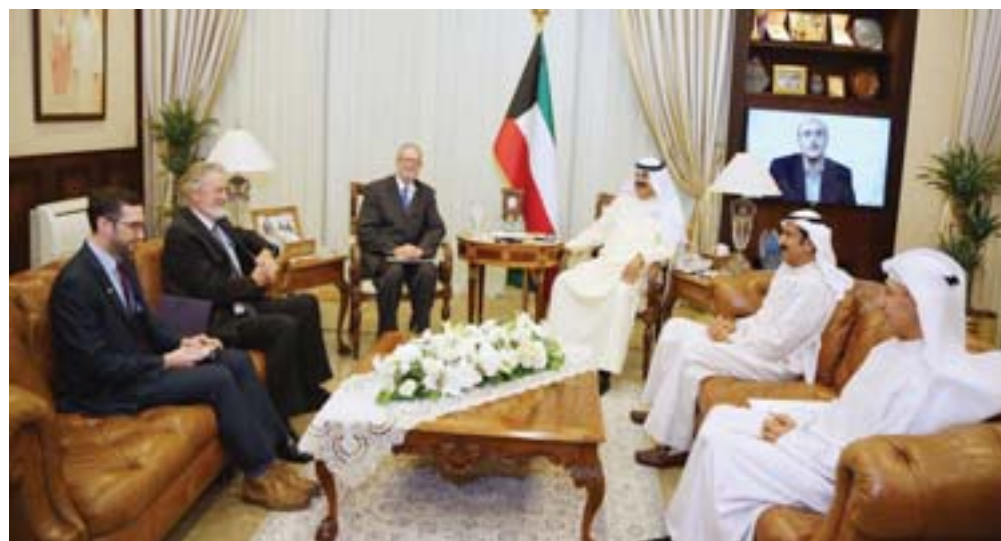
NUR-SULTAN: Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem held yesterday a joint meeting with Saudi Shura Council Speaker Sheikh Dr Abdullah Al-Sheikh, Bahraini Speaker of Council of Representatives Fawzia Zainal, Speaker of Shura Council of Oman Khalid Al-Mawali and the President of the Federal National Council of the UAE Dr Amal Al Qubaisi. The meeting came on the sidelines of the Speakers of Euro-Asian Countries' Parliaments' fourth meeting held in Kazakhstan's capital Nur-Sultan. Al-Dustour news network said in a press release. The meeting discussed the most important issues on the conference agenda in addition to issues to be raised during the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference scheduled to be held in Belgrade in October. MP Rakan Al-Nisf of the Kuwaiti side also attended the meeting.— KUNA



NUR-SULTAN: Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with GCC counterparts in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.— KUNA

Deputy FM meets US, UAE Ambassadors

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman, and the two tackled bilateral relations and current developments in the region and international arenas. The meeting was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister's Assistant Ambassador Ayhem Al-Omar, and Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Two Americas Advisor Salah Al-Hadad. Later, Jarallah met with UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Saqer Al-Raisi. The meeting delved into bilateral relations and recent developments in the region and international arena.— KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman.— KUNA photos

Malta President receives new Kuwaiti envoy

ROME: Maltese President George Vella received credentials of Faisal Ghazi Al-Mutairi as the new Kuwaiti Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary Ambassador to the Republic of Malta. Ambassador Mutairi handed over the credentials at an official ceremony at the Grand Master Palace on September 19, in attendance of Counselor at the Embassy Mohammed Rashid Al-Nuaimi and Second Secretary Mohammed Abdul Hamid Al-Qattan, the Kuwaiti embassy in Rome said in a statement. Upon the occasion, Ambassador Mutairi stressed the keenness of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to support and enhance bilateral relations between the two countries. Both sides discussed the Kuwait-Maltese relations and ways to improve them on many levels, including politics, economy, investments and education. More than 100 Kuwaiti students study in



Kuwaiti Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary Ambassador to Malta Faisal Al-Mutairi delivers his credentials to Maltese President George Vella.

Malta in the college of medicine. The Ambassador conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah to the Maltese President with wishes of good health, and more progress and prosperity for the people of Malta.— KUNA



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister, Defense Minister, and Chairman of the Supreme Council for the Environment Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with members of the Environmental Advisory Group.— Defense Ministry photo

Sheikh Nasser calls for improving environment

KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister, Defense Minister, and Chairman of the Supreme Council for the Environment Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah stressed yesterday the importance of adopting related studies to the national environmental strategy, and improving environmental indications and conditions in Kuwait. This came in a press release issued by the Ministry of Defense following a meeting between Sheikh Nasser and members of the Environmental Advisory Group, during which they discussed the most impor-

tant issues related to environment. Sheikh Nasser added that the improvement of environmental indicators achieves several strategic objectives, including the reduction of pollution-related diseases, which may reduce the cost of spending on medical services due to the deterioration of these indicators. The minister also called for the need to combine all efforts in order to overcome various obstacles that may hinder the work of improving the environmental situation in many locations in the country.— KUNA

Kuwait strongly deplors Israel's annexation plans

GENEVA: Kuwait yesterday vehemently condemned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to annex the Jordan Valley, a substantial part of the West Bank, calling the measure a "new chapter" of illegal settlements on Arab lands. The remarks by the Gulf state's permanent delegate to the United Nations Jamal Al-Ghunaim came amid UN Human Rights Council talks over existential conditions in Arab lands occupied by Israel, including the holy city of Jerusalem. The Kuwaiti diplomat decried what he described as Israel's attempt to "alter the demographic and historical landscape" of Palestinian territories, saying it was a grave infraction of international law. He excoriated Israel for a string of "deplorable actions" including its recent adoption of a "Jewish-nation state" law declaring that only Jews have the right of self-determination, besides destructive tendencies such as the demolition of homes and systematic killings. The Kuwaiti envoy spoke of the international community's "mounting obligation" to intervene and put an end to these atrocities, many of which have been largely ignored at a time where urgent action is needed. Kuwait's unflinching support for the Palestinians is "deeply embedded" in the Gulf state's foreign policy,



Jamal Al-Ghunaim

he added, saying the Palestinians have the right to an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital. On a UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees, he said it was necessary for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) mandate to be renewed, highlighting that some 5.5 million Palestinian refugees have been the beneficiaries of UNRWA's aid. The Palestinian cause will "always take precedence" over other matters concerning the Arab region, added the diplomat, saying ultimate statehood for the Palestinians remains the perennial goal.— KUNA

Local

Kuwait's Amir receives Qatari counterpart, Iraqi president in US

Premier visits Amir, reassures about his health



NEW YORK: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. — KUNA photos



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi President Barham Salih.

NEW YORK: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sunday received Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in His Highness' residence in the United States. Sheikh Tamim reassured about His Highness the Amir's health and recent medical checks. His Highness the Amir expressed his appreciation to Sheikh Tamim for his sincere sentiments which embody good relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Iraqi President Barham Salih, who reassured about His Highness' health. His Highness Sheikh Sabah expressed his appreciation to President Salih for his sentiments that reflect the good relations between the two neighboring states.

His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, who is in the

US to represent His Highness the Amir at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly. His Highness the Premier reassured about His Highness the Amir's health and medical check-ups. Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attended all three meetings. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif palace yesterday Al-Asima (Capital) Governor Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



NEW YORK: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Kuwaiti students in the United States. — KUNA

PM receives Kuwaiti students in New York

NEW YORK: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received a number of Kuwaitis studying at US universities, at his residence in New York City. His Highness the Prime Minister, accompanied by Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi, assured the students about the well-being of His Highness the Amir following successful medical tests. He also reiterated government's keenness to provide support and care for the

students to continue their education and return to their country to contribute to its development. His Highness the Prime Minister said he was confident the students would represent their country in an honorable manner. The meeting was attended by Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Undersecretary at Prime Minister's Diwan for Security and Appeals Sheikh Fahad Jaber Mubarak Al-Sabah and Undersecretary at Prime Minister's Diwan for Economic Affairs Sheikh Nasser Ahmad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. —KUNA

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Despite government's efforts to provide sufficient parking spaces for clients in the vicinity of governmental departments' buildings, these places are still choked with traffic jams every day. The problem grows bigger as clients park in 'no parking' areas due to lack of parking spaces, blocking roads and aggravating the traffic problem. — KUNA

'Ooredoo Treasure' grand prize winner announced

KUWAIT: Consistent with its customer centric approach and within its endeavors to reward and positively engage customers, increase brand loyalty and attract new brand advocates, Ooredoo Kuwait held the long-awaited grand prize draw of 'Ooredoo Treasure' competition last Thursday, September 19, 2019. The draw was conducted live on Q8 Pulse FM 88.8 Al-Diwaniya show and in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and representatives from Ooredoo. Fatemah Abdulaziz was announced as the lucky winner of the brand new Land Cruiser V8.

Commenting on the sidelines of the draw event, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Al-Ayoub said: "Ooredoo Treasure is actually another manifestation of Ooredoo's unremitting commitment to delivering on its promise of enriching people's lives through world-class networks, unrivalled digital experiences and significant CSR engagements that focus on empowering individuals (youths) and helping them to live their dreams."

"The Treasure Competition, with its extravagant rewards, was basically conceptualized as a customer appreciation program aiming at rewarding our customers' loyalty and also as a platform to increase brand awareness, foster Ooredoo's interaction with its customers throughout the year and encourage others to come to subscribe with us," Ayoub added.

"Ooredoo Treasure Competition gives abundant opportunities for our customers to enjoy quality daily content and play exciting quiz to gain more chances. Users get more points for every correct answer. We do provide our customers valid chances to win prizes even if they answer incorrectly. This is not just all, we have Insta Quiz as well which the customers can play anytime if they have a valid Ooredoo Treasure Subscription and users get assured cash prizes if they answer all set of questions correctly. Users are normally charged 150 fils daily subscription (receive daily content) and 500 fils per answer to the quiz (every answer gives more chances to the users). They can send keyword like WIN to shortcode 1010," Ayoub concluded. It is worthwhile to note that a test of Ooredoo's high speed 5G technology, which is still the talk of the town, was also conducted by a group from Al-Diwaniya on the sidelines of the Treasure grand prize draw event.



Ministry rejects proposals to cancel subsidized food cards

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) has rejected some parliamentary proposals to cancel the subsidized food supplies' cards issued to citizens, GCC nationals and certain categories of bedoons (stateless). The proposals had called for substituting the cards, which entitled their holders to monthly rations of basic food items, with cash allowances given to each Kuwaiti bread-winner. Notably, some MPs had demanded cancelling the cards to stop what they described as waste of public funds through smuggling subsidized items out of Kuwait. Lawmakers also argued that some Kuwaiti citizens do not actually use their cards, but instead buy their needs from the local market, while they give away their shares of food rations to others. "This means those supplies go to non-deserving consumers," they warned.

Less costing

On the other hand, MOCI said that the proposal seems less costing for the state's budget

because the cash allowance would be much less than what the state allocates to purchase the supplies. "However, cash allowances would lead to price increases suffered by both citizens and expats," the sources warned, noting that the ministry might face challenges in controlling prices if that happens. Further, MOCI explained that it is closely watching the subsidized supplies' centers and decided to appoint Kuwaiti officials to run them instead of expats. "The problem is that very few Kuwaitis have so far been attracted to these positions," MOCI remarked, noting that more incentives would be given soon including working either morning or evening shifts, or working two shifts in one day and taking the following day off. Finally, MOCI explained that it would continue adding new items to the subsidized supplies ration, and stop giving those supplies to bedoons with expired security cards.

Fake medicines

In other news, Ministry of Health's (MOH) assistant undersecretary for food and medicine control affairs Dr Abdullah Al-Bader yesterday announced that the ministry inspection teams had recently seized quantities of fake or banned medicines and unregistered food supplement products inside a gifts shop in Al-Asima (Capital) Governorate. Bader explained that the seized items pose violation of law number 28/1996 and other related laws regulating the circulation of medicines and health products in Kuwait, adding that the entire case would be referred to public prosecution.

Child kicked out of stolen vehicle in Jahra

KUWAIT: Police are looking for a man who stole a vehicle left running outside Jahra Co-operative Society after kicking out a child who was waiting for his father inside it. The car's owner, Syrian, had left his 9-year-old child inside the vehicle to do some quick shopping, but while at the cashier, he looked from the window and saw a man dragging his son out of the car. He rushed outside but the suspect drove away from the scene, so he went to the police station and filed a case.

Kidnap

A citizen who was on a visit with his children disappeared with them away from his ex-wife, so she lodged a complaint. The woman said her ex-husband has visitation rights one day a week, and used to take them out that day, but he asked her to take them for a second day because he missed them. The woman obliged, and he took the children but never returned, she told police. A kidnap case was lodged.

Drunk driver causes accident

A drunk man went to his ex-girlfriend's apartment, so she called police. But when officers arrived, he had already escaped. Police went in search for him in the area, then instructed the woman to go to the police station and lodge a complaint. Then while on their way back, they received a call from the same woman saying that the man showed up again, so they returned but the suspect escaped one more time. The police patrol remained close to the building as the drunk man returned for a third time, so they attempted to stop him as he drove away to Blajat Road, jumped a curb, and collided with another car injuring himself and the other driver. Both were taken to hospital under heavy guard. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

New competition law 'instrumental' to lure foreign investors

KUWAIT: A new competition law pending approval by lawmakers will be referred to parliament for its upcoming session, Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said yesterday. Roudhan, who also serves as state minister for services, told the press that the new legislation would grant Kuwait's competition protection agency broader powers, besides being instrumental in luring more foreign investment into the Gulf state. The minister spoke of amendments the Kuwaiti ministry of commerce has made to the country's trade laws in a bid to create a more alluring business environment. Kuwait's competition protection agency has recently joined forces with a myriad of companies, putting the government body "on the right track," said its chairman Rashid Al-Ajmi. Kuwait's competition protection agency is a state-run body that monitors operations in the local market as part of efforts to serve producers and consumers alike. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan speaks during a press conference yesterday. — KUNA

KD 3.3 billion worth of projects in 2019-20 development plan

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The total number of projects listed in Kuwait's 2019-2020 development plan is 135 according to the first quarter report, including 22 strategic projects with the cost of KD 2,662,400, Secretary general of the Supreme Council of Planning and Development Dr Khaled Mahdi announced yesterday.

Speaking in a press conference held yesterday to announce the first quarterly follow-up report for the 2019-2020 development plan, Mahdi explained that the total cost of the 135 projects is KD 3.3 billion, of which around KD 271 million was spent during the first quarter; that is up till June 30, 2019.

Further, Mahdi said that the 22 strategic projects in the plan include Al-Adan Hospital, of which 45.2 percent have so far been achieved, Al-Sabah Hospital (with 53 percent achievement so far), Al-Zour refinery (88.2 percent complete), the Clean Fuel Project (98 percent complete), Al-Metla residential area (43.2 percent complete) and Al-Shaqaya renewable energy complex (95.1 percent complete). Moreover, Mahdi said that the aforementioned projects had faced 567 challenges, including administrative, financial, technical and monitoring-related ones.

Regional developments require united Gulf stance: Kuwaiti official

Gulf countries bound to Washington by strategic partnership: Jarallah



A group picture featuring Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang and the ambassador's spouse with performers at the event.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said Sunday that the "inflamed" situation in the Middle East requires Gulf countries to "move on from their wounds and stand united." "The situation in the region is leading us in a direction that is closer to optimism on resolving the Gulf dispute in light of the keenness of all sides on Kuwait's mediation," he told reporters at a Chinese embassy event celebrating China's national day. On the US position amid these escalating tensions, he said Kuwait and other Gulf countries are bound to Washington by a "strategic partnership and crucial alliance, characterized by the coordination of all sides." Meanwhile, he said Kuwait's attendance of talks on the US-proposed global maritime protection coalition is to learn more about its details and to form a relevant position.

Jarallah made his remarks to reports on the sideline of a reception hosted by the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Li Minggang on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel. Higher official, diplomats, cross section of Chinese Community and media person attended the event. A 10 minutes cultural performance by the visiting artists won the heart of audience.

Kuwait - China ties

In a speech during the event, Ambassador Minggang spoke highly of his country's deep-rooted ties with Kuwait. "Kuwait is the first GCC country to establish diplomatic relations with China, and also the first Arab country to sign cooperation documents under the Belt and Road Initiative," he said. "In July last year, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid a successful state visit to China. During his visit, both countries agreed to establish a strategic partnership to inject new impetus into bilateral ties. China and Kuwait are mutually supportive in the issues of core interests and major concerns, and have collaborated closely in the United Nations Security Council and other multilateral organizations."

On bilateral trade, Ambassadors Minggang noted that its volume amounted to \$18.7 billion last year, with a 55.1 percent year-over-year growth. "China maintains its position as Kuwait's largest source of imports and second largest export destina-



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang cut the cake during the ceremony. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

tion, and Kuwait's largest non-oil trade partner. Kuwait is one of the most important sources of China's crude oil imports," he said. "In 2018, China imported 23.21 million tons of crude oil from Kuwait, with a year-over-year increase of 27.2 percent. In addition, China and Kuwait have steadily expanded bilateral cooperation in areas such as infrastructure, finance and investment. The opening of Kuwait Investment Authority's (KIA) office in Shanghai marks Kuwait's second investment office overseas. The establishment of the Chinese Cultural Center in Kuwait is well underway at full swing."

China-Kuwait relations are currently at their best period in history, Ambassadors Minggang insisted. "China is ready to work with Kuwait to better align the Belt and Road Initiative with Kuwait Vision 2035, actively engage in the construction of major projects such as Kuwait's 'Silk City and the Five Islands' development project, and help the Kuwaiti people in the early attainment of their aspi-

ration for a better life," he said. "I firmly believe that, under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Kuwait practical cooperation in various fields will achieve more fruitful results that benefits both peoples and contributes more to the world's common development."

Close cooperation

Ambassadors Minggang also recalled the reforms that his country underwent throughout the past seven decades to become the economic powerhouse it is today. "The past 70 years since the founding of New China have witnessed the united and determined efforts of the Chinese people, and have also seen the deep integration and close cooperation between China and the rest of the world," he said. "In the past 70 years, China, the once poverty-stricken country, has gone through reforms and opening up and set out towards prosperity and strength. The Chinese people have created an economic



(From left) Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang and Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan.

miracle through their hard work. With an increase of 450 times in the GDP, from \$30 billion in the early years of New China to more than \$13.6 trillion in 2018, China is now the world's second largest economy, largest industrial country, largest trader of goods, biggest holder of foreign exchange reserves, and top producer of more than 200 industrial products."

"The Chinese people have created a scientific and technological miracle through their intelligence and wisdom," the ambassador went on. "China has made remarkable achievements in manned spaceflight, lunar exploration, quantum science, deep-sea exploration, supercomputing, satellite navigation and 5G mobile technology. These are all fruitful results of the strategy of pursuing innovation-driven development."

"The Chinese people have also created a miracle of better livelihood through their strenuous efforts," said the ambassador. "From 1949 to 2018, China's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita increased by 135 times from approximately \$70 to \$9,470. Thanks to the four decades of reform and opening-up, China has lifted over 700 million people out of poverty. The Chinese people have gained a greater sense of accomplishment and happiness to pursue a better life."

"Seeking well-being solely for its own is

never a motto of China," Ambassadors Minggang proclaimed. "In the past 70 years, China has contributed to shared prosperity for all humanity while achieving its development goals. For many years, China has contributed more than 30 percent to the world economic growth, and has become a major stabilizer and engine of global economy. Six years ago, President Xi Jinping proposed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind. Since then, the Belt and Road Initiative has been translated from vision to actions. From Eurasia to Africa, Americas and Oceania, the Belt and Road Initiative opens the new space for world economic growth, builds new platforms for international trade and investment, provides a new solution to world economic governance, and makes new contribution to well-being of people in the participating countries. The Belt and Road Initiative has built a common platform for opportunities and a road to prosperity for all countries in the world. In the meantime, the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind has also become a consensus by being endorsed in the documents of the UN, the G20 and other international organizations, and has played a positive role in promoting peace and progress of mankind."

Chinese envoy hails ties with Kuwait



(From left) Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al Saud, Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang.



Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang tour a gallery at the event.



Chinese performers perform during the ceremony.



35 killed at wedding party in Afghanistan

Trump, Modi vow relentless fight on extremists, terrorism

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CALIFORNIA: Crosses mark old graves at the Daggett Pioneer Cemetery in the Mojave desert in Amboy, California. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment found that temperatures of the inland deserts of Southern California, including the Mojave desert, are expected to continue climbing. According to the report, average daily highs could increase as much as 14 degrees this century if greenhouse gas emissions keep rising. —AFP

'Moment of truth' at climate summit

World leaders convene for a UN summit on 'climate emergency'

UNITED NATIONS: Some 60 world leaders convene yesterday for a UN summit on "climate emergency" aimed at reinvigorating the faltering Paris agreement, at a time when mankind is releasing more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than at any time in history. From heat waves to slow-crawling hurricanes to rapidly acidifying oceans, the impacts of global warming are being felt more than ever before, yet the gap between carbon reduction targets demanded by scientists to avert catastrophe and actions thus far taken is only widening.

It is within this context that a new, youth-led movement has emerged and re-energized climate activism, symbolized by Swedish teen Greta Thunberg who will take the podium in the morning following a speech by Secretary General Antonio Guterres. Thunberg along with millions of others around the world rallied on Friday calling for climate justice and for the voices of the younger generations who will be most affected by increasing extreme weather events to be heard. Fewer than half the 136 heads of government or state in New York this week to attend the UN General Assembly will be present yesterday.

US, Brazil, Australia absent

Among the list of those absent will be US President Donald Trump, who pulled his

country out of the Paris Accord upon taking power and has made slashing environmental regulations a key part of his platform. Likewise President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, under whose leadership the Amazon rainforest is continuing to burn at record rates, and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison whose government has pursued an aggressively pro-coal agenda.

China, the world's biggest carbon emitter by far, but also a leader in the renewables sector, will be present and represented by foreign minister Wang Yi, with Guterres hinting last week that the East Asian giant will be committing to new measures. Laurence Tubiana, CEO of the European Climate Foundation and one of the architects of the Paris agreement, told AFP the summit represented a "moment of truth" but was also taking place at a time of great political headwinds.

"There's a tension between the countries that want to go ahead to translate their goals into real policies" and those that do not, she said. "We can hope for the best, that this group of progressive countries and actors and local authorities prepare for the second wave, to demonstrate that this is where modernity is, where progress is, and even where economic growth could be."

Increased urgency

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

fresh from a triumphant diaspora event in Houston where he was joined by Trump, will speak in the morning session, along with the leaders of New Zealand, the Marshall Islands, and Germany's Angela Merkel. Like China, India is coal-addicted, but has also set itself highly ambitious renewable energy targets, particularly in solar. Guterres has asked countries to bring "concrete, realistic plans" to enhance commitments made in 2015 in Paris toward the goal of limiting long-term warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius—and ideally 1.5 degrees Celsius—over pre-industrial levels.

These are deemed important to avoid hitting a number of so-called "tipping points," like the melting of polar permafrost, that could trigger irreversible warming and fundamentally alter weather events and ecosystems. Seventy-five countries are expected to bring enhanced commitments. But officials have also been careful to manage expectations and say the summit is also a run-up event to the 2020 UN climate summit that the UK will host in Glasgow. Still, there is some sense of increased urgency.

The goal of "carbon neutrality"—where most emissions are eliminated and those that remain are offset by planting new trees (and potentially carbon capture technology in the future) was considered so radical in 2015 that it was left out of the text of the



NEW YORK: (From left to right) Colombia President Ivan Duque, French President Emmanuel Macron, Bolivian President Evo Morales and US actor Harrison Ford listen to Amazonian Indians during the Amazonia Forest meeting at the United Nations headquarters yesterday. —AFP

Paris agreement. Now, though, it has become a rallying cry for countries like the United Kingdom and France as well as major corporations, who are leading the charge in countries like the US where the political leadership have sought to distance themselves or even undermine the cause.

Ahead of the summit, 87 firms under the "We Mean Business" coalition pledged to slash their emissions. The UN published a

report on the eve of the summit that said the five-year period ending 2019 was set to be the hottest ever, the latest grim reminder that climate change is already a reality. "Our global carbon credit is maxed out," said Dave Reay, a professor and chair in Carbon Management at the University of Edinburgh, commenting on the report. "If emissions don't start falling there will be hell to pay." —AFP

Japan roboticists predict rise of the machines

SEIKA: Set in 2019, cult 80s movie "Blade Runner" envisaged a neon-stained landscape of bionic "replicants" genetically engineered to look just like humans. So far that has failed to materialise, but at a secretive research institute in western Japan, wild-haired roboticist Hiroshi Ishiguro is fine-tuning technology that could blur the line between man and machine.

Highly intelligent, self-aware and helpful around the house - the robots of the future could look and act just like humans and even become their friends, Ishiguro and his team predict. "I don't know when a 'Blade Runner' future will happen, but I believe it will," the Osaka University professor said. "Every year we're developing new technology - like deep learning, which has improved the performance of pattern recognition," he added.

"Now we're focusing on intention and desire, and if we implement them into robots whether they become more human-like." Robots are already widely used in Japan - from cooking noodles to helping patients with physiotherapy. Marketed as the world's first "cyborg-type" robot, HAL (hybrid assistive limb) — developed by Tsukuba University and Japanese

company Cyberdyne — is helping people in wheelchairs walk again using sensors connected to the unit's control system.

Scientists believe service robots will one day help us with household chores, from taking out the garbage to making the perfect slice of toast. Stockbrokers in Japan and around the world are already deploying AI bots to forecast stock market trends and science fiction's rapid advance towards science fact owes much to the likes of Ishiguro. He previously created an android copy of himself - using complex moving parts, electronics, silicone skin and his own hair - that he sends on business trips in his place.

'Wake up, time to die'

But Ishiguro believes recent breakthroughs in robotics and artificial intelligence will accelerate the synthesis of man and machine. "As a scientist, I hope to develop self-conscious robots like you see in 'Blade Runner' to help me understand what it is to be human," he said. "That's my motivation." The point at which that line between humans and machines converges has long been a source of anxiety for some, as depicted in popular culture. In "Blade Runner", Harrison Ford plays a police officer who tracks down and kills replicants that have escaped and are living among the population in Los Angeles.

The "Terminator" series starring Arnold Schwarzenegger centers on a self-aware computer network which initiates a nuclear holocaust and, through autonomous military machines, wages war against human survivors. "I can't understand why

Hollywood wants to destroy robots," shrugged Ishiguro, who in 2007 was named one of the top 100 living geniuses by global consultants firm Syneetics. "Look at Japanese cartoons and animations - robots are always friendly. We have a totally different cultural background," noted the professor.

It's not just Hollywood that has concerns over AI. Tesla's Elon Musk has called for a global ban on killer robots, warning technological advances could revolutionize warfare and create new "weapons of terror" that target innocent people. But Ishiguro insists there is no inherent danger in machines becoming self-aware or surpassing human intelligence. "We don't need to fear AI or robots, the risk is controllable," he said. "My basic idea is that there is no difference between humans and robots."

'Uncanny valley'

The ultimate goal, according to Ishiguro's colleague Takashi Minato, is "to bring robots into society as human companions - it's possible for robots to become our friends." But will they look like us, as Ishiguro believes, and how comfortable will we feel surrounded by autonomous humanoids? Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori suggested in 1970 that the more robots resemble people, the creepier we find them - a phenomenon he called the "uncanny valley".

Ishiguro's first attempt at creating an android clone was based on his daughter and its "jerky movements" reduced her to tears. He has since perfected the template, including a creation he claimed was the world's first news-reading android and a robot priest at a Kyoto temple unveiled earlier this year. —AFP

Man killed by mob over cow

BHUBANESWAR: A mob in India killed a man after accusing him of butchering a cow, police said yesterday, in the latest case of violence involving the animals considered sacred to the country's Hindu-majority population. ML Meena, a senior police official in eastern Jharkhand state, told Reuters a crowd of 10-15 people attacked three men on Sunday, accusing them of butchering a cow in a forest about 50 km from the state capital Ranchi. The villagers beat them "severely", Meena said. One of trio died and the others sustained injuries. One of the men is still undergoing treatment in hospital, while the remaining victim suffered minor injuries.

Police have detained eight people in connection with the lynching in the rural Khunti district, he added. "Police are investigating the matter. We are addressing this murder case," Meena said. Cows are sacred in Hinduism, and there have been frequent attacks on those accused of killing them for meat or leather, predominantly people from the minority Muslim population or those on the lower rungs of India's ancient caste system. The three men attacked by the mob on Sunday were not Muslim, Meena said. — Reuters

International

Tap for trash: App seeks to clean up Zimbabwean waste-clogged cities

Government struggling to keep the cities clean

HARARE: The stench of decaying rubbish fills the air around Euphrasia Mangwe's house in the Zimbabwean capital, attracting hordes of green flies to the two plastic bins in the corner of her garden. It is an irritation to the 35-year-old mother of four who has become accustomed to. The rubbish bins in her neighborhood in Harare are supposed to be emptied once a week, but often they sit untouched for up to four weeks at a time.

