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MP: Kuwait's fiscal position sound, reserve not depleted

Lawmaker drops plan to grill social affairs minister over social aid

Amir receives Omani, UAE, Bahraini FMs



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday welcomed the foreign ministers of Oman, Bahrain and UAE, namely Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Khaled bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa and Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, at his residence in the

US. They were assured about HH the Amir and his medical checkups, which were successful. The Amir expressed his appreciation to this initiative which embodies the depth of relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council states, wishing them good health. — KUNA

By B Izzak And Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Rapporteur of the National Assembly's budgets committee MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said yesterday that Kuwait enjoys a sound financial position backed by huge assets, denying statements that the state's reserve fund has been reduced to just KD 7 billion. The lawmaker said assets in the state reserve are "greatly higher" than the figure announced by current and former officials, including former finance minister Bader Al-Humaidhi, who warned of a financial crisis if Kuwait does not rationalize spending.

Adasani said the budgets committee exerted efforts with the government that resulted in transferring some KD 8.4 billion to the state reserve fund. He also said the expected actuarial deficit of the pension agency is KD 17.4 billion and not KD 19 billion as was said, adding that the most important thing here is that the deficit is not current but is expected to happen in the future based on calculations. Adasani said the country has huge assets, but they must be managed in the best way possible, recalling that the government must tackle problems related to distortions in the state budget and final accounts.

Adasani also warned that he will go ahead with

plans to grill the prime minister and the finance minister unless the government appeals against the prosecution's decision to shelve investigation into suspected money laundering cases in which current and former MPs are involved. He said the government pledged to file the petition but so far nothing has been done. The lawmaker reiterated his pledge to grill the interior minister.

Meanwhile, MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei said he has suspended plans to grill the minister of social affairs and labor over the ministry's alleged mistreatment of needy Kuwaiti women who receive social aid from the state. The lawmaker had vowed to grill the minister because the ministry suspended social aid to thousands of Kuwaiti women.

Subaei however said yesterday that ministry officials informed him that only 1,130 women were affected because they failed to update their files by bringing certificates from various ministries to prove they were in need. He added the officials informed him that the women are no longer required to bring such certificates personally, as the ministry has already written to other government bodies and the update is expected to be completed within a week's time.

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News in brief

Iran oil sector on 'full alert'

TEHRAN: Iran's oil minister yesterday ordered his country's energy sector to be on high alert to the threat of "physical and cyber" attacks. Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said "it is necessary for all companies and installations of the oil industry to be on full alert against physical and cyber threats," in a statement published on the oil ministry's Shana website. Zanganeh said precautions were needed due to American sanctions and the "full-scale economic war" that the Islamic republic accuses the United States of waging against it. Iran denied press reports on Sept 21 that its oil installations were disrupted by a cyber attack. — AFP

Egypt kills 15 militants in Sinai

CAIRO: Egyptian security forces have killed 15 suspected militants in a shootout in restive north Sinai, the interior ministry said yesterday. A militant group was "planning hostile acts targeting military and police forces...in order to destabilize national security", the ministry said in a statement, adding "terrorist elements" had been hiding in a farm in El-Arish, the capital of North Sinai province. Authorities also said they found a small trove of stashed weapons including an explosive belt, several rifles and an explosive device. Graphic pictures of the bodies of the alleged militants were sent along with yesterday's press release. — AFP

Prominent Egypt dissident detained

CAIRO: Prominent Egyptian dissident Alaa Abdel Fattah was detained yesterday morning beyond his overnight probation, his family and a judicial official said. Abdel Fattah, 37, is serving five years of probation after completing a five-year jail sentence in March for staging a protest against a 2013 law effectively banning public gatherings. His probation requires him to report to a police station near his home in Cairo at 6:00 pm every evening, and stay overnight in a cell until 6:00 am. Yesterday, officers denied his mother Laila Soueif access to the police station and refused to say why he was not released. — AFP

2 killed in rollercoaster accident

MEXICO CITY: Two people were killed and two more injured when a rollercoaster carriage derailed at a theme park in Mexico, authorities have said. Early reports suggest a mechanical problem caused the carriage to become detached from the ride and fall some 10 m to the ground, the public prosecutor said in a statement. It is believed the two men died as a result of head injuries, it added, while two women were taken to hospital - one of them in a serious condition. The accident happened at La Feria amusement park in the capital Mexico City on Saturday. — AFP

Saudi king's bodyguard shot dead by 'friend'

RIYADH: A prominent bodyguard of Saudi Arabia's King Salman has been shot and killed at a friend's house in what has been described as a personal dispute, according to state media. Major General Abdelaziz Al-Fagham's death triggered an outpouring of emotion on Twitter, with some condemning the killing of the Saudi ruler's "guardian angel". Fagham, who was frequently seen by the king's side, died Saturday evening in the western city of Jeddah, police in Makkah said in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

A spokesman said that the gunman was shot dead by security forces, but that five officers were wounded in the melee that has shocked the kingdom, where gun violence is rare. Police said the trouble broke out when Fagham was visiting a friend who was receiving guests at his home in Jeddah, the port city in western Saudi Arabia. An acquaintance, Mamdouh Al-Ali, entered the residence and an argument ensued.

"The conversation between Fagham and Ali escalated... Ali left the home, came back carrying a gun and fired at Fagham, injuring two others in the household, a Filipino worker and the brother of the house's owner," it said. Ali "refused to surrender" and barricaded himself into the house, exchanging shots with security forces before he was ultimately killed, it said.

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Fire hits Saudi high-speed train station

RIYADH: Five people were injured in a fire that broke out at a new high-speed train station in Saudi Arabia's western city of Jeddah yesterday, state television reported, with huge palls of smoke seen rising into the air. The station serves the main Haramain High Speed Rail system. The route opened to the public in October last year, transporting passengers between Makkah and

Madinah, Islam's holiest sites. "Five people who sustained minor injuries because of the fire were transported to hospital," Al-Ekhabriya state television reported.

The General Directorate of Saudi Civil Defence said in an earlier tweet that it was working to extinguish the fire. A video uploaded on Twitter by the Makkah provincial government showed plumes of grey smoke rising from what looked like the inside of the complex. An AFP correspondent said security forces closed the main road linking Makkah and Jeddah and cordoned off the site.

The blaze erupted at 12:35 pm local time (0935 GMT), according to the Haramain High Speed Rail's Twitter account.

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Dubai builders wooing buyers amid downturn

DUBAI: Dubai, a city defined by its glittering towers and man-made islands, is stuck in a five-year property downturn with no end in sight, drawing warnings of an industry reckoning that will see weaker players fail. Property developers are slashing prices and offering ultra-easy financing to lure customers, while concerned authorities have stepped in with incentives and regulations to revive the crucial sector.

Ahead of the Expo 2020 global trade fair that Dubai hopes will deliver an economic windfall and some 300,000 new jobs, hundreds of mega projects have been unveiled in recent years, leading to an oversupply and a slide in prices. The government rushed to rescue the sector in 2018 with a raft of measures including easy visa terms for expatriate buyers and permanent residence permits for big investors. This month, a top-level committee was established to rebalance the oversupplied market.

The Standard and Poor's ratings agency has said the industry, which makes up 7.2 percent of Dubai's

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JEDDAH: This Sept 25, 2019 photo shows Saudi King Salman accompanied by his personal bodyguard General Abdel Aziz Al-Fagham (right). — AFP



JEDDAH: Cars drive by as thick smoke billows from the Haramain high-speed train station after a fire broke out yesterday. — AFP



BEIRUT: Lebanese protesters hold placards during a demonstration in Martyrs' Square yesterday. — AFP

Lebanese stage protests over failing economy

BEIRUT: Hundreds of people protested in Lebanon's capital yesterday over increasingly difficult living conditions, amid fears of a dollar shortage and possible price hikes. A skirmish broke out as protesters tried to break through security barriers in front of the cabinet office and anti-riot forces pushed them back with shields and batons, an AFP photographer said. Demonstrators briefly cut off several Beirut thoroughfares, some with burning tyres emitting billowing black smoke.

Around 500 people, some carrying Lebanese flags, had gathered earlier in the capital's central Martyrs' Square to march to the seats of government and parliament, the photographer said. "Revolution, revolution," cried some of the protesters. Outside parliament, dozens of men and women streamed in from a side street under the watchful eye of security forces, another AFP reporter said. "Government, parliament... Thieves, thieves!" they chanted.

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Local

Shamal Azzour Al-Oula KSCP public offering by KAPP to launch on Oct 1

Kuwaiti citizens eligible to take part in offering of 50 percent of shares

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) announced in a press statement yesterday that it will launch on October 1, 2019 the public offering of its 50 percent equity stake in Shamal Azzour Al-Oula KSCP, the owner and operator of the Az-Zour North One Power and Water Plant.

Shamal Azzour Al-Oula KSCP is the first company to be established as a Public-Private Partnership project and the first PPP to be offered for public subscription. The public subscription period will open for 60-days and ends on November 29, 2019.

Once the transaction concludes, and depending on the final level of demand, up to 50 percent of Shamal Azzour Al-Oula's shares will be owned by Kuwaiti citizens. The remaining 50 percent will continue to be owned by current shareholders (40 percent by a private investor represented by Azour North One Holding Company KSCC owned by a consortium comprising ENGIE (formerly GDF SUEZ), Sumitomo Corporation, AH Al-Sagar and Brothers, five percent by Kuwait Investment Authority,

and five percent by the Public Institution for Social Security).

The public offering is mandated by the IWPP and PPP Laws, which form an integral part of an overarching governmental effort to include citizens in the ownership of megaprojects that are offered to private-sector institutional investors. In addition to providing attractive investment opportunities to citizens, PPP projects empower the private sector to take the lead in growing the national non-oil economy.

Shamal Azzour Al-Oula is Kuwait's first company established under the IWPP Law. The company is the owner and operator of Az-Zour North One Power and Water Plant, which is the first privately-owned gas-fired combined cycle power and water desalination plant. The facility commenced commercial operations in November 2016 and currently supplies about 10 percent of Kuwait's installed power generation capacity and about 20 percent of the country's installed water desalination capacity.

Power and water produced by the company are entirely supplied to the national power and water grid operated by the Kuwait Ministry of Electricity and Water

(MEW) under a 40-year long-term Energy Conversion and Water Purchase Agreement (ECWPA). Shamal Azzour Al-Oula KSCP is the first phase of Kuwait's Independent Water and Power Project (IWPP), which is a part of MEW's strategy to increase the country's capacity to meet electrical and water demand over the coming years.

Faisal Al-Hamad, CEO of NBK Capital, expressed the pride of NBK for being part of this huge economic development project, in addition to acting as the main consultant to arrange and execute the process of distributing shares to citizens for the first company established under Law No 39 of 2010 to establish Kuwaiti shareholding companies to build and implement electric power and water plants.

He pointed out that Shamal Azzour Al-Oula is a real-life success story, and an opportunity for citizens to invest in infrastructure projects in Kuwait, adding that the future revenues are linked to the long-term agreement to buy energy and water diversion term that signed between Shamal Azzour Al-Oula and the Ministry of Electricity and Water for 40 years of fixed revenues. Hamad added that there is a



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) officials announce that it will launch on October 1, 2019 the public offering of its 50 percent equity stake in Shamal Azzour Al-Oula KSCP. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

major shift in Kuwait's approach towards large infrastructure projects and its orientation towards providing the private sector with the opportunity to own and operate

large projects and services, also endeavor to enable the private sector to take the initiative, considering consumer to be the biggest beneficiary.

Acting PM meets Iraqi minister, Kuwaiti officials



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of Kuwait National Petroleum Company's (KNPC) Labor Syndicate Mohammad Al-Hajri and the syndicate's board members.



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Sheikh Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Bareeq Program's Director Ruqaya Hussein.

KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met yesterday with the visiting Iraqi Trade Minister Dr Mohammad Al-Ani, accompanied by Commerce and Industry Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged friendly talks and discussed significant issues and subjects of joint interest, the defense ministry said in a press statement. The Kuwaiti defense minister welcomed the Iraqi guest and his accompanying delegation and wished them a good stay in the country, said the statement. He also stressed the importance of boosting Kuwaiti-Iraqi commercial cooperation prospects to achieve inclusive economic growth, which would ultimately benefit the region and business. Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah also affirmed keenness to enhance bilateral ties through investing all potentials and resources.

The Acting Premier also met separately with Chairman of Kuwait National Petroleum Company's (KNPC) Labor Syndicate Mohammad Al-Hajri and the syndicate's board members. The two sides exchanged friendly talks and discussed a number of important issues, the statement said, adding Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah praised the syndicate's active role in addressing and following



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Iraqi Trade Minister Dr Mohammad Al-Ani. — Defense Ministry photos

various occupational issues of KNPC workers. Later, the Defense Minister received Sheikh Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, accompanied by Bareeq Program's Director Ruqaya Hussein, and exchanged friendly talks with them. Meanwhile, Sheikh Intisar presented Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah, on the sidelines of their meeting, an edition of her new book, entitled 'Kuwait in 400 years,' which

was also co-written by Hussein. The Deputy Prime Minister congratulated Sheikh Intisar Al-Sabah and Hussein on their latest work, and said it reflects the volume of great effort and continuous research in gathering its information and revising its content as well. Readers could now review and learn about several significant junctures in Kuwait's history, said Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem meets with the visiting Iraqi Trade Minister Dr Mohammad Al-Ani. — KUNA

Speaker receives Iraqi Trade Minister

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem received yesterday at his office Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of State for Services Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan, accompanied by visiting

Iraqi Trade Minister Dr Mohammad Al-Ani, along with his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by MP Rakan Al-Nisf, MP Saadon Al-Otaibi, MP Al-Humaidi Al-Sudaie, and senior trade officials. — KUNA

Kuwait has clear strategy to implement digital transformation

KUWAIT: Secretary-General of The Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khaled Mahdi said yesterday that Kuwait has a clear strategy and a roadmap to achieve digital transformation and technical development. This came in a speech by Dr Mahdi during a seminar organized by Kuwait Institute for Public Policies at the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development's (SCPD) headquarter. "Kuwait has highly developed technical infrastructure in the 5G technology," Mahdi said. This indicates Kuwait's ability to move towards digital technology, which is one of the most prominent development goals of the state, he added. He pointed out that Kuwait occupies the second place in the world depending on 5G technology after South Korea, due to the number of transmitters dedicated to this technology,



Dr Khaled Mahdi

and digital infrastructure compared to the size of the country, according to a report by Huawei China. He stated that digital revolution has configured new global markets in the past five years, witnessing strong competition especially with the existence of China as a global competitor. — KUNA

British envoy highlights strong bond with Kuwait

KUWAIT: Kuwait and Britain's storied relationship dates back more than a century and has grown over time, said the UK's ambassador to the Gulf state, citing the 'Anglo-Kuwait Agreement' of 1899 as the catalyst for better ties. Michael Davenport said yesterday he was ecstatic over the "camaraderie and goodwill" shared by the two countries, joining the Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Kamal Al-Abduljalil in planting the indigenous 'Sidra' tree some 120 years after bilateral ties began in earnest. Planting the tree is highly emblematic of Kuwait's "historic relationship with Britain," according to the Kuwaiti official, besides being a symbol of the Kuwaiti identity, as he pointed out. Britain pledged to protect the territorial integrity of Kuwait under the clandestine treaty signed in 1899, a historic event that the Gulf state commemorates on a yearly basis. — KUNA



KUWAIT: British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport and NCCAL Secretary General Kamal Al-Abduljalil plant the Sidra tree. — KUNA photos



IICO graduates 150 Quran students in Jordan

AMMAN: Kuwait's International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) held yesterday a graduation ceremony for 150 Jordanian Quran students, as part of its Al-Shafi' project for Quran memorization. The graduation ceremony was attended by Kuwait's Ambassador to Jordan Aziz Al-Daihani, IICO Director General Bader Al-Sumait, in addition to the Director of Al-Shafi' project Khaled Al-Qassar and number of officials from Jordan's Association for Preserving the Holy Quran.

Daihani said that the Kuwaiti humanitarian work extends and includes various fields, especially charitable, developmental and social fields. He praised Al-Shafi' project for Quran memorization, saying, "it is one of the leading charitable projects in the world." He expressed appreciation to those in charge of the project, praising their keenness to spread

the Quran science through educational environment and specialists. The Kuwaiti diplomat pointed out that the continuation of Kuwaiti official charitable projects translate the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the humanitarian leader, and enhances the status of Kuwait on the map of humanitarian action. He congratulated the new graduates on their achievement, expressing hope that they will be good role models, be guided by the holy Quran, and promote their society through its blessed teachings.

Meanwhile, IICO Director General Bader Al-Sumait said that Al-Shafi' project has achieved great success in Jordan by graduating about 500 Quran students. He added that the Kuwait-based organization carries a lofty message of "building human being capable of making a positive change in his society." — KUNA

Local

Efforts to prevent barrage of grilling motions at start of parliament term

Education Ministry moves forward with banning soft drinks in schools

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Well-informed parliamentary sources stressed that some lawmakers have already initiated contacts to prevent filing grilling motions before the new parliamentary term opens on Oct 29. "The aim of this effort is to prevent filing several grillings and discussing them in the opening session and extending it to the early hours of the following morning in vain," the sources said. They noted that MP Riyadh Al-Adasani is planning to file a grilling motion against Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah before the new term, MP Mohammed Hayef is preparing to grill Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf, and MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei intends to file a motion against Social Affairs Minister Saad Al-Kharraz to be discussed in the first session, in addition to other motions against Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi and Minister of Public Works Jenan Bushehri. The sources added that a number of lawmakers had started contacting their colleagues to delay their grilling motions until after the opening session.

Soft drinks ban

Responding to social media reports that some school administrations have banned soft drinks and food products containing preservatives, the Ministry of

Education (MoE) stressed the decision coincides with the launch of the 'healthy school canteen' project to protect students' health. In its statement, MoE elaborated that the project was launched at the beginning of the new school year in collaboration with the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition and Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company with the ultimate goal of fighting malnutrition-related diseases.

Co-ops' Kuwaitization

Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies (KUCCS) Khaled Al-Hudhaiban announced launching an initiative to 'Kuwaitize' various positions in co-ops, noting that the initiative will be launched on Oct 23 under the auspices of Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharraz. "This initiative targets Kuwaitizing all leading positions in various co-ops and facilitating citizens' employment there," he added, noting that applications can be made at KCCS after launching the initiative.

Fatal accident

A Kuwaiti citizen reported yesterday that an Egyptian fisherman working for him was killed at dawn when two fishing boats collided. An investigation was opened into the accident.



The National Assembly.