So, Mangwe does what many other residents do. She waits until dark and then tosses her rubbish into an open space near her home. "It is horrible having to live near garbage. That we are not sick is a wonder when we are always surrounded by mounds of waste," she explained. "Waste collection is a basic right, the same as water. But not here." Constrained by a lack of fuel and funding amid the country's worst economic crisis in a decade, the government is struggling to keep its cities clean.

In Harare it manages to pick up only two-thirds of the 30,000 tons of garbage residents produce each month, Harare City Council (HCC) spokesman Michael Chideme told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. So, the private sector is sweeping in to help with a new mobile-based solu-

tion. The digital service from local waste management company Clean City Africa works through a popular ride-hailing app to connect households and workplaces with private waste collection firms. To use the on-demand, "Uber-type" service, which launched in July, a customer schedules and pays for garbage collections through the Vaya Africa app, explained Clean City Africa CEO Lovemore Nyatsine. Then one of the company's more than 200 franchisees picks up the customer's waste from their doorstep and takes it to one of the city's landfill sites - instead of customers having to do it themselves or filling in an online form.

Cholera outbreak

While Chideme at the HCC said the city's waste collection shortfall has been ongoing since early 2018, many residents complained they have not had regular rubbish collections for at least the past five years. Nyatsine said he first became aware of how acute the problem was during a cholera outbreak last year in Harare's highly-populated suburbs of Glen View and Budiriro which left at least 50 people dead, according to the World Health Organization. Officials said that the outbreak had been caused by burst

sewer pipes that contaminated the city's drinking water. The waste piling up around the city was exacerbating the health crisis, Nyatsine explained.

He was part of a team sent by telecoms giant Econet Wireless Zimbabwe to join other volunteers in trying to curb the outbreak by sweeping the streets, cleaning drains and picking up rubbish. But once they were finished cleaning an area, it became clear that the council did not have the capacity to dispose of all the garbage they had collected. "We realized it was not just a problem of the cholera-afflicted suburbs, but city wide," Nyatsine said.

In response, Econet subsidiary Cassava Smartech created Clean City Africa. Working with local authorities and its franchisees, the company can now cover more than 500,000 households in Harare and its suburbs, Nyatsine noted, and has plans to roll the service out to other cities in Zimbabwe by the end of the year. More than 50 illegal dump sites have been shut down across Harare since the company launched, he added.

Ease the pressure

Kudakwashe Ncube, a resident of the suburb of

Cranborne, said there has been a marked improvement in waste collection since the Clean City Africa initiative started. He and his neighbors had tried other private waste management companies, he added, but they never seemed to have enough trucks to cope with Harare's mounting waste problem. "Some residents were looking for alternatives such as dumping in common areas ... others were burning their litter in their yards, again polluting the environment."

As for the local authorities, Harare city councillor Norman Makondo said they welcomed any help they could get from private waste collection companies, adding that they eased the pressure on the government. "I'm happy to see companies like Clean City Africa come in, because they have the capacity to clean and collect garbage in (a) short period," Makondo said in a phone interview. "We could not keep up with collecting garbage." When announcing this year's budget in December 2018, HCC spokesman Chideme told reporters the council would increase the amount it spends on water and sanitation, which includes investing in more rubbish trucks.— Reuters

Could Egypt's rare anti-Sisi protests swell?

CAIRO: Rare protests erupted in Cairo and the port city of Suez over the weekend for the first time in three years, spurred by discontent over rising prices. Heavy security has been put in place, but could this trigger a wider movement against former general-turned-President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi?

What happened?

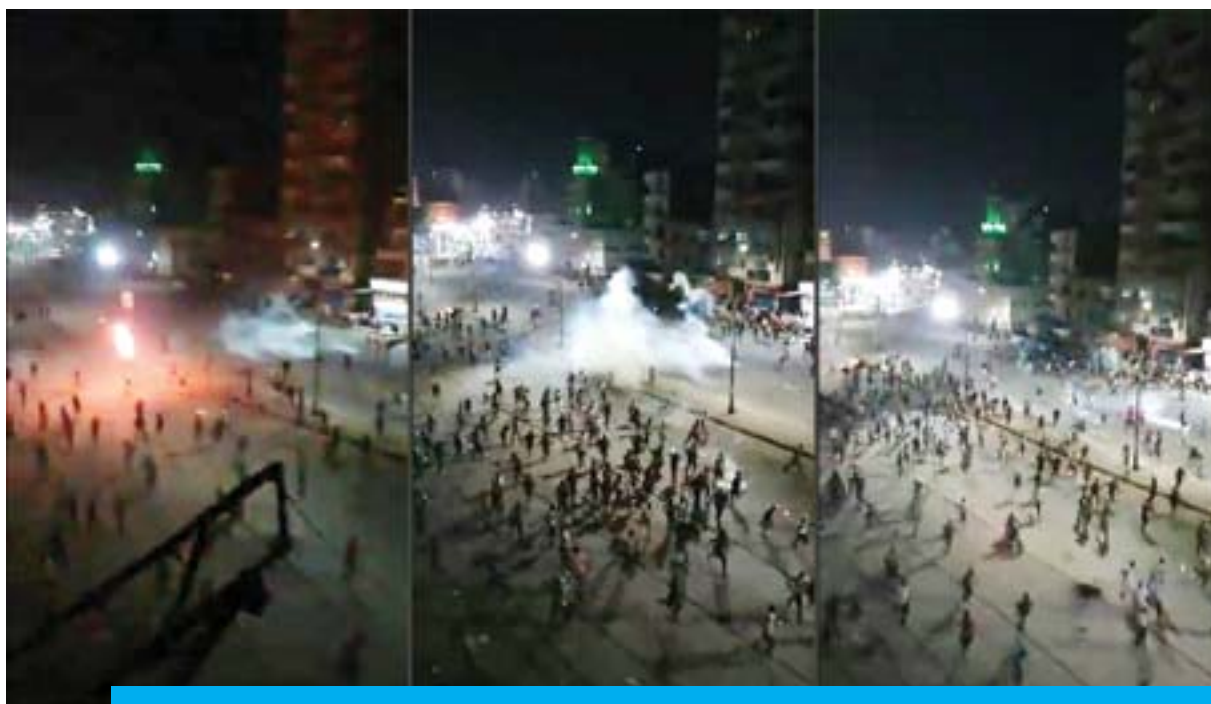
Just after a highly awaited derby between two rival Cairo football clubs last week, scores of protesters gathered in the capital's iconic Tahrir Square - the epicenter of the 2011 revolution. Demonstrators in other major cities also joined in a spontaneous outpouring of chants against Sisi's regime calling for the "downfall of the military regime" and shouting "Leave, Sisi". The protests had been called for by Mohamed Aly, 45, an exiled Egyptian businessman in Spain, who in recent weeks has leveled accusations of corruption at Sisi in a series of viral videos which have sparked unprecedented public debate. Alleging how taxpayer money went into building lavish palaces for Sisi, they have struck a chord with Egyptians who have been bearing the brunt of stringent economic reforms his government has introduced since 2016.

Why are Egyptians protesting?

"The image with which Sisi wanted to present himself as Egypt's savior from Muslim Brotherhood rule... has been completely dismantled", said Hassan Nafaa, a veteran political scientist at Cairo University. Sisi led the military ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013. Nafaa explained that Egyptians "have been shouldering the burdens of Sisi's policies". He referred to the austerity measures imposed since the pound was floated in 2016 as a prime example fuelling discontent. "Mohamed Aly came out of nowhere to become a hero in a certain sense. He managed to unmask Sisi," Nafaa said. The Egyptian leader has flatly denied the graft allegations as "lies and slander".

Who is protesting?

Egypt passed a restrictive anti-protest law in 2013 after Morsi's overthrow and a renewable state of emergency remains in effect. Sisi's government has waged an ongoing



SUEZ: Combo pictures shows confrontations between Egyptian security forces and protesters in Al-Arbaeen Square in the centre of the port city of Suez. — AFP

wide-scale crackdown jailing thousands of Islamists, secular activists and even bloggers and comedians. The latest example being Mahienour El-Massry, an award-winning human rights lawyer, arrested on Sunday.

The new wave of demonstrators "had not been political before engaging with Aly's videos. They were shocked with the detailed information he gave," said Nafaa. Aly pinpointed villas Sisi had built in recent years in Mediterranean resort towns in Egypt that triggered the ire of many citizens. "The protesters are those who are socially crushed. They say to themselves 'we have nothing to lose' by protesting," Nafaa added.

How have authorities responded?

Sisi, currently in New York to attend the UN General Meeting this week, has not commented publicly on the outbreak of small-scale protests. His office did not respond when asked by AFP on Saturday about the demonstrations. Pro-Sisi Egyptian media have gone to great lengths to show that the country is stable and public squares are under control, broadcasting nightly images of

traffic moving smoothly. The government's foreign media accreditation body released a statement late Saturday cautioning international journalists that their reporting of events "should not be exaggerated", without explicitly mentioning the protests. Security has been heavy with anti-riot police stationed in Tahrir Square in Cairo and in Suez where anti-Sisi protesters congregated for a second night in a row on Saturday.

What will come next?

Aly, the building contractor, has called for a "million-man march" this Friday dubbing it a "people's revolution" vowing to unseat Sisi. Analysts assessing the fluid political situation believe that anger is swelling which would translate to more protests in the coming days. "What happened on Friday is a worrying sign for the authorities. People went out to demonstrate even in the midst of a heavily securitized environment," said political analyst Mustapha Al-Sayyid. "I believe these protests won't stop at this point, but it's also difficult predicting what comes next", he added. — AFP



TEHRAN: President Rouhani attends a farewell ceremony at the Mehrabad airport in Tehran, shortly before leaving Tehran for the UN General Assembly in New York. — AFP

US emphasizes diplomacy in Iran standoff

WASHINGTON: The United States said it will make its case against Iran at the United Nations this week, insisting it wants to give diplomacy "every opportunity to succeed" in the wake of a devastating attack on a vital Saudi oil complex. Settling the stage for President Donald Trump's address to the annual UN General Assembly today, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo put aside threats of US military retaliation against Iran for the attack.

"President Trump and I both want to give diplomacy every opportunity to succeed," Pompeo said in an interview with ABC's "This Week." "Our administration's taking this on in a serious way and we are working diligently to see that this has a diplomatic outcome," he said. "But make no mistake about it, if we're unsuccessful in that and Iran continues to strike out in this way, I am confident that President Trump will make the decisions necessary to achieve our objectives."

The United States has accused Tehran of carrying out the sneak air attacks that set aflame Saudi Arabia's Abqaiq plant and the Khurais oil field September 14, knocking out half the kingdom's oil production. Pompeo called it "one of the largest attacks on the global energy supply in history." But despite initial warnings by Trump that US forces were "locked and loaded," the US president quickly softened his rhetoric, brushing off Republican hawks who warned that the absence of a forceful response would be read as weakness in Tehran.

Trump has so far ordered stepped up sanctions against Iran, and a relatively modest deployment of US troops to the Gulf, primarily focused on defensive missions like air and missile defense. On Fox News, Pompeo said the administration was "deeply aware of the risks" of a miscalculation leading to conflagration in the tinderbox region. "It's why we want to resolve this in a way that doesn't resort to kinetic action if it's at all possible to achieve that," he said.

On Sunday, before leaving the White House on a trip to Texas, Trump once again left open the possibility of an unscheduled meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. — AFP

Yemen upcycles shot-up buses to ease water shortage

TAEZ: Once a bus wreck peppered with bullet holes, the pristine white water tanker parked in front of a Yemen university now delivers water to students in the war-torn and cholera-hit south. Sitting among still battle-scarred buses, the tanker was repurposed by student welfare officer Nashwan El-Rebasi, who has made a mini fleet of water transporters for the university at the foot of the Taz mountains. "The idea was born out of the water shortages in the region and the total lack of a reservoir at the university," said the 35-year-old.

Taz, Yemen's third city located in the country's mountainous southwest, has been rocked by violent clashes between pro-government forces and Houthi rebels, as well as between different loyalist factions. The ongoing civil war has ravaged Yemen since its outbreak in 2014. The conflict has been thrust back into the spotlight after the Houthis claimed an audacious attack on Saudi oil infrastructure on September 14 that took out half the kingdom's production. Washington and Riyadh have roundly rejected the claim, with the finger of blame pointing towards Iran instead.

Filled with rainwater

Taz's 600,000 people have remained under the control of pro-government forces with the backing of Saudi Arabia, while Houthi fighters backed by Iran have besieged the city. The Houthis have tested the resolve of the city's residents by seizing control of areas that include the principal wells supplying the city and restricting access to the essential resource. "Eighty percent of the buses at the university were destroyed," said Rebasi from behind the wheel of one of his tankers, which he creat-



TAEZ: A man stands atop a university bus transformed into a water tank in Yemen's third city of Taiz. — AFP

ed by working "tirelessly" for a fortnight. In an open air workshop, university technicians dismantle other buses, leaving only the driver's seat and the chassis onto which tanks are attached in place of passenger benches.

Four passenger buses have been reincarnated as water tankers in total, to help 200 dormitory-dwelling students out of the university's 40,000-strong student body. "We've had several assembly issues and have struggled to find spare parts on the market," explained technician Mohamed Amin. "We can't order them from Sanaa" or provisional capital Aden, he said. The tankers are filled from what little rainwater falls in the area and from the boreholes still under government control. The scheme costs the university 700,000 Yemeni riyals a month (\$2,700 at the official rate, \$1,300 on the black market).

The United Nations accuses both the rebels and pro-government forces of war crimes against civilians, and provoking the world's worst humanitarian crisis including a cholera epidemic. The UN's special envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths wrote this week that "this is a conflict the international community can resolve. And because we can, we must". "Let us be clear: Yemen cannot wait. And moreover, Yemen need not wait. And neither should we." Two million suspected cases of the waterborne infection have been recorded by the World Health Organization, while cholera has killed at least 3,500 people, roughly two-thirds of whom were under five years old. — AFP

EU ministers in Malta to thrash out new migrant system

VALLETTA: Interior ministers from four EU countries met yesterday in Malta to try to work out an automatic system to determine which countries will welcome migrants rescued in the central Mediterranean. The ministers from France, Germany, Italy and Malta hope to end the long, drawn-out negotiations that have seen vulnerable asylum seekers including babies stranded at sea, sometimes for weeks.

The mooted automatic distribution scheme would only be a temporary solution until the current system, the "Dublin regulation", can be revised. Critics have long argued that the regulation places an unfair burden on the Mediterranean frontier countries Italy, Malta, Greece and Spain. Italy's new, pro-EU government has moved quickly to turn the page on the hardline anti-migrant policies pursued by former far-right interior minister Matteo Salvini, who closed the ports to those rescued.

A successful European migrant agreement would be a blow to Salvini, showing that cooperation gets better results than confrontation. After a meeting last week, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and French President Emmanuel Macron both called for a reform of Europe's "ineffective" policy.

Countries that did not volunteer to take migrants should face financial penalties, they argued. "Europe has to be better prepared and stand with frontline countries like Italy, Greece, Malta, Spain and Cyprus," European migration commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos said as he arrived for the Malta talks. "Our priority is to save lives... the others who want to cross European borders illegally, they must know they will be sent back home," Avramopoulos said. Finland's Interior Minister Maria Ohisalo is also attending the talks as her country currently holds the EU presidency.

Rotation?

In a sign of how things have changed over the last few weeks, Italy late Sunday authorized charity rescue vessel the Ocean Viking to disembark its 182 people rescued at sea in Messina, Sicily. The decision "puts an end to five days of unnecessary suffering," said charities SOS Mediterranean and Doctors without Borders (MSF) which operate the ship.

"It is urgent that a European agreement is found to put an end to these repeated stand-offs," the ship's search and rescue coordinator Nicola Stalla said. At an informal meeting of foreign and interior ministers in Paris in June, 15 countries agreed to set up a "European Solidarity Mechanism". Croatia, Finland, France, Ireland, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Portugal said they would "actively" take part.

But Hungary's nationalist prime minister, Viktor Orban, rejected redistribution quotas in comments made during a visit to Rome on Saturday. Yesterday's meeting in Malta will try to decide where those rescued can be relocated - and whether that covers just those fleeing war and persecution, or economic migrants too. France and Germany are reportedly willing to receive 25 percent of people plucked from the Mediterranean.

But they are not keen on Italy's idea for migrants to be sent to countries across southern Europe on a rotation basis. Italy could take 10 percent of new arrivals - a lower proportion because it has already hosted tens of thousands. The number of migrants reaching Europe via the Mediterranean has dropped sharply in recent years. The UN's refugee body recorded nearly 115,000 arrivals in 2018, down from 170,000 in 2017 and over one million in 2015.

In Brussels, the European Commission said it welcomed the Malta talks and that it was looking forward to "the next step", a meeting of all EU interior ministers in Luxembourg on October 7-8. "We stand ready to support such temporary arrangements both financially and operationally," Commission spokeswoman Mina Andreeva said of the possible migrant distribution mechanism. — AFP

International

Eyeing elections, UK's Labor Party pledges more spending, less work

Opposition party sets out plan for socialist-run Britain

BRIGHTON: Britain's opposition Labor Party pledged yesterday to mobilize financial resources on a scale not seen since the post-World War Two reconstruction, promising a shorter working week and higher public spending with an eye on an early election. Labor is hoping to use the Brexit chaos engulfing Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government to win control of Britain's \$2.8 trillion economy at a national election expected to be called later this year.

Presenting himself as Britain's finance minister in waiting at Labor's annual conference in Brighton, veteran left-winger John McDonnell set out how he would reshape the pro-business, free-market orthodoxy that has guided the country for decades. "We're mobilizing financial resources on a scale not seen since the post-War reconstruction to achieve the twin goals of a sustainable future and a better today," he said. The 68-year-old, once considered to be at one extreme of Britain's political spectrum after a lifetime spent campaigning to tear up the capitalist system, is now seen by investors as a possible custodian of the world's fifth-largest economy.

The Labor Party's plans for widespread nationalization, higher public spending, higher taxes and forcing large corporations to give workers shares, have provoked deep concern among investors and business lobby groups. But with Johnson fighting a battle to keep his divided party together over Brexit and huge uncertainty over how and when Britain will leave the European Union - if it ever does - the result of a national election is hard to predict.

Shorter working week

McDonnell's most eye-catching policy announcement was a pledge to reduce the average working week to 32 hours within a decade from its current level of about 37 hours, as measured by the Office for National Statistics. "It will be a shorter working week with no loss of pay," McDonnell said to loud cheers from party members gathered in the English seaside resort.

Labor said this could be achieved by boosting the power of collective bargaining, raising holiday entitlements and ending a British opt out from European directives on how many hours people can work per week. McDonnell repeated Labor's promise to hold a second referendum on leaving the European Union, warning that Johnson's government was fuelling uncertainty and undermining democracy with its Brexit policy. He also pledged to pump billions into the country's social care system, primarily to provide the elderly with free assistance for basic tasks such as cooking meals and bathing.

"Nothing is more important than dignity in retirement for those who have built our country and given younger generations the world we live in today," McDonnell said. Labor's care policy is estimated to cost 6 billion pounds (\$7.5 billion) in 2020/21, rising to 8 billion pounds per year by 2030/31. The party did not explicitly explain how this policy would be funded but pointed to its manifesto at the last election which set out tax rises to pay for more funding for the wider social care system.

McDonnell has already backed new taxes on Britain's



BRIGHTON: A standing ovation is given for Unite Union General Secretary Len McCluskey after he delivers a speech at the Labor party conference in Brighton, on the south coast of England yesterday. —AFP

financial services sector, and, in the 2017 election campaign, said he would raise income taxes on the highest earners. The personal care policy addresses a sensitive subject for Britain's ageing population - a demographic that votes in high numbers and has the power to swing

election outcomes. In the 2017 election, a Conservative policy that was seen as unfairly penalizing dementia sufferers prompted a decline in the party's poll rating and was cited as a major factor behind a disastrous result for then-prime minister Theresa May. — Reuters

News in brief

Two Turkish soldiers killed

ANKARA: Two Turkish soldiers were killed yesterday in northern Iraq in an attack blamed on Kurdish militants, the defense ministry said. The soldiers died after an improvised explosive device (IED) "placed by PKK separatist terrorists exploded as a supply convoy was passing", the ministry said. Turkish soldiers have been in northern Iraq since May in a ground offensive and bombing campaign against the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). The PKK has conducted a separatist insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984, during which more than 40,000 people have been killed. Its leadership and rear bases are located in the remote mountainous Qandil region and other areas of northern Iraq. The group is listed as a terrorist organisation by Ankara and its Western allies. — AFP

Mugabe died of cancer

HARARE: Zimbabwe's founding president Robert Mugabe had "advanced cancer" when he died in hospital in Singapore on September 6, the state-owned newspaper reported yesterday. The former guerrilla leader, who died aged 95, came to power at the end of white minority rule in 1980 and ruled Zimbabwe uninterrupted for 37 years and seven months. He was toppled on November 2017 in a military-backed coup, ending an increasingly iron-fisted rule marked by political oppression and economic ruin. Mugabe's health deteriorated rapidly after the ousting and he made regular trips to Singapore to seek treatment. "Mugabe had advanced cancer, and had to be taken off chemotherapy treatment because it was no longer effective," said The Herald yesterday. The information was revealed by President Emmerson Mnangagwa during an address to party supporters in New York on Saturday, according to the paper. — AFP

Attacks kill 9 in Burkina Faso

OUAGADOUGOU: Nine people have been killed in two attacks in northern Burkina Faso, a region bearing the brunt of a jihadist revolt, officials said yesterday. "Six people were killed by armed men overnight Saturday at Pissele, near Bourzanga," a security official said. Bourzanga is located about 50 kilometers south of Djibo, a hotspot for jihadist attacks. A local administrative official said three people "were shot dead in the village of Bool-Kiiba," and their bodies were found after the assailants left. Others were unaccounted for, the official said, adding that the attackers also looted possessions, including motorbikes. A security official confirmed that an attack on Bool-Kiiba had taken place but was unable to give a toll. Burkina Faso has become part of a seven-year-old jihadist insurgency in the poor, fragile Sahel region. More than 580 people have been killed since early 2015, according to an AFP toll. — AFP

Russia says CIA mole missing

MOSCOW: Russia has officially declared a former Kremlin official alleged to have been a CIA informant missing and is looking for him, according to an entry in the Interior Ministry's database, the RIA news agency reported yesterday. US media reports, confirmed to Reuters by two sources, have said a CIA informant in the Russian government was extracted and brought to the United States in 2017. The official may have been a man called Oleg Smolenkov, who disappeared with his wife, Antonina, and three children while on holiday in Montenegro in June 2017, Russian daily newspaper Kommersant has reported. RIA said the interior ministry's database showed that Smolenkov had now been declared missing and that the ministry was looking for him. US media reports have described the informant as a high-level CIA source. — Reuters

Trump, Modi vow relentless fight on extremists, terror

HOUSTON: US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday declared themselves united in a relentless fight against "terrorism," vowing a close, personal alliance in front of tens of thousands of Indian-Americans. The two leaders, like-minded nationalists fond of fiery rallies and skeptical of traditional media, heaped praise on each other in an unusual joint appearance inside a football stadium in Houston.

To the bhangra beats of four drummers in saffron turbans, Trump in his dark suit and Modi in a yellow kurta and vest made a grand entrance with arms clenched together to ecstatic cheers from a crowd estimated by organizers at 50,000. Trump won his biggest applause when he told the crowd, many wearing the saffron of India's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, "We are committed to protecting innocent civilians from the threat of radical Islamic terrorism."

Taking the flavor of one of Trump's own boisterous rallies, Modi later asked the crowd to give a standing ovation to Trump for his stance. Trump has stood by the Indian leader during controversial decisions this year, including his revocation of autonomy for Muslim-majority Kashmir and his order for jets to enter Pakistani territory in response to a suicide bombing.

With Trump watching in the front row and listening to the translation, Modi made clear reference to rival Pakistan, which controls part of Kashmir and has sought to rally international attention over the Himalayan territory. Modi said he was seeking equal status and development for Kashmir, adding that his actions were "causing discomfort to some people unable to manage their own country" and who "nurture terrorism." "These people have put their hatred of India at the center of their political agenda," Modi said.

India accuses Pakistan of arming Islamic militants



HOUSTON: US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attend 'Howdy, Modi!' at NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas on September 22, 2019. — AFP

who have fought its rule in Kashmir. But India has also faced strong criticism from human rights activists for shutting down virtually all internet and cellular communications across much of Kashmir. Protesters gathered outside of the NRG Stadium with placards and shirts that said "Free Kashmir" and accused Modi of violating religious freedom - a cause frequently evoked by the Trump administration.

Some Democrats take distance

The event - dubbed, with a Texan twang, "Howdy, Modi!" - was billed as the largest gathering ever by a foreign leader other than the pope in the United States. Hoping to ensure that it remains bipartisan, organizers also invited prominent Democrats. Steny Hoyer, the sec-

ond-top Democrat in the House of Representatives, pledged that both major US parties wanted strong relations with India - but gently voiced concern, pointing to India's historic "respect for secularism and human rights."

"Americans and Indians must strive to make our promises and aspirations a reality for all our citizens," he said with Modi at his side. Presidential contender Bernie Sanders, who did not attend, was more direct, saying that Trump showed a "deafening silence" on the clampdown in Kashmir. "I know that when a president stays silent in the face of religious persecution, repression and brutality, the dangerous message this sends to authoritarian leaders around the world is, 'Go ahead, you can get away with it,'" Sanders wrote in the Houston Chronicle. — AFP

Go East: Germans return 30 years after Wall's fall

GLINDENBERG: For years after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the mantra for millions of former East Germans was to "Go West" for better jobs and opportunities. But three decades on, an increasing number are returning to their roots to seek a fresh start. With new industries taking shape and offering a variety of career paths, better childcare options and relatively cheap housing, the former communist states are starting to look a lot more attractive to young families. Take the Hoffmanns for instance. Peggy, 29, had wanted to return to the office full-time after having two children, but in western Germany, she felt a stigma associated with working mums.

Undeterred, she looked all over and finally found a job in insurance in the eastern city of Magdeburg last year. Crucially, another key piece of the puzzle fell into place quickly - a full-day childcare spot for her two sons rather than the half-day offers in the west. "For a woman who works, that's the dream," said Peggy, in her apartment in Glindenberg, a village in the suburbs of Magdeburg. Despite the initial reluctance of her husband Carsten, the family moved back to the couple's native state of Saxony-Anhalt.

Brain drain

A decade ago, she had joined Carsten in Stuttgart, where he had gone for his studies, driven, he said, by a wish to "discover something new". The return "was very difficult for me in the beginning," said the 33-year-old, explaining that he had to give up a full-time job in the knowledge that wages in the east lagged behind those in the west. But he, too, managed to find employment and without taking a pay cut. The Hoffmanns are the



GLINDENBERG: Carsten Hoffmann plays with one of his two sons outside their temporary flat in Glindenberg, near Magdeburg. — AFP

kind of family that Saxony-Anhalt and the other former communist states badly need.

While regional and federal governments have pumped hundreds of billions of euros (dollars) into reviving the east, companies drawn by subsidies and other favorable conditions complain that any investment plans are often hampered by the severe lack of skilled workers. The east "lost about 1.2 million people between 1991 and 2017", said Nico Stawarz, researcher at the Federal Institute for Population Research in Wiesbaden.

The first exodus wave came right after reunification, when the communist-run industries collapsed. The second wave happened in 2000, when unemployment shot up to almost 20 percent among the working-age population. And it was the young and well-educated who fled, leaving a fast-ageing population behind. The researcher noted the difficulties of making up for such a dramatic brain drain, but said that the

positive trend was that the outflow had stopped.

'Better quality of life'

In a recent study, the institute noted that in 2017, for the first time, the number of arrivals in the east was higher than departures - even without taking Berlin into account which for years has seen this trend. "We see positive developments in the east," Stawarz said. The economy is perking up, unemployment rates are falling and attractive urban centers with universities are gaining attention. Even though there are no global statistics, several reports document a rise in the returns of the so-called "Ossis" (after the word Ost for East). Most are between 29 and 45 years old, having spent about a decade in the west, started a family and are returning "for a better quality of life", said Stawarz. Among the pull factors are more comprehensive childcare, lower property prices and proximity to older relatives. — AFP

International

At least 35 killed at a wedding party during Afghan army raid

Troops target foreign terrorist group

HELMAND: At least 35 civilians attending a wedding party were killed and 13 people wounded by explosions and gunfire during a raid by Afghan government forces on a nearby militant hideout, two officials in southern Helmand province said yesterday. The officials said the house being used by the Taliban to train suicide bombers was located adjacent to the bride's home that came under fire during Sunday night's attack.