Suspects' extradition approved during GCC justice ministers' meeting

MUSCAT: Justice Ministers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) discussed yesterday many topics aimed at strengthening legal and judicial cooperation among the GCC states. Kuwaiti Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Advisor Dr Fahad Al-Afasi said that the 29th ministerial meeting discussed the extradition of suspects between the GCC countries, which was approved. The meeting also discussed the role of Gulf judicial institutes in improving judicial officials, by preparing courses and exchanging experiences between

the GCC states. The establishment of a committee of judicial directors was approved to discuss cooperation mechanisms, Afasi added. They also discussed the draft agreement to renounce hate speech, adding that Kuwait submitted this draft to the justice ministers' meeting, Afasi said. Afasi was accompanied by a delegation from the Ministry of Justice, including Justice Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs and International Relations Zakaria Al-Ansari and Office Director of the Minister Dhawi Al-Mutairi. — KUNA



News in brief

17 newspaper, magazine licenses canceled

KUWAIT: The information ministry has cancelled licenses of 17 weekly and monthly newspapers and magazines. The cancellation was part of a series of decisions issued by the ministry's assistant undersecretary for journalism, publication and prints affairs to cancel licenses of Dalal, Kuwait Auto, Sawalef and Ostora monthly publications, in addition to the cancellation of 13 licenses of monthly newspapers and magazines - Yaqtha, Al-Majales, Waseet Al-Jahra, Elanak, Al-Intiyaz, Nujoom, Ummati, Arab, Jufaina, Kalam, Burgan, Rumooz and Safaqa. — Al-Qabas

Govt goes after fake accounts

KUWAIT: The government is preparing a list of bogus social media account owners who instigate strife, which will be submitted to concerned authorities to deal with them. Informed sources said the Cabinet will not be satisfied with closing the accounts - rather it will take those behind them to court in Kuwait or abroad in coordination with embassies. The government's communications center met representatives of all government departments to discuss the development of the media mission. Sources said the center stressed that it is necessary to use all technological means to fight rumors, while forming teams in ministries to combat them. Sources called upon government departments to use the opportunity presented by people's communications with ministries through WhatsApp and develop ministries' accounts that are lagging behind their counterparts. — Al-Qabas

Repair works to be organized

KUWAIT: The commerce and industry ministry is contemplating a decision to regulate car, motorbike and boat repair workshops in order to set the timespan for all mechanical and electric repairs as well as paint jobs. An informed source said the decision is to control the guarantee invoices of repair jobs legally so they will be a reference for consumers and supervisory divisions. The source said after the organization of the mechanical work market, the ministry will move to other markets such as electronics maintenance to regulate their work and boost consumer confidence. — Al-Qabas

Private sector's hiring

KUWAIT: Statistics issued by the Civil Service Commission showed an increase in the number of expatriates hired in the private sector since 2015, indicating that expats' numbers in the private sector rose to nearly 1.7 million by the end of August 2019, compared to 1.4 million in 2015. Meanwhile, the number of Kuwaitis hired in the private sector reached 71,013 by August 2019 after 4,506 were hired during the same period. — Al-Rai

Entertainment City development on panel meeting's agenda

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Headed by councilmember Hassan Kamal, the Capital committee at the Municipal Council is scheduled to discuss annulling the allocation of unused sites on Failaka island, a project to develop the Entertainment City and a proposal made by Kuwait Ports Authority to allow adding commercial activities at the port's administrative building at Shuwaikh port. The committee is also set to discuss proposals on expanding the parking lot of Al-Sadhan mosque in Faiha, building a metal fence to protect joggers in Adaliya and allocating a site to build a mosque in Doha, in addition to several other proposals.

Central bank initiative focuses on workforce development

KUWAIT: Kuwait's top banker yesterday highlighted the significance of a local initiative to bolster the workforce in the country's banking sector, saying the broad endeavor also allows novice employees the chance to hone their skills. The initiative entails varied training programs directed at employees of the banking sector, read a statement by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), citing its governor Dr Yousef Al-Hashel. The programs are part of a plan that aims to have the careers of bank employees remain on a steady upward trajectory, CBK's governor emphasized, saying an efficient workforce would help better serve the populace. On other initiatives in the works, he said a program seeking to lure fresh graduates into the banking sector is coming up, in addition to other ones catering to researchers and economic experts. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman on bilateral relations. According to a statement by the bureau, the talks dealt with the latest regional and international developments, as well as issues of common interest. — KUNA



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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A view of Kuwait City from the sea. — Photo by Mustafa Al-Bader (KUNA)

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KCST teams shine at KCPC 2019

KUWAIT: KCST teams ranked 2nd in the Seventh Kuwait Collegiate Programming Contest (KCPC) held at the Kuwait College of Science and Technology yesterday. The KCST team was able to solve nine complicated programming problems within five hours. The purpose of the contest is to foster creativity, teamwork, and innovation in building new software programs, and enables students to test their ability to perform complex tasks as a team under pressure.

KCST had two teams rank in the top 10, qualifying them both for the Arab Collegiate Programming Contest (ACPC) which will be held in Sharm Elsheikh next November. The team that came in 2nd place was made up of: Mohammed Al-Abdulhadi, Ahmad Al-Shabani, and Abdulrahman Serhan.

Team were mentored by Dr Tareq Al-Zayyat, a faculty member in the Computer Science and Engineering Department.

A total of nine KCST teams participated from the Computer Science and Engineering Department. At the competition, 43 teams participated from different Kuwait educational institutions including: Australian College of Kuwait (ACK), Arab Open University (AOU), Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST), Kuwait Technical College (K-Tech), Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), Algonquin College Kuwait (AC-Kuwait), Kuwait University (KU), and the American University of Kuwait (AUK).

The ACPC is a team-based, programming competition operating under the auspices of the Association for Computing Machinery, ACM, and headquartered at the Arab Academy for Science and Technology in Egypt. The contest involves a regional network of universities hosting national competitions, the national winners advance to the ACM-ACPC Arab Regional.



KUWAIT: The winning teams in group photos with officials at the event.



Local

Kuwait's Sadu Craft Society holds Sadi exhibition in Al-Shaheed Park

Bringing together 10 Sadi artists from 2016, 2019 events



KUWAIT: Artworks displayed at the 'Remembering Sadi' exhibition. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Sadu Craft Society held 'Remembering Sadi' exhibition with participation of Sadi artists at Al-Shaheed Park, the society said in a statement yesterday. The Sadi program encourages creativity, innovation in contemporary, textile arts and diverse

fabrics, techniques and rich colors found in textiles for the artists, the statement added. President of Al-Sadu Society Sheikha Altaf Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and a society team are eager to present the Sadu Art and Design Initiative (SADI), which inspires tradition,

modernism and cultural exchange in textile arts, it noted. The statement pointed out that the exhibition provides a foretaste into rich Bedouin heritage in the textile field in Kuwait as well as creating pieces that reflect this content. The artists' work of art will reveal

their personal vision and their interpretation of textiles as an idea, concept and materials, it explained. The exhibition will also bring together 10 Sadi artists from 2016 and 2019 events, where they will participate in workshops, weekly meetings, seminars and

research training in textile art, statement added. Meanwhile, the Sadi initiative reflects the Sadu Society's efforts to preserve Kuwait's cultural heritage and highlight the cultural identity, diversity and contemporary artistic expression in Kuwait. — KUNA

Kuwait marks 107th anniversary of 'year of great prosperity'

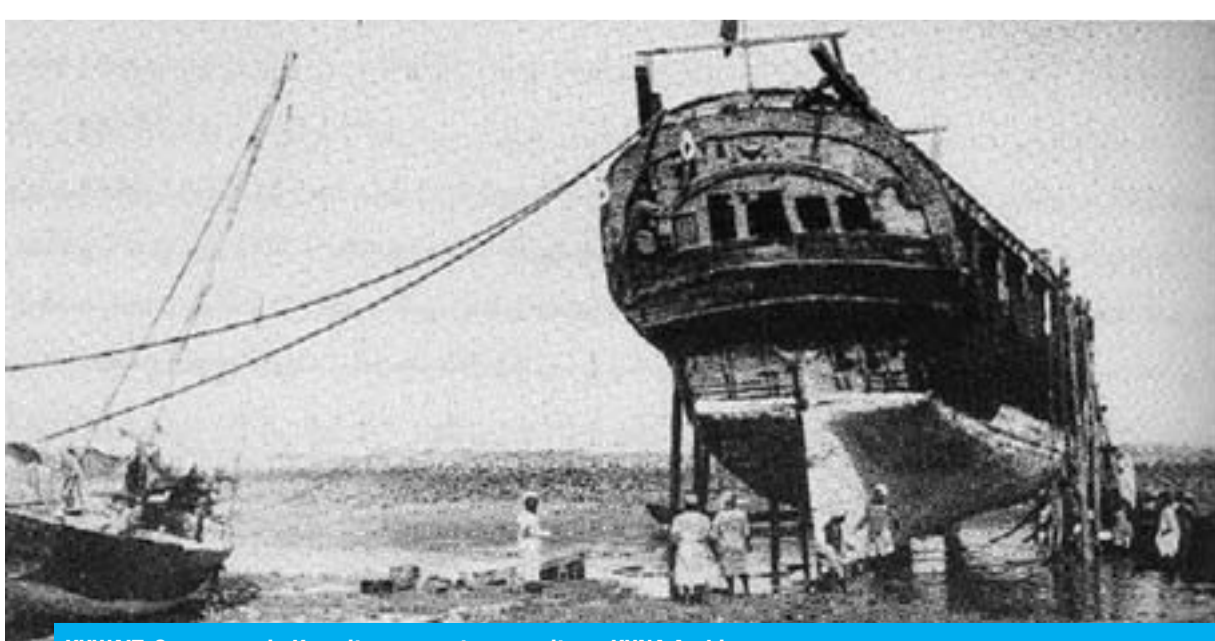
KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait marks today the 107th anniversary of 'Senat Al-Tafha,' or 'the year of great prosperity.' In 1912,

pearl diving and commerce in Kuwait saw great prosperity because of good business in that specific year. Pearl diving boats

reached over 800 vessels, bringing around six million rupees' worth of wealth. There were also 200 ships used to transport goods. These vessels, which had around 6,000 sailors on board, generated an income exceeding one million rupees. Prior to the year of great prosperity, Kuwait was involved in the Hadiya battle in 1910 during the era of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, thus disrupting the flow of the pearl diving busi-

ness. The following year, businesspersons, who took their activities elsewhere in the region, were lured back to Kuwait in reaction to incentives offered by Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah. This brought in a large flow of business to Kuwait with a huge number of workers and artisans, especially in the sailing business as 30,000 Qallalif (boats builders) flocked to Kuwait, Kuwait, which had an estimated population of no

more than 110,000 back then, received in that year around 222,000 rupees in tax imposed on ships. The increasing wealth in Kuwait led to the use of the 1,000 rupees banknote. Markets were expended in the era with the number reaching 40 at that time. Exports to Iraq and the Levant region also thrived and the diving season was expended to two because of the unprecedented wealth. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Commerce in Kuwait saw great prosperity. — KUNA Archive

Congratulations to NBK Mega Day Winners

250,000

Winners of Cashback for a Year

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Asayel Mohammad Al-Mutawa	Mariam Abdulredha Al-Hendiani
Ahmad Reyadh Ahmad Al-Sanea	Yaqoub Yousef Al-Mumen
Faisal Bader Sulaiman Al-Othman	Fahad Abdulmohsen Al-Matrouk

Winner of Al Jawhara Quarterly Prize KD 250,000

Mona Mohammad Akbar Lari

Winner of Honda Car in the NBK Mobile Banking campaign for Al Shabab

Abdullah Jasem Al-Khamees

Winner of GAC Motor Car in the NBK Mobile Banking Campaign

Ahmed Mohamed El-Said

1801801

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The Bank You Know And Trust



UK's Johnson rallies party for Brexit fight

Nations that make weapons, foment migration but refuse refugees: Pope

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TAEZ: A Yemeni child buys sweets from Majd Al-Din Al-Shamiri (unseen), a 16 year-old Yemeni who set up a shop in his family's car that was destroyed during the ongoing war in the Jabal Sabr area of the southwestern city of Taz. — AFP

New fuel shortage hits Yemen

Yemen faces humanitarian crisis due to civil war

SANAA: A fuel shortage is deepening Yemen's humanitarian crisis, forcing drivers to wait for days in queues that stretch back from some petrol stations as far as the eye can see. The new shortage is just one of many problems causing suffering in the civil war being fought by the Iran-aligned Houthi movement and a Saudi-led coalition backed by the West.

But its consequences are far-reaching. Fuel is needed not just for cars but also for water pumps, hospital generators and to transport goods around a country where millions are on the brink of famine. "It's affecting us and all the Yemeni people," said Nashwan Khaled, who had already been waiting for two days in a queue for petrol in Sanaa, the Houthi-controlled capital where many petrol stations have been forced to close.

"I put my job and my life on hold," he said. Petrol on the black market is selling for almost three times

the official price. Drivers can queue for two or three days. "Fuel shortages in Yemen exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation in the country and lead to unacceptable levels of suffering," said Sultana Begum, a representative of the Norwegian Refugee Council humanitarian organization.

Controls and bureaucracy

Imports into areas controlled by Houthis have to go through stringent controls imposed by the Saudi-led military coalition which intervened in Yemen in 2015 to restore the government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Supplies can be held at ports and frontline borders for months because of bureaucracy on both sides, aid agencies say. "Today we are in a very bad situation, there's a fuel crisis and they are stopping fuel ships from entering Yemen with the excuse of security," said Ahmed Nasser, standing at a

petrol station. "We suffer shortages of fuel, goods, all commodities."

A Djibouti-based UN inspection mechanism was



Bureaucracy and stringent controls hamper supplies

set up in 2015 after the coalition accused the Houthis of smuggling Iranian weapons through Yemeni ports

under their control, a charge both the group and Tehran deny. Ships also need permission from the internationally recognized Yemeni government and the Western-backed, Sunni Muslim coalition to enter ports. Last week, United Nations aid chief Mark Lowcock said he was concerned that imports were being further complicated by new Yemeni government regulations on commercial fuel.

He said earlier this month that the coalition and government were preventing 10 vessels carrying 163,000 metric tons of commercial fuel imports - more than an average month's imports - from entering the port of Hodeidah. Two of the ships have since been allowed to dock, port sources told Reuters. The coalition's spokesman was not immediately available for comment. A government committee accused the Houthis of "fabricating" the fuel crisis in response to the regulations, Saudi state media said. — Reuters

Netanyahu, Gantz trade blame over breakdown in Israel coalition talks

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his rival Benny Gantz traded blame yesterday over the failure so far of efforts to reach a unity government deal following deadlocked elections. A new round of negotiations between Netanyahu's right-wing Likud and Gantz's centrist Blue and White broke down yesterday and the two sides appeared far from reaching a compromise.

Likud said Netanyahu would make a "last effort" to reach a deal before informing President Reuven Rivlin he is unable to form a government. That would leave Rivlin to decide whether to ask Gantz to try to do so or call on parliament to agree on a candidate for prime minister by a vote of at least 61 out of 120 members.

Netanyahu "will make a last effort to realize the possibility of forming a government at this stage, before returning the mandate to the president," Likud said in a statement. It called the latest round of negotiations a "big disappointment." Blue and White accused Likud of "throwing around slogans with the sole aim of generating support in preparation



TEL AVIV: (Right to left) Retired Israeli General Benny Gantz, leader and candidate of the Israel Resilience party, sits with independent Gabi Ashkenazi and Telem party's Moshe Yaalon, all part of the Blue and White (Kahol Lavan) political alliance, after giving a statement and toast for Rosh Hashanah to reporters. — AFP

for dragging Israel into another round of elections at the behest of Netanyahu."

This month's poll was the second this year, after Netanyahu failed to form a coalition following April polls. Israel marks the two-day Rosh Hashanah holiday beginning yesterday night and serious negotiations are not expected during that time. Likud said later that Gantz and Netanyahu had spoken by phone, agreeing that negotiators for both sides would meet Wednesday morning followed by talks between the two leaders.

Blue and White had not confirmed the meetings. Likud wants to negotiate on the basis of a compromise set out by Rivlin to form a unity government, which takes into account the possibility of Netanyahu being

indicted for corruption in the weeks ahead. The proposal could see Netanyahu remain prime minister for now, but step aside if indicted. Gantz would step in as acting premier under such a scenario.

Netanyahu also says he will not abandon the smaller right-wing and religious parties supporting him in parliament, giving him a total of 55 seats backing him for prime minister. Blue and White says Gantz must be prime minister first under any rotation arrangement, since it finished with the most seats in September 17 elections. It also says it cannot serve in a government with an indicted premier and insists Likud negotiate on its own, not on behalf of the smaller parties supporting it. — AFP

France expands rape probe against Islamic scholar Ramadan

PARIS: The French authorities have expanded an investigation against Tariq Ramadan, a leading Islamic scholar already charged in France with raping two women, to include evidence from two more alleged victims, judicial sources said yesterday. Ramadan, a Swiss national, 57, has already been charged in France with raping a disabled woman in 2009 and a feminist activist in 2012. He denies all the charges.

Paris prosecutors earlier this month instructed the investigating magistrate handling the case to look into the evidence from "two new potential victims" over incidents that took place in 2015 and 2016, a judicial source told AFP, confirming a report in Le Journal du Dimanche newspaper. Investigators took witness statements from the two women after they were identified from documents found on his computers. The women themselves have not filed a criminal complaint.

But they both say they were led into a brutal sexual relationship with

Ramadan, one from November-December 2015 and the other in March 2016. "It was something other than physical rape, it went beyond that... there was a moral rape," one of the women said in her testimony seen by AFP. "He had such a hold on you that you did everything that he demanded. But this relationship was consensual, yes," she said. "I asked him to be milder, but he said 'it is your fault, you deserve it' and that he needed to be obeyed, which is what I did," the other said.

Le Journal du Dimanche said prosecutors believe the two testimonies contained "serious and concurring" evidence that could incriminate Ramadan. Ramadan was taken into custody in February 2018 and held for over nine months before being granted bail. Authorities in Switzerland are also investigating him after receiving a rape complaint in that country while two other criminal complaints of rape have been filed relating to incidents in March 2018 and July 2019.

Ramadan has in the last week gone on a media offensive to deny all the allegations against him, publishing a book called "Duty of Truth" and insisting all his relationships have been consensual. Ramadan was professor of contemporary Islamic studies at Oxford University until he was forced to take leave when rape allegations surfaced at the height of the "Me Too" movement in late 2017. — AFP

International

Victims of northern Nigerian school share stories of terror

Institution not registered as school or correction centre

KADUNA: When Jibril had tried to escape as a boy from an institution in Nigeria that called itself a place of Islamic teachings, he said he was hung up by his arms until bones in his shoulders broke. Another teenager, one of about 400 men and boys freed in Thursday's police raid, said boys were often kept in chains and those caught stealing food were whipped until they bled. "They used car engine belts and electrical cables to floor us," 15-year-old Suleiman told Reuters, staring at the floor. "Teachers used to sexually harass us ... They tried to loosen my pants once but I fought them off and was beaten."

Horror stories are emerging about life in a two-storey house in Nigeria's northern city of Kaduna as the authorities try to find families of the victims who often spent years at the site. Police arrested seven adults in the raid on the building, which had a sign in Arabic at the entrance declaring itself "House of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal for the Application of Islamic Teachings". Some parents paid fees, believing it was an Islamic school. Some described it as a good institution and dismissed talk of abuse. Others saw it as a correctional facility. Police and regional officials said it was not registered as either.

Despite mixed accounts about its role, the abuse reported by victims has thrown a spotlight on Nigeria's struggle

to provide enough school places for its rapidly expanding population, leaving a gap for unregulated institutions that poor parents sometimes turn to. The West African nation's population will swell from 190 million to 400 million by 2050, according to UN figures. Primary education is officially free but about 10.5 million Nigerian children aged five to 14 are not in school.

"Nigeria is facing a demographic tidal wave," said Matthew Page, an associate fellow with the Africa Program at Britain's Royal Institute of International Affairs. "The long-term viability of the Nigerian economy - and the state itself - hinges on the government, religious, and traditional institutions developing a plan to address this challenge before it becomes impossible to remedy," he said.

Prior to Thursday's police raid, those who made it out of the Kaduna institution were sometimes returned by families. Some parents said they needed to discipline wayward children and others said they were too poor to look after all

their kids. Kaduna state government said there were at least 77 boys under 18 years old held there. The youngest was five. Reuters spoke with seven victims and five parents of those who had been inside, withholding their full names to protect their privacy.