A senior Afghan Defense Ministry official said the raid was against "a foreign terrorist group actively engaged in organizing terrorist attacks". "During the operation, a large warehouse of the terrorists' supplies and equipment was also demolished," the official said. A second Afghan Defense Ministry official said a foreign militant detonated a suicide vest that killed him and others around him, including a woman.

"The compound was being used to train men and women who were willing to become suicide bombers, we raided it. We are aware that civilians were injured in the attack," he said. Attaullah Afghan, a member of the Helmand provincial council member, said 35 civilians people attending the wedding party near to the attack site in the Khaksar area of Musa Qala district were

killed and 13 were injured.

A second provincial council member, Abdul Majid Akhundzadah, said 40 people, all civilians. The Defense Ministry said the Taliban hideout was also used by foreign nationals working for the hardline Islamist group. "As a result of a joint operation in Musa Qala district of Helmand, 22 Taliban members were killed and 14 others arrested," the ministry said in a statement, adding that five Pakistanis and one Bangladeshi national were among those arrested.

Bombing, air strikes and ground clashes between the US backed Afghan forces and hardline Islamist groups have intensified following the collapse of the US-Taliban talks and ahead of the presidential polls next week. A senior US defense official in Afghanistan said the operation was aimed against Al-Qaeda fighters but did not give any details about civilian casualties. The United States in 2001 sent forces to Afghanistan to oust Taliban leaders after they refused to hand over members of the Al-Qaeda militant group behind the Sept 11 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Since then, the US forces have supported the Afghan forces in war against the Al-Qaeda, Taliban and Islamic State militant groups that recruit Afghans and foreign-



HELMAND: Afghan villagers carry a dead body on a stretcher outside a hospital following an airstrike in Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province yesterday. — AFP

ers who mount attacks against the Western-backed Afghan government and foreign forces. The Taliban said Afghan soldiers backed by US forces conducted a night air strike, followed by ground clashes between

their fighters and Afghan forces in the Musa Qala district. Several civilians at a wedding party were killed and 18 members of the Afghan forces died in the fighting, the Taliban said in a statement. — Reuters



Militant detonates suicide vest

Collapse of US, Taliban talks an awkward blow for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The collapse of US-Taliban talks is an untimely setback for Pakistan, which had hoped its efforts to bring the militants to the table would be rewarded with an economic boost and American support in its dispute with India over Kashmir. Prime Minister Imran Khan has promised to issue a rallying cry at the United Nations General Assembly in New York next week over India's moves in the disputed Himalayan region, which he has described as ethnic cleansing, and warned of "impending genocide".

But Pakistan, long condemned for its support for militant groups, needs political capital if it is to sway a global community that has been historically reluctant to challenge New Delhi over Kashmir. Helping the United States with its fervent wish to leave Afghanistan after nearly 18 years of war was widely seen as an opportunity to get back into Washington's good books after years of being accused of duplicity.

For a brief moment in July, it appeared to be working. President Donald Trump delighted Khan in Washington by declaring his willingness to mediate on Kashmir, over which India and Pakistan have fought two wars and countless skirmishes since the end of British colonial rule in 1947. New Delhi repeated its position that Kashmir is a purely bilateral issue with Islamabad and dismissed the possibility of foreign mediation, but still, Pakistan's star once again appeared on the rise in Washington. The relief was short-lived.

Last month, Prime Minister Narendra



NEW YORK: Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan (left) meets with Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad in New York. — AFP

Modi threw a security blanket over the Indian-administered part of Kashmir and revoked the region's autonomy, igniting outrage in Pakistan. And as Islamabad scrambled to win international support for its position on Kashmir, in a separate twist, Trump abruptly called off talks with the Taliban, blowing up nearly a year of painstaking efforts to secure a deal that would have seen the beginning of US troop withdrawal.

Pakistan has for years called for a political solution in Afghanistan, and had used its influence over the Taliban to help facilitate talks with the United States, hoping a successful outcome would help generate diplomatic capital - especially for Kashmir. "Until Pakistan gets Afghanistan settled, they are not going to find it easy to respond to India's action in Kashmir so they are certainly in a bit of a bind," Kashmir militancy expert Myra MacDonald told AFP.

Khan told reporters last week that he will meet with the US President yesterday to urge a resumption of talks with the Taliban. Khan

will take zero comfort from Trump's beaming participation Sunday in a massive "Howdy Modi" rally in Texas on Sunday, during which the Indian leader offered a staunch and unchallenged defense of his move in Kashmir and took several, thinly-veiled swipes at Pakistan as a sponsor of terrorism. Trump told the 50,000 crowd of mostly Indian-Americans that Modi was doing an "exceptional job".

Tough times

The talks collapse comes at an especially delicate time in Pakistan, where frustrations are mounting just a year into Khan's rule with the economy under immense stress, and officials are struggling to raise revenues while slashing spending under an International Monetary Fund bailout agreement. They are also bracing for a decision next month by the Financial Action Task Force, an anti-money-laundering monitor based in Paris that has threatened to blacklist Pakistan for failing to combat terror financing. — AFP

Indonesia blames 737 MAX 'design' for Lion Air crash

NEW YORK: Indonesian authorities have cited failures in the Boeing 737 MAX design and oversight as contributing to the 2018 Lion Air plane crash, the Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday. The report into the crash, which will be formally released in early November, also blames pilot error and maintenance issues for the crash that killed 189 people shortly after the flight departed from Jakarta last October, the newspaper said. The Boeing plane model was later grounded worldwide after an Ethiopian Airlines 737 MAX crashed after taking off from Addis Ababa in March, killing 157 people.

Preliminary investigations into both accidents have implicated the MCAS anti-stall system, designed specifically for the 737 MAX. Indonesian investigators could still change their findings, which have been shared with the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the Journal said. US officials are scheduled to visit Indonesia at the end of September to discuss the

report, in which Indonesian investigators list some 100 factors in the crash.

While the NTSB is unlikely to object to the findings, Boeing and the FAA are worried that the report "will unduly emphasize design and FAA certification missteps," the newspaper reported, citing unnamed sources familiar with the matter. "Boeing continues to support the investigation as the accident report is being completed," a spokesman for the company told AFP. The FAA and NTSB declined to comment, referring questions to the Indonesian authorities.

"For the time being we cannot comment since the final report is still being processed by the relevant parties so they can provide input," Haryo Satmiko, deputy chairman of Indonesia's National Transportation Safety Committee said yesterday. The NTSB is preparing to announce "around the end of the month" recommendations to improve pilot and crew training, and to the FAA's certification process for new airplane models, according to the Journal.

A panel of international regulators set up by the FAA is also expected in the coming weeks to submit a report critical of the relationship between Boeing and the agency. New FAA head Steve Dickson is to meet with his international counterparts on Monday ahead of an International Civil Aviation Organization meeting in Montreal to discuss Boeing's proposed changes to the 737 MAX and its eventual return to service. — AFP

One killed as fresh unrest erupts in Indonesia's Papua

WAMENA: At least one person was killed as Indonesia's Papua region plunged into fresh unrest yesterday, the military said, as protesters burned down a government office and other buildings in Wamena city, Papua, on the western half of New Guinea island, has been gripped by weeks of violent protests fuelled by anger over racism, as well as fresh calls for self-rule in the impoverished territory. The clashes had died down in recent days but flared up again as hundreds took to the streets, and houses and stores went up in flames.

Another demonstration erupted in the provincial capital Jayapura, where security forces fired warning shots above stonethrowing protesters at a university, according to an AFP reporter on the scene. A soldier was stabbed to death near Jayapura, the military said, while activists said at least one Papuan university student was shot dead and another wounded in the same area.

Yesterday's protests in Wamena - mostly involving high-schoolers - were reportedly sparked by racist comments made by a teacher, but police have disputed that account, calling it a "hoax". Indonesia routinely blames separatists for violence in Papua, its easternmost territory, and conflicting accounts are common. Demonstrations broke out across the region and in other



WAMENA: A building burns as fresh protests break out in Wamena yesterday. — AFP

parts of the Southeast Asian archipelago after the mid-August arrest and tear-gassing of dozens of Papuan students, who were also racially abused, in Indonesia's second-biggest city, Surabaya.

A low-level separatist insurgency has simmered for decades in Papua, a former Dutch colony, after Jakarta took over the mineral-rich region in the 1960s. A vote to stay within the archipelago was widely viewed as rigged. Earlier yesterday, authorities said the situation had been brought under control in Wamena, while an AFP reporter there said Internet service had been cut. "Security forces have also taken steps to prevent the

riots from spreading," said National Police spokesman Dedi Prasetyo.

The airport in Wamena was shut yesterday with some 20 flights cancelled due to the unrest, local media reported, citing an airport official. Indonesia has sent thousands of security personnel to Papua to quell the recent unrest, and dozens were arrested for instigating the earlier riots. At least five demonstrators and a soldier were killed, but activists say the civilian death toll is higher. Last week the military said a toddler and teenager were among three people killed in a gunfight between security forces and independence-seeking rebels. — AFP

Thousands still homeless a year after Indonesia earthquake

JAKARTA: Nearly 60,000 people are still living in makeshift accommodation nearly a year after a devastating earthquake and tsunami pounded the Indonesian city of Palu, the Red Cross said yesterday. The magnitude 7.5 quake and subsequent deluge razed swathes of the coastal city on Sulawesi island last September, killing more than 4,300 people and displacing some 170,000 residents. The force of the impact saw entire neighborhoods leveled by liquefaction—a process where the ground starts behaving like a liquid and swallows up the earth like quicksand. It also destroyed fishing boats, shops and irrigation systems, robbing locals of their income.

A year later, around 57,000 people "are

still living in temporary accommodation, unsure where and when they can rebuild" said the Indonesian Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). "We are hoping the government will redouble their efforts to identify settlement areas and help thousands of families... build permanent homes," said Jan Gelfand, head of the IFRC Indonesia country office. Saturday marks one year since the double disaster. Earlier the World Bank offered the country up to \$1 billion in loans to get the city back on its feet.

Indonesia is one of the most disaster-prone nations on Earth due to its position straddling the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, where tectonic plates collide. The sprawling archipelago is also dotted with more than 100 volcanoes, including one that erupted between Java and Sumatra in late 2018 and unleashed a tsunami that killed more than 400 people. On Boxing Day 2004, a 9.1-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Sumatra and triggered a tsunami that killed 220,000 across the Indian Ocean region, including around 170,000 in Indonesia. — AFP



PALU, Indonesia: The remains of buildings are seen on a neighborhood area affected by liquefaction a process where the ground starts behaving like a liquid due to the September 28, 2018 earthquake, in Palu. — AFP

Analysis

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Nations turn to nature to cut climate risks

New York City gets its drinking water from a network of more than 20 reservoirs and lakes further north in New York state, some more than 160 km away. Because the land surrounding the reservoirs is carefully protected and managed, the water piped in is pure enough so that the city is one of the few in the United States that does not need to filter its drinking water, officials say. Creating more "nature-based solutions" like this - planting coastal mangroves or protecting coral reefs to slow storm surges - is a relatively cheap and effective way to curb rising climate change risks, resilience experts told a meeting in New York.

It could also help address other threats, including accelerating losses of plant and animal species not just from climate change but also expanding agriculture, forest-felling and mining, to meet the needs of a rising human population. "There is a wealth of evidence ... that if we restore, protect and enhance ecosystems, they will lower human vulnerability to climate change," said Nathalie Seddon, a University of Oxford zoologist. Especially in poorer countries, such measures can offer "the only affordable solution to climate change", she told the meeting on boosting resilience to climate pressures ahead of a U.N. summit Monday to accelerate action on global warming.

Africa forest deal

In Indonesia, international organizations and the government are working together to protect eroding coastlines by planting mangroves, said Henk Nieboer, director of Ecoshape, a Dutch foundation that promotes efforts to "build with nature". Once in place, the mangroves provide jobs by improving fishing and act as a barrier to destructive storm surges, he said. Ecoshape has carefully monitored the benefits of 14 pilot mangrove restoration projects in Indonesia, providing evidence that has now attracted interest from Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and China, he said.

Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Fiji's attorney general and economic minister, said his Pacific island nation was also planting mangroves to blunt the effects of rising seas, store carbon, protect biodiversity and promote sustainable fisheries. Restoration projects are possible in many other natural environments, from peat-rich wetlands to grasslands and forests, climate experts said.

Andrew Norton, director of the London-based International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), said efforts to maintain ecosystems can provide "a stunning range" of benefits, from jobs to absorption of climate-changing gases. But finding the money to fund that work remains a challenge, not least because putting a financial value on the benefits is hard, and investors have yet to see an obvious pay-back. Nieboer said attracting capital would require the creation of value for ecosystems through measures like a carbon price to monetize avoided or removed carbon emissions. That is what is happening in Gabon, which will receive \$150 million over 10 years for protecting its carbon-absorbing tropical forests in an agreement announced Sunday - the first such deal for an African country. Under it, Norway will guarantee payment of at least \$10 for each ton of carbon certified as being stored.

Close to 90 percent of Gabon's land is covered in natural forests, much in reserves created over a decade ago, but like many Central African nations, it is under pressure to allow forest-felling to bring in cash. "We have to raise the value of the Gabonese rainforests in order to ensure that conservation and sustainable exploitation can be used as tools to improve the living standards of the Gabonese people," its environment minister said in a statement.

Social justice

Backers of such efforts to put a clearer value on forests and other natural systems warn that doing so brings some risks, including that indigenous people and others living on the land could be pushed off as its value rises. "Nature-based solutions have to work for social justice as well as climate solutions," said Norton of IIED. Nicky Batang-ay of Tebtebbba, the Philippines-based Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education, noted that "as indigenous people, we've been doing these nature-based solutions from time immemorial".

Oxford's Seddon, who runs the university's Nature-Based Solutions Initiative, said payments and other incentives should protect and expand natural forests rather than support single-species plantations with fewer natural benefits and far less resilience to climate change. Natural ways of dealing with climate change have seen a "wave of political momentum" in the build-up to the U.N. climate summit, speakers said on Sunday.

U Ohn Win, Myanmar's minister of environmental conservation, said his country - which is highly vulnerable to extreme weather - was looking to reforest 600,000 hectares over the next 10 years, in part to cut its climate risks. "Our country has committed to a sustainable development pathway ... with nature-based solutions at its core," he said. — Reuters

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In this file photo taken on Dec 22, 1989, people from East Germany greet citizens of West Germany at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. — AFP

Nov 9, 1989: The day that changed the world

Guenter Schabowski scratches his head, puts on his glasses, hesitates, then fumbles with his handwritten notes. He seems to be trying to understand what he is reading and haltingly responds to a question about when a measure giving East Germans more freedom to travel would take effect: "As far as I know... as of now." History's train has left the station. It is around 7 pm on Nov 9, 1989. A member of the Politburo of East Germany's communist party, and its spokesman, this member of the inner ruling circle of the "workers' and peasants' state" as the German Democratic Republic was known just announced to a few flabbergasted journalists the fall of the Berlin Wall. He seems to do it by accident, at the end of a press conference and in response to questions about the new rules for East German citizens leaving the country. There was no going back.

But 30 years after the fact, the debate is still raging: Was the sudden demise of the Berlin Wall, a prelude to that of the entire communist bloc, an accident of history, a slip of the tongue? Was it the result of a misunderstanding in the communist hierarchy, caught flat-footed by events, or a calculated gesture by the East German dictator who had reached the end of the line?

'We want to leave!'

In the corridors of power in East Berlin, inside the opulent villas in the leafy northern suburb of Wandlitz which the apparatchiks called home, the mood has been on a knife-edge for weeks. How to salvage the situation? The East German population, trapped behind the Iron Curtain since 1961, is "voting with its feet". Since Aug 1989, Hungary and Czechoslovakia have been turning a blind eye to a flood of refugees escaping the east for West Germany.

Meanwhile since early September, hundreds of thousands of East Germans have taken to city streets to protest each week, chanting against the regime "We are the people!" and "We want to leave!" The crisis has reached the tipping point. And the GDR can no longer count on the Soviet big brother to intervene.

Gorbachev's warning

In Moscow the tone has changed and Mikhail Gorbachev is speaking of "perestroika" (change or reform) and "glasnost" (openness, transparency). The Soviet leader had only just warned East German strongman Erich Honecker in early October that "Life punishes those who are too late." A few days later, on Oct 18, Honecker, who had applauded China for "crushing the counter-revolu-

tionary uprising" in Tiananmen Square, was gone, making way for Egon Krenz. Presented as a relative moderate, Krenz intends to shore up the GDR with a few reforms, notably a liberalization of travel with the granting of an exit visa without any preconditions.

A mistake?

Against this backdrop, Guenter Schabowski is entrusted the evening of Nov 9, 1989 with the mission of announcing live on television the measures decided the same day by a small committee. From there, the versions of events vary. Krenz still resents Schabowski, whom he accuses of having plunged the GDR "into a difficult situation" by proclaiming the immediate entry into force of the chance to leave the country. He should have, according to Krenz, stuck to a press release drawn up announcing the liberalization of travel starting the next morning.

The idea was to allow controlled departures with a mandatory visa and to maintain border infrastructure, not to rip down the Wall overnight, and with it the GDR. So was it an error of judgement in the line of fire? Or an audacious, intentional move? Until his death in 2015 at 86, Schabowski never clearly answered the question.

'Save the GDR'

"No one could have stopped the movement that was touched off by my announcement," he would say later, casting himself as an ardent reformer. According to his version of events, the opening of the borders was pushed through by a vanguard of proponents of change against the wishes of the party's central committee, dominated by Stalinist diehards. "We came to the conclusion that if we wanted to save the GDR, we had to let the people who wanted to flee leave," Schabowski told the daily TAZ in 2009. The former East German dissident and later speaker of the Bundestag lower house of parliament, Wolfgang Thierse, however is convinced that Schabowski never grasped the full impact of his announcement. "I don't think he knew what was going to happen," he told public radio. "We suspected that something was being prepared for freedom of travel because the communist party wanted to lift the lid to decrease the pressure. But Schabowski did not have an inkling that he was going to set everything off."

Merkel 'speechless and happy'

The ensuing events turned the tide in East Germany after more than 40 years of Cold War. After having heard the message on the radio, on television or by word of

mouth, East Germans streamed in their thousands throughout the night to the border crossings. Cautious at first, then incredulous, they grew emboldened by the West Berliners who were already cheering them on from the other side of the Wall. In the face of the swelling crowd, the barriers were soon wide open, starting in Berlin at Bornholmer Strasse.

Among the slackjawed East Berliners who made their way toward the west from that border crossing that night was a certain Angela Merkel. She lived in a small flat nearby and had kept her weekly date for the sauna before emerging to savor her first taste of freedom. "We were just speechless and happy," she would tell public broadcaster ARD. The chemistry researcher at the GDR Academy of Sciences modestly celebrated the evening by drinking "a can of beer" with friends in the west, before returning home at a reasonable hour.

"The welcome in West Berlin was so warm," the future chancellor recalled to the daily Frankfurter Rundschau. Further border crossings opened and the armed guards, overtaken by events and without orders from the party, stopped performing their official duties and the police withdrew. "We are as lost as you are," a border guard tells a Berlin woman.

'Completely crazy'

At the Bundestag in the "provisional" West German capital in Bonn, deputies by around 8 pm have begun to grasp the scope of the epochal earthquake. They interrupt their session and spontaneously break into a chorus of the national anthem. Former chancellor Willy Brandt, father of the Ostpolitik of rapprochement with the east, has tears in his eyes. At 10:40 pm, the main newsreader on West German television, Hanns-Joachim Friedrichs, presented the headline "East Berlin opens the Wall".

"The Berlin Wall no longer divides anything," AFP wrote that night, its reporters moved by their chance to witness history in the making. On that night of dreams, Berliners from East and West climbed atop the hated Wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate and danced to freedom and the "end of history". The jubilant images of Germans reuniting in tears circled the globe. Everyone seemed to have a variant of the same phrase on their lips: "It's completely crazy!" And Schabowski? The story's ending for its messenger is less happy: He was sentenced to prison in 1997 for his complicity in the shoot-to-kill policy enforced by border guards against those trying to flee to the West. He was pardoned in 2000. — AFP



(Left) Diman Fatah, the owner of Arbil's first female-run plant nursery, tends to her plants at her nursery in Arbil on Aug 8, 2019. (Center) Zilan Serwud, the owner of the Zee Burger food truck, poses for a picture with a burger in Arbil on Aug 17, 2019. (Right) Shawnem Hussein, owner of Sky Fitness health center, poses for a picture at the first fitness center for women in Raniya district, 70 km east of Arbil, on Aug 7, 2019. — AFP photos

For Kurdish Iraq's women entrepreneurs, persistence pays off

Smiling proudly, Zilan Serwud welcomed hungry customers swarming her newly-opened food truck in Kurdish Iraq. But launching the venture required more than just permits and loans: Serwud needed family approval. Lingering societal prejudice, family pressures and an under-developed private sector have constrained women from breaking into the Iraqi workforce, including in Kurdistan. That didn't stop 22-year-old Serwud. She launched Zee Burger in the regional capital Arbil last month, offering no-fuss fare of burgers, fries and onion rings served at small wooden tables.

The journey to get there was nowhere near as simple. The first step to any female-run business, said Serwud, was convincing relatives the venture would not be looked

down on by the Muslim-majority, conservative society. "I heard some people say: 'she has a father and brother, why should she run the restaurant?'" Serwud told AFP. "But if you have an idea or want to develop yourself, you should not listen to hearsay."

Her family gave its approval, and she received funding from the German development agency (GIZ) to purchase mobile kitchen equipment. Serwud's father helped pick out the kitchenware and her brother Bayad even flips burgers part-time in the yellow-and-purple food truck. "I am super happy now that I have my own business. I feel I've obtained my freedom and am showing everyone this is what I am capable of," said Serwud.

Budding businesses

In Iraq, only 15 percent of working-age women are in the labor force, one of the lowest rates in the world, according to a 2018 demographic survey by the regional government. Among employed women in Kurdistan, up to 75 percent work in the public sector, making female entrepreneurs an especially rare breed. The biggest obstacle is defamation by conservative elements of Iraqi society who see economically-autonomous women as

too liberal or even promiscuous. "What actually destroys women in our society is the word 'shameful'," said Diman Fatah, 59, who opened Arbil's first female-run plant nursery and chairs a botanical club with 450 members, including 25 women. "Women are afraid to innovate or develop themselves because of what other people might say about them," said Fatah. Some recent comments on the Facebook pages of female-led businesses described the owners as "silly" and insisted that "women are responsible for war at home".

But through solidarity and persistence, a gradual shift has become noticeable. Besides caring for literal buds, Fatah's club helps women-led ventures flourish by encouraging owners to "be confident". "Don't give up and don't be silent about your rights," she urges peers. "When a woman starts her own business in our society, she does not only earn money. She raises awareness about equality and paves the way for other women to enter the market and obtain their freedom," she said. A 2013 United Nations survey found that 66 percent of Iraqi youth support the right of women to work, compared to just 42 percent among the elderly - a marked generational improvement. — AFP



Business

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12 Trade tension could impact financial markets in Gulf region, says expert**13** Stable, growing and successful economies should be inclusive, says Omar Alghanim**14** Al-Bahar: Diversification remains a key theme in NBK's strategy

Zain and Boubyan Bank announce plan for first Islamic digital bank in the region

Al-Kharafi values Al-Hashel's efforts in promoting Fintech industry



KUWAIT: Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi with Adel Al-Majed and Eaman Al-Roudhan at Zain's booth

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its sponsorship of the Fintech Exhibition that came as part of the International Banking Conference: Shaping the Future, organized by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

During the exhibition, Zain showcased its digital capabilities in supporting the ecosystem and offering the latest and most innovative Fintech platforms. Being a leading mobile telecommunications provider, the company plays a pivotal role when it comes to generating positive economic impacts, as well as supporting the efforts of economic growth and creating direct job opportunities within the market.

Mobile banking services have played an essential role in people's lives, and so Zain has taken upon itself many innovative initiatives as part of its comprehensive business strategy to ensure managing customers' needs while keeping up with the advancements of financial tools and the aspirations of those who need mobile banking services. These initiatives centered around investing in data, value management, and digital transformation.

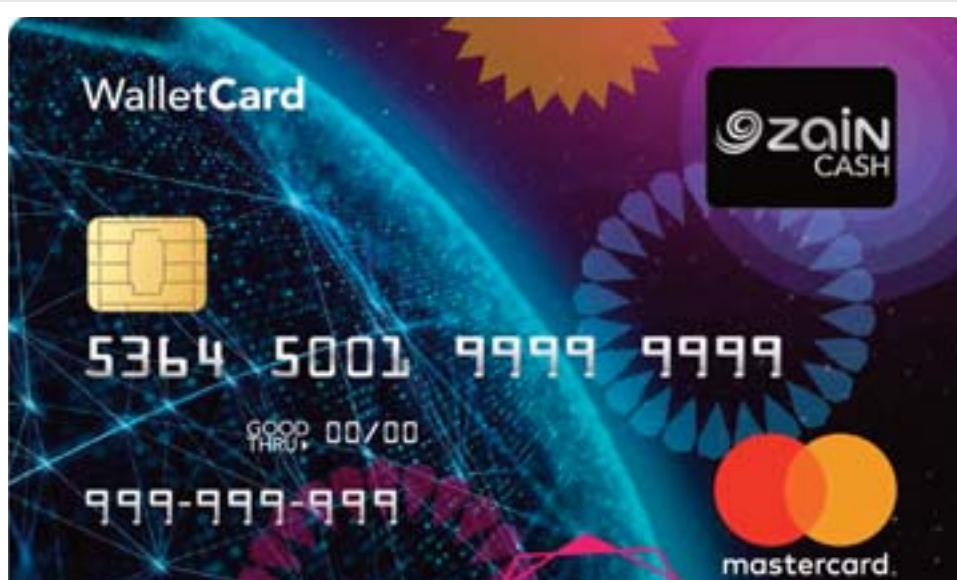
The conference witnessed a strategic partnership between Zain and Boubyan Bank to announce the first digital platform for Islamic banking services, which is the first digital partnership in the region's markets, and comes between one of the biggest telecommunications companies in the Middle East and Africa, and one of the most innovative banks in offering advanced digital banking facilities.

It is expected that this digital partnership - after the approval of the Central Bank of Kuwait - will contribute to creating a comprehensive tech community and build the first digital bank, due to the huge potential both parties hold within the ICT and digital banking services sectors. This strategic partnership will also help create a business ecosystem that inspires innovation and keeps up with the tech community within the Fintech industry.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO commented, "our digital partnership with Boubyan Bank will introduce an advanced platform to encourage a business environment that aspires for digital banking services. It will also support startups and emerging enterprises thanks to the extended geographic diversity of Zain's operations in the Middle East markets".

Al-Kharafi explained: "Zain was looking

- Zain demonstrates its Fintech capabilities at International Banking Conference
- Zain Cash; one of biggest mobile money platforms for disbursement of monetary support
- Tamam; a micro-lending platform that will have positive social and economic impacts
- Mobile money and digital payment channels contribute to increasing financial inclusion and empowering communities



The Zain Cash Card

for the best method for enriching its digital and Fintech services, and was faced by two options: either invest in or acquire a bank, or enter a strategic partnership with one of the banks. After conducting thorough studies, management found that the second option better suited our business direction, and thus the decision to enter a strategic partnership with Boubyan Bank was made. Our strategic vision met the ambitious vision of the bank's executive management in digital banking services".

Al-Kharafi added: "The leap offered by Fintech services within the financial industry, along with the financial inclusion it introduces, invited us to take proactive steps and invest in this area to accommodate the new advancements in regional and international markets. And with the rise in Fintech innovation expansion, the expectations roof has risen because of what digital banking transactions will offer in the future".

Al-Kharafi mentioned: "services offered by Fintech encouraged more competitiveness in this changing world, and this have invited organizations and banks to expand access to financial services. The collaboration with Boubyan Bank reflects

this direction, and due to Zain's customer base, this partnership will work on creating a digital space that enriches digital financial services".

Al-Kharafi further continued: "with the spread of smartphones, and the advancement of mobile telecom networks' speeds, Fintech contributed in the variety of digital transactions. This foreshadows the emergence of more investment opportunities in this area, and more marriage between banking institutions and telecom operators that seek to make use of Fintech applications".

Al-Kharafi added: "digitization is accelerating at an incredible pace, giving rise to social and economic benefits that one could have scarcely predicted even a decade ago. The rise of Financial Technology is one area experiencing exponential growth, and it is an industry trend that Zain Group identified and launched back in 2016, and which we continue to foster and successfully exploit".

Al-Kharafi mentioned that the rise of Fintech is still below the desired expectations within the region's markets, and this presents a major challenge for the growth of emerging companies and startups. Even so, there are positive expectations for the

growth of online payments in the future, which are led by the increasing usage of online banking services, as well as the reliance on Fintech applications.

Al-Kharafi valued the efforts exerted by the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel and his contribution in regulating and advancing Kuwait's infrastructure into entering the Fintech industry, as well as keeping up with the financial sector's trends within regional and international markets, all which serves the country's vision to transform into an international financial and commercial center.

The intersection between information and communications technology (ICT) and financial services contributed to the rise of the number of financial services companies that rely on Fintech. This pushed the State of Kuwait to take serious steps in this matter, where CBK announced a year ago the issuing of special instructions regarding online payment operations, which specified the responsibility of such companies and their operation within Kuwait, as well as develop the legal and regulatory frameworks to launch this industry's services in the country.

Al-Kharafi continued: "Fintech not only makes sense from an economic perspective, it has the means to literally transform the lives of people across communities, and both these outcomes are of central importance to Zain. Our activities in this burgeoning area started with our award-winning Zain Cash mobile platform". Al-Kharafi further added: "Zain Cash greatly facilitated the disbursement of monetary support through eye scans to vulnerable individuals by the UNHCR. Furthermore, our recently launched Micro-Lending platform "Tamam" is a service which will have positive economic and social impacts". Al-Kharafi expressed his belief that telecom service providers are in a privileged position to be able to either hinder the progress of fintech or help raise its development to even greater heights to the benefit of society at large. At Zain, we are firmly in the latter category and we relish the opportunity to inno-

vate with leading partners in this dynamic and transformational area.

Al-Kharafi continued: "We are determined to continue investing in fintech, either directly or through affiliates and partners so that we are better able to fast-track the development of fintech solutions and offerings for our customers. Helping to achieve Sustainability Development Goals as set out by the UN brings us enormous satisfaction and we look forward to continuing to play an active and productive role in the fintech domain".

The advancement of Fintech and mobile applications contributed to the emergence of new tools and products, and this have allowed many startups and emerging enterprises to innovative effective applications out of these tools, including those that are dedicated to control baking processing managements, e-wallets, investment recommendation programs that offer users crucial information on financial tools, and more.

With the fast-paced growth of ICT technologies, new tech services can greatly help economic growth, and the further progress of communities that need banking services. It has been witnessed how technology played an unprecedented role in affecting the wellbeing of communities. The fast advancement of technology led to the reliance on new products and services. In turn, that led to offering companies a chance to achieve growth, which resulted in great value to everyone.

Zain believes that mobile telecommunications technologies play an essential role in facilitating financial transactions, as the link between mobile telecom tech and financial services will open many doors and hold great potential for marginalized communities that are deprived from services. Benefiting from mobile telecom tech to overcome these challenges will greatly affect them, and create transformation within peoples' lives, all of which Zain Cash presented through money transferring solutions and disbursement of monetary support through smartphones via secure gates.

Mobile money and online payment channels are considered main elements of empowering communities. This has led Zain to adopt efforts that are targeted at offering access to mobile financial services for communities that are deprived from financial services. Financial inclusion has proven itself as an integrated method to reduce poverty and loosen the gap between the poor and the rich. The presence of a financially inclusive environment is vital to minimize economic disparity.

Business

Trade tension could impact financial markets in Gulf region, says expert

Citibank economist allays fears over global recession



KUWAIT: (From left to right), Moderator and Editor at Large Reuters Axel Threfall, and panelists Central Bank of Bahrain Governor Rasheed Mohammed Al-Maraj, CEO, Mashreq Group, UAE, Abdul Aziz Al-Ghurair, Global Chief Economist, Citibank, Dr Catherine Mann and Deputy Group CEO Shaikha Khaled Al-Bahar during the 'International Banking Conference: Shaping the Future' yesterday. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Nawara Fatahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times spoke with Dr Catherine Mann, Global Chief Economist for Citibank, during the Central Bank of Kuwait's International Banking Conference: 'Shaping the Future', in Kuwait City yesterday.

KT: What is your expectation for the global economy in the next year? Do you think we will see a global recession?

Dr Catherine Mann: The question about the global recession is misplaced. The likelihood of having a global recession is quite low. In fact, in our predictions, we see some improvement in emerging markets, even as the advanced economies are slowing. So we have diversions in prospects for advanced economies and emerging markets. It's rare for emerging markets to be the locomotive for the global economy. So there is a fragility and we are concerned about that, but right now, we don't have a global recession on the horizon.

KT: How do you see this impacting the Gulf region in case of a possible recession?

Dr Mann: We worry about the consequences of an escalation of trade tensions between the US and China,

which will have a global impact through global value chains. On top of this fragility, there is definitely a concern that advanced economies are slowing, which has an implication on the demand for major energy products from the Gulf region. If this trade tension escalates, it will impact financial markets and cause turbulence in financial markets. That is going to create additional downdrafts for the global economy.

KT: What are the main factors that will trigger or lead to a recession?

Dr Mann: The centerpiece for our concerns is trade - most people think of trade in goods and services. But our analyses find that financial turbulence might be associated with trade tensions getting worse. This financial turbulence is the more important factor. In many countries, the central banks are easing policy to buoy up financial markets so that they don't become a conduit for worsening trade tensions.

This is also a problem, because if you buoy up financial markets, and trade tensions continue to get worse, you have the possibility of asset bubbles. If the real economy is getting worse and assets are being underpinned by central bank easing, that's not a recipe for a stable economy going

forward. So there are number of different concerns that we have on the real side, with trade on the financial side and turbulence coming from trade.

KT: How do you see fintech progressing as a segment of the global financial industry? Do you see it overtaking traditional banking/investment houses or working more in partnership/collaborations? Or perhaps being absorbed or competed with by traditional financial establishments?

Dr Mann: I think that fintech is creating competition and new innovations in delivering services for consumer-oriented retail banking. They are very important in terms of payment systems, but there are so many aspects, where large multinational banks that have many different product areas they can offer a client. These are the economies of scope - in other words, these products and services work together to serve the client.

So far, fintech has not been able to produce competitive products where there is economy of scope. Fintech is relatively more adaptable, competitive and innovative in the consumer retail banking space. There are some differences in the uptake of innovation and fintech is going to be a competitive threat.



Dr Catherine Mann, Global Chief Economist for Citibank, during the interview

KFH has a proven track-record in digital transformation, says Al-Nahedh

KUWAIT: Group Chief Executive Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh said that the banking and financial industry is undergoing a process of digital transformation where many processes - often transactional - are being fully automated.

He added during his participation in the CBK International Banking Conference, Shaping the Future: "We're living through a disruptive time where innovation is very strategic to competitive industries such as banking. Therefore, banks with competitive advantages will need to move faster to adapt to this ever-evolving environment given that the recent innovations are being adopted more quickly.

Today, many banks work in a fast-paced and competitive environment which challenges their current business models due to the Digitalization.

Al-Nahedh added during the discussion panel entitled Future Banking Models: What Lies Ahead, that to adapt to the fast-changing and competitive environment:

- Banks should partner with Fintech companies to keep upgrading their services while innovating new ones.

- Legacy systems should be replaced by using high-end systems that can match the increasing needs of enhancement.

- The change of mindset is significantly important. This can be achieved through hiring specialized personnel who promptly adapt change in efforts to avoid being left behind.

He pointed out that Kuwaiti banks are keen to invest in banking and financial technology and digital transformation. This trend will enhance the role of the private sector in the Kuwaiti economy as it is a key part of Kuwait's 2035 vision to become a regional financial and commercial hub.

Digital technologies enable shorter operational lead times, higher asset utilization and maximum product quality. Cost reductions of 3.8 percent per annum on average are forecasted.

Digital innovation

In this context, I am pleased to say that Kuwait Finance House (KFH) is an undisputed leader in innovation to expand and enhance the range of products and services. KFH released the first fully automated 24hr digital self-service branches in Kuwait under the theme of KFH-Go and the first automated virtual queuing system for customers under the theme of Skiplino, showing the emphasis on convenience and higher levels of service quality, putting KFH at the forefront of innovation in the region as KFH taps into blockchain technology as an enabler for its growth.

Al-Nahedh indicated: "digital disruptions are all around us. For example, Facebook, the world's largest media company, generates no content. Uber, the world's largest taxi company, owns no cars."

In such a mobile-first world, many financial institutions will gradually give up the traditional operating model to adopt a completely different one to remain relevant, in particular in two main segments: payments and financings.

Indeed, in a highly competitive market, the only thing that is permanent is change. The best Banks anticipate the need to evolve and adapt in a continuous cycle to the change in customer expectations especially when it comes to technological advancement.

He added: "In our region, banks have already begun the transition of adopting and utilizing the disruptive technologies. Many of these financial institutions are teaming up with financial services technology providers who own unique solutions and expertise in areas outside of the banks' traditional scope. They offer a range of services ranging from consultation, analysis and technical support to the creation of digital platforms and apps.

Across the MENA, the GCC countries made the most advances in adopting digital transformation. The digital economy accounts for 8.0 percent in Bahrain and 5.1 percent in Kuwait-but less than 1 percent in both Oman and Qatar. Bahrain's high score is mainly driven by that country's high digital exports to regional neighbors.

In Kuwait, digital innovation market (Smart services and software) is set to reach \$989million (KWD 293 million). Kuwait vision 2035 is set to leverage digitalization.

At KFH level, we have some interesting figures to look at. The following figures reflect how KFH effectively utilizes these technologies to ensure that its business and customer expectations are aligned. In 2018, the total usage of KFH online services reached roughly 90 million. The number of registered KFH Online users reached over 450 thousand customers as of July 2019. New users signing up from January to July in 2018 reached 53 thousand, while it surged by 11 percent reaching 59 thousand for the same period in 2019.

These numbers confirm that we are on track and are adapting well to the digital era demands. Moreover, in KFH, we have embraced this change and introduced a wide range of high-end digital services over the past few years."

Al-Nahedh said that in the new digital phase, the banking industry has seen a shift in terms of customer preferences and behavior due to the rapid expansion of mobile and internet connectivity. New financial technology platforms and IT infrastructure have emerged to contribute to changing the traditional banking concept which keeps abreast of customers' experience.

Today, customers want relevant advice and product information at their fingertips as they go about their daily lives. As most customers want quick and easy access to service offerings, safety, security and fairness are now topping the list of their expectations. In our region, innovation is a primary driver for banks to meet the customer expectations and growth as well, where the overwhelming majority of population is young and highly tech savvy. Banks also could use it in the best interests of their customers.

Customers are at the center of the traditional banking industry being a service-oriented industry. The dynamic customer environment will without doubt have a direct impact.

To put matters in perspective, banks must determine customer needs and desires, focusing on the requirements that matter most to them, developing a comprehensive understanding of their needs and behaviors across segments and channels. The key is to use technology as a measuring tool to keep pace with changing customer needs. The flow of customer behavioral information should also be maintained in the bank's database. Among areas that banks can focus on, is prioritizing improvement based on customer experience, expectations and operational cost. Given the rapid transfor-



KUWAIT: Mazin Al-Nahedh (third right) with other speakers during the international banking conference, 'Shaping the Future' yesterday.



KUWAIT: Group CEO at KFH Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh honoring Central Bank Governor Dr. Mohammad Y Al-Hashel during the international banking conference yesterday.

mation, customers always expect faster, better, and safer services. Therefore, a continuous review of the key processes needs to be instituted. It should be a part of the bank's bi-annual or quarterly review.

He continued: "As the entire banking system evolves with the digitization agenda and gains access to new technologies, there is an opportunity for regulators to play a vital role to ensure banks achieve smooth business models' transformation. This needs to be driven by a supportive regulatory environment in which banks can operate, transform and innovate while ensuring that customers are protected."

He pointed out that there are several trends unfolding locally, regionally and even globally. The first trend is regulation, where the Central Bank of Kuwait issues the regulation for Electronic Payments to install much-needed discipline in the payments world.

Regulation

There is also regional regulation that has been issued, regulating token sales, Telco/banking licensing wallets, etc. The regulatory scene continues to be very high paced and very pivotal in determining the direction of the markets and more importantly in protecting consumers from loose technologies, this builds more trust and confidence in digital technology.

The regulatory authorities have played a partnership role as well as a supportive role with the banking sector since it is the lifeblood of the local economy. They have found a balance between allowing banks to utilize new technologies, and work towards transforming their operating models, while at the same time setting the guidelines that will protect the interests of all stakeholders (shareholders, customers, the public etc.).

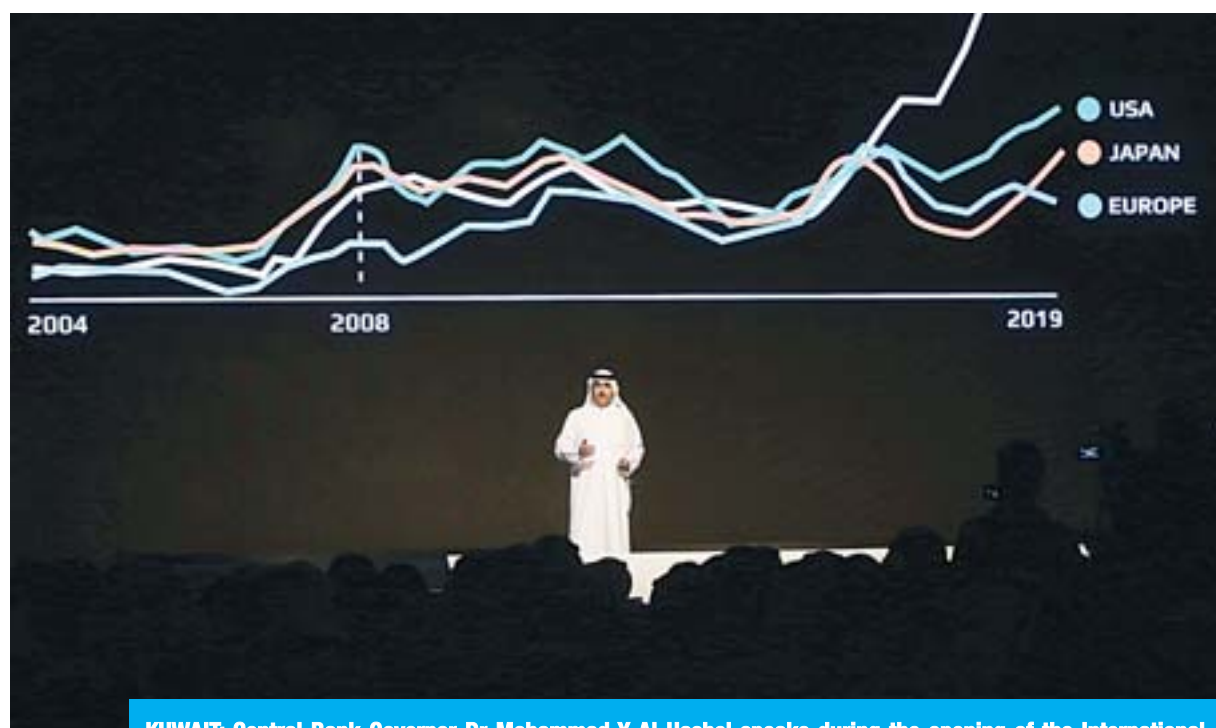
Business

Stable, growing and successful economies should be inclusive, says Omar Alghanim

Gulf Bank participates in CBK's International Banking Conference, themed 'Shaping the Future'



KUWAIT: Dignitaries attend the inaugural ceremony of the International Banking Conference: Shaping the Future hosted by the Central Bank of Kuwait at the Four Seasons Hotel yesterday. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Central Bank Governor Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel speaks during the opening of the International Banking Conference: 'Shaping the Future' yesterday.



KUWAIT: Omar Alghanim at Gulf Bank's Fintech booth at the international banking conference venue yesterday.

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank participated in this year's annual International Banking Conference, themed "Shaping the Future," organized by the Central Bank of Kuwait. The conference, held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, took place yesterday at the Four Seasons Hotel in Kuwait City.

Gulf Bank Chairman Omar Kutayba Alghanim spoke during the first session of the conference, titled "Global Economy in Retrospect: Emerging Trends and Challenges." The session addressed unconventional monetary policies and the ways in which low interest rates have led to a significant rise in global debt. The panel included regional economy thought, including Governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, Dr Ahmed Al-Khulaifi, and the Governor of the Central Bank of Jordan, Dr. Ziad Fariz. Topics of discussion also included the impact that factors such as geopolitical challenges, trade disputes, fluctuations in oil prices and currency exchanges, and financial technologies have had on the banking industry. The speakers also discussed future prospects for the global economy, as well as the tools currently available to take on any future challenges.

Regarding the stability of the Kuwaiti market, Omar Alghanim emphasized the role of the Central Bank of Kuwait, saying: "At a time of geopolitical uncertainty, volatile oil prices and a weakening global economy, Kuwait's economy is stable and growing. The Kuwaiti banking sector holds adequate capital buffers to weather any storm, well above and beyond

- The Central Bank of Kuwait is a world leader in requiring swift and comprehensive adoption of international accounting standards
- Kuwaiti youth are a crucial factor in boosting the country's economy
- Successful, productive economies encompass and engage all members of their communities

what is required, and the Central Bank of Kuwait has been a world leader in requiring swift and comprehensive adoption of international accounting standards. This has resulted in a transparent system that is attractive to foreign investors. We have seen the benefits of that at Gulf Bank; foreign investment in the bank has increased from 1 percent to 11 percent in just a year. Even though Kuwait's banking sector has comparable return on equity with the United States, we're still seeing fund flows into our market - which is an excellent indicator of the earnings quality and investor confidence. That's good for everyone - shareholders, businesses of all sizes and Kuwait as a whole."

He also went on to discuss the role that economic diversification can play in minimizing the nation's dependence on oil, and pressed on the vital role of the nation's youth in creating value for Kuwait's economy: "Enshrined in the 2035 vision for Kuwait being put into action by His Highness the Amir and his government is a need to diversify the economy and pivot away from

dependence on oil. This is crucial for our long-term economic success and it requires absolute commitment and collaboration from the government, regulators and the private sector to make it happen. We are moving in the right direction but we must accelerate the pace of our transformation. Our young population holds the key. We have to shift our mindset and consider them a massive asset, not a liability. With quality education, training and encouragement into the private sector, they are central to a value-creating economy for Kuwait."

Private sector role

Omar Alghanim's final point touched on economic inclusivity: "Stable, successful, growing economies are inclusive economies. Striving to include all those who are marginalized - including women, the financially disadvantaged and young people - is not just the right thing to do; it is vital for productivity and would add millions to our nation's bottom line. The private sector has a big role to play in this, from lend-

ing schemes and job creation to training and education programs. I'm proud of the 600 Gulf Bank employees who have been volunteers in the INJAZ scheme over the last three years. They volunteer to go into schools, colleges and universities, share essential skills, and act as private-sector mentors and role models for the Kuwaiti workforce of the future."

Gulf Bank had renewed its sponsorship of the Central Bank of Kuwait's International Banking Conference in recognition of the conference's role in highlighting the current state of the Kuwaiti economy. The conference is also a great opportunity to discuss new innovations adopted by the local banking industry, highlighting the ways in which financial technologies have added a new level of daily convenience for customers.

As a sponsor at the conference, Gulf Bank also showcased its latest investment and financial service technologies, including Wise, an advisory and portfolio management service for long-term investments. As a financial investment tool, Wise offers users an investment experience that is completely digital, with the ability to register and monitor investments online.

Digital innovation is always at the forefront of Gulf Bank's service offering, with the Bank launching two new, innovative services this year: Selfpay and E-loan. Selfpay is an easy and convenient way to transfer payments from individuals and groups instantly. Gulf Bank also introduced E-loan, an innovative service that allows customers to seamlessly apply for consumer loans through the app or website.



KUWAIT: Central Bank of Oman Executive President Tahir bin Salim bin (right) and Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Datuk Nor Shamsiah Mohd Yunus.



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank Chairman Omar Kutayba Alghanim attends the first session of the international banking conference titled "Global Economy in Retrospect: Emerging Trends and Challenges" yesterday.

Business

Al-Bahar: Diversification remains a key theme in NBK's strategy

NBK Deputy Group CEO addresses International Banking Conference 'Shaping the Future'



KUWAIT: Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO, National Bank of Kuwait delivers the keynote speech at International Banking Conference 'Shaping the Future' yesterday.



KUWAIT: Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait said that the magnitude and frequency of today's technology leaps mean we are seeing the fastest pace of evolution - across almost all sectors. In her speech at the International Banking Conference "Shaping the Future" sponsored by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), Al-Bahar said that the successful transitioning of any industry is dependent on how much its participants understand trends leading to change, and more importantly the forces behind those trends.

"For the financial services industry, it's no different to other service sectors. We began the transition a few decades back, and today the evolution of the sector is accelerating rapidly - this makes it hard for players to stay ahead, and in some cases keep up," Al-Bahar said.

She highlighted that there are winners and losers in the transition process, adding that the question we have to ask is how, as banks, do we successfully transition to a new operating model and how do we stay ahead or how do we avoid being left behind?

Al-Bahar stressed on the importance of learning from the experiences of other industries, explaining that as sectors evolved, the winners were those who adapted to change by understanding emerging trends. On the other hand, those who refused to evolve and maintained a rigid business model mostly failed.

Al-Bahar mentioned numerous examples of companies that failed to compete as they couldn't keep up with the new trends including online shopping, smart phones, streaming platforms and the dominance of digital media that sent print media to a downward spiral.

"Our world changes by the hour, and a good business model should be flexible enough to evolve and accommodate market transition, without losing its strategic focus," Al-Bahar added, emphasizing that business leaders should have the vision to envisage changes in macro and industry trends and to position their institutions to exploit their competitive advantage. She also explained that demographics and technology are the two most important forces that are currently - and will continue - influencing the future of financial services, and more specifically banks.

Demographics

Al-Bahar stated that different demographic trends exist across markets: from an aging population in developed economies to a younger and more demanding population in emerging and frontier markets pointing out that population trends are radically changing when we compare urban and rural areas, while life expectancy is increasing in many markets, and the distribution of both wealth and work force is shifting as well.

"These trends are shaping the future of the financial sector, because they are creating opportunities for banks to grow. But they're also creating challenges, as the behaviors and needs of customers change, especially with the commoditization of products and services," Al-Bahar noted. Focusing on the young population in our region, she explained that the numbers vary across different states but generally speaking, half of the population of the Middle East is below 30, and that is a huge challenge for all service industries that need to cater to young customers.

Customer centricity is a growing priority that is shaping the future of banking. This young population is demanding and dynamic, making it hard to foster loyalty.

"Our view is that as a bank we need to be more engaged with customers and stay close to their ever-changing needs. New ways of communication are emerging and influencing decision-making, from social media to online listening tools and personalized targeted advertising," Al-Bahar stated.

Al-Bahar listed various means by which banks, as well as other service providers, could keep pace with all the new developments through product innovation, financial inclusion and the development of technology driven offerings and transactions for digital banking to become more dominant and better serve customers' needs.

External challenges

Al-Bahar pointed out that the world has seen massive leaps in technology in the last decade, which have already changed the financial industry, adding that the future holds many more - most of which are impossible to predict.

She highlighted that today's world data and analytics play a very important role in product innovation and cus-

tom targeting. With current internet, mobile and social media penetration rates, the move by banks to a digital offering is both inevitable and essential. In the GCC, which enjoys one of the highest internet and mobile penetration rates in the world, advanced online and mobile banking is an integral part of the financial ecosystem.

"The new wave of startups and Fintechs that focus on a more agile and efficient customer experience pose a threat to banks, who in turn need to raise the bar and evolve with the industry trends to meet customer needs," Al-Bahar explained, adding that Banks are also seeing growing pressure from non-industry players (Google, Apple, Amazon) as well as established industries seeking to complement their services (particularly telcos, in countries with lower banking penetration. The three largest companies by market capitalization globally (Google, Apple and Amazon) have all recently announced new initiatives that will compete with core banking products. So digital banking is the future, but this will have significant implications for current banking business models and the wider industry.

She also outlined that we are already seeing major changes to banks' distribution models and the payment industry, with e-commerce business reaching USD 2.0 trillion annually. For banks to evolve and cater to this digital era, heavy investment is required to build an infrastructure that will support product innovation and delivery.

"We are seeing significant investment in robotic process automation (RPA), cloud computing and data processing, all of which are enablers for banks to better serve customer needs," Al-Bahar added, confirming that with digitization come new demands on human capital: qualified talent is a scarce resource, especially in a demanding environment that requires a new, and sometimes niche, skillset to support banks' changing operating models.

NBK's digital transformation journey is progressing at full speed

On the steps being taken by NBK to position itself for the next technology cycle, Al-Bahar stressed that the bank has tirelessly worked towards identifying, and are directly addressing, the two most important themes of

demographics and technology. NBK highly emphasizes product innovation focused on the technology aspect, as an attractive proposition for the younger population, especially considering that more than 60 percent of Kuwaitis are below the age of 30. Moreover, customer focus is also one of NBK's driving forces, as it regularly measures customer satisfaction, using the power of market research to understand changing behaviours of banking customers and evolve to meet their needs.

"We are investing heavily in Group-wide digital banking. We have a best in class mobile banking application in Kuwait and in several other locations including Egypt, Iraq, Bahrain, Jordan and UAE," Al-Bahar noted, NBK is pushing ahead with RPAs, more functionality with blockchain technology as we roll out more markets under our Ripple transfer network, and we are constantly improving the functionality of our mobile application.

NBK has established the first of its kind platform for new technologies. It is also a foundation for employing and training young Kuwaiti talent and equipping them to lead in a more agile banking era.

"Our banking model is more flexible today than it ever has been. We are becoming more dynamic without losing our strategic focus. Diversification remains a key theme in our strategy, and this is what we believe gives us a competitive edge in an increasingly challenging operating environment," Al-Bahar confirmed.

Reaping the benefits of diversification

Al-Bahar pointed out that NBK has been reaping the benefits of its diversification efforts, as the bank derives its revenues and profitability from multiple geographies and from different business segments - both of which are directly supported by both our business model and strategy with 25 percent to 30 percent of profits from international (8-9 percent from Egypt) and 10 percent of profits from Islamic banking (Boubyan).

Al-Bahar also highlighted that in the history of NBK has faced many challenges, sometimes crises, and on each occasion came out stronger. That is an evolution the bank has been through over time, and which it still maintains. Today's operating environment is different, but it offers opportunities that we believe we are in a strong position to pursue.

Saudi attacks leave hedge funds unmoved despite battle of the bots

LONDON: Hedge fund managers remain cautious about the outlook for oil prices despite a short-term surge following the recent attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil installations. Amid record trading volumes, oil prices posted a record one-day rise on Sept. 16, the first trading day after the attacks. However, most of this was probably attributable to short-term computerised market-making programs ("bots") taking intra-day positions rather than fund managers shifting their strategic view. Prior to the attacks, hedge fund managers had increased their bullish positioning in petroleum significantly as hopes rose for a trade truce between China and the United States.

But the attacks themselves have not added much to this economy-driven relief rally with the oil price rise flushing out some of the weaker bearish shorts but doing little to encourage the creation of new bullish long positions.

Hedge funds increased their net long position in petroleum futures and options by just 23 million barrels in the week to Sept. 17, an unexceptional amount and down from an increase of 122 million barrels the previous week. Across the six most important petroleum futures and options contracts, portfolio managers reduced short positions by 17 million barrels but added just 5 million barrels of new long positions.

Funds were net sellers of ICE Brent (-9 million barrels) but buyers of NYMEX and ICE WTI (+11 million barrels), US gasoline (+8 million), US diesel (+5 million) and European gasoil (+8 million). —Reuters

Thomas Cook shockwave hits European tourists

FRANKFURT: As British tour operator Thomas Cook declared bankruptcy yesterday, some 600,000 tourists from around Europe had their holidays disrupted. Here is what we know so far about how they will be affected and what the company, its subsidiaries, and national governments in departure and destination countries are doing to clear up the mess.

Britain

Number of tourists abroad: 150,000. The British government has said it will charter planes to bring its stranded citizens home from their holiday destinations, in the biggest repatriation since World War II.

"All customers currently abroad with Thomas Cook who are booked to return to the UK over the next two weeks will be brought home as close as possible to their booked return date," the government said.

Germany

Number of tourists abroad: 140,000. Thomas Cook's subsidiary Condor has said it will continue flying and applied for an emergency "bridging loan" from Berlin. The airline is no longer legally allowed to carry passengers who booked through its bankrupt parent company.

Meanwhile, the German branch's legally-mandated bankruptcy insurance

should cover costs of repatriating citizens up to 110 million euros (\$121 million), government spokespeople said.

Thomas Cook said 21,000 people who had been slated to fly on Monday and Tuesday must now stay at home.