Shackled

All the victims said beatings were regular and said children and men were frequently shackled. Days were dark, long and hungry: food was only served at 10 am and 11 pm. Suleiman's elder brother sent him to the institution five months ago for skipping school. He was signed up to board while he studied Arabic and Islam's holy book, the Quran. "They beat us everywhere in the house, even in the mosque. If you asked to speak with your family, they would shackle you," said the 15-year-old, who showed sores, scabs and scars on his back. When Suleiman and three friends were caught trying to steal some garri - a staple food made from cassava shavings - they were stripped and whipped, he said. "When the police raided the school the whole place was in pandemonium, we were so happy," he said.

"What I want now is to return home. I'll be a good boy," Jibril, now 17 and who was hung up for trying to escape when he was 10, said boys faced a stark choice: submit to regular sexual assault or be beaten. Jibril chose beatings. "The teachers and prefects raped boys. Those who were sexually molested were enticed with canned fish. Those of us who refused were caned," he said, blaming a scar beside his left eye on a caning. "They used planks of wood to beat us."

He now struggles to raise his arms since his punishment for trying to escape. He was sent home for six months after that incident. His family returned him when he had healed. Jibril and Suleiman are now in a safehouse on the edge of Kaduna while the authorities try to find their relatives. Their temporary home is filled with laughter as boys and teenagers, up to 17 years old, play together. Those adults who were freed are staying in a neighboring building.

At the Kaduna institution, relatives were not allowed to see boys for three months after admission and had limited visiting rights after that, parents and children said. Punishment was swift for those who talked of any abuse,



KADUNA: Some of the 300 male students of 'different nationalities' sit on the floor in chains outside a torture chamber in the Rigasa area of Kaduna in northern Nigeria. —AFP

boys said. "If anyone tried to tell their family, they would be hung up from a wall or put in chains," said 14-year-old Umar, whose grandfather sent him to the facility two years ago for skipping school.

Sexual abuse

About 40 police officers finally raided the building, acting on a complaint by an uncle who was denied access to his nephews. Police said they found several boys and men in chains. Reuters filmed victims in chains on Thursday after the raid. Some boys said they were shackled to broken power generators, which they dragged around, including to bed or the bathroom.

Police said they expected to charge seven people, who they said ran the institution, over physical and sexual abuse allegations. Those arrested could not be reached for comment. The building lies in Rigasa, a rundown Muslim district of Kaduna, a city that, like Nigeria, is evenly split between Muslims and Christians.

Reuters journalists who visited the labyrinthine building saw wheels and generators attached to metal chains. Floors were strewn with litter and stained sponge mattresses. Flies swarmed. Children begged in the traffic on the streets outside. Islamic schools, known as Almajiris, are common across the mostly Muslim north of Nigeria. Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), a local organization, estimates about 10 million children attend Islamic schools in the north.

President Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim, has sought to encourage school attendance, with programs that include one offering free school meals that the government says reaches 9.8 million children in 32 of Nigeria's 36 states. But Nigeria, an oil producing state whose finances by the government's admission have been drained by corruption, only spends 0.5% of gross domestic product on health and 1.7% on education, among the lowest worldwide, the International Monetary Fund said. With few options, some parents defended the Kaduna institution, which charged fees of 35,000 naira (\$114) a term. —Reuters



Victims report sexual assault and beatings

Within the sight of border, war-weary Syrians dream of Turkey

ATME: Desperate to escape war and find medical care for their daughter, Jaber Karawan and his wife have spent hundreds of dollars trying to escape northwestern Syria into next-door Turkey. They have tried five times to smuggle themselves and their two children across the border in recent weeks. But all their attempts have failed, forcing them back each time to temporary shelter in Syria's war-torn northwestern region of Idlib.

"There is no work for me here, the situation is disastrous," 31-year-old Jaber said. Dreaming of proper treatment for their three-year-old daughter who suffers from an eye condition, Jaber and his wife Walaa have borrowed money from relatives and drained their savings to pay smugglers \$1,200. But on their fifth attempt this week, Jaber tumbled from the grey concrete wall separating the two countries, breaking his leg.

Just hours earlier, wearing a crisp white shirt, his face neatly shaven, Jaber had helped his wife and two children straddle a motorbike outside their camp in the town of Atme. With two small bags in tow, the family of four were aim to cross the nearby Turkish border illegally. When an AFP corre-



ATME: Jaber Karawan rides a motorcycle with his wife Walaa, their children, and his wife's nephew at a camp for displaced Syrians in Atme in the northwestern Idlib province, near the border with Turkey. —AFP

spondent first met Jaber, it was after a previous such attempt. He was helping his children disembark from a taxi that drove them back from the Turkish frontier, where they were briefly detained by border guards. The family has landed in Turkish custody several times after trying to cross.

'This is no life'

Each time, they trek for hours through rocky terrain under the cover of night, before trying to scale the border wall, where they are intercepted by Turkish patrols. "This is not a life," Jaber said sitting inside his tent in a camp for the displaced before the fifth attempt. "I'll try 50, 60, 100 times until I get in," he said. Originally from south-

ern Idlib, Jaber and his family are among more than 400,000 people driven from their homes by months of fierce bombardment.

"I want to go there to find a job, to provide for my children and to look after my daughter," Jaber said, as nearby his three-year-old girl ate crisps scattered on a thin mattress. Air strikes by Damascus and regime ally Moscow have killed nearly 1,000 civilians since late April, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. But since August 31, a Russian-backed ceasefire has largely held, despite sporadic strikes. "We risk our lives to go to Turkey, and in the end, we cannot," Walaa said, her expression hidden by a full-face veil. —AFP

Controversy grips Iraq after removal of top commander

BAGHDAD: The sidelining of a prominent Iraqi general celebrated for helping oust jihadists from Mosul has generated controversy in a country caught in a tug of war between Tehran and Washington. The Iraqi premiership on Friday announced it was decommissioning Staff Lieutenant General Abdulwahab al-Saadi, who had served as the deputy head of the elite Counter-Terrorism Service, without giving a reason.

As a top commander in the CTS, which was created and intensively trained by the US, Saadi helped recapture Mosul from the Islamic State group in 2017 and is considered by many Iraqis to be a national hero. On Friday, Saadi said he considered the shift to a posting at the defense ministry as an "insult" and a "punishment".

The decision has sparked allegations of a purge of officials seen as unfavorable to Iraq's Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary force, which includes factions close to Tehran. An Iraqi government official who requested anonymity said pro-Iran factions within the Hashed

had "personally" lobbied for Saadi's removal. "These groups were operating outside the state and the only barrier was the CTS," the official said. "The idea is to sideline him to bring somebody close to Iran and no longer have the CTS as a check."

Political commentator Ghaleb Al-Shabandar said the move was "the beginning of the Iraqi army's dismantling and handover to the Hashed and other armed groups". Iraqis across the country - including in battered Mosul, where a statue of Saadi was erected but never unveiled due to divisions in the city - reacted with shock to the move. The Hashtag "We are all Abdulwahab Al-Saadi" began trending on Twitter, with users sharing photographs of the general aiding civilians in Mosul and cities.

"He won the people's friendship but the (politicians') hatred," one supporter wrote, while another lamented there was "no more space for patriots in this country". Saadi led CTS troops to recapture a string of cities from IS - Baiji and Tikrit in 2015, followed by Fallujah and Mosul. "While the fight against IS goes on, this decision reinforces the enemy's morale and weakens Iraqis' faith in their army," said jihadist specialist Hisham Al-Hashemi. Lawmaker Khaled Al-Obeidi, Iraq's former defense minister, said parliament would investigate the reasons behind the premier's decision. —AFP

Furthering Kuwait's eCommerce potential with Visa

By Ankush Devadason, Visa's Country Manager for Kuwait

The GCC region has taken a unique route to digital adoption and today, it is one of the fastest-growing markets for eCommerce globally. The total eCommerce market size is forecast to be worth \$48.6 billion in 2022, up from \$26.9 billion in 2018. Kuwait has all the favorable factors in place (rising disposable income, growing card usage, young adult demographics, tech savvy consumer base and high internet and smartphone penetration) to further its eCommerce potential.

Consumer experience is key

To capture the eCommerce opportunity that lies ahead, both online retailers and traditional retailers alike in Kuwait should focus on enhancing the consumer experience. And the first step in this process is understanding consumers' evolving expectations and how they can be met.

Visa's 'Stay Secure' study in partnership with the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) highlighted that Kuwaiti consumers are increasingly comfortable paying and transacting with cards overall (in-store and online), with 92% of respondents finding cards more secure than cash. Among online shoppers, 73% prefer to pay by card driven by factors such as security (77%), budget management (66%), and availability (60%).

So, within this context, two facets about the Kuwaiti consumer's online behavior become apparent. One is the increased penetration and usage of digital payments for online transactions, demonstrating that convenience is a key consideration for the consumer when shopping. The other is that security features as a vital component in the consumer's shopping experience.

Catering to consumers' expectations for increased security and convenience

As consumers increasingly shop online or in-store using their mobile phones, the need for a seamless and secure digital payment experience becomes crucial. And this is where Visa's tokenization technology comes handy. A key enabler for mobile wallets such as Apple Pay, Samsung Pay, and Google Pay, Visa Token Service replaces sensitive account information, such as the 16-digit account number, with a unique digital identifier called a token. The token allows payments to be processed without exposing actual account details that could potentially be compromised.

Tokenization also provides online retailers with an innovative and secure way of handling payments. Visa's tokenisation technology therefore creates a win-win situation for both merchants and consumers by empowering frictionless payments in digital commerce environments.

Like security, online shoppers' expectations related to convenience can be tackled effectively if retailers were to offer card payment option (mobile POS) upon product delivery. This could help with converting Cash on Delivery (COD) customers into digital payers. The survey indicates that 95% of those customers preferring COD would pay by card if a mobile POS machine was available upon delivery.

Another approach is Three-Domain (3-D) Secure,



Ankush Devadason - Kuwait Country Manager - Visa

Visa's messaging protocol that gives merchants and issuers a way to authenticate cardholders for eCommerce transactions prior to authorization. The protocol was recently updated to address industry concerns over user friction. Now referred to as 3-D Secure 2.0 (3DS 2.0), the new protocol promotes greater data exchange between stakeholders to collaboratively manage fraud and maximize authenticated transactions.

With this risk-based authentication, issuers can take a more selective or segmented approach and instead of requiring all online transactions to be actively authenticated. Irrespective of their characteristics, banks can identify the small proportion that look in any way suspicious. With such a small proportion of transactions deemed to be higher risk, the bank can invoke a strong and appropriate authentication method - this could include dynamic passwords, the type of challenge questions used in their existing online banking solutions, or one-time-passwords delivered via SMS text messages. Risk-based authentication offers tangible benefits to all parties involved and for a consumer especially - the speed, simplicity and convenience of the checkout process is improved - which translates to a better consumer experience. For higher risk transactions, a step-up authentication is invoked - which can bring a sense of reassurance to more cautious online shoppers.

The exciting eCommerce opportunity

Kuwait consumers are increasingly seeking seamless and secure online shopping experiences. Today, an increasing number of Kuwaitis and expatriates in-country are shopping online, driving the expansion of the eCommerce market, which has grown almost 30% over the last three years and is estimated to rise to almost \$1.1bn by next year. So, Visa will continue to support an enhanced customer experience with security as its cornerstone in order to help fully harness Kuwait's eCommerce potential and accelerate the country's digitization efforts.

International

Conservatives win Austria election as far-right tumbles

Greens big winners, viable coalition partners for Kurz

VIENNA: Austrian conservatives won most seats in snap elections yesterday, putting their leader Sebastian Kurz on track to retake power but forcing him into tough coalition negotiations after a corruption scandal sent his far-right former allies tumbling. Kurz's People's Party (OeVP) won 37 percent, up almost six percentage points from the last election two years ago, but not enough to form a government on its own, according to projections. The Greens were big winners amid voters saying the climate was their top concern, securing at least 13 percent of the vote. That means they will be viable coalition partners for Kurz in the new government.

Kurz's former allies, the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), were the biggest losers, falling 10 percentage points to stand at around 16 percent following the spectacular "Ibiza-gate" affair. The scandal broke in May, bringing down the OeVP-FPÖ coalition after just 18 months in government and triggering the snap poll. The centre-left Social Democrats look set for their worst-ever result on around 22 percent of the vote, with the liberal NEOS party winning around seven percent.



Negotiations between parties to take months

Green partners?

The Greens - who failed to make it into parliament in the last elections in 2017 in shock results - looked to have surged 10 percentage points to at least 13 percent. This puts Kurz - a former law student, who has enjoyed a rapid ascent through the ranks to become the youngest-ever chancellor in 2017 - in a tough spot if he wants to try to woo them and rebrand himself as fighting climate change rather than immigration.

"It's an important vote for the climate. Past governments have done much too little," 26-year-old Peter Litzbauer, 26,

told AFP after casting his vote in Vienna. Kurz has said before the polls he would keep all options open. However, as the Die Presse daily noted in its editorial on Saturday, "even with a nice plus on Sunday, it is more difficult for him than in 2017" to construct a suitable coalition. "We had too much chaos in the last months. We hope for something less chaotic," Vienna voter Clara Heisinger told AFP.

Far-right falls

The FPÖ loss was more than expected following the "Ibiza-gate" scandal which brought down its long-time leader Heinz-Christian Strache and a fresh investigation against him announced this week - this time over alleged fraudulent expense claims. One FPÖ MEP, Harald Vilimsky, told Austrian television the party needed to "win back the confidence of voters" and threw doubt on any return to government.

Previously, a renewed coalition with the far-right - touted by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and other nationalists as a model for all of Europe - looked likely until the new allegations shook the party this week. "We are voting to decide in which direction we will go - that of Orban and the populists, or if we stay oriented toward Europe... we are deciding if the corruption will go on," said Vienna voter Gabriel Steiner, 29.

Since World War II, either the OeVP or SPÖ have always been in government, and for 44 years in total the two have ruled together. But it was Kurz who ended their last "grand coalition", leading to the 2017 polls. He has also floated the idea of ruling in a minority government. But this would potentially further bring political uncertainty and even trigger another election.



VIENNA: A supporter of Austria's People's party (OeVP) holds a sign reading 'We for Kurz' ahead the announcement of exit polls during the party's electoral evening yesterday. —AFP

Either way, negotiations between parties are expected to take months. Ultimately, President Alexander Van der Bellen, a former Green leader, will need to approve any government. The OeVP-FPÖ coalition imploded in May when two German media outlets published footage filmed secretly on

the Spanish resort island of Ibiza, showing then FPÖ leader Strache appearing to offer public contracts in exchange for campaign help from a fake Russian backer. In the aftermath, Strache resigned from all posts, including that of Kurz's vice-chancellor. —AFP

Over half of Europe endemic trees risk extinction: Experts

GENEVA: More than half of Europe's endemic tree species, including the horse-chestnut, risk extinction, conservationists warned, blaming invasive species, unsustainable logging and urban development for their decline. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) said out of the 454 tree species native to Europe, 42 percent could disappear from the continent.

And a full 58 percent of the tree species endemic to Europe - meaning they only exist on the continent - were now considered threatened with extinction, the IUCN said in an update to the tree section of its "Red List" of threatened species. Even more worrying, the update found 15 percent of them, or 66 species, were considered "critically endangered", or just a step away from going extinct. The report comes amid a growing sense of urgency to address global environmental degradation, with fires raging in the Amazon, and following UN warnings in May that climate change, habitat loss and other factors are pushing one million plant and animal species to the brink of extinction.

'Alarming'

The IUCN described the development for Europe's tree species as "alarming", saying pests and diseases were especially fuelling their decline as well as invasive plants introduced by humans. "Trees are essential for life on earth, and European trees in all their diversity are a source of food and shelter for countless animal species such as birds and squirrels, and play a key economic role," Craig Hilton-Taylor, who heads the IUCN Red List Unit, said in the statement. He called for a concerted effort "to ensure their survival", stressing in particular the need to integrate the threatened species into regular conservation planning and land management.

The some 170 tree and shrub species in Europe that belong to the Sorbus genus, within the rose family, have been particularly affected, IUCN said, warning that three-quarters of them, including the Crimean Rowan and Mountain-ash, were threatened. IUCN said that the iconic horse-chestnut, or conker tree, had been assessed as vulnerable following significant declines across Europe. This was mainly due to the leaf-miner moth - an invasive species that originated in the Balkans but which has rapidly spread throughout the continent - as well as logging, forest fires and tourism, it said.

Crucial for ecosystems

While great attention is often paid to the decline of so-called charismatic species, like the African elephant or rhinos, IUCN stressed the need to heed developments in lesser-known species and include them in conservation planning. The Red List's European edition evaluated the status of many lesser-known species for the first time. It found nearly half of all shrub species in Europe were threatened with extinction, as were a fifth of terrestrial mollusc species like snails, and bryophytes species, which are non-vascular plants that include moss. —AFP

UK's Johnson rallies party for Brexit fight

MANCHESTER: Embattled British Prime Minister Boris Johnson gathers his Conservative party yesterday for what could be its final conference before an election, with the gathering set to be dominated by Brexit. Despite a string of parliamentary setbacks and a defeat in the Supreme Court, Johnson insists he will take Britain out of the European Union, with or without a deal, on October 31. His stance has put him at odds with the House of Commons, which has passed a law blocking a "no deal" exit, and lost him a number of his own MPs.

But it resonates with many pro-Brexit voters and particularly with Conservative party members who elected him in July, and are expected to give him a hero's welcome. The conference "will be a rally for Boris Johnson and a rally for Brexit", predicted Tim Bale, professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London. The four-day meeting in Manchester, northwest England, however risks being disrupted by parliamentary business back in London.

MPs were furious at Johnson's decision to suspend parliament for five weeks in early September - a move the Supreme Court quashed on Tuesday -

and refused to agree to the normal conference recess. Opposition parties are threatening as yet unspecified maneuvers that could force ministers to race back to parliament over the coming days. But in what will be seen as a snub to MPs, Johnson will deliver his closing speech as planned on Wednesday, when he should be answering questions in the Commons.

Maximize 'Leave' support

Johnson has had a turbulent two months in office, having suffered seven successive defeats in the Commons - in the process losing his majority. He expelled 21 Conservative MPs when they backed a law requiring him to delay Brexit if he cannot get a divorce deal with the EU by mid-October.

Johnson suspended parliament but the Supreme Court ruled this unlawful. And when he called for an election before Brexit day, MPs blocked him. In a further headache, a police watchdog is looking into whether he should face investigation over his links to a US businesswoman when he was London mayor. But Johnson responded with defiance to the court ruling and has focused his ire on MPs, accusing them of "surrendering" to the EU and trying to undermine the 2016 referendum vote to leave.

His rhetoric drew accusations of stoking division, but it appears to be winning over pro-Brexit voters. The Conservatives have had a clear lead over the main opposition Labor party since Johnson took over. A YouGov sur-



MANCHESTER: Mugs and coasters are seen for sale in support of Brexit and the Conservative leader at the Manchester Central convention complex in Manchester, north-west England yesterday on the first day of the annual Conservative Party conference. —AFP

vey this week put them 11 points ahead, while an Opinion poll yesterday put this lead at 12 points. "What he's trying to do is maximize support among Leave voters," Chris Curtis, a political research manager at YouGov said.

'Come out fighting'

Poll numbers matter because, with parliament deadlocked, most commentators expect an election in the next few months. But Johnson must overcome a key hurdle before then. The law passed by MPs means he can only deliver Brexit on October 31 if he strikes a divorce agreement by an EU summit on October

17. But few in Brussels are optimistic and the latest round of talks ended on Friday without a breakthrough.

Constantine Fraser, an analyst on European politics at investment service T.S. Lombard, said Johnson's team were running out of options. "They hung their credibility on an October 31 exit from the EU and it's very difficult to see how they can deliver that," he said. "So their response is going to be to come out fighting, to dial up the rhetoric and to dial up the confrontation." Not all Conservatives are enamored by Johnson's approach, but many moderates will avoid conference. —AFP

State Department ratchets up Clinton email probe: Report

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's administration is amping up an investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails, The Washington Post reported Saturday, breathing new life into a pet issue used by the president to rail against his opponent during the 2016 elections. The question of whether Clinton improperly used a private email account and server while secretary of state led to Trump's repeat assertion that she deserved to be put in prison and frequent chants of "lock her up" at his political rallies.