France

Number of tourists abroad: 10,000. Thomas Cook has set up an emergency hotline for French customers currently on holiday and has warned those scheduled to fly Monday not to travel "to avoid any further difficulties".

Scandinavia

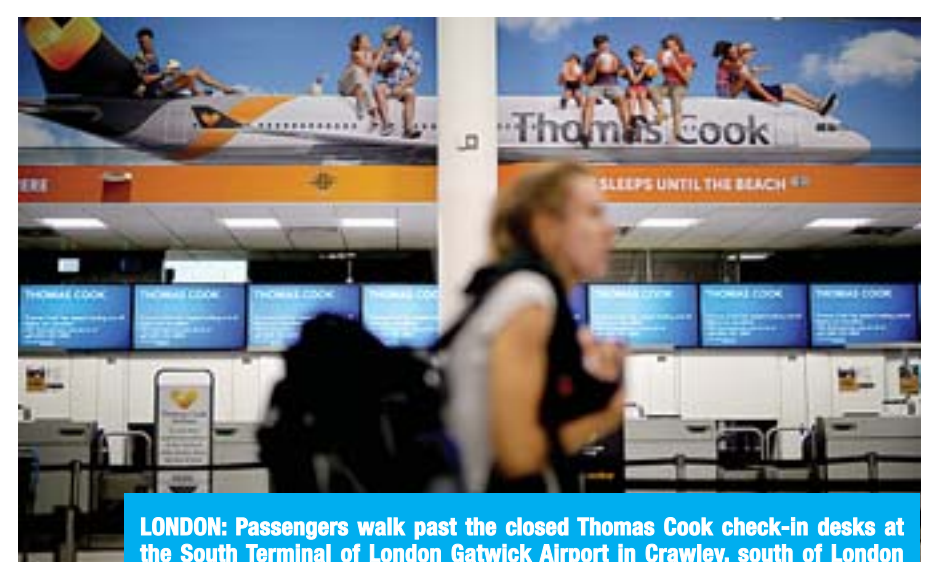
Number of tourists abroad: 35,000. Around 17,000 Swedes and 9,000 people each from Denmark and Norway are currently on holiday with Thomas Cook. Almost 6,000 more had yesterday flights cancelled by its subsidiaries Ving, Globetrotter, Spies and Tjareborg. In Denmark, competing tour operators Tui and Bravo Tours said they would fly Thomas Cook customers to their destinations, without specifying how many they could handle.

Tui said it would cover return travel costs for customers whose stays in its hotels were packaged with flights from Thomas Cook.

Benelux

Number of tourists abroad: 20,000. With around 10,000 each from the Netherlands and Belgium affected, neither country plans to repatriate their citizens immediately.

"There's an arrangement for them to be able to finish their holidays," a Thomas Cook spokesman told Dutch news agency ANP. The Netherlands also



LONDON: Passengers walk past the closed Thomas Cook check-in desks at the South Terminal of London Gatwick Airport in Crawley, south of London yesterday after the company announced it was taking steps to enter into compulsory liquidation with immediate effect. —AFP

has a foundation that takes over the costs for travellers let down by-for example-a tour operator's bankruptcy.

Cyprus

Number of tourists present: 15,000. Cyprus' deputy tourism minister Savvas Perdios said the government was working with Britain to repatriate its citizens. "As for owed monies for the operations of July, August and even September, until last week, I don't think anyone (i.e. the local hoteliers) expect to get compensated for that in any way," he added.

Greece

Number of tourists present: 50,000, including 22,000 on Crete. Tourism minister Haris Theocharis said the process of returning foreign tourists was already

Tunisia

Number of tourists present: 4,500. Some tourists in Tunisia, especially in coastal hotspot Hammamet, have already been charged for services Thomas Cook was unable to cover over the weekend. A crisis center has been set up to deal with tourists' and hoteliers' questions.

Turkey

Number of tourists present: 21,000. Turkey's tourism ministry said it would set up a loan scheme to support local companies affected by Thomas Cook's sudden bankruptcy. —AFP

What's On

Sheraton honored 'Luxury Property Sales Team of the Year' ELITE award by Marriott International



Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel was awarded the Best Sales Team in the Middle East and Africa region during the BMSC conference which was held earlier in Amman - Jordan. This award was received by Mr Mazen Mhanna, Executive Assistant Manager, proudly witnessing all the hard work and dedication of the Sales Team in 2018, in addition to complying with the brand standards of Marriott International to elevate the efficiency and the effectiveness of the Sales Team.

On this occasion, Fahad Abushaar, Complex General Manager, expressed his honor of the exceptional efforts and commitments of the Sales Team of Sheraton Kuwait and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait, which led to achieving this prestigious and well-deserved award despite the high competition in the region. In addition, Abushaar added that "During the years, we continue to develop our high services and skills to reach and exceed our guest's expectations and continue to prove ourselves with the success of our employees year after year."

For many years, Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel was honored for its exceptional achievements and unique services which has resulted in its guests to experience a unique and luxurious stay. As well, our authentic lobby and suites, accompanied by our lavish cuisines reaching out to the Avenues, to our exceptional catering services aims to offer you an unforgettable experience.



The embassy of the Republic of Korea in cooperation with the Kuwait Korean Cultural Diwaniya recently organized a Korean cuisine contest at Saveco. — Photos by Fouad Sheikh

SPY Cricket Tournament 2019

Salmiya Parish Youth (SPY) organized their first ever five-over cricket tournament at Agility Grounds, Sulaibiya on September 13, 2019. The pleasant morning was fitting for a day of action. In his opening address to the teams, Fr Lionel Braganza wished them success, strong team work and fair play. To begin the day, Infinity captained by Rosita Fernandes defeated Daredevils led by Glenda Menezes and thereafter defeated Salmiya Friends to claim the Women's Championship. Salmiya Friends led by Lavina had to settle with a single win. The other woman awardees were Precilla D'souza, Queenie Pereira and Glenda Menezes claimed Superwoman and Best Batswoman while Queenie and Glenda took home the Best Bowler and Best Fielder respectively.

Following this, Team Warriors XI captained by Dinesh D'silva beat the Altar servers, however they were defeated by the Godwin Fernandes' led SWAK in their second encounter. Captain Lloyd Miranda's Altar Servers team fought bravely, but couldn't chase the huge tar-

get of 99. In Pool - B, MFC won both their games, beating their opponents Salmiya Friends led by Gratian Noronha and KICC captained by Ignatius D'souza to top the pool. While, Salmiya Friends who secured the second place in the pool lost to the leading Team SWAK of Pool-A in the semifinals; the finals were played between MFC and SWAK with SWAK having to settle in the runners up position.

Jason Errol skipper of MFC claimed the Best Fielder and the Best Bowler awards. The Man of the Match award of the final was fittingly presented to Wilson Lobo for scoring a blistering 31 off just 10 balls. The days' match officials were Austin D'cunha, Christopher David, Jeffery Rodrigues, Jesley, Nigel D'souza and Platini Rozario, while the live commentary was provided throughout the day by Neville, Dr Manohar and Varun D'souza who also emceed the event.

Outdoor catering was handled by M&M Confectionary. The Overall Best Batsman award was presented to Royce Jaison for scoring 70 runs in four appearances. Among the other award winners were Reeshal Minejas, Tressy Fernandes, Ignatius Dsouza and Ranon Dsouza. The chief guests for the day were Clara and Roshal; office bearers of the Ladies Cricket League and Diyu Xavier a prominent player of the Kuwait National Cricket Team.



Health & Science

West Antarctica's crumbling ice sheet to redraw global coastline

MONACO: The fate of the world's coastal regions and the hundreds of millions of people who inhabit them depend on a block of ice atop West Antarctica on track to lift global oceans by at least three meters. It is not, according to available science, a matter of "if" but "when". Anders Levermann, a professor at the Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research in Germany and a top expert on Antarctica, spoke to AFP — days before the release in Monaco of a major UN report on oceans and Earth's frozen zones — about how climate change is impacting the world's coldest region.

Q. Does global warming affect Greenland and Antarctica the same way?

No. In Antarctica, 99 percent of all ice loss occurs when ice slides into the ocean. There is practically no ice melt on the surface — it is simply too cold. In Greenland, half of the ice loss is due to melt water that runs into the ocean. When ice in Antarctica or Greenland slides into the ocean and becomes an ice shelf, it comes into contact with surface water. Even a tenth of a degree increase in the temperature of the water can lead to a significant ice sheet imbalance. Greenland's ice sheet is much smaller than Antarctica's — seven metres of sea level equivalent vs. 55 — but sheds even more mass. That is because Antarctica, even if its topography has fewer barriers, is so much colder.

Q. What do we know about Antarctica that we didn't know a decade ago?

Ten years ago the modeling of Antarctica showed no significant ice loss within this century. Indeed, there was some debate as to whether the continent might add ice mass. Today, all the ice sheet models lose ice at a significant rate. The continent's ice sheet has shed about 150 billion tons of mass every year since 2005, virtually all of it in West Antarctica. Ice loss in both Greenland and Antarctica is accelerating. There is no longer any ambiguity. The studies we have in hand tell us that West Antarctica has passed a tipping point. It has become unstable and will discharge all its most vulnerable ice into the ocean.

Q. How much will Antarctica add to sea level rise by 2100?

A study I did with numerous colleagues in 2014 estimated that we could get 50 centimeters of sea level from Antarctica by 2100 — which is huge. The last assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said 16 cm was the upward limit. In 2016 an important study published in Nature — introducing new physical processes — proposed an even higher contribution, of up to more than a meter. That study has been much criticized, and the findings may be revised.

Q. What will happen after 2100?

In 2100, nothing stops. If we keep to the Paris Agreement, sea level rise will at best slow down. If we don't, it will still be accelerating at the end of the century. The most vulnerable part of the West Antarctic ice sheet — equivalent to 3.5 meters of sea level rise — sits in depressions below sea level, where ocean water infiltrates and erodes the ice sheet from underneath.

Q. How worried should we be?

Nobody should fear for their life because of rising seas. But if New York winds up five metres below sea level behind dikes and levees, I don't know if people will want to live there. The real impact is what we will lose. Hong Kong is currently a beacon of democracy in China. New Orleans is a bastion of culture, and New York of culture and business. Hamburg, Calcutta and Shanghai — we are going to lose them all to sea level rise if we do not stop emitting carbon into the atmosphere.

Q. Why is Antarctica harder to figure out than Greenland?

Unlike the Greenland ice sheet, ice loss in Antarctica is not due to melting, but to a discharge of icebergs into the ocean. Getting it right is difficult — at first, we were unable to model and observe this process. The first satellite



This file photograph shows a NASA image released on December 20, 2017, and taken November 29, 2017, by Operation IceBridge during a flight to Victoria Land, showing an iceberg floating in Antarctica's McMurdo Sound. — AFP

images for West Antarctica are from 1992. So when we began to see ice loss there a decade ago, we had less than 20 years of data. That's not long enough to detect long-term trends. Ice sheets change over a long time scale.

So observations can be very misleading. Antarctica is shielded from the rest of the world by the strongest ocean current on the planet, and the situation is similar for the atmosphere. That is also hard to factor in. — AFP

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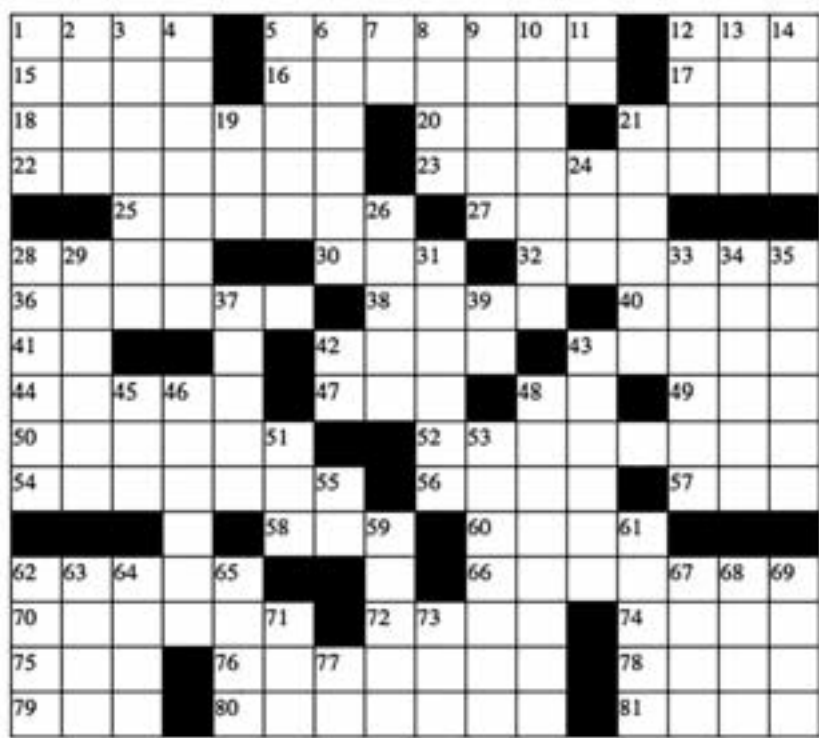
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2315



ACROSS

1. Rock that in its molten form (as magma) issues from volcanoes.
5. Scandinavian liquor usually flavored with caraway seeds.
12. (informal) Roused to anger.
15. A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
16. Of or relating to or characteristic of Zaire or its people.
17. A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
18. Annual sunflower grown for silage and for its seeds which are a source of oil.
20. A rapid bustling commotion.
22. A slip of paper included with your pay that records how much money you have earned and how much tax or insurance etc. has been taken out.
23. Of or relating to or being a speech sound that is articulated using both lips.
25. A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
27. A stick that people can lean on to help them walk.
28. God of fire.
30. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
32. Departing or being caused to depart from the true vertical or horizontal.
36. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
38. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
40. The villain in William Shakespeare's tragedy who tricked Othello into murdering his wife.
41. A mouth or mouthlike opening.
44. With rapid movements.
47. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
49. The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.
50. A wired or starched collar of intricate lace.
52. Green turtles.
54. The type genus of Droseraceae including many low bog-inhabiting insectivorous plants.
56. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
57. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
58. A fatal disease of cattle that affects the central nervous system.
60. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
62. A rule made by a local authority to regulate its own affairs.
66. Crustaceans characteristically having five pairs of locomotor appendages each joined to a segment of the thorax.
70. Without moral standards or principles.
72. Trace the shape of.
74. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
75. Injured by bites or stings.
76. All the New World monkeys except marmosets and tamarins.
78. Bound or secured closely.
79. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
80. A city in western California on San Francisco Bay opposite San Francisco.
81. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.

DOWN

1. Lacking in strength or firmness or resilience.
2. An elaborate song for solo voice.
3. Marked by diversity or difference.
4. Extinct small freshwater jawless fish usually having a heterocercal tail and an armored head.
5. (geology) Before the appearance of life.
6. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
7. Denoting a quantity consisting of six items or units.
8. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
9. Of or relating the Vedas or to the ancient Sanskrit in which they were written.
10. Place or set apart.
11. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.
12. (New Testament) The sages who visited Jesus and Mary and Joseph shortly after Jesus was born.
13. A Lolish language.
14. Consisting of or involving two parts or components usually in pairs.
19. An inflammatory disease of connective tissue with variable features including fever and weakness and fatigability and joint pains and skin lesions on the face or neck or arms.
21. Any of various deciduous or evergreen ornamental shrubs of the genus *Abelia* having opposite simple leaves and cymes of small white or pink or purplish flowers.
24. Black tropical American cuckoo.
26. A telegram sent abroad.
29. (New Testament) One of the three sages from the east who came bearing gifts for the infant Jesus.
31. The whiteness that results from removing the color from something.
33. A recording made on magnetic tape.
34. Small genus of dioecious tropical aquatic plants.
35. Belonging to or on or near the back or upper surface of an animal or organ or part.
37. A sharp narrow ridge found in rugged mountains.
39. An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.
42. A monarchy in northwestern Europe occupying most of the British Isles.
43. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
45. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
46. (New Testament) One of the three sages from the east who came bearing gifts for the infant Jesus.
48. Devoid of physical sensation.
51. The ball-shaped capsule containing the vertebrate eye.
53. An executioner who beheads the condemned person.
55. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
59. (Sumerian) God of the air and king of the Sumerian gods.
61. A blanket that is used as a cloak or shawl.
63. (Norse mythology) The primeval giant slain by Odin and his brothers and from whose body they created the world.
64. A globular water bottle used in Asia.
65. A city in east central Texas.
67. A roughly cylindrical that is vessel open at the top.
68. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
69. An informal term for a father.
71. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
73. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
77. A radioactive transuranic element.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Finances are a plus today. You may be able to value your own life situation. Someone may compliment you on your tastes or belongings. Close relationships take on more emotional depth, power and importance. Harmonious ties to others are what you yearn for; refinement and elegance are what you seek. The ideal partnership, the perfect balance, the highest standards of truth and beauty—these are some of the things that quicken your pulse. Home, family or real estate will be an interest that requires a lot of discipline and responsibility now.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a significant day that you can use to your best advantage. This is a day that is not too lazy or too stressful—time for accomplishing tasks or setting things up to work in your favor. You are very determined when it comes to security and you seldom make a move that does not strengthen your position. This easygoing day can certainly work in your favor, without taxing the nervous system or pushing you to extremes. You pursue responsibilities the way others pursue pleasure. Stop to smell the flowers this evening. Truth, religion and philosophy are subjects that will become more of a focus for you now.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Work, achievement and ambition are important to you and come almost automatically. You appear very comfortable in your job. Everything seems to be working together and when interrupted, you can still maintain a balance. This is a really good talent to learn as it is something you have worked hard to achieve. It has been difficult for you to deal with interruptions or difficult people but you have learned to achieve and overcome these difficulties. Later this afternoon the art of expression is fine-tuned as you enjoy companions or best friends. A lover or child who is bright and articulate plays a big role in your life. When you teach fair play, chaos is seldom seen. Tonight you make contact with someone who lights your fire.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

There are several opportunities available now to gain greater authority and prestige in the workplace. You will probably impress someone that could influence your life in large ways. You are especially active, dynamic and ready to tackle challenges. You influence others with your confidence—not excessively or pompously. There may be some concern over finances but if you remain the practical person that you are, you will see some positive results from your investments. Take the long view and map out a future plan for an early retirement. To ensure peace this evening—maintain low tones.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Power struggles in the workplace may be disconcerting but inevitable when it comes to competition. This is what separates the adult from the juvenile. Attracting support from others can help provide the resources you need to achieve your aims. This is a good day to start a diet, or perhaps, a new and positive habit. All the energies are working in your favor for this to be a successful endeavor. An appreciation for creative insights that are quite otherworldly is upon you. It is easy for you to love and be compassionate and to value what life offers. You have a sense of unity and brotherhood that will stay with you. You may gain a renewed set of values. The spiritual aspect of a relationship becomes deep. Schedule a massage for the two of you.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You could find yourself in a detached frame of mind this morning, as though you are viewing things from the outside. Your friends and loved ones would be happier if you took a more personal attitude. Making your mark on the world has special significance for you now. Achievement has greater meaning for you. Organizing and administering people and projects puts you on an even keel and you are back to work quickly. Challenging authority and striving for success may be on your agenda as well. Ambition is a powerful motivation—try and stay aware and focused on the present. You will find the results of your efforts are achievement and recognition.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Challenge gives you the opportunity to pull on many choices. It is a good idea to remove the emotions and see the situation in a technical and truthful avenue. This is a good time to be creative and secure the positive. A period of great forethought and planning has begun. You have a lot on your mind and feel a strong need to communicate and gather ideas. You may run into an ethical disagreement this afternoon that could damage your faith in a work situation unless you know clearly where you stand. Changes in the neighborhood may get on your nerves this evening and excessive mental frustrations like this can make it difficult to relax. This evening would be a good time to drive to a nearby park or mall with a loved one. Listen to music.



Scorpio (October 23-November 18)

Your most exciting, life-fulfilling dreams can be met during this time. You may come to an understanding of just where you are in your life and where you want to go next—create a focal point, achieve and appreciate. The energies that are available are hot and ready to be utilized; however, you must choose the direction you want, since these energies could be negative as well as positive. Habits are in a cycle of change; variety satisfies a deep inner need. You keep alert to any possible changes and you manage to move a few steps ahead. Satisfying that instinctive itch comes when you communicate.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 18)

The good life and all that is fine and luxurious may be what you value just now. You enjoy finding solutions to whatever problems you find. Circumstances should work together to help bring out your ideals and make it easier to make your dreams real. You may find yourself examining and testing ideas and offering opinions or ideas of your own. All in all, this is a good time to project your image. It is easy to organize your thoughts and make your plans for the next phase, project or research. Money that someone owes you may be repaid to you now. This evening is good for relaxation and for enjoying the people around you; laughter comes easily.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are driven and passionate in your pursuit of change and inner growth. You possess, at the core, an intensity that burns through superficialities, searching for opportunities to face the truth and render the hidden to view. Careful... This ceaseless investigative activity, while central to your nature, may be the source of discomfort to others. Emotions and drive take the heat as far as being a prime focus for action in your personal sphere. You may be moved to appreciate and discover the beauty in your life and in those around you, particularly when you slow down this afternoon to enjoy the simple things in life.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Pace yourself today, since you may feel like you are running a race. You are entering a period of emotional change; feeling two ways at once without getting too deeply into either polarity is possible. Habits are in a cycle of change; variety satisfies a deep inner need. Learning and communicating relieve an instinctive urge to move forward in your life path. You teach others to think outside the box; now it is your turn to think in creative ways. An understanding attitude on your part could have far-reaching effects on your own life-path and career during this time.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may find opposition in the workplace today; however, the exchange of ideas becomes a way to reach a positive result. You are developing a knack for organizing things and your skills will not go unnoticed. Your people skills are improving and there is a sense of ambition and self-confidence that improves with each day. Work, achievement and ambition mean a lot to you now. Saying and writing things with style counts for a lot—the social butterfly in you emerges and you are able to accomplish quite a lot for your company. You may be a buyer for your company and you know just what the public wants. Neighbors or brothers and sisters will likely bring all kinds of good experiences your way. Humanitarian efforts can affect your life-path.

Wordsearch Puzzle

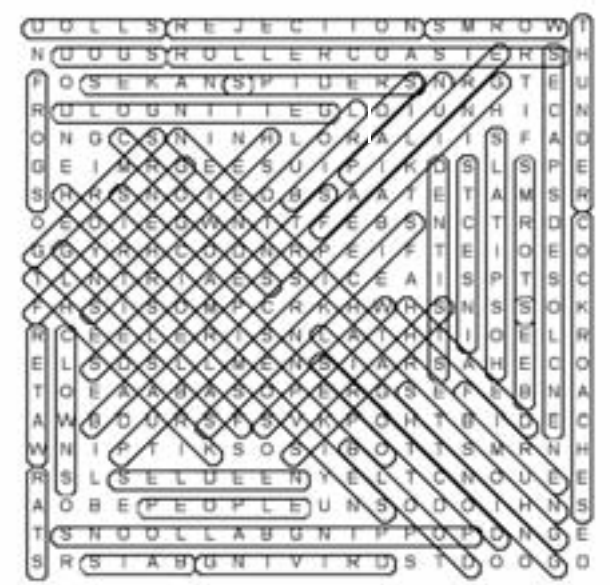
Fish 1

Find and circle all of the fish that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Benjamin Franklin quotation.



- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| BARRACUDA | DORADO | PARROTFISH | SMELT |
| BLUEFISH | DRUM | PERMIT | SNOOK |
| BONEFISH | GAR | POMPANO | STURGEON |
| BULLHEAD | GRAYLING | RODFISH | SUNFISH |
| CATFISH | GRUNT | ROOSTERFISH | SWORDFISH |
| CHUB | HALIBUT | SALMON | TILAPIA |
| COD | JEWFISH | SAND DAB | TRIPLETAIL |
| CRAPPIE | MACKEREL | SAUGER | TUNA |
| CREVALLE | MUSKELLUNGE | SHARK | WAHOO |
| DOLLY WARDEN | PADDLEFISH | SHEEPSHEAD | WARMOUTH |

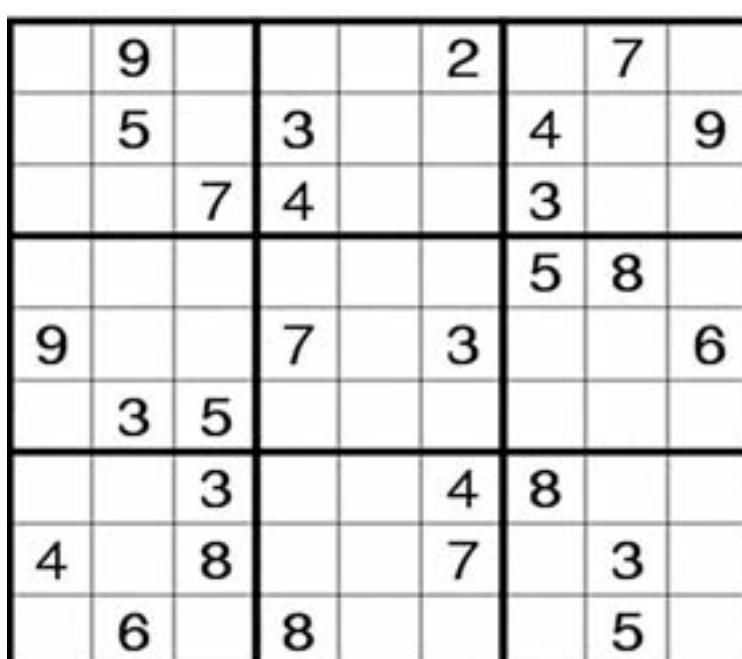
Fears and Phobias



- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| BASINETS | DRIVING | HOSPITALS | REJECTION |
| BATS | ENCLOSED SPACES | INSECTS | ROLLER COASTERS |
| BEES | FAILURE | LIGHTNING | SHARKS |
| BIRDS | FALLING | LOUD NOISES | SICKNESS |
| BLOOD | FIRE | NEEDLES | SNAKES |
| CLOWNS | FLYING | NUMBER THIRTEEN | SPIDERS |
| COCKROACHES | FROGS | OPEN SPACES | STORMS |
| CROWDS | GERMS | RAIN | THE DARK |
| DEATH | GETTING OLD | PEOPLE | THUNDER |
| DEFTETS | GHOSTS | POPPING BALLOONS | WARS |
| DOCTORS | HEIGHTS | PUBLIC SPEAKING | WATER |
| DOGS | HORROR MOVIES | RATS | WORMS |
| DOLLS | | | |

The hidden message is: NOTHING IN LIFE IS TO BE FEARED, IT IS ONLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD.

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2019



Italian fashion designer Donatella Versace, right, and US singer Jennifer Lopez pose following the presentation of Versace's Women's Spring Summer 2020 collection in Milan. — AFP

Early Van Gogh works auctioned in Belgium



A picture shows a painting by Dutch artist Vincent Van Gogh at Kiggen's auction house in Gent, Belgium. — AFP

Two early works by Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh were auctioned in the Belgian city of Ghent on Sunday, fetching near estimate prices that the organizer said were bargains. The first work, a watercolor of flowers, was snapped up for 220,000 euros, slightly more than expected, auctioneer Johan Kiggen told AFP. The second piece, a charcoal drawing of a jug, went for 140,000 euros, just below the estimated price. "Everyone is happy," Kiggen said, who added that buyers could only bid in person.

"The two works went for a very good price for the buyers," he said. The two buyers, who wished to remain anonymous, were both Belgians and pledged to keep the works in the country, which was a request of the seller. Kiggen said the works have been certified as authentic on several occasions, and are featured in Van Gogh catalogues. Dated to 1883, the works bear little resemblance to Van Gogh's iconic works. They were made before the troubled master was inspired by the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists in Paris.

Van Gogh is one of the most expensive Impressionist and modern artists, with 12 of his works having gone for more than \$30 million at auction. His output of about 2,000 pieces, of which 900 are paintings, are mainly held in museum collections, which means they are a rarity on the art market. — AFP

Keeping the thread alive at a **Vietnam silk village**

Cocoons bob in boiling water as silk is rapidly teased out, spinning on reels skillfully operated by women in Vietnam's Co Chat village, where households have been making thread for more than a century. The village in Nam Dinh province, two hours south of the capital Hanoi, is nearing the end of silk production season. Dozens of workers, mostly women, in the bustling workshops stir the vats, gently unwinding the fiber from the cocoons through clouds of rising steam. Once the yellow and white fibers are spun onto wooden reels, workers hang them in the sun to dry.

"Production from the silkworm cocoons depends 90 percent on the weather," says workshop owner Pham Van Ba, whose family has been spinning thread for three generations. "Our products will be ruined" if it's not dried under the sun, he tells AFP, explaining that even good quality thread can be marred by inclement weather. Around 30 kilograms of cocoons are processed by each worker every day, and the final threads are sold to traders exporting to Laos and Thailand.

While a few households have invested in modern silk-reeling machines, the majority choose to unwind the cocoons using chopsticks, even if it means sweating through the summer heat in stuffy workshops. Doing it manually makes it easier to salvage usable silk thread from cocoons even if they are not good, Ba says. Each laborer earns around \$10 a day, but worker Tran Thi Hien describes the work as "precarious".

"If the market price goes up, then we make some profit. Otherwise, it's only enough to cover our expenses," the 37-year-old says, sitting next to baskets of yellow cocoons, waiting to be sorted. Like others in the village, she worries about the future of the industry with many youngsters lured by a city lifestyle in nearby Nam Dinh. "My kids tell me this job is too hard," she says. "They will find other jobs instead." — AFP



A worker separates yellow silkworm cocoons.



This photograph shows silk threads hung out to dry in the compound of a home in Co Chat village in Vietnam's Nam Dinh province. — AFP photos



A worker dries collected silk thread yarns in an open courtyard.

Lifestyle | Awards



Bill Hader



British actress Jodie Comer



Michelle Williams



Alex Borstein

Comedy's rising star **Phoebe Waller-Bridge** dominates Emmys

British actress and writer Phoebe Waller-Bridge was the explosive big winner at the Emmys on Sunday, as her offbeat and piercing creation "Fleabag" dominated the comedy awards at television's answer to the Oscars. The TV adaptation of her one-woman show about a disillusioned young singleton in London won best comedy series, while Waller-Bridge herself won best comedy actress and comedy writing statuettes. She defied predictions by besting eight-time acting winner Julia Louis-Dreyfus, who had won best actress for all six previous seasons of "Veep."

"Fleabag" started as a one-woman show in Edinburgh festival," said Waller-Bridge as she collected the top comedy prize at the gala in Los Angeles. "The journey has been absolutely mental." "It's just really wonderful to know and reassuring that a dirty, pervy, angry, messed-up woman can make it to the Emmys," she added, referring to her character. With further directing, casting and editing Emmy wins, it was a remarkable turnaround for "Fleabag," which received zero nominations for its first season.



British actress Phoebe Waller-Bridge poses with the Emmy for Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series, Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series and Outstanding Comedy Series for 'Fleabag' during the 71st Emmy Awards at the Microsoft Theatre in Los Angeles. — AFP

'THRONES' WINS TOP DRAMA EMMY AS 'FLEABAG' SPRINGS A SURPRISE

"Game of Thrones" took the top Emmy for best drama Sunday but dark British comedy "Fleabag" was the surprise big winner of television's glitziest night, dominating the comedy prizes at a star-studded ceremony in Los Angeles. "Thrones"—the most decorated fictional show in the history of the Emmys, television's Oscars—finished with 12 awards overall for its final season.

"Thank you to the hardest working crews in show business—the dragons who shot for 70 nights straight in freezing Belfast rain, the wolves who shot all around the world—you are amazing, all of you," said showrunner Dan Weiss. Peter Dinklage won his fourth best supporting actor statuette for his portrayal of sharp-tongued dwarf Tyrion Lannister.

But the blood-soaked fantasy epic's hopes of going out with a new record numbers of Emmys for a single season were dashed after it failed to convert nominations in directing, writing and the other acting categories. The divisive final run of "Thrones" enraged many fans—more than a million signed a petition for HBO to redo its conclusion. But the 10 nominated cast members of "Thrones" received a standing ovation as they gathered on stage.

pervy, angry, messed-up woman can make it to the Emmys," said Waller-Bridge.

"This is just getting ridiculous," she said upon winning the best comedy prize. "The journey has been absolutely mental." "Fleabag" was totally shunned by Emmy voters during its first run, failing to bag a single nomination. But the Television Academy's 24,000-plus voters changed their tune for its second season. Waller-Bridge has ruled out a third season, saying the irreverent series about a self-absorbed young Londoner has come "to a natural end."

'We all have the right'

Billy Porter made history as the first openly gay black man to win the best drama actor prize for FX show "Pose," which explores New York's underground ballroom culture in the 1980s. "I am so overwhelmed and so overjoyed to have lived long enough to see this day," said Porter, who turned 50 on Saturday, in his acceptance speech. "I have the right. You have the right. We all have the right," he added.

Jason Bateman was the surprise winner for directing Netflix's dark crime thriller "Ozark." Co-star Julia Garner



US actress Julia Garner

Program creator Ava DuVernay tweeted: "I hope this night makes you feel celebrated + seen." Bill Hader won for best actor for HBO's hitman comedy "Barry." The network pulled off another victory for "Succession," with Jesse Armstrong—one of the many British winners on the night-taking the prize for drama writing.

Damn good

The glitzy 71st Emmys began at the Microsoft Theater in downtown Los Angeles with a comedy skit: a cartoon Homer Simpson was introduced as "host"—and quickly crushed by a falling piano. "Breaking Bad" star Bryan Cranston then appeared on stage to "rescue" the Emmys, delivering a tribute to television's so-called golden era. "Television has never been bigger. Television has never mattered more. And television has never been this damn good," said Cranston.

In the battle of traditional networks vs new platforms, HBO reaffirmed its supremacy over Netflix, finishing with 34 wins to the streaming giant's 27. But Louis-Dreyfus missed out on a ninth acting statuette—which would have been her seventh, and a clean sweep for every season, as foul-mouthed vice-president-turned-president Selina Meyer in HBO's "Veep." "I'm sorry, I was told I would be up here alone," she joked as she later appeared on stage with her co-stars to a standing ovation to present an award. — AFP



The cast of 'Game of Thrones' speaks onstage during the 71st Emmy Awards at the Microsoft Theatre in Los Angeles. — AFP photos

"I think all of us agree how amazing the entire last season was for us," said Sophie Turner, who played Sansa Stark. "Thrones" had already bagged 10 Emmys in lesser categories at last weekend's Creative Arts Emmys, including for the show's special effects and elaborate costumes. It ends its eight-season run with 59 Emmys, a record for a drama or comedy. Only variety sketch show "Saturday Night Live" has more.

In the night's biggest shock, "Fleabag" star Phoebe Waller-Bridge bested eight-time acting winner Julia Louis-Dreyfus ("Veep") before the show itself won for best comedy series. The BBC show—which has grown into a phenomenon on both sides of the Atlantic after being acquired by Amazon—also scooped awards for best comedy writing and directing on Sunday, and six overall. "It's just really wonderful to know and reassuring that a dirty,

won best supporting actress. Sandra Oh failed in her bid to become the first woman of Asian descent to win the leading actress in a drama category, beaten by her co-star Jodie Comer in BBC spy thriller "Killing Eve."

The pair embraced before British star Comer, who plays an assassin, collected her prize and told the audiences she hadn't invited her parents to the ceremony "because I didn't think this was going to be my time."

"Chernobyl"—HBO's drama about the 1986 nuclear catastrophe—won the Emmy for best limited series. It faced off against "When They See Us," the searing true story of five New York teenagers wrongly accused of raping a Central Park jogger. One of the Netflix show's young stars, Jharrel Jerome, won the prize for best actor in a limited series, and paid tribute to the five men, who attended the ceremony.



US actor Peter Dinklage

Understanding of humanity

Waller-Bridge is "not apologetic about having a flawed heroine," Andrew Scott, one of the main characters in Season 2, told AFP in an interview earlier this year. All that has been enough for Waller-Bridge to be hailed as a feminist heroine, regularly compared to American screenwriter Lena Dunham, though their universes are fairly far apart. "Because it's written by a female, people point out that it's a feminist show, but I think sometimes that just undermines the actual work," said Scott. "I think her grace and gift is her understanding of humanity."

But the feminist theme is reinforced by Waller-Bridge's propensity to offer fellow actresses equally dense, complex roles—in "Fleabag," Olivia Colman—who won an Oscar for "The Favourite"—delights as the heroine's passive-aggressive stepmother. It's also clear in the offbeat thriller series "Killing Eve," starring Jodie Comer, who won the best drama actress Emmy prize Sunday, and Sandra Oh.

Waller-Bridge has been called upon to liven up the script for the 25th installment of James Bond's adventures, at the express request of 007 himself, actor Daniel Craig, who wanted to inject more humor into the film set for release next year. As for "Fleabag," Waller-Bridge has ruled out a third season of the series—at least for another 16 years.

Asked at a Los Angeles screening last month whether her upcoming reprisal of the original play in London's West End is the last we will see of "Fleabag," Waller-Bridge said the show had come "to a natural end." "I think it's time to go to the next chapter, and I'm so grateful for the character," she said. "I have a fantasy of bringing 'Fleabag' back when I'm 50," she added.—AFP



US actor Billy Porter



Tony Shalhoub



US actor Jharrel Jerome

Winners

Outstanding drama series: "Game of Thrones" (HBO)

Outstanding comedy series: "Fleabag" (Amazon)

Lead actor, drama: Billy Porter, "Pose"

Lead actress, drama: Jodie Comer, "Killing Eve"

Lead actor, comedy: Bill Hader, "Barry"

Lead actress, comedy: Phoebe Waller-Bridge, "Fleabag"

Supporting actor, drama: Peter Dinklage, "Game of Thrones"

Supporting actress, drama: Julia Garner, "Ozark"

Supporting actor, comedy: Tony Shalhoub, "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"

Supporting actress, comedy: Alex Borstein, "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"

Outstanding limited series: "Chernobyl" (HBO)

Outstanding television movie: "Black Mirror: Bandersnatch" (Netflix)

Lead actor, limited series or movie: Jharrel Jerome, "When They See Us"

Lead actress, limited series or movie: Michelle Williams, "Fosse/Verdon"

Supporting actor, limited series or movie: Ben Whishaw, "A Very English Scandal"

Supporting actress, limited series or movie: Patricia Arquette, "The Act"

Competition program: "RuPaul's Drag Race"

Variety sketch series: "Saturday Night Live"

Top five programs with most overall wins:

"Game of Thrones" - 12

"Chernobyl" - 10

"The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" - 8

"Free Solo" - 7

"Fleabag" - 6

Top five platforms with most overall wins:

HBO: 34

Netflix: 27

Amazon Prime Video: 15

National Geographic: 8

NBC: 7



English actress Gwendoline Christie



US actress Rachel Brosnahan



Angela Bassett



Milo Ventimiglia



Sophie Turner



Laverne Cox and Chase Strangio



Gwyneth Paltrow



Welsh actress Catherine Zeta-Jones

Television's best and brightest shine on Emmys red carpet

Both the looks and the temperature were red-hot Sunday on the Emmys red carpet, where Hollywood's top stars battled the heat and humidity to bring their fashion A-game. The mercury soared past 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 Celsius), and US network Fox—which broadcast television's answer to the Oscars—deployed ceiling fans in the arrivals area to try to keep the glitterati from sweating through their gowns. Metallics had a big moment—from traditional gold and silver to blue and pastel pink. But so did white-hot glamour, and pops of color for the men. The following is a look at the trends spotted at the Microsoft Theater in downtown Los Angeles:

All that glitters is (fashion) gold

Phoebe Waller-Bridge ("Fleabag") defeated Julia Louis-Dreyfus ("Veep") and Rachel Brosnahan ("The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel") in the best actress in a comedy category, but all three were style winners in glittering gowns with metallic elements. Waller-Bridge, one of the night's big winners, wore a pale Monique Lhuillier gown with a cluster of sparkles at the waist. Louis-Dreyfus, who missed her chance at Emmys history, glimmered in gold Oscar de la Renta while Brosnahan, last year's winner, went for a sparkling blue Elie Saab number. Others getting in on the metallics trend: Ava DuVernay, Natasha Lyonne, Niecy Nash, Chrissy Metz and Laura Linney.

White queens, red queens

On television, Jodie Comer plays an assassin with a killer fashion sense on "Killing Eve." As she accepted her award for best actress in a drama, she slayed in a white Tom Ford gown with a deep V neckline and a high slit. Patricia Arquette, a double nominee who won for her work on "The Act," also adopted the all-white look, with long sleeves and a giant silver clutch. But another big color of the night was red-on its own, as worn by Catherine Zeta-Jones and Angela Bassett—or in combination with pink, seen on Taraji P. Henson, Marisa Tomei, and "This Is Us" stars Mandy Moore and Susan Kelechi Watson.

Quest for the Emmy throne

HBO's blood-soaked fantasy epic "Game of Thrones" had a big night Sunday, and its many stars made sure they were dressed for the moment. Peter Dinklage, now a four-time winner for his portrayal of Tyrion Lannister, looked ready for his close-up in a sleek black tux with a long tie. Gwendoline Christie, a nominee after she submitted her own tape, looked regal in a red and cream Gucci gown that looked Westeros-ready. The mother of dragons, Emilia Clarke, got the memo about the weather—her indigo Valentino gown was barely there with a daring plunging neckline and a bow sash.

Politics and fashion

Political messages on the red carpet are nothing new, and transgender actress/activist Laverne Cox, a nominee for her work on "Orange Is the New Black," did not miss her moment. Her rainbow clutch said "Oct 8. Title VII. Supreme Court"—a reference to an upcoming case on the high court's docket about whether Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applies to anti-LGBT discrimination. On her arm was Chase Strangio, an attorney for the

American Civil Liberties Union. Around Strangio's neck was a large necklace that read: "TRANS." "We want everyone to tell their friends and families about this case," Cox said.

The boys of (late) summer

It's hard for the other men to best Billy Porter for straight-up swag. Porter, the star of FX's underground ballroom show "Pose" and the first openly gay black man to win an Emmy for best actor in a drama, stunned red carpet watchers at the Oscars earlier this year in a velvet tuxedo gown. On Sunday, he went with a glittering black and silver pinstriped suit by Michael Kors, an outsized black hat with a decidedly "Old Town Road" vibe, and giant platform shoes. "I have always loved fashion and I'm so happy to have the place to do it," he told E! network.

As for the rest of Hollywood's A-list men, they hit the red carpet with some game, eschewing basic black for a rainbow of color. Sterling K. Brown, a 2017 winner for best actor in a drama for "This Is Us" and a nominee again this year, rocked a Brioni red jacket and bowtie-and sunglasses, while co-star and fellow nominee Milo Ventimiglia donned a gray velvet jacket with black lapels. James van der Beek of "Dawson's Creek" fame went for a daring double-breasted salmon velvet jacket. — AFP



Nikolaj Coster-Waldau



Kim Kardashian West and Kendall Jenner



Welsh actress Catherine Zeta-Jones



Zendaya

Lifestyle | Fashion

PARIS FASHION WEEK BRACES FOR CLIMATE PROTESTS, ABSENT STAR

Paris women's fashion week is bracing itself for climate change and animals rights protests as it started yesterday, with one of its biggest stars—Virgil Abloh—missing. Extinction Rebellion activists had called for London fashion week to be cancelled entirely because of the “climate emergency” and laid down their own bleeding red carpet to highlight the environmental damage done by the industry.

Animal rights group PETA also took to the streets in London to denounce fashion's love affair with leather, saying tanneries were among the world's worst polluters. Protesters smeared themselves in black slime as a metaphor for the “hazardous waste associated with the leather industry”. Similar protests are likely in Paris over the nine-day marathon of its spring summer shows—by far the world's biggest and most important fashion week.

But the French capital will be without Abloh, the hyperactive American streetwear guru behind Off-White, who has managed to hog the headlines on both the men's and women's runways over the past year. The 38-year-old—who also designs Louis Vuitton's menswear line as well as working with Nike and Ikea—has been forced to curb his manic globe-trotting schedule because of “health considerations”.

Abloh forced to slow down

With his doctor advising him not to travel, Abloh will stay at home in Chicago, where a retrospective of his work at the city's Museum of Contemporary Art has been extended after breaking box office records. “I was just tired, so I went to the doctor,” the architect-turned-

designer told Vogue. “Everything is fine, but the doctor told me: ‘This pace that you've pushed your body to is not good for your health.’”

“Being busy isn't working,” he confessed in a remarkably frank admission in an industry where creative burn-out is something of a taboo. Abloh's Paris Off-White show will go ahead Thursday without him. “I designed it with this seeming hurdle in tow. There's an element that replaces my attendance with crowd participation,” he added. Last week Paris' other big new star, Demna Gvasalia, quit Vetements, the rebellious uber hip brand where he made his name as the bad boy of fashion.

Having “started Vetements because I was bored of fashion”, he said that he felt he had accomplished his “mission” of shaking the industry up. But Gvasalia is staying at Balenciaga, the venerable Paris luxury label he has also shaken up, the brand told AFP.

Koreans are coming

Kiminte Kimhekim, who cut his teeth at Balenciaga, will make his Paris debut with his eponymous label Monday a few hours before another Korean newcomer, Rokh, will present its second collection. Kimhekim—known for his use of giant bows—has already caught the eye of Hollywood star and fashion icon Elle Fanning, who wore a pink transparent dress belted with a giant bow to the premiere of her new film “Maleficent: Mistress of Evil” last month. He told AFP that his show—cheekily called “Buy it if you can”—mixes the chima, the long traditional Korean skirt, with high school uniforms worn there, spiced with an extra touch of “provocation”.

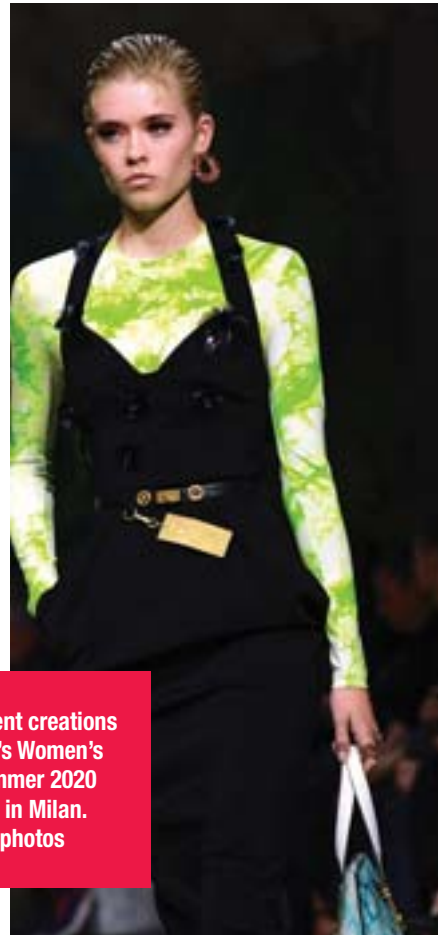


Activists for animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animal (PETA) douse themselves with black product during a protest against the use of leather in the fashion industry in front of the Eiffel tower in Paris. — AFP

His collection includes a pair of trousers that are twice as long as a normal pair. “Some people might think that they are not terribly wearable, but I don't care. If you can, buy them!” he joked, saying it was important to push boundaries and experiment. Fellow Korean Rok Hwang, a protege of the ex-Celine creator Phoebe Philo, shares much of the British designer's discreet modern chic. Having deconstructed the classic wardrobe staples of trench coats and suits in his debut Paris Rokh show, this time he is going outdoors with a show he calls “Field Trip”.

The other Paris debutante is Japanese designer

Maiko Kurogouchi, who eight years after leaving the “King of Pleats” Issey Miyake, is bringing her own Mame label to Paris. Like Miyake, Kurogouchi's clothes are both ultramodern and steeped in Japanese craft tradition. “Designers can make something new from ancient know-how and transmit it to the next generation,” she said.—AFP



Models present creations for Versace's Women's Spring Summer 2020 collection in Milan. — AFP photos

Jennifer Lopez is Versace guest star in Milan

Hollywood star Jennifer Lopez on Friday made a surprise catwalk appearance at the Versace fashion show in Milan, sporting a near identical dress to the green jungle print robe she wore to the Grammy Awards in 2000. The actress closed Donatella Versace's spring/summer 2020 collection in the green silk creation with a deep-V plunging neckline, triggering an ecstatic reaction from the audience. Versace sent out a string of other looks also using her green jungle print from shorts to suits. Other outfits included little black dresses teamed with knee-high strappy sandals, a big-shouldered denim jacket and trench coat, a red feathery mini dress and a fuchsia pink parka.—AFP



Classifieds

Tuesday, September 24, 2019

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STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
 Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 23/09/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	40 °C	32 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	25 °C			
ABDALY	44 °C	26 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	46 °C	29 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	40 °C	31 °C			
AHMADI	39 °C	30 °C			
NUWASIB	37 °C	24 °C			
WAFRA	44 °C	24 °C			
SALMY	44 °C	25 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	09/24	Hot	46 °C	24 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	09/25	Hot	45 °C	26 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Thursday	09/26	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	44 °C	23 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Friday	09/27	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	41 °C	23 °C	SE-VRB	08 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:18
Sunrise	05:37
Zuhr	11:41
Asr	15:08
Sunset	17:44
Isha	19:01

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	41 °C
MIN. Temp.	23 °C
MAX. RH	82 %
MIN. RH	20 %
MAX. Wind	S 18 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

name is read as given name: MIRAHUSSAIN ABDUL LATIF and surname: ALVI. (C 5678)

I, ALVI MIRAHUSSAIN ABDUL LATIF, holding Indian Passport No. Z2816291, S/o ABDUL LATIF DAWOOD ALVI, PR/O 28/10, FLR-2, Ashok Niwas, Nawroji RD-5, Mumbai-400009. At present residing in Kuwait hereby declare that henceforth my

I, Harpreet S/o Dalip Kumar R/o V. Khojewala, Po. Khaira Majja, Distt. Kapurthala, Punjab, India. Have changed my name from Harpreet to Harpreet Kumar. (C 5677) 24-9-2019

EMERGENCY 112

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



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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 24/9/2019				Departure Flights on Tuesday 24/9/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	241	Alexandria	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	713	Sohag	00:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	MSC	406	Sohag	00:15
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	JZR	723	Alexandria	01:05
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	FEG	342	Sohag	01:05
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	THY	773	Istanbul	01:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	UMK	2422	Jeddah	02:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:00
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:25	JZR	111	Doha	02:10
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	JZR	707	Luxor	02:50
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
NIA	1601	Luxor	03:10	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	NIA	1402	Sohag	04:10
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	QTR	1087	Sohag	04:15
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:20
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	JZR	1735	Doha	04:40
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00
THY	1414	Trabzon	05:05	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	KAC	303	Dubai	05:15
IGO	1759	Delhi	05:10	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	IGO	1765	Delhi	06:10
UAE	873	Dubai	05:40	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	JZR	745	Sharm el-Sheikh	06:45
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	KAC	623	Doha	07:00
KAC	362	Colombo	06:05	RJA	643	Amman	07:00
JZR	702	Asyut	06:10	UAE	874	Dubai	07:10
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	167	Paris	07:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	121	Dubai	07:15
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	JZR	113	Doha	07:30
THY	6376	Istanbul	06:30	RBG	550	Alexandria	07:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	BAW	156	London	07:40
KAC	106	London	06:40	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:45
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	JZR	211	Jeddah	08:00
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	165	Rome	08:00
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	07:05	IGO	1767	Mumbai	08:10
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	08:35
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	501	Beirut	08:50
JZR	724	Alexandria	07:50	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	KAC	561	Amman	08:55
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	117	New York	09:05
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	QTR	1085	Doha	09:10
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
JZR	708	Luxor	08:45	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	JZR	601	Baku	09:20
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	KAC	691	Muscat	09:20
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	157	Istanbul	09:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
IRA	675	Lar	09:20	JZR	731	Cairo	09:45
GOW	061	CNN	09:30	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	JZR	301	Istanbul	09:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR	221	Riyadh	09:55
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	OMA	642	Muscat	10:00
KAC	624	Doha	10:55	KAC	101	London1	10:05
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	IRA	674	Lar	10:10
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	QTR	1071	Doha	10:30
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	GOW	062	CNN	10:30
JZR	114	Doha	11:10	KAC	515	Tehran	10:35
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	KAC	617	Doha	10:40
JZR	746	Sharm el-Sheikh	12:25	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	SVA	513	Riyadh	10:55
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35

Seven children killed, scores hurt in Kenya school collapse

NAIROBI: Seven children died and scores were injured early yesterday when a school building collapsed in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, in an accident blamed on shoddy construction. "We can confirm that we have seven fatalities," said government spokesman Cyrus Ogunu. Education Minister George Magoha said in a statement that 64 pupils had been admitted to Kenyatta National Hospital, most of them with minor injuries, but two others required "more attention".

Hundreds of angry residents of Dagoretti, a poor suburb where many live in makeshift homes, thronged the site where rescuers picked through the rubble until the search for victims ended in the afternoon. An AFP reporter at the site said books and desks were strewn through the debris of the two-storey building, a semi-permanent structure made of concrete, iron sheeting and timber.

"I had just dropped my son to school, and heard screams on my way back, and that is when I found people assisting them out to hospital," said Margaret Muthoni at Kenyatta National Hospital, whose four-year-old son was injured. "I am just lucky my son survived with injuries. It is a very unfortunate incident because some children have died," said Muthoni. Kephah Otieno said he had lost his five-year-old daughter. "I just can't believe. It is too hard for me and the family," he said. The school was a private institution with around 800 registered pupils, said Magoha, adding that it would be closed for the next four days.

Dagoretti MP John Kiarie told KTN television that it appeared the first floor had collapsed on children on the ground floor. However details were sketchy. Kiarie said the area had no land on which to construct a proper public school. He said the disaster highlighted the lack of "regulation of educational institutions, especially those in informal settlements... regulations that pertain to the construction and stability of educational institutions. "It is the highest level of irresponsibility and greed when you look at this structure that came down, and even the ones standing. It is another disaster waiting to happen," said Shadrack Okelo, a local resident.

Moses Nyakiongora, an official with the National Building Inspectorate said at the scene: "This school was not properly constructed. It is totally substandard." Magoha visited the site and vowed to build a public school in the area. "What has happened here today is regrettable but investigations have been launched," he said. "I have inspected the rest of the classrooms and they look stable. "But the one that collapsed was substandard, it should not have been allowed to be there."

Numerous buildings have collapsed in Nairobi and other Kenyan towns with deadly results in recent years, as the country experiences booming growth in the construction industry. Corruption has allowed contractors to cut corners or bypass regulations. In April 2016, 49 people were killed in the collapse of a six-floor building in the north-east of the capital. — AFP



NAIROBI: People stand on debris where a classroom block collapsed at Precious Talents primary school in Nairobi's Dagoretti constituency yesterday. — AFP

'How dare you?' Thunberg asks leaders at UN

UNITED NATIONS: A visibly angry Greta Thunberg berated world leaders at a UN climate summit yesterday, accusing them of betraying her generation by failing to tackle greenhouse gas emissions and asking "How dare you?" The impassioned speech set the tone for the meeting, called by UN chief Antonio Guterres to reinvigorate the faltering Paris agreement, which 66 countries have responded to with vows to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

It comes as mankind is releasing more emissions into the atmosphere than at any point in history, triggering global weather hazards from heat waves to intense hurricanes to raging wildfires and rapidly acidifying oceans. Yet the gap between carbon reduction targets

demanding by scientists to avert catastrophe and actions thus far taken is only widening.

"I shouldn't be up here. I should be back at school on the other side of the ocean," said Thunberg, 16, who has become the global face of a growing youth movement against climate inaction that mobilized millions in a worldwide strike on Friday. "You come to us young people for hope. How dare you?" she thundered, her voice at times breaking with emotion. "We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is the money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!"

In a surprising turn of events, President Donald Trump made a brief unscheduled appearance yesterday at the UN climate summit, which he had been expected to skip entirely. Trump, who has repeatedly expressed doubt about the overwhelming scientific consensus on manmade causes of global warming, spent a few minutes in the hall of the General Assembly where he applauded Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech then left.

Earlier, opening the summit, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: "The climate

emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win." French President Emmanuel Macron invited his counterparts from Chile, Colombia and Bolivia to a meeting where \$500 million in extra funds were pledged by the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and non-profit Conservation International to protect the world's rainforests. Fewer than half the 136 heads of government or state in New York this week to attend the UN General Assembly were present yesterday.

Among those absent are President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, under whose leadership the Amazon rainforest is continuing to burn at record rates, and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison whose government has pursued an aggressively pro-coal agenda. China, the world's biggest carbon emitter by far but also a leader in renewables, was represented by foreign minister Wang Yi who called on developed countries to lead by example in reducing emissions - but also said China was respecting its climate change promises. — AFP



NEW YORK: Youth Climate activist Greta Thunberg speaks during the UN Climate Action Summit yesterday at the United Nations Headquarters. — AFP

600,000 tourists stranded as Thomas...

Continued from Page 1

The UK government said yesterday it had hired planes to fly home British tourists, in a mass repatriation plan codenamed Operation Matterhorn which began immediately. Launching Britain's "largest repatriation in peacetime history", Transport Secretary Grant Shapps added that the government and UK Civil Aviation Authority had hired dozens of charter planes to fly home Thomas Cook customers. "All customers currently abroad with Thomas Cook who are booked to return to the UK over the next two weeks will be brought home as close as possible to their booked return date," the government said.