Following an FBI investigation into the matter, former director James Comey did not recommend charges against Clinton but did describe her conduct as "extremely careless." In recent weeks, up to 130 officials have been contacted by State Department investigators concerning emails they sent years ago which have been retroactively classified, nearly all of which were sent to or eventually made their way into Clinton's unsecured email account, the Post reported. The paper, which cited

current and former officials, said State Department investigators began contacting employees approximately 1.5 years ago, before the effort trailed off, only to be revived again in August. "This has nothing to do with who is in the White House," one senior State Department official told the Post, speaking on condition of anonymity. "This is about the time it took to go through millions of emails, which is about 3.5 years."

Revelation of the renewed effort comes the same week that Democrats in Congress launched an impeachment investigation into Trump over accusations he tried to arm-twist the Ukrainian president into providing dirt on one of his main 2020 election rivals, Joe Biden. State Department officials deny the renewed email effort has any political motivation. However, one former senior US official familiar with the investigation said it seemed to be a means for Republicans "to keep the Clinton email issue alive" and represented "a way to tarnish a whole bunch of Democratic foreign policy people." Those who have found their emails swept up in the investigation do not seem to be at risk of criminal prosecution, however.

Trump's own handling of classified information has come into repeat question, such as when he revealed highly classified infor-



NEW YORK: In this file photo, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks during the Time 100 Summit event in New York. Donald Trump's administration is amping up an investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails, The Washington Post reported. —AFP

mation on the Islamic State group to senior Russian officials in an Oval Office meeting in May 2017. And in April, a whistleblower told Congress some 25 White House officials including top advisors of Trump were given security clearances despite staff rec-

ommendations against it. Clinton has previously chalked up her election defeat to Comey's brief re-opening of the FBI investigation into her use of the private email account and server just days before the 2016 election. —AFP

In pushing probe of rival, did Trump enlist the US government?

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump pressed his Ukrainian counterpart to investigate a political foe. Now, a central question for Democratic lawmakers moving with

remarkable speed to impeach him is the extent to which Trump entangled both his office and the machinery of the US government to spark investigations that would benefit him personally. The White House and Trump's aides have already put much of that evidence on public display.

During a telephone call in July, Trump urged Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to speak with his personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, who had been pursuing a globetrotting effort to find out whether Ukrainian officials improperly dropped an investigation of a company that had hired

the son of former US Vice President Joe Biden, one of the leading contenders to challenge Trump when he seeks reelection in 2020.

The president also offered to involve the US attorney general, according to a summary of the call the White House released last week. Giuliani has said the State Department helped arrange meetings with aides to Zelenskiy, posting a copy of a text message from a US diplomat on Twitter. And much of the episode played out at a time when Trump's administration had suspended security

aid that the US government had earmarked for Ukraine to help it contain threats from Russia.

After Zelenskiy mentioned to Trump that the country was ready to buy new anti-tank missiles, Trump replied that he "would like you to do us a favor" by looking into whether the probe of Russian election interference that shadowed much of his first term was a Ukrainian plot. "The core facts of this are known," said Ross Garber, who teaches impeachment law at Tulane Law School. "The piece we don't know yet, which is critical, is the why." —Reuters

International

Attacks, fraud fears dampen turnout in Afghanistan's poll

Insurgents push offensive, conducting a string of bombings

KABUL: Voter participation in Afghanistan's presidential elections appeared yesterday to have been lower than in previous years, with turnout hit by the threat of attacks, a muted campaign and concerns of fraud. Afghans went to the polls Saturday to vote in the first round of a presidential race that will decide whether President Ashraf Ghani will win a second five-year term.

About 9.6 million Afghans in the war-torn nation - with an estimated population of 35 million - had registered to vote in the election, which was held at some 4,900 polling stations. An initial tally released yesterday by Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission showed that with data from slightly more than half the stations, just under 1.1 million people had voted. If that turnout trend holds, it would represent a participation level of less than 25 percent - lower than any of Afghanistan's three previous presidential elections.

In 2014, for instance, turnout was a little under 50 percent, although direct comparisons are tough because previous polls were tainted by allegations of systemic fraud. Authorities heralded Saturday's election as a success because the Taliban were unable to pull off a large-scale attack resulting in high casualty numbers, and there were fewer technical difficulties than some had feared. But the insurgents nonetheless pushed their offensive on the democratic process, conducting a string of bombings at polling stations and engaging Afghan security forces in clashes across the country.

According to the Afghanistan Analysts Network, which compiled incidents through various sources, more than 400 attacks had been reported over the course of the election day. The Taliban claimed to have conducted

531 attacks, while the interior ministry said "the enemy" had carried out 68 assaults. The official death toll is five security forces. But in years past, authorities have suppressed information on election day only to later give larger numbers.

'Much cleaner'

Still, Shaharzak Akbar, who heads the Afghan government's Independent Human Rights Commission, said she breathed "a sigh of relief" that the election had gone smoothly compared to previous years.

Authorities herald election as success

"The Afghan security forces really showed a real capability in managing the security situation across Afghanistan in ensuring people have access to polling centers," she said. But turnout was also hampered by skepticism about the electoral process. Previous polls, including the 2014 presidential election, were undermined by widespread allegations of vote-buying, ballot stuffing and fraud.

And the election campaign itself seemed almost moribund during the two months of campaigning because many thought the poll - already twice delayed while the US and the Taliban tried to negotiate a troop withdrawal deal - would be pushed back yet again. It was only after US President Donald Trump scuppered those talks on September 7 that candidates really believed the election would take place, leaving little time for them to campaign. Turnout was low because of security threats and "the weak campaigning of the candidates" political analyst and Kabul academic Atta Noori said. "It is not because they were not interested to vote," he said.

Independent political analyst Haroun Mir said that even with a low turnout, the election could be considered a vic-



KABUL: Youths walk at Wazir Akbar Khan hilltop overlooking Kabul yesterday. Voter participation in Afghanistan's presidential elections appeared to have been lower than in previous years, with turnout hit by the threat of attacks, a muted campaign and concerns of fraud. — AFP

tory for the democratic process because it was "much cleaner" than previous polls. Election officials have said the result would be the purest yet, with equipment such as biometric fingerprint readers and better training for poll

workers ensuring the vote was fair. Results are not expected until October 19. Candidates need more than 50 percent of the vote to be declared outright winner, or else the top two will head for a second round in November. — AFP

Kashmir crisis leaves lucrative apple orchards to rot

SHOPIAN: Farmers in Kashmir are deliberately leaving their apples to rot, undermining the restive territory's most lucrative export as bitterness towards the Indian government grows. New Delhi has deployed tens of thousands of extra troops since early August, when it scrapped the region's decades-old semi-autonomous status, and brought in a communications blockade that cut off Kashmiris from the outside world.

Political leaders and thousands of civilians have been arrested, with allegations of torture and abuse levelled at authorities - which deny them - and protests have since raged. Either in anger or at the urging of local militants, farmers have joined in the rebuke of India's actions by deliberately sabotaging a crop vital to the local economy. The fertile Himalayan region usually sells hundreds of millions of dollars worth of apples each year, and more than half of Kashmiris are engaged directly or indirectly in cultivation.

At one orchard in central Shopian district, Ghulam Nabi Malik and his brother usually sell 7,000 boxes of apples a year for markets and kitchen tables across India, earning them some seven million rupees (nearly \$100,000). Their land is now idle, with branches sagging under the weight of unpicked fruit. "Let it rot on the trees," Malik said. Amid the latest unrest, Malik told AFP that harvesting would allow the Indian government "to tell the world that everything is fine in Kashmir". And everything, he says, is far from fine.

'Ready to sacrifice'

Militants have circulated letters and stuck posters outside mosques, appealing to orchard owners not to harvest and instead join the "resistance". "Apple growers and students are ready to sacrifice this year and not betray the blood of martyrs," reads one such notice, nailed to a wooden post and signed by a local rebel commander.



MALIKGUND: Apples are ready to be harvested in an orchard in Shopian district of southern Kashmir valley. — AFP

Many farmers say they are willing participants in the campaign, although there have been threats and one orchard owner - a local bigwig close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party - was attacked. In one village, a former police officer who deserted to join a rebel group set fire to empty boxes his own family had bought for packing fruit. Militants have also put pressure on fuel stations, forcing off the roads many trucks needed to transport the fruit.

But locals insisted to AFP that the insurgents were not the reason for abandoning what they say is a bumper crop this year. "To leave the ripe apples rotting on the trees is the only form of protest we can do under the current circumstances," Malik said. People say they are more frightened of Indian security forces, who often haul away young men from villages at night. "There is fear (of the militants), but it's not like the fear of the state forces," said one villager who declined to be named, fearing reprisal.

Security measures

Modi says that with tens of thousands killed in Kashmir's 30-year-old anti-India insurgency, his govern-

ment has acted to end "a vicious cycle of terrorism, violence, separatism and corruption". New Delhi says most Kashmiris support its move but are scared to say so out of fear of "terrorists" backed by arch-rival Pakistan, which has fought two wars with India over the territory.

The state government has tried to resolve the situation with the apples by promising security for growers and offering to buy apples directly. It insists these measures are working. Deliveries of apples to market were only down by around 25 percent, said Metharam Kriplani of the New Delhi-based Kashmir Apple Merchants Association. The "biggest problem" facing buyers was the lack of phone lines as a result of the region's communications lockdown, he said.

But growers that spoke to AFP have refused the offer of government support, and fruit markets in Shopian and elsewhere in Kashmir are empty - despite some traders claiming that local authorities attempted to browbeat them into opening as normal. The authorities "threatened that they would destroy the shops (at the market) if we didn't open. But the market is deserted," said Bashir Ahmad Bashir, head of the local fruit-growers association. — AFP

Thousands rally in Moscow to demand release of protesters

MOSCOW: Thousands of Russians rallied in Moscow yesterday to demand the release of protesters jailed in what Kremlin opponents says is a campaign to stifle dissent. The protesters were arrested during demonstrations since July against the exclusion of many opposition candidates from a local election, and allegations of police brutality and what many Muscovites saw as harsh jail sentences have sparked an unusual public outcry.

Several people were sentenced to up to four years, and others are being prosecuted, for crimes such as violence against police officers. In a rare step following the outcry, courts freed one person on bail and dropped charges against another. But President Vladimir Putin's opponents say the moves may be a tactic to avoid wider concessions and want to step up pressure for others to be freed.

Opposition politician Leonid Volkov said a high turnout yesterday would compel the government to release more people. "If there are 50,000 people, they'll let everyone out," Volkov wrote on Twitter ahead of the rally. Protesters filed through metal detectors under light rain, waving flags from an array of opposition groupings of starkly different political stripes. A crowd of 18,000 people had been counted 30 minutes after the start of the rally, according to the White Counter group which monitors political protests.

The rally has been authorized by the Moscow mayor's office, meaning mass detentions by police are less likely to happen. The series of protests began in July when more than a dozen opposition-minded candidates were not allowed to run in a Sept. 8 election to Moscow's city legislature on a technicality. The police says people were detained or prosecuted for breaking the law and that the protests had to be dispersed as they had not been authorized and were illegal.

After his allies were barred from the vote, opposition leader Alexei Navalny called on supporters to vote tactically for opponents of the ruling United Russia party, regardless of their political stripe. United Russia, which supports Putin, lost a third of its seats in the Moscow city assembly, a setback for the authorities that Navalny said was a victory for the Kremlin's opponents even though the governing party kept its majority. The rallies were the largest sustained protest movement in Moscow in almost a decade, peaking at around 60,000 people, before appearing to lose momentum. — Reuters

Nations that make weapons, foment migration but refuse the refugees: Pope

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis yesterday scolded countries that produce weapons for wars fought elsewhere and then refuse to take in refugees fleeing the very same conflicts. The 82-year-old Argentine pope, whose parents were of Italian immigrant stock, has made the defense of migrants and refugees a plank of his pontificate and he has often clashed over immigration policy with US President Donald Trump and populist anti-immigrant politicians in Europe.

Francis has also criticized the arms trade repeatedly and his sermon for 40,000 people in St Peter's Square yesterday linked the issues of war and migration as the Roman Catholic Church marked its World Day of Migrants and Refugees. "Wars only affect some regions of the world, yet weapons of war are produced and sold in other regions which are then unwilling to take in the refugees generated by these conflicts," Francis said.

Yesterday's Mass was attended by many immigrants and groups helping them. It was also marked by a mix of African, Spanish and Portuguese music as well as traditional Church music. Francis said the world is becoming increasingly "elitist and cruel towards the excluded", adding that it is the duty of Christians to look after all those left behind in a "throwaway culture" taking root in society. "This means being a neighbor to all those who are mistreated and abandoned on the streets of our world,



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis attends the unveiling of a sculpture called 'Angels Unaware' by Canadian sculptor Timothy P Schmaiz (right) depicting a group of 140 migrants of various cultures and from different historic times, following a mass for World Day of Migrants and Refugees at St Peter's Square. — AFP

soothing their wounds and bringing them to the nearest shelter, where their needs can be met," he said. People could not remain indifferent to "the bleak isolation, contempt and discrimination experienced by those who do not

belong to 'our' group", the pope said. Francis then inaugurated a large statue in St Peter's Square, showing dozens of migrants and refugees from different faiths and different periods of history. — Reuters

Death toll in east Indonesia quake rises to 30

JAKARTA: The death toll from a strong earthquake in Indonesia's eastern province of Maluku has risen to 30 people, the national disaster mitigation agency (BNBP) said yesterday, and hundreds of thousands of people remain in evacuation shelters. The 6.5 magnitude quake hit early on Thursday, damaging hundreds of houses and dozens of public facilities and infrastructure, including the main bridge in the city of Ambon.

Officials on Thursday had put the death toll at 20 people. Many were killed by falling rubble. More than 150 people were injured, BNBP spokesman Agus Wibowo said in a statement on Sunday, and over 200,000 remain in shelters. Those whose houses were destroyed have set up tents as shelters in near hospitals or school yards. People living near the ocean have evacuated to higher ground following the quake, fearing a tsunami, despite authorities have ruled out the possibility of a giant wave. Indonesia, which sits on the seismically active Pacific Ring of Fire, is often hit by deadly earthquakes and tsunamis. — Reuters

Analysis

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Web giants woo festive shoppers

E-commerce giants Amazon and Walmart-backed Flipkart kicked off a crucial battle for shoppers yesterday ahead of India's massive festive season as retailers search for a much-needed boost to sales amid a slowing economy. October and November - when much of India's 1.3 billion population celebrates several major Hindu festivals and consumers traditionally go on spending sprees - are critical for retailers, with some raking in almost half of their annual sales during the period.

But sales this year have been hit by falling consumer demand as a liquidity crunch crimps personal loans and unemployment soars to its highest level since the 1970s. "Things are difficult," Rakesh Kumar Yadav of the Federation of Sadar Bazar Traders Association, which represents some 40,000 wholesale traders in the capital New Delhi, told AFP. Even aggressive pitches by Amazon and Flipkart, which have heavily invested in India's budding e-commerce market, did not stop online consumer spending from slipping by around 20 percent in the six months to June compared to last year, the Economic Times reported citing market research firm Kantar.

"The festive season is around the corner... and a lot of these corporates are coming up with various schemes to prop up demand and woo the consumers," India Ratings principal economist Sunil Sinha told AFP. "But my own sense is that despite all the efforts, overall consumer sentiment is so down-and-out that we won't see similar kinds of spending that we have seen in the past."

With their deep pockets, Amazon and Flipkart are taking on India's local family-run stores, known as "kirana" shops, that have dominated streets for decades. Less than five percent of India's \$600 billion retail market is online, but the sector is expected to expand to 8-9 percent of the market by 2022 thanks to smartphone adoption and a rising middle class, according to RBC Capital Markets.

Amazon - which recently opened a massive campus for 15,000 employees in the southern city of Hyderabad - has taken out full-page newspaper ads to promote its "Big Indian Festival" sales and is offering discounts of up to 90 percent. Flipkart has Indian mega-star cricket Virat Kohli as the face of their "Big Billion Days" sales campaign and has slashed prices on fashion items and home appliances.

The two platforms - which have almost 75 percent market share of the e-commerce market - hope to attract cash-strapped shoppers with financing options, and have hired hundreds of thousands of temporary staff to cope with expected increased demand. Their six-day festive sales are estimated to reach \$3.8 billion, up from \$2.9 billion last year, despite the wider economic slowdown. Forrester Research senior forecast analyst Satish Meena said. — AFP

Tax woes for Japan retailers

Cash register shortages, differing tax levels and a complicated points system: From October 1, Japan will have a new consumption tax and its complex regulations have left some retailers baffled. The long-awaited and twice delayed consumption tax hike will move Japan's VAT from eight percent to 10 percent - a key revenue source to fund government plans including free preschool. But a raft of exceptions and government efforts to use the hike to encourage cashless payments have left retailers fearing a meltdown.

In a bid to smooth out the impact of the hike on consumers, Japan has agreed to certain exemptions, including for food purchases, unless they are being eaten onsite. That rule puts a range of retailers, from fast-food outlets and bakeries to Japan's ubiquitous convenience stores, in a bind. A bento box bought to be eaten outside qualifies for the old tax rate, but if the customer decides to eat in the small seating areas in many convenience stores, they face the new rate.

"Customers don't necessarily know at the moment when they're buying something what they're going to eat here and what they're going to take home," said one frustrated bakery owner in Tokyo's Shinagawa neighborhood. "We're not going to monitor where they eat," she added, speaking on condition of anonymity. As a result, she has decided to simply apply the old eight percent tax rate to all her products and report all her sales as takeaway. "It would have been better to tax everything at 10 percent or leave all food at eight percent," she said.

In Tokyo's famed Tsukiji outer market, another retailer said he too would simply be recording all purchases as takeaway, even if customers consumed them onsite. "Our cash register is capable of ringing up the different rates, but it's too complicated, so we'll leave everything at eight percent," he said. Other retailers are taking a different approach and will charge varying base prices for food items depending on whether they are eat-in or takeaway. — AFP

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In this photo taken on Sept 11, 2019, a firefighter extinguishes a fire in a forest near Rambutan village in Ogan Ilir in Indonesia's South Sumatra province. — AFP

Indonesia fires put palm oil under scrutiny

A brutal Indonesian forest fire season that left Southeast Asia choking in smog has renewed scrutiny of major palm oil and paper companies, with activists accusing them of breaking promises to halt logging. The monster blazes sent a pall of acrid smoke over the region for weeks, closing schools and airports and causing a spike in respiratory ailments. Mostly lit to clear land for agriculture, they were the worst seen in the country since 2015.

Leading companies have in recent years pledged not to log any more pristine rainforest, not to use burning to clear land and to cut ties with smaller suppliers who don't abide by their rules-but critics say such vows now ring hollow. "They do not live up to the commitments, and are not addressing the fact that we are now in a climate crisis," Annisa Rahmawati, a senior forest campaigner at Greenpeace, told AFP. "They are still doing business as usual."

Industry players however insist they have gone to great lengths to stop burning and trees being cut down in their operations. Singapore-listed Wilmar International, the world's biggest palm oil trader, committed in 2013 to a no-deforestation policy and says it has stopped sourcing from 17 suppliers that did not comply with their rules. Production of palm oil - used in numerous everyday goods from shampoo to biscuits - has been blamed by environmentalists for driving massive deforestation.