Both a tour operator and an airline, the travel giant's key destinations were in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean but it offered also holidays in Asia, North Africa and the Caribbean. "It is a matter of profound regret to me and the rest of the board that we were not successful," said Thomas Cook chief executive Peter Fankhauser. "This marks a deeply sad day for the company," he added. As well as grounding its planes, Thomas Cook has been forced to shut travel agencies, 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, had agreed last month to

inject £450 million into the business as part of an initial £900 million rescue package. In return, Fosun was to acquire a 75 percent stake in Thomas Cook's tour operating division and 25 percent of its airline unit. "Fosun is disappointed that Thomas Cook Group has not been able to find a viable solution for its proposed recapitalisation with other affiliates, core lending banks, senior noteholders and additional involved parties," it said yesterday.

Cabinet maker Thomas Cook created the travel firm in 1841, transporting 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, followed soon after by destinations further afield. The tour operator grew into a huge operation but fell into massive debt despite recent annual turnover of £10 billion from transporting about 20 million customers worldwide.

The company's failure comes just two years after the collapse of Monarch Airlines that prompted the British government to take emergency action and return 110,000 stranded passengers, costing taxpayers £60 million on hiring planes. Thomas Cook's demise caps a dramatic fall from grace for a company which was demoted from London's FTSE 100 shares index in 2010 - and from the second-tier FTSE 250 last year. Its shares are worthless and now suspended.

"It ultimately is management's fault - whether they should have taken debt on (and) whether they should have had such a big high street portfolio," said Helal Miah, analyst at The Share Centre. "Maybe they should have thought about offloading that a lot earlier. They didn't have the foresight of changing the business structure around," he said. — AFP

"For 19 years if you have not been able to succeed, you're not going to be able to succeed in another 19 years," Khan said in an address to the Council on Foreign Relations. Khan - whose government has sought to use its influence with the Taliban - admitted that Trump's snapping off diplomacy caught him off-guard. "We read it in the paper. It should have been at least been discussed with us," he said.

Khan, a former cricket star who has long criticized military operations against extremists, discounted the possibility that the internationally recognized government would be toppled by the Taliban if US troops pulled out. "I don't think the Taliban will be able to control the whole country. I think there will be a settlement," he said. "I honestly believe that this is not the Taliban of 2001. There are lots of things that happened and I believe they will be more accommodating," he said.

The Taliban imposed an austere version of Islam on most of Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, banning music and girls' education and giving refuge to Al-Qaeda. On Sunday, Trump held an unusual joint rally in Texas with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a Hindu nationalist. — AFP

CBK: Global uncertainty...

Continued from Page 1

Moreover, they don't face the same regulations and associated costs that banks do," Hashel pointed out.

Meeting the evolving needs of customer expectations in the fast-paced global environment further adds to the weight of the need for change, and all of this is further exacerbated by heightened geopolitical tensions and trade disputes. To meet these challenges, Hashel laid out a strategy of attack that focuses on five key areas - customer loyalty, value, efficiency, resilience and talent. He also called for greater proactivity on the part of regulators and the banking industry.

MoH imposes new fees for sick leaves...

Continued from Page 1

ads for health-related products and KD 100 for licensing ads about companies or health facilities. The ministry also imposed fees for analysis at drug registration laboratories for medicines, health products, food supplements and medical supplies. Analysis of a registered product will cost KD 15 and KD 50 for non-registered products. The fee for reanalysis for the first time is KD 30 and KD 60 when the request is repeated.

The ministry approved a KD 30 fee for issuing import and export licenses for narcotic and psychoactive drugs and KD 100 for issuing licenses to trade in narcotic or psychoactive drugs, in addition to KD 10 for the narcotic and psychoactive prescription book for every 50 prescriptions and KD 5 for every 400 pages of the psychoactive drug register.

Australia resumes live sheep exports...

Continued from Page 1

Australia state, for Kuwait by today. It is expected to be the first of many to depart in the coming months, much to the chagrin of animal welfare campaigners. New guidelines introduced in 2018 required exporters to significantly increase cargo space for sheep and to

"We the regulators must also consider how we should operate in the future. We need to take a proactive and dynamic approach to promote innovation, and act as a catalyst for the industry. We need to promote collaboration and share our experiences with each other to develop frameworks that will fit the needs of our societies. And we need to focus on capacity building to ensure that our staff can meet the future challenges of the industry," he said.

Held under the patronage of H.H. the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and attended by Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, the conference brought together central bank chiefs from around the region, banking executives, chief economists and leaders in the industry to discuss what the future holds for banking, the impact of fintech and how banks can better collaborate, cooperate and shape a sustainable future for all.

The ministry approved fees to issue certificates and their translation - a "good conduct" certificate will cost KD 10 per certificate, in addition to KD 10 for a "to whom it may concern" certificate and KD 10 for translating the license into English. The fees included charges for medical operations - permission to conduct a one-day surgery will be KD 200 per year, and its renewal will be for four years. Fees of KD 200 will be collected for issuing in-vitro fertilization permission and for freezing embryos.

The fees for registering medicines and pharmaceutical companies at the medical and plant medicines registration department are KD 500 for registering a company that has marketing rights and registering a new medicine - be it for humans or animals - and vaccines, besides KD 25 for registering a health product and medical device.

A KD 100 will be collected for registering a food supplement and issuing a certificate for free trade of medical and cosmetic products, KD 10 to register a cosmetic product and KD 150 for sound manufacturing practices for local manufacturing companies. KD 50 will be collected for duplicates or additional copies of a product, company or manufacturing site. — Al-Anbaa

ensure independent observers travel on all ships carrying live animals, with penalties for non-compliance including fines and jail time.

But activists argue that the measures will do little to mitigate the animals' heat stress and the trade should be further restricted. The resumption of shipments was welcomed by the Australian Livestock Exporters' Council, which said the moratorium had meant "competitors have entered some of our markets". Lifting the ban means "renewed stability and food security" for consumers, they argued. Live sheep, goat and cattle exports are worth about Aus\$2 billion (\$1.35 billion) each year to Australia's economy, according to the lobby group. — AFP

Khan presses Trump on Taliban...

Continued from Page 1

On Afghanistan, Trump said it was "ridiculous" that the United States had been fighting there for 19 years. However he made no promises about restarting peace talks with the Taliban, saying only "we'll see."

Trump has frequently called for an end to America's longest war, launched after the September 11, 2001 attacks. A senior US diplomat reached a deal to pull troops after a year of negotiating with Taliban militants. Trump abruptly ended talks earlier this month, revealing on Twitter that he had invited Taliban leaders to the United States but canceled their visit after a bombing in Kabul killed a US soldier.

Khan said just before meeting Trump that he would be underlining that "there's not going to be a military solution" in Afghanistan, which also neighbors Pakistan.

Sports

Wales open Rugby WCup campaign with six-try win over Georgia

Victory sent out a signal of intent to main Pool D rivals Australia

TOYOTA CITY: Six Nations champions Wales opened their Rugby World Cup campaign with a bonus-point 43-14 victory over Georgia in Toyota City yesterday. The victory not only sent out a signal of intent to main Pool D rivals Australia, who beat Fiji in their opener, but also dispelled any doubts there might have been of a hangover in the Welsh camp over the sending-home of assistant coach Rob Howley amid allegations of illegal betting.

Four slick first-half tries from Jonathan Davies, Justin Tipuric, Josh Adams and Liam Williams ensured the bonus point for Wales, who were given a stern examination by a strong Georgian scrum that came to life in the second period. "It was a good first half for us and we were pretty happy at half-time," said Wales coach Warren Gatland.

"A little bit messy in the second half but the ball was quite slippery out there and it was hard to hold on to it. We scored a few nice tries and we're happy with the bonus point." There were barely two minutes on the clock when centre Davies was played in under the posts after a rocket of a pass by scrum-half and namesake Gareth, decoys Dan Biggar and Hadleigh Parkes bamboozling a leaden-footed defence.

Biggar's conversion surprisingly came back off the posts, but the fly-half redeemed himself with a penalty shortly afterwards. Another well-drilled midfield move saw winger Adams split the defence before offloading to Gareth Davies. The scrum-half was brought down short, but Tipuric was on hand to swoop for the ball and sidestep inside Giorgi Tkhalishvili to run through unmolested for Wales' second try, Biggar converting.

The third came soon after, Adams running in from almost halfway after an inside Biggar pass off a lineout, with the Georgian defence glaringly absent. Biggar hit the extras and it was a point a minute after 22 minutes, the 35,545-strong crowd at a sultry City of Toyota Stadium scenting a rout.

'OUT OF THE BOX'

The sole bright spark for Georgia in a grim first-half display saw a rare break into Welsh territory by hooker Shalva Mamukashvili, Gareth Davies twice on hand with tapdowns to halt the foray. Skipper Alun Wyn Jones, matching Gethin Jenkins' record of 129 Wales caps, and No 8 Josh Navidi were at the heart of the effective Welsh rush defence to nullify the threat from the 'Lelos'.

And it was instead Wales who had the last word of the first 40 minutes, Liam Williams scooping up Jonathan Davies' pass to dot down in the corner, Biggar making no mistake to stretch the score out to 29-0.

The Georgians opened the second-half exactly as coach Milton Haig would have liked them, hooker Mamukashvili bundled over from an attacking line-out for a well-received try that Tedo Abzhandadze converted. Wales roared back with their own driving maul, but fresh-on-the-field Jaba Bregvadze manipulated it to a juddering halt, his dark art spotted by referee Luke Pearce who had no option but to yellow card to the replacement hooker.

A raft of replacements disrupted the flow of the game, enabling Georgia to weather the 10-minute sin-binning without conceding any points. Despite their far more combative half, it was replacement scrum-half Tomos Williams who chased down a George North grubber for Wales' fifth.

Toulon prop Levan Chilachava responded Georgia when he bombed over from short range, but Wales had the last word when North finished well after some neat footwork and an offload from Tomos Williams.

"I think we came out of the box as we went out into the first half but I'm disappointed if I'm honest with the second half," said Jones. "We let a couple of tries in and we didn't really continue in a similar vein. It's a good result but it's plenty to work on." —AFP



TOYOTA CITY: Wales' wing George North scores a try during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool D match between Wales and Georgia at the City of Toyota Stadium in Toyota City yesterday. —AFP

Doubt cast on shock Folau rugby league return with Tonga

SYDNEY: Sacked Wallaby star Israel Folau plans a shock return to rugby league, making himself available alongside his brother for Tonga in upcoming Tests against Australia and Britain, the Pacific nation said yesterday.

The devoutly Christian fullback, who has Tongan parents, was fired by Rugby Australia in May after he posted online that "hell awaits" gay people and others he considers sinners, with court action for unfair dismissal pending.

"The chairman of the Tongan National Rugby League, Mr George Koloamatangi, today announced that both Israel and John Folau will play for Mate Ma'a Tonga in the Oceania Cup,"

the Tonga National Rugby League (TNRL) said on Facebook.

Folau, who was set to play a key role for Australia at the ongoing World Cup in Japan before his fall from grace, said he was excited by a return to the game.

"I don't want to bring any of my personal matters into this and I am grateful that the RLIF (Rugby League International Federation) have endorsed my availability," he reportedly said in a TNRL statement. "What I will do now is focus on playing great rugby league and do my talking on the field." Despite his optimism, RLIF deputy chairman Peter Beattie told the Sydney Morning Herald the dual international had not yet been given clearance to play for Tonga. "As a current member of the RLIF board ... I can assure you that this has never been discussed or mentioned around the board table," he added.

Australia's National Rugby League (NRL) also cast doubt on whether he would pull on a Tongan jersey. It said in a report on its website that "it is under-

stood there will be a strong push by members of the board of the Rugby League International Federation to veto the move at an upcoming meeting".

The NRL has previously made clear it was an inclusive sport and Folau would not be allowed to play rugby league in Australia again.

Folau, who grew up in Sydney, began his sporting career in rugby league, making his debut for Melbourne Storm as a teenager in 2007, grabbing the winning try on his debut to telegraph his arrival.

During his meteoric rise, he broke the National Rugby League's record for most tries in a debut season and won rookie of the year. Folau played 90 games in the sport with the Storm and Brisbane Broncos between 2007 and 2010, making eight appearances for Australia before switching to Australian Rules and then rugby union with the NSW Waratahs.

He made his Wallabies debut in 2013 against the British and Irish Lions and went on to win 73 caps before being

sacked. His firing proved hugely divisive. While many were outraged by his views, others, including the Christian lobby, defended his right to free speech. Folau, who made similar offending comments last year, is pursuing court action for unfair dismissal and restraint of trade, with a hearing set for next February. He is seeking up to Aus\$10 million (US\$6.8 million) in compensation, an apology and the right to play rugby union again.

"These guys (Israel and John) are great footballers and bring size, pace and skill to the team," Tonga coach Frank Endacott told reporters. "They will make a huge impact in the team and provide exciting attack options all over the park."

Folau's brother John also used to play for the NSW Waratahs but quit after his sibling was fired. He previously played league for the Parramatta Eels in Sydney. Tonga are set to play Britain in Hamilton, New Zealand on October 26 and Australia in Auckland a week later. —AFP

England look to Mitchell for inside knowledge of USA

SAPPORO: England are set to call upon defence coach John Mitchell's inside knowledge when they face the United States in their second Rugby World Cup match in Kobe on Thursday. The New Zealander was Eagles head coach when they qualified for Japan 2019. He then returned to club rugby in South Africa before joining Eddie Jones's England set-up last year.

England opened their campaign with a 35-3 Pool C win over Tonga in Sapporo on Sunday but Thursday's match in Kobe will be the United States' tournament opener. England scrum coach Neal Hatley said former All Blacks head coach Mitchell's inside knowledge would prove especially useful given England have just a four-day turnaround between matches.

"Obviously having Mitch is handy and his historical knowledge having worked with them just a few short years ago. There are a lot of players he brought through and knows well," Hatley told reporters at England's hotel in Sapporo yesterday.

"The analysis on the USA has already been done because this is their first match," he added. "We have looked at what they did in the Autumn and their Pacific Nations Cup games. Things may get changed on the back of what happened last night but the work has been done."

"It was Tonga's first game last night and this will be America's first game on Thursday. We expect them to come out like Tonga did — fizzing."

As for the short gap between matches, Hatley said: "It's a four-day turnaround, we've just got to get on with it. We've been looking at the combinations potentially but selection is pretty fluid and things change. But we have plans in place."

England were far from their best against Tonga but still secured a bonus-point win without conceding a try to the Pacific islanders. "A scratchy start but a win, a bonus-point win — objective achieved, but plenty to work on," said Hatley.

"Defensively, we were very good, held them to no tries. Ball in hand, where we have been very good, we made a few uncharacteristic errors that we will have a look at."

Meanwhile England back-row Lewis Ludlam, who came off the bench in the 54th minute at the indoor Sapporo Dome to win just his third cap, said: "It was awesome."

"I was really happy to get on the pitch and to get the five points was really good and we're off to a start now and out of the blocks. "I wasn't too nervous, just impatient and excited more than anything. I wanted to get on the pitch, get out there and show the coaches what I can do on a bigger stage," he added.

England found themselves in a physical battle on Sunday, with even powerhouse No 8 Billy Vunipola, son of a former Tonga international, knocked back in the tackle.

"They (Tonga) came flying at us, we knew that was going to be the case pre-game and watching them, they are big hitters," said Ludlam. "I think we coped with that physicality really well, both sides of the ball. Billy got smacked a few times but he also bowled a few people off him so the physicality was good out there." —AFP

Whitfield heads list of Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame inductees

TORONTO: Former triathlon champion Simon Whitfield and diving standout Alexandre Despatie are among this year's class of nine inductees to the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame, the Canadian Olympic Committee announced yesterday.

Whitfield, who announced his retirement in 2013 after 16 years racing for Canada, unexpectedly won the inaugural Olympic triathlon event at Sydney in 2000 and added a silver eight years later in Beijing.

In Sydney, Whitfield was in the middle of the field after the swimming and cycling legs but used his sprint speed to pass the leader, German Stephan Vuckovic, less than 300 metres from the finish line before pulling away for the victory.

Whitfield's triumph is credited with sparking a massive growth in the sport across Canada. Despatie became the first Canadian man to reach an Olympic podium in diving when he won a silver medal in the individual 3m springboard at the 2004 Athens Games. He repeated the feat four years later in Beijing.

Anti-doping body tells Russia to explain 'inconsistencies'

TOKYO: The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) yesterday gave Russia three weeks to explain "inconsistencies" in a cache of laboratory data handed over to investigators, raising the possibility of a fresh ban on the country in the build-up to the Tokyo Olympics.

Russia stands to be declared non-compliant by WADA if it fails to explain why evidence of some positive tests handed over by a whistleblower doesn't show up in data provided by Moscow's anti-doping laboratory in January. If Russia challenges an eventual

Emilie Heymans, who became the first female diver in the world to win medals at four consecutive Olympics, and Christine Girard, who is Canada's first ever Olympic weightlifting champion, rounded out the four athlete inductees.

Girard's bronze medal from the 2008 Beijing Olympics and gold medal from the 2012 London Olympics were awarded several years after the competition when athletes who had initially placed ahead of her were disqualified for doping.

Now a passionate advocate for anti-doping in sport, Girard shares her story and is actively involved in discussions with domestic and international anti-doping advocates.

"These individuals remind us that the Olympic Movement is about more than just victory," COC President Tricia Smith said in a statement. "It's about making an indelible impact on our communities, our nation and the next generation."

The women's ice hockey team that conceded just two goals en route to a gold medal at the 2010 Olympics and women's soccer team that in 2012 won Canada's first Summer Olympic team sport medal (bronze) since 1936 are also being inducted.

Hiroshi Nakamura, who is responsible for the establishment of judo as a competitive sport in Canada and served as head coach at five Olympics is also being inducted.

Jack Poole, who played a key role in bringing the Olympic Games to Vancouver in 2010 as chairman of the bid corporation, and Randy Starkman, an award-

suspension by WADA the case will go to the Swiss-based Court of Arbitration for Sport, whose decision will be binding on sports bodies including the International Olympic Committee.

"Forensic experts have looked at what we got from whistleblowers, what we got from Russia and they noticed some inconsistencies," WADA director general Olivier Niggli told AFP after an executive committee meeting in Tokyo. "Then they studied the differences and this came to a situation where there are some questions that need to be asked and answered." WADA has previously warned that it would take the "most stringent sanctions" if any of the data was found to have been tampered with.

Russian sports minister Pavel Kolobkov said WADA and RUSADA, the Russian anti-doping agency, would look into "inconsistencies". "Digital experts from both sides, who are already in touch, will see what the discrepancies are about and what



Simon Whitfield

winning journalist known for his coverage of amateur sports, will both be inducted posthumously.

The induction ceremony will take place in Toronto on Oct. 23 and individual inductees will be commemorated with murals that will appear in their respective local communities across Canada. —Reuters

they are connected to. As far as we are concerned, we continue to help in any way possible," he said in comments released by his ministry. Russia handed over thousands of files from its Moscow anti-doping laboratory in January, fulfilling a key condition for its reinstatement by WADA last September. RUSADA had been suspended for nearly three years over revelations of wrongdoing including a systematic conspiracy to switch tainted samples at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

During its suspension by WADA, Russia was allowed by the International Olympic Committee to take part in the 2016 Rio Olympics, but Russian competitors at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Games had to take part under a neutral flag. However, athletics body the IAAF has maintained a ban on Russia since November 2015, although many of its athletes are given special dispensation to compete under a neutral banner. —AFP

Sports

Daniel Jones rallies Giants past Buccaneers in first career start

Watson helps Texans rally past Chargers

TAMPA BAY: Rookie quarterback Daniel Jones led the Saquon Barkley-less New York Giants on a game-winning drive in the final two minutes in his first career start to defeat the host Tampa Bay Buccaneers 32-31 on Sunday. Matt Gay missed a 34-yard field goal as time expired to seal the victory for New York (1-2). Gay had made four previous field goals but had missed two extra points, one of which was blocked. Jones completed 23 of 36 passes for 336 yards and two touchdowns, plus two scores on the ground. He was 5 of 7 on the go-ahead drive that covered 75 yards and ended with his 7-yard rushing score with 1:16 remaining to put the Giants up for the first time all day. Jones was the team's leading rusher with 28 yards. Barkley, who hurt his ankle in the second quarter when tackled awkwardly by safety Mike Edwards, had to be helped off the field. The running back — who had eight carries for 10 yards — was later seen on the sidelines with a walking boot and using crutches.

CHIEFS 33, RAVENS 28

Patrick Mahomes passed for 374 yards and three touchdowns as Kansas City won its home opener by outlasting Baltimore, The 300-yard passing performance was the 13th for Mahomes in 20 career starts. Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson completed 22 of 43 passes for 267 yards and rushed for a 9-yard touchdown with 2:01 remaining, but his two-point rush failed. A 14-yard pass to LeSean McCoy with 2:07 left in the third quarter resulted in the Chiefs' last touchdown as Mahomes went 27 of 37. Tight end Travis Kelce topped the Chiefs with seven receptions, while Darrel Williams had 62 of the team's 140 rushing yards.

PATRIOTS 30, JETS 14

Quarterback Tom Brady threw for 306 yards and two touchdowns while passing Drew Brees for second place in career touchdown passes, and New England continued its early-season roll with a victory over New York in Foxborough, Mass. Brady was 28-of-42 passing and threw first-half touchdown passes to Phillip Dorsett and Julian Edelman, giving him 524 career touchdown passes, two more than Brees in league history and trailing only Peyton Manning (539). Brees is expected to miss another five weeks or more with a thumb injury. Sony Michel and Rex Burkhead had rushing touchdowns for the Patriots, who threatened an NFL record for fewest points allowed in the first three games of the season before Jamal Adams intercepted a Jarrett Stidham pass and went 61 yards for a touchdown with 6:23 remaining.

COWBOYS 31, DOLPHINS 6

Dak Prescott passed for 246 yards and two touchdowns and ran for a third TD as Dallas rolled past hapless Miami in Arlington, Texas and remained undefeated. Both of Prescott's scoring passes went to Amari Cooper, who led the Cowboys with six catches for 88 yards. Ezekiel Elliott ran for 125 yards on 19 carries, and Tony Pollard added 103 yards and a touchdown on 13 carries as Dallas recorded its first back-to-back games with 200 yards rushing since 2009. Josh Rosen, who was acquired in the offseason after starting 13 games last season for Arizona, started for the first time

for the Dolphins and passed for 200 yards. He was sacked three times by the Cowboys, who entered the game with just two sacks in their first two games.

PACKERS 27, BRONCOS 16

Aaron Rodgers threw for 235 yards and one touchdown as Green Bay beat visiting Denver in a battle of first-year head coaches and Super Bowl-winning quarterbacks. The Packers improved to 3-0 under coach Matt LaFleur, while the Broncos fell to 0-3 under Vic Fangio. Denver's Joe Flacco threw for 213 yards but tossed one interception and was sacked six times. The Broncos controlled the ball for more than 35 minutes and ran 21 more plays. Six of their first nine possessions reached Green Bay's side of the field. Their final possession in Green Bay territory came late in the fourth quarter, with Denver trailing by 11. The Packers got a turnover on downs when outside linebacker Preston Smith made his third sack of the game.

COLTS 27, FALCONS 24

Jacoby Brissett threw for 310 yards as host Indianapolis earned its second straight win, holding off Atlanta. Brissett completed 28 of 37 passes, including an 11-yard strike to Jack Doyle in the final two minutes for a first down to the Atlanta 16 that sealed the outcome. The Colts also got 74 yards and a touchdown on 16 carries from Marlon Mack, who provided the Colts' final score, running 4 yards with 8:40 left to lead 27-17. The Falcons drew back within a field goal on Matt Ryan's 10-yard touchdown pass to Julio Jones with 4:11 left, but never saw the ball again.

LIONS 27, EAGLES 24

Matthew Stafford completed 18 of 32 passes for 201 yards and one touchdown, and Detroit remained unbeaten with a victory at Philadelphia. Wide receiver Marvin Jones Jr. had six receptions for 101 yards and one touchdown as the Lions improved to 2-0-1. Eagles quarterback Carson Wentz was 19 of 36 for 259 yards and two touchdowns to Nelson Agholor, but Philadelphia fell to 1-2. The Eagles had one last chance to win when Malcolm Jenkins blocked a 46-yard field-goal attempt by Matt Prater just inside the two-minute warning. Wentz connected with running back Darren Sproles on fourth-and-5 for a 25-yard strike to get to the Lions' 20, but Sproles was called for pass interference to negate the play.

TEXANS 27, CHARGERS 20

Deshaun Watson connected with tight end Jordan Akins for two second-half touchdowns to lead Houston to a come-from-behind victory over Los Angeles on Sunday at Carson, Calif. Watson escaped the grasp of Melvin Ingram and hit Akins for a 53-yard scoring play with 9:40 left in the fourth quarter to make it 27-17. The Texans missed the PAT. The Chargers had appeared to stop the Texans' drive five plays earlier on Rayshawn Jenkins' interception, but the turnover was nullified by offsetting penalties, including a facemask infraction on Desmond King. Los Angeles' 14-play, 60-yard drive in the final minutes ended when Philip Rivers' fourth-and-14 pass fell incomplete.



TAMPA: Ronald Jones #27 of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers rushes during a game against the New York Giants at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida. —AFP

VIKINGS 34, RAIDERS 14

Minnesota got rushing touchdowns from three different players and totaled 211 yards on the ground in bulldozing visiting Oakland in Minneapolis. Adam Thielen scored twice, once on a pass from Kirk Cousins, and the Vikings' defense harassed Derek Carr into four sacks and an interception in the most lopsided game in 38 years in the 16-game all-time series between the Super Bowl XI combatants. Dalvin Cook rushed for 110 yards and a second-quarter touchdown, and also caught four passes for 33 yards. He went over 100 yards rushing for the third straight game, a feat last accomplished by a Viking when Adrian Peterson did it in 2015.

49ERS 24, STEELERS 20

Jimmy Garoppolo's 5-yard touchdown pass to Dante Pettis with 1:15 left boosted the error-prone San Francisco to a 3-0 start as it rallied past winless Pittsburgh in Santa Clara, Calif. Garoppolo completed 23 of 32 passes for 277 yards with two interceptions. The Niners won despite making five turnovers and committing 71 yards worth of penalties. Steelers quarterback Mason Rudolph hit on 14 of 27 passes for 174 yards and two touchdowns, including a 39-yarder to rookie Diontae Johnson with 10:22 left in the game for a 20-17 edge. But Pittsburgh (0-3) was outgained 436-239 on the day.

SAINTS 33, SEAHAWKS 27

Teddy Bridgewater threw two touchdown passes in his first start in place of Drew Brees as New Orleans won at Seattle. Bridgewater was making his second NFL start since the 2015 season as he fills in for Brees. The former Pro Bowl quarterback completed 19 of 27 passes for 177 yards. He hit running back Alvin Kamara on a 29-yard touchdown late in the second quarter and wide receiver Michael Thomas from 1 yard out in the third. The Saints' defense and special teams each contributed a touchdown as New Orleans improved to 2-1. It was just the third time in Saints history that the team scored a touchdown in all three phases in the same game.

PANTHERS 38, CARDINALS 20

Kyle Allen threw two of his four touchdown passes to tight end Greg Olsen as Carolina notched its first victory by defeating host Arizona at Glendale, Ariz. Allen, who made his first start of the season and second of his career, was filling in for injured Cam Newton (foot). For Allen, who is from Arizona, it was a happy homecoming as he completed 19 of 26 passes for 261 yards. For Arizona quarterback Kyler Murray and first-year coach Kliff Kingsbury, they'll have to wait to produce their first NFL victory. The Cardinals are 0-2-1. Murray finished 30-for-43 passing for 173 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions, taking eight sacks. —Reuters

Kohli wants India to step out of comfort zone ahead of World T20

MUMBAI: India captain Virat Kohli's decision to bat first against South Africa in the third and final Twenty20 International backfired but the 30-year-old says the hosts want to prepare for next year's Twenty20 World Cup by minimising the impact of the toss. It was the first time in seven T20Is at the Chinnaswamy Stadium that the captain winning the toss chose to bat, only for a revamped South Africa to claim a series-levelling nine-wicket win on Sunday.

"Nothing is a given or a guarantee before you start playing," Kohli told reporters. "I think if we as a team are willing to get out of our comfort zones a lot more, then we will be unfazed with what happens at the toss. Unless you do that and start taking those risks, you are always going to be put under pressure somewhere or the other. We want to make sure we iron all of those things out before we head into the World Cup."