Consumer goods companies are paying more attention to where they source palm oil and other materials. Some of

the world's largest brands - including Nestle and Unilever - pledged in 2010 to reach net zero deforestation within a decade through "responsible sourcing" of cattle, palm oil, soya and other commodities. But after that pledge was signed, the pace of tree-felling linked to commodities increased dramatically and at least 50 million hectares of forest worldwide has been destroyed Greenpeace said - an area about the size of Spain.

Firestarters

Fires are used as a cheap way to clear agricultural land in Indonesia every year during the dry season. Experts say it is hard to know who is responsible for the blazes in the hardest hit areas - Indonesia's Sumatra island and the Indonesian part of Borneo - which are home to myriad companies of varying sizes and numerous small-scale farmers. Big firms insist they have "no-burn" policies in place and often blame smallholders for starting fires they say then spread to their plantations.

Indonesia has made some arrests over the blazes but in many cases it remains unclear who started the fires - and who ordered them. While larger companies have vowed not to source from smaller ones that break strict environmental rules, critics say they are not monitoring their supply chains carefully. "The biggest challenge is the industry-wide lack of traceability of the origins of palm fruit," said Nur Maliki Arifandi, from WWF Indonesia.

"This has allowed continuing deforestation, often

caused by real smallholders as well as land speculators and rich, powerful people to open more natural forest areas and plant illegal oil palm plantations." Some industry watchers say commitments by big firms have helped and official figures show the rate of forest loss in Indonesia declined in recent years.

Burning issue

But critics say problems persist - this week Greenpeace said in a new report that palm oil and pulpwood companies with links to land burned between 2015 and 2018 rarely faced serious government sanctions. And last year the NGO accused palm-oil giant Wilmar, as well as other consumer brands including Colgate-Palmolive, Hershey, Nestle, and Unilever, of continuing to buy from groups that were destroying the rainforest.

At the end of 2018 Wilmar, Unilever and Mondelez committed to a mapping and monitoring platform for the palm oil sector, which Greenpeace supported at the time as a potential breakthrough in cleaning up supply chains. But the NGO pulled out of the project last month, saying the companies were not serious about the project. Wilmar insists it sticks to its commitments and says it continues to work towards a supply chain free from deforestation from 2020. Activists however doubt such goals are within reach. "We are asking companies to be more serious in implementing their targets on the ground," WWF Indonesia's Arifandi said. — AFP

In Kosovo, Roma's recycling work is unsung, underpaid

As the sun rises over Pristina, the Maksutis and their six children fan out across the capital to scour garbage bins for bits of plastic and metal, part of an invisible army doing the dirty work of recycling in Kosovo. "We start at 7:00 am and we are out by the containers all day," says Bujar Maksuti, the Roma family's head, as he stands by a bin swarming with wasps.

Kosovo's patchy, haphazard waste management is one of several environmental threats piling up in this impoverished corner of Europe, with illegal dumpsites littering the countryside and hazardous landfills leaking into the groundwater. Yet the issue gets little attention in the run-up to Oct 6 elections, where the environment does not top any party's list of priorities.

Similarly forgotten are the poorest of the poor who do the bulk of waste sorting in Kosovo, work that is low-paid, dangerous and thankless. Most hail from the marginalized Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities who make up around two percent of Kosovo's mainly ethnic Albanian population. An absence of formal contracts -

coupled with discrimination that often locks Roma out of other job opportunities - leaves the scrap collectors open to exploitation by companies who purchase what they collect and export it abroad. Most collectors earn between €50-100 (\$55-110) a month, a fifth of the average wage in Kosovo, according to a 2018 survey carried out by the European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo (ECMI Kosovo). But in an industry that generates around 40 million euros annually in exports, the recycling firms' profits are much larger, according to the NGO, who said at least some of that money could be used to help lift the waste collectors out of poverty.

Poverty trap

Dirty and dangerous, the work also keeps Roma and other minorities marginalized. "Working in recyclables is not an honour job... you work with garbage," said Bashkim Ibishi from the NGO Advancing Together, which advocates for social inclusion in Kosovo. It also feeds prejudice against the communities, he said. Many children help their parents, missing out on school and perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

According to UNICEF, 17 percent of Kosovo's Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children work, 60 percent live in absolute poverty, and nearly a third of girls do not complete primary education. The recycling also poses health risks as the workers lack the proper protective gear to handle waste that is sometimes hazardous.

The Maksutis, who spend most of the year in neigh-



Bujar Maksuti arranges items that he found in the containers as his children look on in Pristina on Sept 10, 2019. — AFP

boring Albania but come to Kosovo to work for the summer, send their older children to dig through bins in other locations while their youngest son and daughter trail behind them, watching from a distance. "We keep the (young) children away so they do not get sick," explained Maksuti, who uses a wheelbarrow to move his scraps home until they have enough to sell. Like most of their colleagues, the Maksutis don't own a motorized vehicle and must hire a truck to transport their finds to a private recycling firm, which can eat up nearly half of their weekly profits. — AFP

Bracing for Brexit: French food firms fear cost of 'no deal'

White smoke billows from a chimney at a sugar beet factory in northern France, where a tanker truck is filling up on the region's "white gold". As the sugar beet harvesting season enters full swing, the Lillers plant of the world's third-biggest sugar producer Tereos is a hive of activity, with trucks bearing consignments of sugar departing every hour for markets around Europe. Many are headed to Britain through the nearby port of Calais, Tereos' fifth biggest market, where it supplies sugar to United Biscuits as well as the Whitworths baking sugar brand.

But that custom, which is crucial for Tereos' 14 French plants, could turn sour if, as remains a danger, Britain leaves the EU on October 31 without a divorce deal, prompting the return of a hard border. Britain has set out plans to make 87 percent of its imports tariff-free in the event of a no-deal Brexit. But food producers on either side of the Channel are expected to feel the bite.

Tereos says that the cost of its sugar to British clients could jump by 50 percent. "Today, we're looking at (import tariffs of) 150 euros per tonne of sugar. Given that



A tractor harvests sugar beet on Sept 20, 2019 in Vendin les Bethune, north of France. — AFP

a tonne of sugar is worth 400 euros, when you factor in the extra cost of customs and logistics, we could reach additional costs of 200 euros, or 50 percent," Paul Jacquelin, Tereos' business transformation manager, told AFP. "It's very worrisome for our British clients who will suffer big (price) increases."

Syrups turning to solids

The cooperative, which groups 12,000 French beet growers, also fears its shipments being held up by tailbacks caused by the return of border controls in Calais. This week, French customs staged their third dress rehearsal for a no-deal Brexit in as many weeks, subjecting a selection of trucks travelling between Calais and the English port of Dover to simulated export and import

checks. "I think we're ready," Jean-Michel Thillier, deputy director of the French customs service, told AFP, pointing to new "smart border" technology aimed at easing traffic across the world's busiest shipping route in the event of a return of a hard border.

But a delay of even a day or two in Calais could jeopardize some of Tereos' business, causing its glucose syrups to solidify and British biscuit-makers working on a just-in-time production basis to run out of sugar. "We're still hoping that a deal (between the EU and Britain will be found), or that the UK will unilaterally reduce all its import tariffs to zero," Jacquelin said.

'Absolutely no information'

Concern over Brexit is also palpable at Rungis Market south of Paris, the world's biggest wholesale market for fresh produce. Marie Rivenez, head of GRG, one of France's biggest meat wholesalers, which imports 600 lambs each day from Britain, told AFP she had received "absolutely no information" about what kind of sanitary checks, if any, might apply after Brexit. She is equally concerned about the import tariffs that would apply to lamb in the event of no-deal Brexit and which she estimated at "nearly 50 percent of the price".

"If that's the case we will no longer be able to source our lamb in Britain," she said, warning that the relationships built up by GRG with British suppliers since the 1970s could be at risk. "It's very, very complicated," she said. Some 100,000 French companies trade with Britain, France's sixth-biggest trading partner. — AFP

Business

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All-new Zain Store opens in Mishref

Company launches new iPhone 11 offers



From the Zain Store inauguration and the launch of iPhone 11 devices



KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the inauguration of the all-new Zain Store in Mishref Cooperative Society, which leaps beyond the concept of the traditional retail branch and offers tech enthusiasts with the latest electronics. The store's opening ceremony witnessed the presence of the company's executive management.

The all-new store, which is the first of its kind by a telecom operator in Kuwait, comes under the umbrella of Zain's digital transformation journey and expansion strategy, through which the company is committed to becoming closer to its customers - who are considered Kuwait's largest family of subscribers - wherever they are. The opening also came to reflect Zain's leadership position in the Kuwaiti market.

During the opening ceremony, Zain launched its offers for the all-new iPhone 11 devices from Apple with a variety of plans for postpaid customers. The company is keen on offering the most flexible and competitive plans to suit customers' unique personal and professional needs.

The new Zain Store in Mishref is the first of many to-come new stores Zain will roll out soon all-around strategic locations in Kuwait. The Zain Store's design leaps beyond the concept of the traditional retail branch. Not only does it offer Zain's innovative solutions and customer care services, but also features a collection of the latest electronics and original accessories that Zain offers for the very first time to tech enthusiasts, including: laptops, video game consoles, drones, headphones and speakers, cases and covers, and much more.

The store also offers customers a chance to try Zain's superfast 5G network and learn about the huge capabilities behind this revolutionary new technology. Additionally, the store has a dedicated section that features Zain LIFE's innovative home security solutions, including smart cameras, motion sensors, smart smoke detectors, and more.

Zain Stores will always be updated with the latest from the biggest tech companies around the world, offering an exceptional concept of the retail experience by featuring the latest smart devices, high-tech touchscreens, telecommunication services, accessories, and more. The stores are equipped with the latest tech solutions that offer a rich customer experience and transform the idea of the traditional branch into a digital one. This concept comes as part of Zain's digital transformation journey into becoming an integrated digital services provider.

This opening comes after Zain's recent inauguration of its all-new retail branch in the Avenues Mall, Phase 4 - The Forum, featuring the latest Customer Service innovations. The new branch, which is strategically located in the latest phase of the Avenues mall called The Forum, features more employees to serve visitors all week long, especially on weekends when the mall



- Store leaps beyond traditional branch concept to offer latest electronics to tech enthusiasts
- New store reflects Zain's strategic direction towards digital services
- Company holds opening ceremony with presence of executive management

witnesses high traffics of visitors. Zain's new branch features an all-new Smart Mall screen, considered the first of its kind in Kuwait. The Smart Mall is an interactive touchscreen that uses the latest and most advanced technologies, offering customers the opportunity to virtually shop without the need for branch staff to be present. Customers can simply touch the screen and interact with the 3D modeled products, select the desired items, complete the transaction using their bank card, and specify the delivery location to get their order delivered wherever they need. The Smart Mall features a wide range of the latest electronics, smart devices, accessories, and more from Kuwait's leading providers.

The newly opened branch also includes the Zain Smart Branch, which is considered the first digital self-service touchscreen of its kind launched by a telecom company in Kuwait. The Smart Branch offers Zain's customers with new service options that were previously not available through a traditional self-service machine, and works automatically through advanced technology without the need of the presence of branch staff.

Equipped with a smart interface, the Smart Branch recognizes a customer's identity through the advanced face recognition feature, where the branch scans the customer's civil ID and matches their photo with their face on-the-spot. Of the many new services offered by Zain's Smart

Branch, the most notable is the SIM card replacement feature, which is the first service of its kind provided by a self-service machine. Customers can order a replacement for their lost or ineffective SIM cards and receive a new one immediately without the need of visiting a traditional branch. The Smart Branch also offers a variety of other services including recharging lines, bill payment, managing accounts, and purchasing devices from Zain's Online Store.

The Smart Homes sector is one of the main elements of the digital transformation journey undertaken by telecoms around the world, particularly with respect to securing homes and protecting them against theft with the use of modern technology. Zain is working on designing new plans to match these transformation processes to be included in Zain LIFE in addition to its existing portfolio of smart solutions. Zain always aspires to new levels of excellence in all services it offers to its customers. Through the opening of this new store, Zain affirms its continuous efforts in meeting its customers' needs and aspirations, and delivers its promise to offering the best services and latest technologies. The company constantly looks at ways to improve the retail experience for its customers, including providing them with the latest solutions to better serve their needs through the biggest network of branches in Kuwait.

Business

Thousands crowd Ooredoo office to get best iPhone 11 offer in town

Exclusive offer with all-embracing packages starting at KD 23



From left Fatima Dashti, Mijbil Al-Ayoub and Creative photographer Abdulaziz Al-Sraye'a



Mijbil Al-Ayoub and Khaled Al-Mulaifi



KUWAIT: Since the year 2014, Ooredoo Kuwait has been achieving a great success year after year, and maintaining the level of trust and loyalty amongst its customers and giving them the best exclusive offers that coincide with the launch of Apple devices every year. This year, at midnight on Friday, September 27th, Ooredoo celebrated yet another major successful launch event for the best and most remarkable offer in Kuwait for the iPhone 11 amid a huge crowd of customers who flocked to its headquarters in Kuwait City to obtain the devices, within exclusive packages and for a limited time only in an event that is the largest and most exciting in Kuwait every year.

KD 23

The company's headquarters received thousands of customers who were keen to attend and benefit from the exclusive offer offered by the company for a limited time, which is a comprehensive package at KD 23 per month only with unlimited minutes and Internet of up to 250GB and a voucher of up to KD 100.

6 years

In a statement he delivered on the launch ceremony, Senior Director of Corporate Communications, Mijbil Al-Ayoub said, "We are proud to have a distinctive footprint in launching new iPhones every year-by welcoming our customers at the stroke of midnight until early morning. We are offering the best exclusive deals and in competitive packages. This year we are witnessing another success for the company in the largest global annual event in the world of tech and IT. "This year we have been keen to offer exclusive and competitive advantages, which

is part of our policy of care, connect and challenge. The mass turnout today is the biggest testimony to the company's success and its endeavor to satisfy all customers and give them the best offers, packages and services." Thanks to our customers for their trust and we promise to always provide the best."

Al-Ayoub highlighted the strategic and distinctive relationship with Apple and said, "Through our special relationship with Apple, we seek to provide the latest innovations in the world of communications and provide the best experience in the world of communications with the best offers in Kuwait at competitive prices."

Elite Display

The company has introduced iPhone 11 enhanced with a distinctive and different competitive offer this year that allows elite customers to get new iPhone 11 with valuable gifts. Customers were given the chance to receive Elite offers, which include a KD 60 package and a KD 90 package. These packages have been launched with many features as two customer selectable devices with unlimited local minutes, unlimited internet, unlimited SMS, free Ooredoo Passport packages and more. Ooredoo Elite Program is a special program for VIP and VIP customers in Kuwait.

Midnight, yearly timing and the most requested color

The iPhone 11, Pro 11 and Pro Max 11 are the most advanced line-up of Apple smartphones ever, and with their innovative and revolutionary design, they carry many new features and capabilities built into the Apple iOS 13 operating system, delivering a customer experience no match. The devices are

available in many colors, including the all-new midnight green, light gray, light silver, gold, black, white, purple, green, yellow and red. The timing of the launch was matched with the color of the most sought-after midnight green, which saw an unprecedented demand from customers.

5G for only KD 17.5!

In addition to the special iPhone 11 offers, the company also offered an exclusive launch event by offering a 5G router at a monthly subscription of KD 17.5. It is worth mentioning that the company launched the 5G network where customers enjoy an exceptional experience in terms of download speed and a higher amount of data flow, which gives them an experience that reaches new speeds beyond compare. The new 5G network also offers ultra-low latency, which means that the customer will enjoy a stronger Internet and easier data flow at a more stable speed. The company received customers in the specially designed 5G pavilion on the occasion of the event, which allowed customers to experience the network and enjoy the experience through Games and 5G router.

CAVARATY

CAVARATY, a leading company in Kuwait specializing in smart phone accessories and other products such as headphones, batteries, pens, power banks and more, took part in this event. It offered Ooredoo customers free screen protectors and exclusive discounts on their exclusive covers as well as offering latest discounted cases that fit the all-new iPhone 11.

On the participation of CAVARATY, General Manager Eng. Ali Al-Qena'ei expressed his delight at the presence of

CAVARATY at the launch of iPhone 11 with Ooredoo. He said "We are keen to provide the best products that meet the needs of customers, especially when customers are always looking for the necessary accessories after purchasing their smartphones. Today, we are keen to provide all this under one roof and are proud to cooperate with Ooredoo on this special day."

Social Media

Some famous social media influencers attended the launch events, including: Ohoud Al Enezi, Mohammad Mirza, Dana Twairish, Ahmed Al Riyahi, Mahmoud Boushahri, Abdulmohsen Al Kout, Hamdi, Q8 Pro-Thamer, Q8 App-Meshal, Osama, iTunes Q8, Slorks, Sayed Nawaf and Anoud Al Enezi, and the creative photographers Abdulaziz Alsuraiya and Abdulrahman Al-Badah. Each one of those influencers contributed to the success of the event and created the right buzz around it.

"Star"

There was a special corner of the Nojoom Rewards program during the ceremony in line with the company's policy of attention, communication and challenge. Customers can use the program to redeem their points flexibly and through the Nojoom Rewards website, in order to ensure that there are a variety of services to meet the needs of the customer.

Ooredoo has selected all program partners to meet the needs of its customers to provide a distinctive experience complementing their lifestyle and needs, which includes Crown Plaza, Eureka, Landmark Group (Home Center, Centrepoint), Alshaya

Group, Jarir Bookstore, Refai, Grills, Chocolateness, Cosmo, Breezyn, Floward, Joyalukkas and Home Safat in the process of increasing the number of program partners. In order to keep up with the lifestyle of dear customers. Established in 2012, the Nojoom Rewards Program has been continuously renovated to suit the modern Kuwaiti and youth lifestyle and meets local and international trends. Nojoom was awarded the Best Loyalty Program in the Middle East and Africa for three consecutive years in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

88.8

The iPhone 11 launch event was broadcasted LIVE88.8 with Diwaniya Al Yaqout and Al Ansari in the presence of representatives from Ooredoo and celebrity social media.

Food trucks & Stations

The launch ceremony witnessed the participation and presence of a number of famous restaurants and cafes in Kuwait such as Crave Too, TNT, Zoom Pizza, FACE / OFF, Texture, Cafe Supreme, Chocolateness, Grills, Burger Bus, Caribou, Surf 'N' Fries, Dahiya Juice, Dose, Coffee Bar, Just C, Zoom Pizza and Saj Co.

Free screen protection from CAVARATY

All customers who received the iPhone 11 offer during the ceremony were given free screen protection from CAVARATY, whose team was present throughout the ceremony through a special booth in the main branch which witnessed long queues of customers who were keen to get free screen protectors and benefit from dis-



Business

Burgan Bank showcases innovative digital solutions and new products

Bank participates in Central Bank of Kuwait's International Banking Conference

By A Staff Reporter

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank participated in the recently held International Banking Conference, themed "Shaping the Future", organized by the Central Bank of Kuwait which took place under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and in the presence of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Dr Mohammad Yousef Al-Hashel, and other local and GCC banks. Demonstrating its leadership as an innovative financial solutions provider for all segments, the bank displayed its exclusive new products and technological services.

Burgan Bank Vice Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer Masaud Hayat said, "Our participation in the International Banking Conference and Financial Technologies Exhibition falls in line with our mission to invest in the advancement of the financial sector through support of such valuable events. The exhibition served as a lucrative platform to reveal new age and emerging technologies transforming the banking sector. Over the years, Burgan Bank's adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Current consumer demands have led to a shift in the way banks operate and perform. In line with the rapid developments witnessed in the banking sector, our long-term strategy has adopted this dynamic transition and will continue to embrace digital solutions that pave the future for technological reforms in financial products and services to serve our customers better."