India failed to capitalise on an aggressive start and ended with a below-par 134 for 9. Ahead of the T20 World Cup in Australia in Oct. 2020, Kohli's top priority is to recalibrate India's batting combinations in the shortest format. "You have to understand as well that it's a very young side, you have to give them time as a team to come together," he added. "We batted till nine tonight, and that's one area we're looking to strengthen." India's focus now shifts to the three-match test series against South Africa, with the opening match in Visakhapatnam starting Oct 2. —Reuters

Afghanistan sweat over Rashid fitness

DHAKA: Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan said he is unsure he will play in the tri-nation Twenty20 international final against Bangladesh today as he is nursing a hamstring injury. Rashid left the field injured against the same opponents in their last match of the league phase in Chittagong on Saturday, before returning to bowl two overs and picking 2-27 in their four-wicket loss.

"I can't say anything right now," Rashid said Monday about his chances of playing in the final. "I had some work on my hamstring yesterday and today. We will decide tomorrow." Rashid said he would rather not have bowled in the previous game, but the team needed his services. "The main reason to come back to bowl was that I wanted to know the severity of the injury," he said. "The physio and coaches didn't want me to bowl. I was OK with the first two overs, but after going for a run it got worse. —AFP

Anisimova sees dawn of new era in women's tennis

WUHAN: American youngster Amanda Anisimova believes Bianca Andreescu's US Open victory is the dawn of a new era in women's tennis, where the teens are ready to conquer. Canadian 19-year-old Andreescu upset Serena Williams in the final at Flushing Meadows to become the youngest female Grand Slam champion since Svetlana Kuznetsova in 2004.

Anisimova, who turned 18 less than a month ago, joins Andreescu as part of a strong generation of teenagers coming up on tour, and made a splash with her run to the Roland Garros semi-finals in June, where she upset defending champion Simona Halep en route.

The world No.29 withdrew from the US Open due to the sudden death of her father-coach Konstantin Anisimov, but watched from afar as Andreescu blasted through the draw towards the title. "I don't think we should be as surprised anymore [by young players winning big titles]," said Anisimova, who enjoyed a winning return following a seven-week absence from the tour by defeating Guangzhou runner-up Sam Stosur 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 in the Wuhan Open first round yesterday.

"I feel like there are so many upcoming players and they're all doing really well," Anisimova, who next takes on world number two Karolina Pliskova, feels ready to make her own statement at the majors, and has her eye on next January's Australian Open, where she hopes to do better than her fourth-round

England drop Bairstow from Test squad for NZ series

LONDON: England have dropped Jonny Bairstow from their Test squad for the tour of New Zealand, with paceman James Anderson unavailable for the two-match series due to a calf injury. Four uncapped players will be on the plane — Warwickshire opener Dominic Sibley, Kent batsman Zak Crawley and Lancashire pair Saqib Mahmood and Matt Parkinson.

Batsman Jason Roy, who starred in England's World Cup triumph, is another name missing from the 15-strong Test squad after a difficult Ashes series, which ended 2-2 last week. Surrey batsman Ollie Pope, who played two Tests against India in 2018, is back in the squad while Jos Buttler will be the wicketkeeper in New Zealand due to Bairstow's absence.

Bairstow, 29, scored just 214 runs in

appearance there this year.

"Oh yes, for sure, I think I can do pretty well there, especially if I have a good pre-season," said the New Jersey-born player. Anisimova had only two practice sets prior to the Wuhan Open, and was pleasantly surprised with how well she performed against Stosur yesterday.

"I'm really happy to be back... I'm just focusing on having fun this tournament. I really don't have any expectations for myself," she said.

Meanwhile, two-time Grand Slam champion Kuznetsova says she's searching for a "new balance" as the Russian veteran tackles the next chapter of her two-decades-long career.

A winner via retirement over Yulia Putintseva in the opening round in Wuhan yesterday, Kuznetsova has dealt with a serious wrist injury over the past couple of seasons and, at 34, is looking to be more selective with her schedule.

"I think I over-trained my body when I was young," said Kuznetsova. "I understand (now) I cannot train five hours a day. It's important to maintain my desire." It was a good day for lucky losers in Wuhan as Tunisian Ons Jabeur, who took Victoria Azarenka's place after the Belarusian withdrew with a shoulder injury, upset No.16 seed Donna Vekic 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Sweden's Rebecca Peterson replaced Madison Keys — who has a left foot problem — in the draw and made the second round when her opponent Camila Giorgi retired after the first set of their encounter.

Grand Slam champions Caroline Wozniacki and Angelique Kerber suffered opening-round exits to Hsieh Su-Wei and Monica Puig respectively.

Ashleigh Barty remains the world number one for another week, according to the latest WTA rankings

the five Ashes Tests during the English summer at an average of 23.77. Anderson, England's top Test wicket-taker, has been out of action since the first Test against Australia and is targeting the South Africa tour, starting in December.

The first Test, at Mount Maunganui, starts on November 21. The series is not included in the new World Test Championship. National selector Ed Smith confirmed Bairstow, who will travel with the 15-man T20 squad, had been dropped rather than rested. "This feels like an opportunity for Jonny to reset," he said on Sky Sports. "He's not rested. He drops out of the Test team but it's an opportunity for Jonny after a very busy summer, very hectic schedule, to reset, to work on one or two things and to come back stronger," he added.

"My prediction is he comes back very strongly." World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan will captain the Twenty20 team, with the five-match series starting on November 1. Somerset's Tom Banton and Mahmood have earned their first England call-ups after impressive white-ball summers, along with Worcestershire seamer Pat Brown and Lancashire spinner Matthew Parkinson.

Test squad: Joe Root (capt), Jofra



LONDON: File photo shows Australia's Marnus Labuschagne (R) plays a shot as England's Jonny Bairstow (L) reacts behind the stumps during play on the fourth day of the fifth Ashes cricket Test match between England and Australia at The Oval in London on September 15, 2019. —AFP

Archer, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Joe Denly, Jack Leach, Saqib Mahmood, Matthew Parkinson, Ollie Pope, Dominic Sibley, Ben Stokes, Chris Woakes

Twenty20 squad: Eoin Morgan

(capt), Jonny Bairstow, Tom Banton, Sam Billings, Pat Brown, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Joe Denly, Lewis Gregory, Chris Jordan, Saqib Mahmood, Dawid Malan, Matt Parkinson, Adil Rashid, James Vince. —AFP

Sports

Neymar saves PSG to send French champions three points clear

Angers move into second place after Ninga score hat-trick in a 4-1 thrashing of Saint-Etienne

PARIS: Neymar scored a fine late winner as Paris Saint-Germain beat Lyon 1-0 on Sunday to move three points clear at the top of the Ligue 1 table. The Brazilian finally beat Anthony Lopes, who had pulled off numerous impressive saves, with three minutes of normal time to play at the Groupama Stadium.

It was Neymar's second winning goal in as many league games since being reinstated to the team following a protracted transfer saga which saw him attempt to force through a return to Barcelona.

"Neymar can do better," said PSG coach Thomas Tuchel. "It's the second or third game in four months for him. He's not at 100 percent capacity. He is not at his limit. He can do better, he will do better. He's going to get to his best level, with matches and decisive goals like that, it's going to help him."

The Parisians sit top on 15 points after Angers and Nice both won over the weekend to temporarily join Tuchel's side at the summit, and followed up their impressive mid-week Champions League victory over Real Madrid with the win in constant drizzling rain in Lyon. Sylvaino's Lyon remain in ninth place and are without a win since mid-August. PSG were without the attacking trio of Kylian Mbappe, Edinson Cavani and Mauro Icardi due to injuries, while midfielder Marco Verratti started on the bench.

The best of the early chances fell to Neymar on 22 minutes but his effort was superbly saved by Lopes. Neymar was denied again by another tidy Lopes stop four minutes before the break as the Portugal international tipped the Brazil forward's dangerous free-kick over the bar.

PSG's domination from the first half carried over into

the second 45 minutes. Abdou Diallo had the pick of the chances, using the wet conditions to glance a header from a Neymar corner over the crossbar.

The world's most expensive player was targeted by home fans when taking set-pieces from the left-hand side as they threw plastic bottles and rolled-up bin bags at him. With 87 minutes on the clock, substitute Verratti found Neymar in the box who dribbled into space and finally beat Lopes to the keeper's left with a low shot. He celebrated by running towards the same corner of the ground where he had earlier been taunted by the Lyon supporters.

HAT-TRICK HERO NINGA

Earlier, Angers moved into second place after replacement Casimir Ninga scored an 11-minute hat-trick in a 4-1 thrashing of Saint-Etienne. Ninga, who joined the club from second-tier Caen in August, put Angers into the lead with less than a quarter of an hour remaining before adding two more goals by the 89th minute to clinch their first home win over Saint-Etienne in 43 years.

The defeat at Stade Raymond Kopa leaves Les Verts a point above the relegation zone, with Ghislain Printant's outfit having failed to win since the opening day of the season. Stephane Moulin's Angers, who finished 13th in the league last season, have claimed four wins from their opening six fixtures to pull level with Nice in second spot. "Casimir made a thundering impact. I truly congratulate him because he's worked a lot since arriving at the club," Moulin said. "The second half perfectly resembles what we have been doing since the start of the season. It's a little bit new but it corresponds perfectly to what we're trying to do." — AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar kicks to score a goal during the French L1 football match between Olympique Lyonnais (OL) and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) at the Groupama stadium in Decines-Charpieu, near Lyon. — AFP

Can Solskjaer save Man Utd's season?

LONDON: Manchester United's demoralising defeat against West Ham was a stark reminder of how far they have fallen as Ole Gunnar Solskjaer wrestles with how to turn around his side's fortunes. Mistakes at the back, a desperate lack of midfield creativity and a worrying shortage of firepower up front have left the club well off the pace just six games into the new Premier League season.

The statistics do not make pretty reading for United fans. Since Solskjaer's honeymoon period came to an end in March they have won just five out of 19 matches in all competitions. After nine successive away victories under the Norwegian in all competitions, they have now gone nine without a win and are already 10 points behind leaders Liverpool.

And it has all come at a time when their two main rivals, Manchester City and Liverpool, are setting new standards at the top of the Premier League. Jose Mourinho, sacked in December, told Sky Sports after Sunday's defeat at the London Stadium that he did not see any improvement in United this season, despite the signings of defenders Harry Maguire and Aaron Wan-Bissaka and winger Daniel James.

"I like the three," he said. "I think they are bringing some good quality to the team. But the team as a team, I don't like at all. I'm not surprised by the result and I don't think Ole can take any positives from the game."

Former United captain Roy Keane, who won multiple trophies under former boss Alex Ferguson, said it was "scary how far they've fallen". To make matters even worse for the Solskjaer, England forward Marcus Rashford limped off in the second half, leaving him with no recognised striker on the pitch.

The injury raises even more questions about the decision not to replace forwards Romelu Lukaku and Alexis Sanchez, both of whom are now plying their trade for Inter Milan. With Anthony Martial out of the picture because of injury, Jesse Lingard came on but looked anonymous as he battles to find form.

But the lack of goals — United have not scored more than once in a game since their opening-day 4-0 victory against Chelsea — is not just due to misfiring forwards. The midfield looks old, flat and ponderous, a world away from the goalscoring power and creativity that Pep Guardiola's City boast in abundance.

In the absence of the injured Paul Pogba, Nemanja Matic lined up alongside Scott McTominay, Juan Mata and Andreas Pereira against West Ham in a side lacking pace and ideas. United also have work to do at the back, despite the summer recruitment of Wan-Bissaka and Maguire at considerable cost.

Maguire is an upgrade at centre-back and has already shown glimpses of the leadership that the club were so sorely lacking last season and Wan-Bissaka has also impressed. But 34-year-old defender Ashley Young was captain at the London Stadium and it was his scything challenge on Mark Noble that led to the late free-kick from which West Ham scored their second goal.

Solskjaer did his best to put a brave face on the defeat, saying it hinged on key moments that had gone West Ham's way. "It's a good group to work with," he said of his players. "They're determined. Sometimes along the road you're going to hit some bumps, some highs and lows."

"This group want to do what we're trying to do in training," he added. "It's key moments in games that can tip these games in our favour... but the attitude and desire is there. That's not the problem. It's the quality in our decision-making and sometimes in the execution."

But the manager who played for United ahead of a midfield of Keane, David Beckham and Paul Scholes will know in his heart that his side do not have the quality to challenge for the Premier League title.

The more immediate problem is that on current form they look unlikely even to make the top four, which would mean another season out of the Champions League. The season is still young but the clock is already ticking for Solskjaer. — AFP



SEVILLE: Real Madrid's French forward Karim Benzema celebrates after scoring a goal during the Spanish league football match between Sevilla FC and Real Madrid CF at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan stadium in Seville. — AFP

Benzema ensures Madrid bounce back with impressive win over Sevilla

MADRID: Real Madrid eased the pressure on Zinedine Zidane and delivered a resounding response to their loss to Paris Saint-Germain by winning 1-0 away at high-flying Sevilla in La Liga on Sunday. Karim Benzema headed in the decisive goal at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan to secure an impressive victory against a Sevilla side that were unbeaten and hoping to return to the top of the table.

Instead, it is Madrid that go level on points with Athletic Bilbao in first place after a controlled and determined performance that was by some distance their best since Zidane's return as coach in March.

"We have had a quite difficult time but the players reacted," Zidane said. His position had come under scrutiny after Madrid's woeful 3-0 defeat by PSG in the Champions League on Wednesday, a result that continued their bumpy start to the season, following a turbulent summer in the transfer market.

But this win should do wonders for belief and leaves Barcelona as Spain's chief club in crisis, with Ernesto Valverde under pressure after they were beaten 2-0 by Granada on Saturday. Madrid are now four points clear of the Catalans after five games played.

"I am very happy as people have been questioning us a lot," said Zidane. "But we don't think much about that. We played 90 minutes at a very high level in a difficult stadium. We must congratulate all the players." Not for the first time this season, Zidane singled out Gareth Bale for praise. "Today hard work was the key," he said. "The effort made by James, Gareth, all of them."

Sevilla's newly-installed coach Julen Lopetegui was sacked by Madrid 11 months ago, 139 days after taking the job that cost him the chance to lead Spain at the World Cup. He insisted on Saturday there was no desire for revenge but it is hard to imagine victory would not have brought a little extra satisfaction. Zidane was asked about his own future as well, several times, and while he maintained he still feels the full backing of the club, there was a warning too. If support dwindles, he said, "then it would probably be best to leave".

But for all the problems — a dreadful pre-season, signings and sales missed, poor performances against Real Valladolid, Villarreal, Levante and PSG — Madrid now sit second, buoyed by a display that may yet prove a springboard for games to come.

A frantic opening half an hour made for an engrossing contest but there were few chances, as Lopetegui earned himself a booking for beckoning Gareth Bale to be shown a yellow card.

Real Madrid probably just shaded the first period and had its two best chances as Eden Hazard slipped in by Benzema, only to be denied by Tomas Vaclik on the angle, before Dani Carvajal was sent clear by James Rodriguez but this time Vaclik's right foot blocked the defender's finish. There was little in it, as Bale's excellent cross almost found James at the back post shortly after half-time while Luuk de Jong went close with a header, prompting Carvajal to back the ball clear at the far post.

Still, Madrid looked more likely and so it proved as Raphael Varane won back possession high up, allowing Bale to thread Carvajal in behind. He dug out a cross, which Benzema met brilliantly, rising high to head home his fifth goal of the season.

Sevilla might have equalised but De Jong headed wide under pressure from Carvajal and then Javier Hernandez did score, in the 87th minute, poking in at the near post, only for the assistant to raise his flag. Bale could have made it two late on but hit the side-netting from an acute angle. One was enough. —AFP

Balotelli in 'great shape' before Brescia debut

MILAN: Mario Balotelli said he was "in great shape" as he prepares to return to Serie A today with his first game for his hometown club Brescia against Cristiano Ronaldo's Italian champions Juventus.

"Mario will be there Tuesday," confirmed coach Eugenio Corini of the Italian striker whose debut was delayed by a four-game suspension for former club Marseille. But Ronaldo may miss the date with Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri revealing the Portuguese star had picked up a slight adductor problem.

"Cristiano has a little fatigue to the adductors and I have to see if he is available," said Sarri. "I don't want to take any risk with injuries," added the Juventus coach with two Serie A fixtures this week before hosting Bayer Leverkusen in the Champions League on October 1.

"Brescia are a dangerous team. The game is undoubtedly a tricky one and Balotelli's debut can give an extra boost." Balotelli, 29, has been getting fit during his absence as he looks to impress Italy coach Roberto Mancini and earn a spot in the Euro 2020 team.

"My objective is to play for Italy at the Euros, but my main aim right now is to get into shape as quickly as possible for Brescia," Balotelli told DAZN. It will be Balotelli's third time playing in Italy after Inter Milan and AC Milan.

"I've worked harder in the last month and a half than in a decade," continued the former Liverpool striker. "I'm ready. I've only played two friendlies, and have not played 90 minutes, but I am in great shape. The last time I was at this weight, I was at Manchester City."

Balotelli, who has 36 caps for Italy, has not crossed paths with Ronaldo in a decade since the Portuguese was playing for Manchester United.

But he insisted: "Ronaldo's presence doesn't really interest me. I'll try to score and play the way I will in any game." The Italian won three Serie A titles with Inter Milan and the Champions League in 2010 before moving to Manchester City where he won the Premier League title in 2012.

Brescia were promoted to Serie A this year, after being relegated in 2011, and are 11th in Serie A after two wins in four games. Juventus are trailing leaders Inter Milan by two points, but Antonio Conte's side also face a tricky test against Lazio in the San Siro.

Napoli, in third, host Cagliari with AS Roma hosting Atalanta. At the bottom of the table Fiorentina chase their first win against Sampdoria who moved ahead of the Tuscans after beating Torino for their first points this season. Torino want to avoid a third consecutive league defeat at home against AC Milan, who are 12th.

ONE TO WATCH: RACISM

FIFA president Gianni Infantino weighed in after the on-going problem with racism in Italian stadiums took centre stage again at the weekend.

Fiorentina's Brazilian defender Dalbert asked the referee to halt play against Atalanta on Sunday after racist chanting. "We need clear sentences, as in England, we must not be afraid to condemn the racists," said Infantino.

Inter Milan's Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku and AC Milan's Ivorian midfielder Franck Kessie have been targeted by monkey cries this season without any sanction being taken. AC Milan have announced they were establishing an internal task force to address racism in Italian football. — AFP

Live		Matches on TV
		(Local Timings)
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Real Valladolid v Granada CF	beIN SPORTS HD 3	20:00
Real Betis v Levante	beIN SPORTS HD 3	21:00
FC Barcelona v Villarreal CF	beIN SPORTS HD 3	22:00
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Hellas Verona FC v Udinese Calcio	beIN SPORTS	20:00
Brescia v Juventus FC	beIN SPORTS	22:00
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Dijon v Olympique Marseille	beIN SPORTS	20:00
AS Monaco FC v OGC Nice	beIN SPORTS	22:00

25 Wales open Rugby WCup campaign with six-try win over Georgia

26 England drop Bairstow from Test squad for NZ series

27 Neymar saves PSG to send French champions three points clear



Astros beat Angels to clinch AL West

Indians tied for wild card after ripping Phillies



HOUSTON: Jared Walsh #25 of the Los Angeles Angels slides into third base with a triple in the second inning against the Houston Astros at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas. —AFP

HOUSTON: George Springer homered in each of his first three plate appearances, shouldering the load until the Houston Astros broke free with a six-run fifth inning in their 13-5 victory over the visiting Los Angeles Angels on Sunday. The Astros clinched the American League West with their 102nd win, their ninth full-season division title and third in a row. Houston completed its home schedule with a club-record 60 victories and finished 32-6 at home against AL West foes, with perfect marks against Seattle and Texas. Springer slugged two home runs off Angels right-hander Jose Rodriguez (0-1) and a third off left-handed reliever Jose Suarez. He lined the first pitch of the bottom of the first inning into the Crawford Boxes in left field for his 12th leadoff home run this season and 36th overall. Justin Verlander (20-6) notched his second career 20-win season despite laboring over five innings, allowing two runs on six hits and two walks. His five strikeouts leave him six shy of 3,000 in his career with just one start left this season.

RED SOX 7, RAYS 4

Christian Vazquez hit a three-run homer in the first inning to lead Boston to a win at St. Petersburg, Fla., trying to play spoilers as Tampa Bay battles for a wild-card spot. Red Sox right-hander Nathan Eovaldi (2-0) pitched six innings, allowing three runs on seven hits. He walked two, struck out six and didn't allow a hit after a leadoff single in the fourth. Joey Wendle and Brendan McKay homered for the Rays, who enter the final week of the regular season in a three-way battle with Oakland and Cleveland for the AL's two wild-card playoff berths. The Rays and Indians are tied for the second wild-card spot, two games behind the A's.

RANGERS 8, ATHLETICS 3

Shin-Soo Choo, Willie Calhoun and Elvis Andrus all homered within Tanner Roark's first 20 pitches and right-hander Lance Lynn equaled his career-best with 12 strikeouts, allowing visiting Texas to salvage one win in their three-game series against Oakland. The loss, in their final home game of the season, leaves the Athletics atop the AL wild-card standings with six games to play. After having been held to a total of three runs and 10 hits in the first two games of the series, the Rangers bombed Roark for four runs in the first inning, getting an immediate spark when Choo belted the first pitch of the contest for his 23rd home run.

INDIANS 10, PHILLIES 1

Oscar Mercado hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the fifth inning to help lift Cleveland to a win in the rubber game of a three-game series against visiting Philadelphia. Yasiel Puig had a three-run double and Franmil Reyes added a two-run homer as the Indians added six runs in the seventh inning. Carlos Santana finished with three hits and two runs for Cleveland,

which ends the regular season this week with three games in Chicago against the White Sox and then three in Washington. Indians starter Adam Plutko went 4 1/3 innings, allowing one run and four hits. He struck out three and walked two. Carlos Carrasco (6-7) followed with 2 2/3 innings of shutout relief. Scott Kingery had two hits and a run for Philadelphia.

TWINS 12, ROYALS 8

Nelson Cruz hit the 400th home run of his career and Miguel Sano hit two home runs to lead host Minnesota past Kansas City, handing the Royals their 100th loss. Cruz, who hit his first major league homer against the Twins at the Metrodome while he was with the Texas Rangers on July 31, 2006, became the 57th member of the 400-homer club in the fourth inning when he hammered a Gabe Speier fastball 412 feet into the second deck in right-center to give the Twins an 8-6 lead. It also was the 40th home run of the season for Cruz, marking the fourth time in his career he has reached that milestone. He is the third Twins player to do it, joining Hall of Famer Harmon Killebrew, who did it seven times, and Brian Dozier (2016).

MARLINS 5, NATIONALS 3

Jon Berti lined a go-ahead, two-run double in the seventh inning as host Miami ended its 11-game losing streak to Washington with a win in its final home game of the season. In seeing its two-game winning streak snapped, Washington fell into a virtual for the top wild card in the National League with Milwaukee. The Brewers are a percentage point behind the Nationals, and Washington has two more games remaining than does Milwaukee. Neither starting pitcher got a decision. Washington's Austin Voth allowed just one run on three hits in five innings, and Miami's Pablo Lopez was touched for three runs on six hits, also in five frames.

BREWERS 4, PIRATES 3

Eric Thames drove in three runs with a pair of homers and Orlando Arcia added a solo shot as Milwaukee, playing its regular-season home finale, continued its torrid September with a 4-3 win over Pittsburgh. The Brewers' win, coupled with Washington's 5-3 loss in Miami, pulled them into a tie with the Nationals for the National League's top wild-card spot. Milwaukee's Brandon Woodruff, an 11-game winner, made his second start since returning from the injured list and worked two perfect innings with three strikeouts and three groundouts. Six Milwaukee pitchers recorded 14 strikeouts.

CARDINALS 3, CUBS 2

Paul Goldschmidt hit the decisive ninth-inning double as visiting St. Louis rallied past Chicago to clinch at least a wild-card playoff berth as the Cardinals will return to postseason play for the first time since 2015. They swept the Cubs in a four-game series at Wrigley

Field for the first time since 1921. The Cardinals lead the NL Central by three games over the Milwaukee Brewers, who beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 4-3 on Sunday. The reeling Cubs suffered their sixth consecutive loss and fell out of the division race. They are four games back in the NL wild-card race behind the Brewers and Nationals.

METS 6, REDS 3

Michael Conforto hit a three-run homer to cap a four-run first inning as New York won the rubber game in Cincinnati to remain on the fringes of the NL wild-card race. The Mets sit 4 1/2 games out of both wild-card spots and finish the season with seven home games against the Miami Marlins and Atlanta Braves. The Reds host the Brewers in a three-game series beginning Tuesday night. Reds starter Trevor Bauer (11-13) retired the first two batters he faced before Pete Alonso doubled and scored on Robinson Cano's double. After Wilson Ramos was hit by a pitch, Conforto homered to right for his first round-tripper since Sept. 12, a span of 31 plate appearances.

YANKEES 8, BLUE JAYS 3

Luis Severino pitched five dominant innings, and New York hit three homers, recording an easy victory over visiting Toronto in its final regular-season home game. Severino (1-0) allowed three hits, struck out nine and walked none in his second start after being activated from the injured list Tuesday. After throwing 67 pitches in four innings that day against the Los Angeles Angels, Severino was stretched out to 80 on Sunday. He threw 54 of those pitches for strikes, including the first 11 of the game. Aaron Judge hit a solo homer, Brett Gardner added a three-run homer and DJ LeMahieu hit a two-run homer as the Yankees raised their season total to 298. Giancarlo Stanton added a sacrifice fly and Luke Voit hit an RBI single as the Yankees won for the 12th time in their past 18 games.

DODGERS 7, ROCKIES 4

Hyun-Jin Ryu hit his first career home run and went seven strong innings as Los Angeles reached 100 victories by rallying to defeat visiting Colorado in the Dodgers' final home game of the regular season. Cody Bellinger added his second grand slam of the season in a five-run fifth inning, and his 46th home run overall, as Los Angeles finished 59-22 at home this season. At 100-56, the Dodgers reached 100 victories for the second time in the past three seasons and just the fourth time in their Los Angeles history. The Dodgers also reduced their magic number for clinching the best record in the NL to one.

GIANTS 4, BRAVES 1

Rookie Logan Webb pitched six strong innings to help San Francisco end a three-game losing streak by beating Atlanta in the Braves' final home game of the

regular season. The 22-year-old right-hander allowed one run on two hits and two walks with seven strikeouts, which matched his career high, in his first career appearance against Atlanta. Webb had struggled in his three previous starts, going 0-2 with a 10.22 ERA. Atlanta finished with a 50-31 record at home and will complete the regular season on the road with two games at Kansas City and three at the New York Mets. The Braves will be without first baseman Freddie Freeman against the Royals, however, after Freeman left Sunday's game in the seventh inning with right elbow pain. Braves manager Brian Snitker told reporters after the game Freeman will stay behind in Atlanta for that series.

ORIOLES 2, MARINERS 1

Chris Davis hit a solo homer in the bottom of the seventh inning to give Baltimore a win over visiting Seattle, giving Davis a nice moment in a trying season in front of his home fans. In winning their final home game of the season, the Orioles finished with a 25-56 record at Oriole Park at Camden Yards and took two of three to win a series for the first time since late August. Davis blast, which cleared the wall in right-center, drew a huge ovation from the fans. It was just 11th homer and 35th RBI of a season in which he is batting just .176.

TIGERS 6, WHITE SOX 3

Jeimer Candelario hit a two-run homer, Willi Castro delivered his first career homer and host Detroit salvaged the finale of a three-game series against Chicago as Victor Reyes supplied two hits, including a solo homer, and scored twice. Gordon Beckham contributed a solo homer and Dawel Lugo added three hits for the Tigers. Detroit starter Matthew Boyd (9-11) pitched the minimum five innings to collect the victory. Boyd, who missed his last start while attending to a family matter, gave up three runs on eight hits and struck out six. Joe Jimenez pitched the ninth for his eighth save. Eloy Jimenez had a two-run homer for the White Sox. Reynaldo Lopez (9-15) allowed five runs on nine hits in four innings.

PADRES 6, DIAMONDBACKS 4 (10 INNINGS)

Infielder Seth Mejias-Brean hit a two-run home run with no outs in the bottom of the 10th inning to give San Diego a walk-off win over Arizona and avoid a sweep at home. The win was the first for interim manager Rod Barajas, who took over on Saturday after the firing of manager Andy Green. Greg Garcia opened the 10th with an opposite-field double into the left-field corner off Diamondbacks right-handed reliever Yoan Lopez. Mejias-Brean, who earlier hit a run-scoring single as the Padres overcame an early 4-0 deficit, then drove a 1-1 pitch into the left field seats for his second homer in his ninth game since making his major league debut on Sept. 3. — Reuters