Group Chief Operations & Technology Officer, Venkat Menon said, "The fast pace of digitization in



Masaud Hayat

Venkat Menon

the banking world where windows of opportunities open and shut faster than ever, demands a focused vision, agility and creativity to translate that vision into action. We have to move fast and balance between transforming for the future in line with rapidly changing customer expectations and continue to excel at the regular routine. Burgan Bank has geared itself to meet this challenge and has planned a series of innovative products and services that will be launched in the near future.

Addressing rising consumer demand for improved, innovative and seamless banking experiences, Venkat Menon presented the new face of banking products and services at Burgan Bank's booth in the exhibition. "We now launch Kuwait's first and biggest voice enabled Artificial Intelligence powered banking chatbot, named 'BANKI'. The electronic virtual assistant uses the latest and Natural Language processing to understand the customer's inquiries and fetch the relevant information from innumerable possible sources, all in a matter of seconds. Customers can get the informa-



tion they are seeking instantaneously by conversing with 'BANKI' in human language instead of searching, browsing, clicking buttons or waiting on a call."

Menon also revealed the "Digital Ambassador", "BiBi", which was received with great interest from the exhibition's visitors. A semi-humanoid robot that would be assisting customers at the branches with regards to their banking requirements, "BiBi" has the ability to evolve its skills through all, and give feedback accordingly and can respond to verbal, touch, environmental and tablet input, and is interactive, progressive and autonomous. The robot will provide basic information about Burgan Bank's products and services,

and will continue to evolve, eventually gaining the ability to provide banking services with complete ease and customer's authentication.

"Bringing further convenience to its valued customers, we at Burgan Bank have made it easier and faster to order or replace a card with instant card production for all types of cards at all branches. Customers can now order a debit or credit card and receive it on the spot as well as open a new account and receive the debit card instantly or order a prepaid or exchange card and receive it on the same day. In the coming months the bank is planning to introduce further enhancements to this service," added Menon.

Huawei P30 Pro limited edition pearl white introduced



KUWAIT: The Huawei P30 Pro is one of Huawei's most coveted smartphones, selling 10 million units in just 85 days, and the winner of various awards for its powerful performance, solid features and stunning design. The brand has also released different variants to the series, with new color and storage options. The latest addition to this family is the Huawei P30 Pro Limited Edition Pearl White with a 128GB storage option. This brand new color brings a new style statement for its users with undertones of elegance and royalty.

Taking to the skies this time, the Huawei P30 Pro Limited Edition Pearl White is heavily inspired by the flowing movement and the clear essence of the clouds as they float across the salt flats that inspired the designs for the Huawei P30 Pro series. After several hundred coating tests, Huawei's engineering marvels were able to create the new Pearl White color, which has a unique gradient of white and pink, taking smartphone design to a whole new level.

Apart from this stunning new color, the Huawei P30 Pro Limited Edition Pearl White still packs the smartphone's award-winning features. Recognized as the Best Smartphone at European Hardware Award 2019 and MWC Shanghai, this flagship phone packs features and hardware that deliver powerful and efficient performance with a premium user experience. It comes with the world's first Leica Quad Camera setup with 50x zoom and on-board AI for perfect shots under any light conditions. Powering the smartphone is the Kirin 980 chipset, Huawei's fastest chipset yet for fast and efficient performance with 128GB of storage, paired with a massive 4200 mAh battery with the 40W Huawei Supercharge and support for 15W Huawei Wireless Quick Charge.

In terms of display, the phone boasts a massive 6.47 inch display with minimal bezels thanks to the in-screen fingerprint and Huawei Acoustic Display Technology, for a more immersive viewing experience. Gaming is boosted as well with the help of GPU Turbo 3.0, which enhances graphics during intensive gaming sessions.

If you are planning on getting the new Huawei P30 Pro Limited Edition Pearl White for yourself or as a gift for a loved one, you can opt for the limited Special Edition Gift Box for KD 209,900. Topped off with an elegant black ribbon, this box houses the Huawei P30 Pro Limited Edition Pearl White along with the new Huawei P30 Pro Glamorous Case embedded with Swarovski crystals, which further accentuates the phone's stunning good looks. On the other hand, both the phone and the case can also be bought separately.

Mazda Al Shaya & Al Sagar continues leasing offers on all models of cars

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Company, Kaico Al Shaya & Al Sagar, the authorized distributors of Mazda cars in Kuwait, continues to offer the strongest leasing promotion on all its cars on the occasion of the new school season.

In addition to the competitive price, the leasing offer contains a package of benefits including a comprehensive insurance, full service during the contract period and provision of a replacement vehicle. And all of this to ensure the customers peace of mind.

The leasing offer includes the CX-9 model that displays the power of a 2.5L turbo 231hp engine with SKYACTIV TECHNOLOGY. Athletic proportions are highlighted by the sleek cabin, a strong and stable lower body featuring large 20-inch wheels and a confident stance.

As the flagship of the Mazda Lineup, Mazda6 has always been the most elegant and refined statement of the KODO design language and Mazda6 expresses this with its dynamic design and powerful three-dimensionality in the grille and signature wings. Mazda6 is the perfect car of the driver, it is a sporty personal car equipped with everything necessary in the cockpit which has been dedicated to help you enjoy the drive.

High-efficiency SKYACTIV-G direct-injection petrol engines are your passport to a world of driving that is



both exciting and eco-friendly. The engine delivers a fuel efficiency of up to 15%. Safety features include Lane-Keep Assist System, Lane Departure Warning System and Smart Break Support. While the interior is characterized by the MZD CONNECT system, which gives you superior connectivity to the Internet and advanced navigation system.

"The customer is & always has been our priority, so we at Kaico make sure to deliver a one-of-a-kind service and offer the most competitive packages in the automotive industry," stated Ashish Tandon, General

Manager of Kaico.

Nader Salmeh, Sr. Divisional Manager, added "Our customers have great knowledge when it comes to the auto world, hence we provide them with the latest Japanese technology and manufacturing techniques that they expect from a 100 percent Japanese made brand such as Mazda"

Mazda has a history of more than 90 years and Kaico has been its successful partner for 50 years. Kaico was established in 1936 and is one of the main pillars of Al Shaya Trading Group.

Flydubai installs Split Scimitar Winglets on its Next-Gen Boeing 737-800 fleet

KUWAIT: Dubai-based flydubai has announced yesterday the completion of the first Split Scimitar Winglets installation on its fleet of Next-Generation Boeing 737-800 aircraft, becoming the first airline in Middle East to invest in this fuel saving technology. On Saturday 28 September, flydubai flight FZ 144 from Amman to Dubai was operated

by A6-FEG; the first aircraft in the airline's fleet to be retrofitted with the new winglets. The retrofit program will see up to 30 Next-Generation Boeing 737-800 aircraft fitted with the new Split Scimitar Winglets between September 2019 and October 2020. Upon completion of the program, the airline's retrofitted Next-Generation aircraft will benefit from greater fuel efficiency while producing less carbon emissions.

By reducing the drag created at the end of the wingtip and distributing the lift of the aircraft more evenly across the whole wing, the Split Scimitar Winglets reduce fuel consumption by 1.5 percent. The winglets are estimated to reduce flydubai's annual fuel bill by over 200,000 litres per aircraft and reduce CO2 emissions by more than 510 tons per aircraft per year.

Commenting on the introduction of the

Split Scimitar Winglets, Ghaith Al-Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer at flydubai, said: "the Split Scimitar Winglets have been in use since 2013 and we have seen many airlines around the world benefit from this technology both financially and environmentally. Choosing to invest in the latest technologies and to retrofit our fleet is part of fulfilling our commitment to cost and operational efficiency and passing on the savings to our passengers."

Al Ghaith, added: "I would like to thank our Engineering and Maintenance team who are working closely with our MRO service provider, Joramco and the Split Scimitar Winglets supplier, Aviation Partners Boeing (APB) to successfully roll out the retrofit program without impacting aircraft availability."

The retrofit program is scheduled to

coincide with the aircraft's scheduled base maintenance checks. By installing the winglets during the periods of scheduled maintenance, the airline minimizes the effect on aircraft availability and any disruption to its flying schedule. When retrofitting an aircraft, the current Blended Winglets on the Next-Generation Boeing 737-800 aircraft are removed and a new aerodynamically shaped "Scimitar" winglet tip cap is installed. The process takes up to four days per aircraft and the airline expects the program to provide a return on investment in under three years.

flydubai operates a single fleet-type of Boeing 737 aircraft consisting of 43 Next-Generation Boeing 737-800 and 14 Boeing 737 MAX 8 and 9s, which continue to be grounded following the safety recommendation issued in March 2019.

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

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

The lucky winners are:

1. Tareq Jassem Mohammad Al-Qattan
2. Sameerah Khudhair Al-Shammari
3. Elias Fahad Kikash
4. Ibrahim Ahmad Abdulmaqsood Saleem

5. Abdulstar Abdulsamad Taqi Al-Safar

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

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

'Unicorns' that wowed investors face hard road on Wall Street

NEW YORK: The so-called "unicorns" that lured big investments and took Silicon Valley by storm are facing a chillier environment as they turn to Wall Street for fresh capital. The startups earned the unicorn moniker for quickly reaching valuations of more than a billion dollars without hitting public markets, considered a rare feat until a few years ago.

But some of the most prominent unicorns have stumbled on Wall Street, with investors cautious about

their profit potential as well as an uncertain economic outlook. Uber, which was the biggest of the unicorns and had hoped for a valuation of \$100 billion, is worth around half that now, and its shares have skidded some 30 percent since its initial public offering (IPO) in May.

Rideshare rival Lyft has fared even worse, with a 40 percent drop since its IPO early this year.

WeWork parent We Company, another massive unicorn valued at some \$47 billion based on private funding rounds, shelved plans for its IPO this month and replaced its top executive Adam Neumann after a series of missteps and governance questions surrounding the fast-growing office-sharing startup that spooked investors.—AFP

Business

Mutawa Alkazi displays 'GAC Motor GS8' vehicle

On the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah with Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang and his wife during the reception



KUWAIT: Mutawa Alkazi Co management and GAC Motor officials

KUWAIT: Mutawa Alkazi Co, the sole authorized dealer of GAC Motor vehicles in Kuwait, participated in the reception hosted by the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait on September 22 at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

The reception was attended by the Deputy Kuwait Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and several ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps in Kuwait.

Mutawa Alkazi's participation came upon the invitation by the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang and his wife in recognition of the close ties between the company and the embassy, particularly on account of its being the authorized dealership of one of the largest auto groups in China.

The company noted that the diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on March 22, 1971 and that the reception commemorates China's 70th National Day and 48 years of relations between the two countries.

It added that over nearly half a century the Chinese-Kuwaiti relations have been growing smoothly, cementing mutual political trust, expanding cooperation and consolidating humanitarian and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Mutawa Alkazi pointed out that Kuwait is the largest provider of government soft loans to China. China is also Kuwait's largest trade partner with the trade volume between the two countries reaching \$18.7 billion last year, an increase of 55.1 percent on an annual basis. Kuwait is the ninth largest supplier of crude oil to China. Figures show that by the end of 2018 Chinese companies were executing 120 engineering contracts in Kuwait valued at \$21.565 billion.

Mutawa Alkazi stressed that the cooperation between the two countries produces remarkable results in the fields of trade, energy, communications, infrastructure, finance, autos and others, therefore maintaining a strong growth momentum.

The company emphasized its keenness to



Cutting the ceremonial cake

- The ceremony held at Chinese Embassy reception in Jumeirah Hotel
- Enhancing Kuwaiti-Chinese bilateral relations
- Providing best cars in the Kuwaiti market

strengthen the bilateral relations between Kuwait and China. This is reflected in its launching of the newest models of GAC MOTOR cars in the local market. It also revealed its intention to launch more models that meet the tastes and demands of all categories of drivers in Kuwait.

Mutawa Alkazi noted that it seeks to participate in all the events held by the Chinese embassy in Kuwait with the aim of giving the best representation of the GAC MOTOR brand. It stressed that such occasions provide a chance to meet those interested in owning Chinese cars and acquaint them with their merits and specifications. During the

reception, the company introduced its entirely new GAC GS8 car, highlighting its features and special offers such as the 11-year warranty, free third-party insurance and free thermal tinting.

GAC GS8 was a revelation with its features as a sport jeep multi-purpose car with its 200-horsepower turbo engine producing a torque of 1750 rpm and a fuel consumption of 6.5 liters at a constant speed of 90 km/h. The GS8 pays special attention to the aesthetics of technology with its LED, double U-shaped tail lights and its similarly-shaped headlights with adjustable sensitivity to secure safer driving.



Deputy Kuwait Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah checks out a GAC vehicle



Deputy Kuwait Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah speaks to the media



Health

Morocco makes headway against HIV but societal stigma remains

CASABLANCA: In Morocco, the struggle against HIV has been so successful in recent years that campaigners worry about losing funding for combating the virus, but for people living with the disease it remains a heavy stigma. In Casablanca, a group therapy workshop offers HIV patients a rare opportunity to speak openly about their disease. "Here I feel normal, I'm treated like a human being," said Zineb, a 29-year-old mother.

Organized by the Association for the Fight Against AIDS (ALCS), on a recent Thursday the workshop brought 12 HIV patients together with a psychologist and a therapist. The ALCS also organizes follow-up therapeutic care in hospital, and prevention and screening campaigns, with funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. These programs were developed shortly after the first HIV case was detected in Morocco in 1986. This early start is partly why UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, calls Morocco a "model country" for its HIV response.

Thanks to improved screening, access to treatment and monitoring, new HIV infections in Morocco declined by 42 percent between 2010 and 2016, compared to an average reduction of four percent across the rest of the Middle East and North Africa. Morocco had 350 deaths from AIDS in 2018, from a population of about 35 million. But some

groups remain vulnerable, with intravenous drug users, men who have sex with other men, and sex workers accounting for two thirds of Morocco's 21,000 identified cases. And the stigma attached to those infected remains high, even within the family. "My mother treated me like a murderer. For a long time I felt alone in the world," said Youssef, a 28-year-old who has twice attempted suicide. Like other HIV patients interviewed by AFP, he asked to be identified by a pseudonym. And all of them — save for a 40-year-old considered very lucky by the group — have either hidden their illness or been rejected by loved ones.

'Don't tell him anything'

In this conservative Muslim society, where sex outside marriage and homosexuality are illegal, HIV patients seldom talk publicly about the virus. "The subject is taboo, because the infection is linked to sex, itself a taboo subject in Morocco," said Yakoub, a 25-year-old ALCS worker. "The social rejection is such that some (HIV patients) lose everything: family, friends, work, home," he said. Zineb, like many HIV patients, hides her medication to conceal her illness.

For 10 years, the former teen mother has told her family that she is being treated for diabetes. "My 17-year-old son knows nothing, I can't bring myself to tell him, I'm too afraid," she said with a sad smile. "Once you're sick,

you're no longer a person," said Sakina, a mother who says she never speaks of her illness except with doctors, the ALCS staff and other HIV patients. Like 70 percent of HIV positive women in Morocco, Sakina was infected by her husband. She cannot bring herself to tell her 15-year-old son that he is also infected. She has always lied to him but she can "no longer sleep at night", she told the group through tears. "My advice: above all, don't tell him anything," said a young man. "For your sake, let him find out from someone else," another group participant suggested.

Then the psychologist interjected to say that private sessions are available to "reflect on these difficult questions". The shame of HIV is so entrenched, it even permeates the medical establishment. "For 30 years we've been talking about it, the virus is well known but the discrimination is still there," said Dr Kamal Marhoum El Filali, head of the infectious diseases department at Ibn Rochd Hospital in Casablanca, which hosts an ALCS branch. "The stigmatization isn't just from society but also from medical staff within the hospital environment." Amina, another group therapy participant, experienced this first hand.

"When I went to the hospital to give birth, no one wanted to take care of me, no one wanted to touch me, I ended up in intensive care," she recalled indignantly. Others in the session though were grateful for the care



CASABLANCA: Two members of Morocco's Association for the Fight Against AIDS (known by its French acronym ALCS) talk with patients in the infectious diseases department at the Ibn Rochd Hospital. — AFP

they had received. "We are lucky to be under the care of the infectious diseases department: we are well cared for compared to others, considering the lack of funding and disrepair in Moroccan hospitals," said another participant.

The emergency room at Ibn Rochd is sometimes overwhelmed with doctors each

seeing up to 40 patients a day. But the infectious diseases department is always spotlessly clean, providing personalised support as ALCS staff liaise with the medical teams. But how much money Morocco will receive to continue its fight against HIV will be determined at a three-yearly conference the Global Fund in October. — AFP

CLINIC
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GENERAL SURGERY

These services include, but are not limited to, the below:

- Laparoscopic cholecystectomy
- Laparoscopic appendectomy
- Laparoscopic hiatus hernia procedures
- Laparoscopic rectopexy
- Procedures for morbid obesity
- Abdominal wall hernia repair
- Colon and small intestine resection

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Consultant Surgeon

Dr. Adnan Sadeq
General Surgery & Organ Transplantation Consultant

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Dr. Randa Al Taras
General Surgeon

Dr. Mansur Hossney
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Dr. Nahla El Sheikh
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Dr Sahar Ghannam

Dermatology consultant, skin treatment and laser

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Sunday, Monday and Tuesday from 9:30 am to 5 pm

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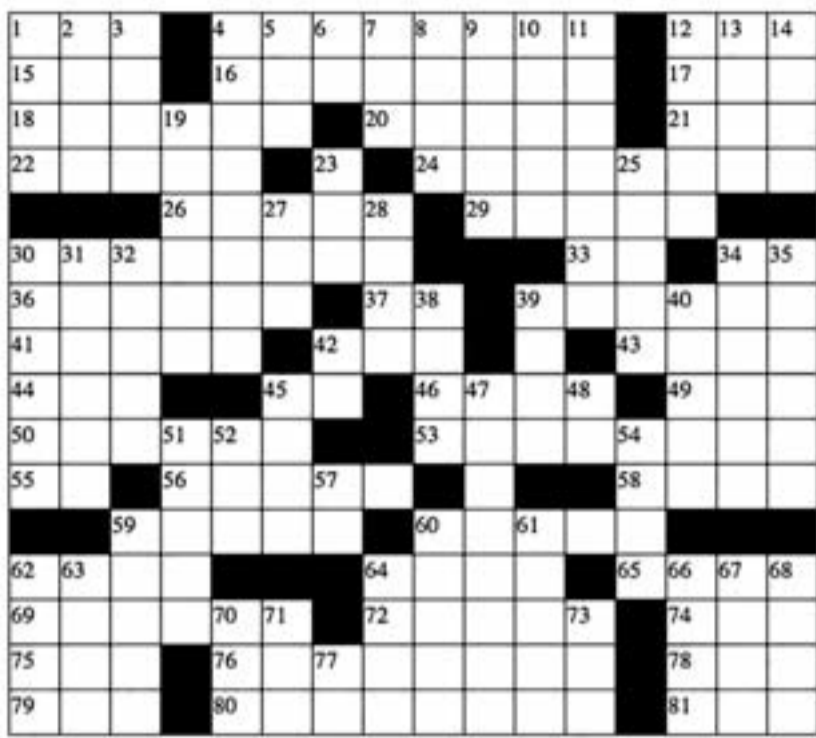
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Stars

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ACROSS

- The compass point that is one point west of due north.
- Durable fragrant wood.
- The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglelike part of an organism.
- A fatty deposit in the intima (inner lining) of an artery.
- A column of light (as from a beacon).
- Small wooden bat with a flat surface.
- Any of various hard resins from trees of the family Dipterocarpaceae and of the genus Agathis.
- A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
- At right angles to the length of a ship or airplane.
- A Bantu language sometimes considered a dialect of Zulu.
- The Mongol people living the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
- A rechargeable battery with a nickel cathode and a cadmium anode.
- A dress crepe.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- Related on the mother's side.
- The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
- Sole genus of the family Naiadaceae.
- A blind god.
- (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
- An enclosed space.
- An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- The character flaw or error of a tragic hero that leads to his downfall.
- A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- Showing or feeling mirth or pleasure or happiness.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- The capital and largest city of Japan.
- One of the rulers in an oligarchy.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- God of the earth.
- Clothed or adorned with finery.
- A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
- Nymph who merged with Hermaphroditus to form one body.
- Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
- A state in New England.
- A doctor's degree in education.
- The biblical name for ancient Syria.
- Relating to or characteristic of people of Rome.
- Italian violin maker in Cremona.
- The capital and largest city of Venezuela.
- (architecture) Forming or resembling an arch.
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- More or less flat-topped cluster of flowers in which the central or terminal flower opens first.
- A member of the Siouan people of the northern Mississippi valley.
- Narrow wood or metal or plastic runners used for gliding over snow.
- (law) The seal for judges in a courtroom.
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- Type genus of the Anatidae.
- A genus of tropical American plants have sword-shaped leaves and a fleshy compound fruits composed of the fruits of several flowers (such as pineapples).
- The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
- Some point in the air.
- The 3 goddesses of fate or destiny.
- A contagious skin infection caused by the itch mite.
- A ballistic missile that is capable of traveling from one continent to another.
- Robust east Asian clump-forming perennial herbs having racemose flowers.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- Nocturnal burrowing mammal of the grasslands of Africa that feeds on termites.
- A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
- Jordan's port.
- Flower arrangement consisting of a circular band of foliage or flowers for ornamental purposes.
- Not widely known.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- A wealthy man (who made his fortune in the Orient).
- (anatomy) Of or relating to the ilium.
- A long pointed rod used as a weapon.
- (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and raised by hand.
- An instinctive motive.
- The lower house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
- An informal term for a father.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- An easy return of a tennis ball in a high arc.
- Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- A doctor's degree in theology.
- A state in the Rocky Mountains.

DOWN

- Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
- Divulge information or secrets.
- English tennis player who won many women's singles titles (born in 1945).

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are concerned with preserving the usual and are stable and methodical in your ways of keeping everything the same. You resist change and may have trouble initiating change; once on the move, you are indomitable. A kind of romantic thinking characterizes your approach to life. This could mean a longing for a soul mate or a yearning to save the world. Community or family concerns may hold your interest this afternoon. There is an interest in bringing people together. This could mean that you become involved in developing communications between neighbors, friends or family—healing.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Making peace with the past is essential now, and it's the only way you can get to the future you want. Ignore this and the questions about the past will never go away. People who cannot help themselves play a bigger role in your life now: do unto others. Meditation brings self-awareness, and that can set you free from being a prisoner of your own plan. Sometimes lazy and perhaps a bit absentminded, you would benefit from making a list of your goals... Long-term and short-term. This will bring some focus into your day as well as recognizing progress. Make it a point to mark off at least two of the most important things on your list.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your happiest times all month are the days, like this day, when you spend time with friends in group activities. Spiritual practices and some charity work may be involved in making this a rewarding time. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends and this should go rather smoothly. You have quick answers, great wit and a surplus of solutions. This is a good time to write and communicate with real originality. Inventions and breakthroughs are possible. Everything conspires to value and to bring out your unique and unusual qualities. You may find that someone close to you understands and is supportive of your eccentricities. You could feel loving and warm to those around you and you are appreciative of your own life.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

May be a challenging day where you can use your skills and expertise to solve problems and feel successful. You may be teaching in a religious setting or you could be working with a few co-workers to help you on this day. You may find that your personal growth depends on how you can handle some very sensitive psychological material coming up now. Perhaps the people you are communicating with today have plenty of questions for you—regardless of what job you are undertaking. You can take control and rise above whatever stress you experience at this time. You will benefit from investigative insights and getting to the heart of things.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This Monday may be challenging, but it is quite gratifying when you look back to see the accomplishments you make in such a short time. This could mean that some project is completed successfully or you help a friend install the border around a vegetable garden. Whatever the case, you seem to have the energy and enthusiasm to keep up with the requirements of the day. Time away from regular responsibilities this afternoon gives you new insight and renewed appreciation of just where you are in your life's path at this time. Opinions and beliefs of different cultures have an appeal for you. There is an urge to study religious, cultural or philosophical controversies: movements that have a way of stirring your blood.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

If you need a loan, the first of next week brings high probabilities of being granted a loan. Get the necessary papers together now, especially if this is something you want at the beginning of next week. Social affairs are wonderful ways in which to network. Accept the invitations that will be coming now and through the end of this month. Neighbors or relatives, brothers or sisters in particular, can be subjects for concern on the home front. It may take some effort and patience on your part to keep things on an even keel. Remember that there is a tendency to be out of touch or uncommunicative just now; listen to your conversations and be your own judge as to how you want to improve your communication skills in order to be most clear.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Independence, a need for freedom and an interest in trying new and different things may take hold of you now. You may behave in unusual or unconventional ways. You could also have an interest in the exotic or in eccentric friends. Breaking away and upsetting the trend of the moment may be the name of the game. A much more adventurous you will emerge. However, be careful that you do not become some sort of a speed demon. This urge to speed may be at your command for a good long time. The thrill of the chase, the smell of the greasepaint or the roar of the crowd is what gets your juices flowing now that you have entered a new cycle. To be appreciated, to be admired—adored, even—is what you desire. Make your passions positive.



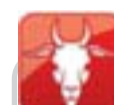
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Deeper levels of consciousness open up for you now. You may be a bit quiet because you are especially impressionable. You are psychically aware of the deepest inner feelings of others. A soul-mate experience—or the yearning for one—can change your whole approach to relationships. There is a tendency to see someone as though he or she were on a pedestal and to measure him or her against an ideal. If you put people on pedestals, they are bound to fall and you could experience some disappointments. This is not the most practical time to get into a close partnership, regardless of how alluring the prospect.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This whole month gives you the opportunity to work on focus and understanding. Understand your feelings and take responsibility for them—you will jump ahead in the game of life many, many steps. You can demonstrate great understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others just now. You are in a good position to communicate concerning groups and society in general. You could be most persuasive with others and moving in speech and communication. The situation is a natural for self-expression and lends itself to your particular thinking. You may find yourself in charge of a sports team or teaching manners to young people.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Friends may take control of most of your day today—you do not mind. You love a social life—friends and relationships play a major role in your makeup. You draw emotional sustenance and a sense of security from ideals, friends and social involvement. You love to communicate and discuss ideas with other people. Your ideas are always fair and impartial, especially when it comes to helping others and perhaps in helping further charity organizations. You are at your mental best when you are communicating with others. This evening you are highly motivated when it comes to a particular romantic relationship and you may show off your best attire for a special event.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Confidence and conviction are keynotes of a new phase you have begun. There is power behind your ideas and the way you gain attention for your viewpoint. On this day it may be fun to join into group conversations but you may find yourself exhausted from the effort if the subject is not interesting to you. Travel and adventure are compelling temptations and you seriously consider lining up your next adventure. Sympathy and understanding are emotional qualities that take on a greater importance. You have plenty of enthusiasm to be helpful when needed.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Communicating and getting your message across to others is at a high just now. Your timing should be perfect and those around you should find you most spontaneous. Romance, recreation and creativity take on an inspirational and perhaps wildly idealized quality now. Such experiences can be truly soul-stirring. Someone you care about—a child or lover perhaps—may have difficulty distinguishing fantasy and reality. Experimenting with different types of music may help you to unveil the different types of moods. Music can be enchanting but some music can be quite grounding. You have real vision and insight into the unity that ties this world together. You find new ways to bring people together—to unify situations.

Wordsearch Puzzle

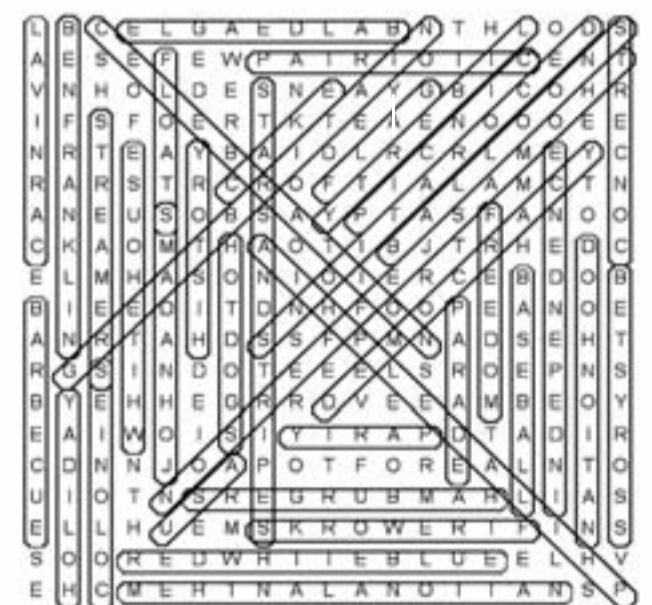
Friendship

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



- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| ACQUAINTANCE | COMPANION | HONESTY |
| AFFECTION | COMRADE | KINSHIP |
| AFFINITY | CONFIDE | LEND |
| ALLY | EMPATHY | LOYALTY |
| AMIGO | FAVOR | PAL |
| AMITY | FONDNESS | ROOMMATE |
| BOYFRIEND | FRIENDLINESS | SHARE |
| BUDDY | FUN | SUPPORTIVE |
| CHUM | GIRLFRIEND | SYMPATHY |
| CLOSENESS | GOOD TIMES | TRUST |

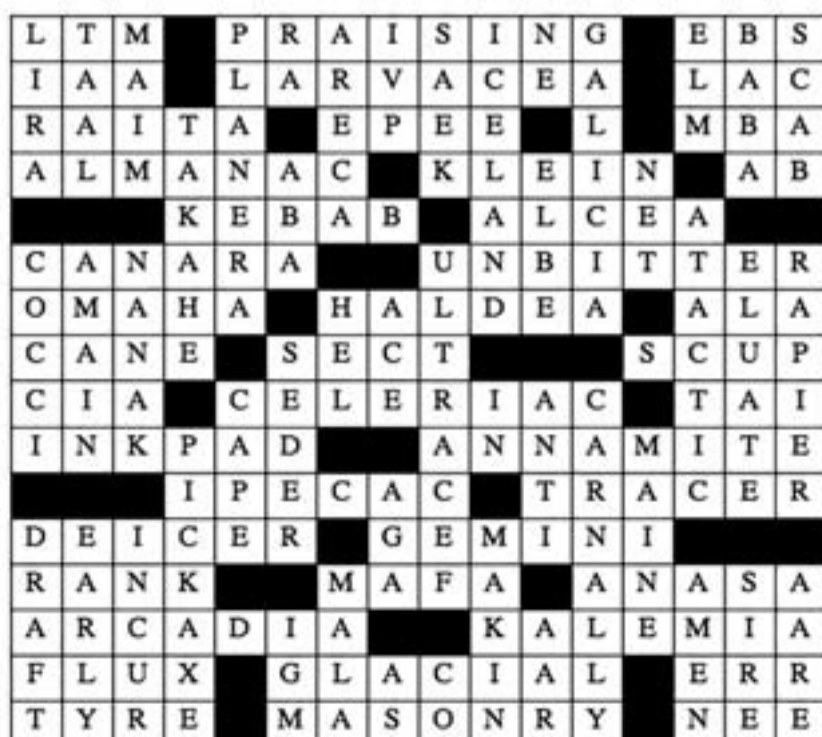
Fourth Of July



- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| BALD EAGLE | CONCERTS | HOLIDAY | PATRIOTIC |
| BALLOONS | DECORATIONS | HOT DOGS | PHILADELPHIA |
| BARBECUE | DEMOCRACY | INDEPENDENCE | PICNIC |
| BASEBALL | FIREWORKS | JOHN ADAMS | RED WHITE BLUE |
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| CAKE | FREEDOM | NATIONHOOD | THOMAS JEFFERSON |
| CARNIVAL | GREAT BRITAIN | PARADE | USA |
| CELEBRATION | HAMBURGERS | PARTY | WHITE HOUSE |
| COLONIES | HISTORY | | |

The hidden quote is: THOSE WHO DENY FREEDOM TO OTHERS, DESERVE IT NOT FOR THEMSELVES

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2019



(From 2nd L) US actress Andie MacDowell, British singer Cheryl, Cuban-US singer Camilla Cabello, British actress Helen Mirren, British singer Geri Horner, US actress Amber Heard, Dutch model Doutzen Kroes and Ethiopian model Liya Kebede present creations for L'Oreal during the Women's Spring-Summer 2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show at the Monnaie de Paris, in Paris. — AFP

MIAMI BAND, NABEEL SHEIL PERFORM IN KUWAIT

By Nawara Fattahova

Over 3,600 people attended the musical concert of Miami Band and Nabeel Sheil held at the International Fair Ground in Mishref on Friday. The event was organized by Dhari Al-Musailem. The concert started at 8:45 pm with popular Kuwait singer Nabeel Sheil's performance. He presented 12 of his old and new songs. Sheil released his first album in 1982 and became popular right after.

Popular Kuwaiti musical Miami Band also performed at the concert. They are known for their fast rhythmic songs mixed with western melodies and folk songs. Miami Band released their first album in 1991, which was very successful. The band is still very popular and is the only Kuwaiti band that continues their production.



British designer Vivienne Westwood, right, acknowledges the audience next to her husband designer Andreas Kronthaler after the Vivienne Westwood Women's Spring-Summer 2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP

Designer calls out fashion's richest man on Thunberg attack

Vivienne Westwood designer Andreas Kronthaler hit out Saturday at fashion's most powerful man Bernard Arnault for attacking Greta Thunberg. The French billionaire and head of the LVMH conglomerate that owns labels like Louis Vuitton, Dior, Givenchy, and pop idol Rihanna's new brand Fenty, said the teenage climate activist was "surrendering to total catastrophism... that is likely to demoralise the young."

"She doesn't offer anything other than criticism," he told reporters in Paris earlier this week as he launched his group's new green drive. The world's second richest man said he was strongly against "her extremely negative" stance. "What we take from it is that we have to stop growth, which has reduced poverty, raised living standards and improved health in poor regions like Africa. "If we want to go backwards, let's stop growth," he declared.

But Kronthaler, who is also Westwood's husband, called Arnault out after his Paris fashion week show for the label he now shares with Westwood, one of the pioneers of ethical fashion. The "business as usual" attitude doesn't work anymore, he told AFP.

Fashion is a big polluter

"We are sitting on a volcano, and on borrowed time. I am not a pessimist. I believe in the good of people. But it is crazy what we are doing. It's obvious and fashion is a very big polluter," he added. Kronthaler praised Thunberg for giving climate change a "whole focus. I think the western world at least is waking up now. I think this young girl is

terribly remarkable and we should thank her. I am very very glad that somebody exists like her."

The Austrian-born creator and his wife have long been environmental activists, with Westwood once telling AFP that she only takes a bath once a week to save water. With supermodel Bella Hadid closing the show, Kronthaler sent out an elegant and highly original Mozart-themed collection made mostly from "forsaken fabrics from the best Italian mills". Other material came from makers in Mali that the brand hooked up with through the Ethical Fashion Initiative, he said.

Westwood and Kronthaler are among the leaders of fashion's "reduce, reuse, rethink" movement, sourcing unsold or off-cut high-end fabrics for their clothes. "RuPaul's Drag Race" stars Aquaria and Violet Chachki were in the front row alongside Canadian actress Pamela Anderson to see both male and female models in skirts and dresses. The charismatic Kronthaler has always featured men in his women's shows "because they can be just as beautiful as women in a dress", he insisted.

"It is very liberating for men to be able to wear anything, and now it is becoming much more of a reality in the street," the added. Arnault, who has made the vegetarian British designer Stella McCartney his personal advisor on sustainable development, said that "he preferred positive solutions which allow us to keep an optimistic view of progress rather than fall into catastrophism."—AFP



Issey Miyake's new designer cans catwalk for Paris show



Issey Miyake's new designer Satoshi Kondo had models in free-flowing dresses dancing, twirling and skateboarding around a former 19th century mortuary for his Paris Fashion Week show. From the cast-iron rafters of the "Cent Quatre" art space, which for more than a century was home to the capital's municipal undertakers, dresses were slowly lowered onto models to the ethereal electronic sounds of French artist DeLaurentis.

"I wanted to express the joy of wearing clothes and the joy of movement. So you see the models dancing, almost like in the wind, moving together", Kyoto-born designer Kondo said of his ready-to-wear Spring/Summer 2020 collection. Rather than parading single-file past viewers on a catwalk, Kondo's models

twirled around the massive hall in striped "parasol" frocks featuring Issey Miyake's trademark pleats, while others in lightweight nylon raincoats zigzagged on electric skateboards.

Wearing ensembles with splashes of raspberry pink, lime green and lilac, models jumped up and down to enhance the bouncy effect of near-translucent fabrics and loosely-woven dresses, and waved fan-shaped bags in a riot of color and movement.—Reuters



Models present creations by Japanese designer Issey Miyake during the Women's Spring-Summer 2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show, in Paris. — AFP photos





US actress Eva Longoria



British actress Helen Mirren

L'OREAL CELEBRATES FEMALE EMPOWERMENT WITH GLAMOROUS RUNWAY SHOW



British model Iskra Lawrence

French cosmetics maker L'Oréal hosted its annual runway show on Saturday featuring an all-star cast of movie stars, singers and supermodels who embodied self-empowerment on the sidelines of Paris Fashion Week. Celebrities including Britain's Naomi Campbell looked on from the audience of the show, held in the inner courtyard of the neoclassical Monnaie de Paris building.

Actress Amber Heard and pop star Camilla Cabello strutted the circular catwalk in their first-ever appearances at the show, alongside long-time brand ambassador Eva Longoria, actress Andie McDowell, model Doutzen Kroes, and former Spice Girl Geri Horner. A barefoot and smiling Helen Mirren closed the show in a floral dress, running joyfully on stage. L'Oréal, an official sponsor of fashion week, collaborated with fashion houses

such as Balmain, Elie Saab, Karl Lagerfeld and Giambattista Valli to dress its high-profile models.

The world's biggest beauty manufacturer, behind labels such as Maybelline and Armani, aimed to promote female empowerment and diversity in the third edition of the show. "It is great to work with a brand that understands women, self-worth is very important, it is more than a lipstick or a hair color," Longoria told Reuters Television. "We have a rainbow of diversity on the catwalk today with Korea, Brazil, India and me from Mexico. Definition of beauty is different all over the world and to have one stage celebrating all of that difference is really remarkable." Paris Fashion Week runs until Oct 1.—Reuters



South Korean model Soo-Joo Park



US-Cuban singer Camilla Cabello



British singer Cheryl



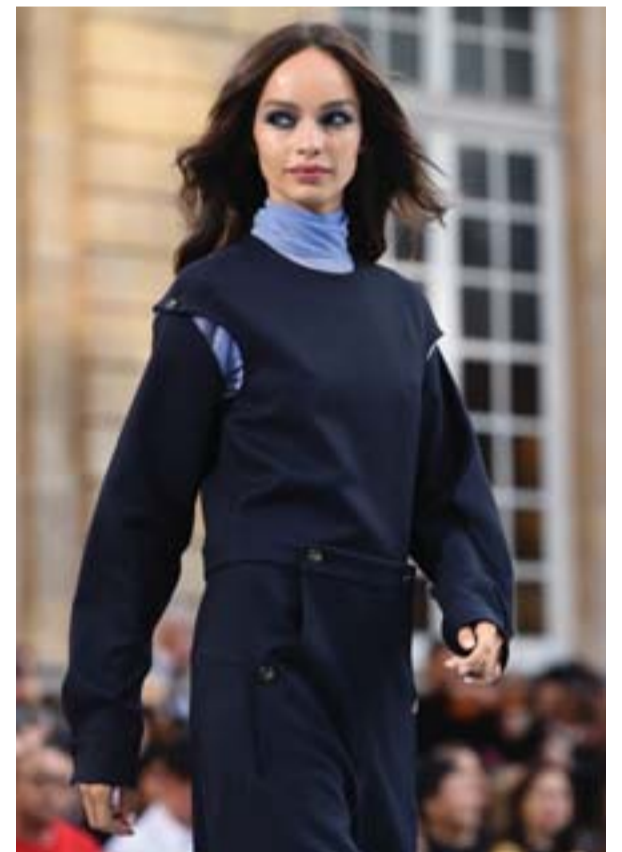
New Zealand model Georgia Fowler



Ethiopian model Liya Kebede



US actress Aja Naomi King



Brazilian model Luma Grothe



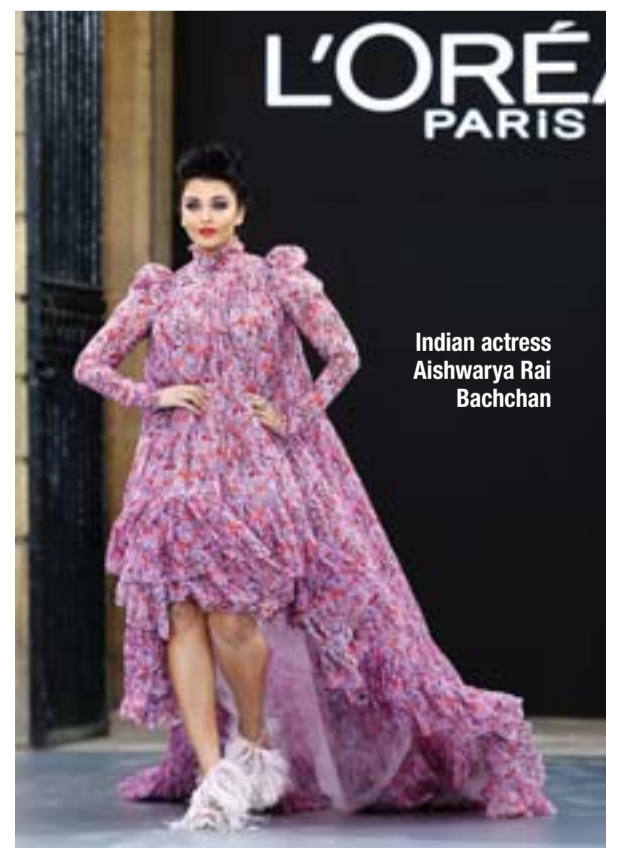
US actress Amber Heard



French model Cindy Bruna



Dutch model Doutzen Kroes



Indian actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan

Lifestyle | Features



Adam Lambert and Brian May of Queen perform onstage at the 2019 Global Citizen Festival: Power The Movement in Central Park in New York. — AFP photos



South Korean boy band NCT 127



US singer Pharrell

Queen and Adam Lambert rock festival urging foreign aid



US actor Rami Malek



US actor Leonardo DiCaprio



US actress Rachel Brosnahan

The legendary band Queen and glam frontman Adam Lambert led a packed Central Park on Saturday in mobilizing world governments to pledge international aid to eradicate extreme poverty and tackle climate change. An estimated 60,000 people crowded in the iconic Manhattan green space for the Global Citizen Festival, an unofficial exclamation point to the United Nations General Assembly which distributes free tickets to people who have worked towards the greater social good.

Entertainment mogul Pharrell Williams, soulful pianist Alicia Keys, R&B prodigy H.E.R., pop band OneRepublic, K-pop boy band NCT 127 and singer-songwriter Carole King also played the festival. Now in its eighth year at Central Park, the day of concerts saw fans young and old sway to classic Queen hits like "We Are The Champions," "Bohemian Rhapsody," and "We Will Rock You."

Frontman Adam Lambert, who has toured with the band for some eight years, led the charge as veteran Roger Taylor helmed the drums as guitarist Brian May delivered his signature anthemic guitar solos. The flamboyant Lambert went through a series of dramatic costume changes, finishing the show wearing a crown and a bright red military-esque uniform, as May dropped his long trench coat to reveal a t-shirt featuring the image of Queen's original lead singer Freddie Mercury, who died in 1991.

Like many of the other performers, Lambert used the moment to urge environmental protections. "We're asking fans to take action to ask certain governments around the world... to take part in helping take care of our oceans," Lambert said. "Fish and wildlife in the ocean are literally gagging on pieces of plastic and it's killing them."

A day prior the former "American Idol" contestant had told AFP he was thrilled to participate. "I love that they're encouraging people to push the more wealthy world governments into backing these initiatives with real funding so that the real change can happen," he said. "They're getting people involved on a task level, so it's actually educating all of our audience members."



US actor and singer Ben Platt

"It's a really brilliant set-up."

Believe in change

Prior to the Queen performance, Hollywood A-lister Leonardo DiCaprio made a surprise appearance to praise youth activists, including the Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, who have taken to the streets and addressed world leaders in leading a global climate movement. "Millions of individuals did more than simply walk out of their schools and places of employment. They took a stand," DiCaprio said. "They set an example of true leadership that our planet so desperately needs." "These young people have said clearly, definitively and without fear, that the time for inaction is over."

The Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne, unveiled a new path for the island nation to tackle plastic waste and design alternative materials, as Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg increased contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to \$228 million by 2023. Germany meanwhile pledged \$11.1 million to the "Education Cannot Wait" fund, aimed at assisting children living in conflict and crisis zones, as Switzerland vowed \$6 million to it. Earlier this



US-Israeli actress Natalie Portman



US actress Laverne Cox



US actress Anna Kendrick

Cambodia's first gay dance troupe upends centuries of tradition

Gold jewelry glistening, six male dancers from Cambodia's first gay "Apsara" troupe swirl in unison on a dimly lit stage, their production a radical shake-up of a ballet form performed by women for more than a thousand years. "Some people say LGBTQ people are born abnormal," 23-year-old dancer Chan Sory tells AFP during a rehearsal in Phnom Penh. "So our goal is to use art to change their mindset."

He is part of Prumsodum Ok & Natyarasa, an all-male Apsara company trying to alter perceptions of the gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community in Cambodia—which is still plagued by prejudice. Bare-chested men wearing crowns and traditional sarongs glide through the slow, graceful movements of the Khmer dance, arching their hands back in poses normally performed by young women in golden dresses.

The soulful pop of Britain's Sam Smith, who recently came out as non-binary, is interwoven with traditional Khmer melodies. Apsara is a celebrated part of Khmer culture—dancers are engraved on the walls of the

Angkorian empire's surviving temples in Siem Reap—and founder Prumsodum Ok says some people are angry he is breaking with convention. "But once they see the quality of the dancing... they can see our love and devotion for the tradition," explains Prumsodum, a Cambodian-American choreographer.

Buddhist-majority Cambodia does not criminalize same-sex relations, but rights groups say the community still faces prejudices linking them to drug use and sex work and they are often caricatured on popular television shows. "My goal is to create a more dignified and realistic image of what it means to be LGBTQ and do it in a way where we don't become pigeonholed," said Prumsodum, who is also gay.

The child of refugees who fled the murderous Khmer Rouge regime, Prumsodum—now 32—grew up in California. He moved to Phnom Penh in 2015 to work on a dance project exploring the role of sexuality in Apsara, but stayed on once he saw young gay Cambodians' need for "a role model". The company is already making strides, and was even invited to perform at Cambodia's Ministry of Culture, which company members hope is a sign of changing times.

"Just the fact that they allow us to do what we do is a gift already," said Prumsodum. Troupe member Dy Puthik tells AFP he joined first because of his love of dance, which he did not have to opportunity to indulge while growing up. "Generally LGBTQ people have not been given value," he said. "I now realize that I am doing an important thing."—AFP



This photo shows choreographer Prumsodum Ok, right, with a member from the Prumsodum Ok & Natyarasa dance company during an Apsara dance performance in Phnom Penh. — AFP

Mexican crooner Jose Jose, hero of jilted lovers, dead at 71

Jose Jose, a velvety-voiced Mexican crooner who was wildly popular in Latin America over a 50-year career that spawned love song after love song, has died, the Mexican government and his son said Saturday. He was 71. Jose Romulo Sosa Ortiz, known as the "principe de la cancion," or prince of song, had suffered from pancreatic cancer.

"We regret to report the death of singer Jose Romulo Sosa, better known as Jose Jose... since the beginning of his career, the singer of 'El Triste' was one of the most beloved voices in Mexico," the country's Culture Ministry said on Twitter. Son Jose Joel posted images of black ribbons on his Facebook page, saying "we are trying to process the situation by having in our heart the divine promise that we will see and hold him again, never to be separated."

Mexican broadcaster Televisa, which Jose Jose worked with for much of his career, reported that the singer died Saturday at a hospital in Homestead, Florida, near Miami. His body was taken to a Miami funeral home later in the day where his wife, Sara Salazar, gave a brief statement to the press. "The love of my life has gone away," she said. In his heyday in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, Jose Jose churned out hit records at a dizzying pace.

He sold more than 120 million records during his professional life, many of them featuring songs meant to comfort jilted lovers. His first international hit—"La Nave del Olvido," or "The Ship of Oblivion"—came out in 1970 and is still heard on Latin American radio stations from time to time. "He was an extraordinary singer," Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said.

"He made many people in my generation cry or feel happy with his songs," the 65-year-old leader said. "The best tribute that we can pay him is to remember and never stop listening to his songs. Some of his hits are just amazing." His lyrics could be heard playing in Mexico's streets and coming from houses, shops and cars throughout the after-

noon, as TV stations canceled previously planned programming to air remembrances. Jose Jose had an interest in mysticism, and in March 2018, when he revealed to his fans that he had been diagnosed with cancer, he blamed it on what he called negative energy surrounding him.

Romances and alcoholism

After the news of his death, fans flocked to Claveria, the middle-class neighborhood of the Mexican capital where Jose Jose grew up, to sing his best-known songs, including "El Triste." Some 300 fans, including older people who said they had met him, gathered in a park where his statue is located.

Jose Jose was very open with the press and his fans about his personal life, including his romances and battle with alcoholism. "He was my idol. It's very sad... life was very unfair to him," Mexican singer Vicente Fernandez, who performed a ranchera song with Jose Jose, told Televisa.

In 2008, Jose Jose published his autobiography, "This is My Life," and promoted it as an inspiration for people battling addiction. He quit drinking in 1993, but the hard life he had led, the strain on his voice after decades of performing, and other health issues silenced his beloved tenor tones. He stopped singing in the early 2000s. Sosa Ortiz was born in Mexico City to a family of musicians. As a small child, he got his first taste of that world by singing in school choirs.

As a teen, he performed in taverns and sang serenades until he recorded his first album in 1969. It was a smash hit. That was when he took Jose Jose as his showbiz name, the second Jose meant to honor his father, who had died a year earlier. The crooner married three times and fathered three children. He married his Cuban widow, Salazar, in 1995. They moved from Mexico to Miami that same year.

In an interview in January 2018 on Telemundo to promote a TV series based on his life, Jose Jose was a mere shadow of what he had been. He spoke in a weak, fragile voice, his face partially paralyzed. Asked about love, the man who spent decades singing about it, said that throughout his life, he had never been able to stand up for himself with his lovers. "They did absolutely whatever they wanted with me," he said.—AFP

Classifieds

Monday, September 30, 2019

Kuwait Times
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STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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www.met.gov.kw



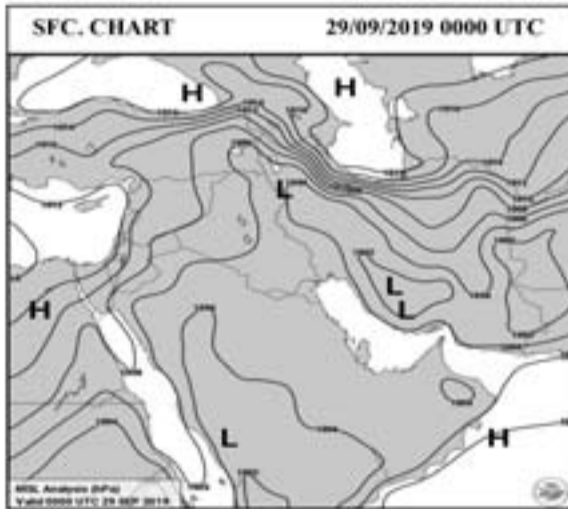
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate south westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 26 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light variable wind to light to moderate south westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING: No Current Warnings.

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	32 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	25 °C
ABDALY	45 °C	28 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	45 °C	29 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	42 °C	31 °C
AHMADI	42 °C	33 °C
NUWASIB	47 °C	27 °C
WAFRA	45 °C	26 °C
SALMY	43 °C	28 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	09/30	Hot	44 °C	24 °C	SW-NE	12 - 32 km/h
Tuesday	10/01	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	43 °C	23 °C	SW-SE	10 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	10/02	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	42 °C	22 °C	SW-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Thursday	10/03	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	44 °C	24 °C	VRB-SE	10 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:21
Sunrise	05:40
Zuhr	11:38
Asr	15:03
Sunset	17:37
Isha	18:54

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	45 °C
MIN. Temp.	24 °C
MAX. RH	68 %
MIN. RH	06 %
MAX. Wind	NW 28 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

I have changed my old name LALITH REDDY (Indian Passport No. M4640321, issued in Kuwait) to new name SIDDA LALITH REDDY with SIDDA as surname and LALITH REDDY as given name for all purposes. (C 5597) 29-9-2019

ALAJI MAHAMADSHAIF KASAM (Indian Passport No. L1429681 issued in Kuwait) to new name ALJI MAHAMAD SHAIF KASAM, with 'ALJI' as surname and 'MAHAMAD SHAIF KASAM' as given names for all purposes. (C 5596) 26-9-2019

LOST

I, SIDDA LALITH REDDY, have changed my name from LALITH REDDY to SIDDA LALITH REDDY, hereafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5595)

I, Khaled Mansour Shaar, had lost my Passport (N012165597), nationality - Syrian, date of birth 10/01/1994, expires on 13/01/2020. If anyone found please call: 55252158 (C 5679) 26-9-2019

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

Flight Schedule

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 30/9/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 30/9/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	IRG	1756	CNN	12:30
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	NIA	1502	Asyut	12:35
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	AXB	790	CNN	13:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:10
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	123	Dubai	13:10
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	JZR	115	Doha	13:25
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	MSR	611	Cairo	13:45
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	THY	767	Istanbul	14:00
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	IRA	600	Tehran	14:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	UAE	878	Dubai	15:30
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	KAC	105	London	15:55
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	ETH	563	Amman	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OMA	775	Riyadh	16:05
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
RBG	1557	Alexandria	03:30	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	FEG	242	Alexandria	16:55
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	KAC	052	Dubai	17:10
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	155	Istanbul	17:35
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	621	Doha	17:50
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
JZR	702	Asyut	06:10	SVA	511	SVA	18:10
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	JZR	127	Dubai	18:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
JZR	102	Bahrain	07:00	IAW	158	Baghdad	19:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	JZR	253	Amman	19:10
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
RBG	211	Luxor	07:25	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
JZR	724	Alexandria	07:50	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:45
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
MSC	401	Alexandria	08:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	19:55
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	QTR	124	Sharjah	20:00
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	KAC	357	Kochi	20:05
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20	RIA	641	Amman	20:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
RSB	1078	Baku	08:30	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:35	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:50
KAC	334	Trivandrum	08:50	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
ETD	9873	Tbilisi	09:10	NIA	1602	Luxor	21:10
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
GOW	061	CNN	09:30	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	RBG	210	Sohag	21:35
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JAV	621	Amman	21:45
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:40	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
THY	1282	Trabzon	11:05	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	KAC	383	Kelhi	22:35
JZR	114	Doha	11:10	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
IGO	1755	CNN	11:30	JZR	407	Ahmedabad	22:40
NIA	1401	Sohag	11:35	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	12:10	KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:25
				JZR	701	Asyut	23:45
				SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45



Men stand on their wooden boats under heavy rain on the banks of Buriganga River in Dhaka yesterday. — AFP

Emirati and Turkish drones battling it out in Libya skies

TRIPOLI: In Libya, where rival forces are deadlocked south of Tripoli, a months-long battle for the skies between Turkish and UAE drones has failed to break the stalemate, analysts say. Since April 4, when eastern strongman Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive to capture Tripoli - the capital and seat of the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) - frontlines have moved little. Faced with a standoff, the two sides have turned to sophisticated weaponry in the hope of gaining an advantage in a battle that has killed over 1,000, injured close to 6,000 and forced 120,000 people from their homes, according to UN figures.

Libya is "possibly the largest drone war theatre in the world", UN envoy to Libya Ghassan Salame said in a video released by

the United Nations on Wednesday. Salame noted "a much more intense use of drones" in recent weeks, saying they had been deployed "600 times on one side and 300 times on the other side", without clarifying the sides to which he was referring. Drones entered the military arena in June, despite a UN arms embargo on Libya in place since the 2011 revolt that overthrew the regime of Muammar Gaddafi.

"Given the intensive use of air assets in the first month of the offensive... most of the combat aircraft of the two air forces are grounded due to a lack of maintenance," said defense analyst Arnaud Delalande. "Not wanting to be left without air power, Haftar and the GNA seem to have turned urgently towards another type of craft: drones," he told AFP.

'Direct engagement'

Experts say that Haftar has procured Chinese-made Wing Loong drones from his main backer, the United Arab Emirates. His rivals turned to Ankara, which is increasingly open about its support for the GNA, to equip themselves with Turkish Bayraktar drones. Each side has since focused on trying to destroy their adversary's drones and command centers.

Haftar's forces have repeatedly carried out strikes on Mitiga airport, closing down Tripoli's only remaining air link to the outside world, saying Turkish drones or their command centers were being targeted. "This air war has become a direct engagement between the main sponsors of the LNA (Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army) and the GNA" - Abu Dhabi and Ankara, respectively, Delalande

said. Retired Libyan general Ahmad Al-Hasnaoui said that drones were providing support to ground forces and playing "an important role in weakening (enemy) forces and supply lines".

'Crucial role'

Libyan analyst Jalal Al-Fitouri said both sides have intensified air raids against enemy drone bases since the end of June. "The UAE's Wing Loongs have been looking for the runways of the Bayraktar drones to destroy the GNA's air power, but they haven't succeeded," Delalande said. "The Turks have diversified their strategy by using roads to launch their drones and by spreading relay antennas over the entire area between Tripoli, Misrata and (the central district of) Jufra to extend the

range of their drones," he added.

But irrespective of whether Wing Loong or Bayraktar drones win the air war, "the drones are not an end in themselves" if ground forces don't advance, Delalande said. Faced with static frontlines on the ground, the UN is encouraging the warring parties to relaunch a political process on hold since Haftar launched his offensive. But Delalande believes "Haftar does not intend to negotiate" and thinks the air war can be won. "He is pushing the United Arab Emirates to engage further. Airstrikes from Mirages (jets belonging to the UAE airforce) are not to be ruled out in the coming weeks," Delalande warned. Ankara, for its part, "no longer hides its support for Tripoli, without directly engaging its own air power," he said. — AFP

Dubai builders wooing buyers...

Continued from Page 1

economy, may not stabilise before 2021. "Over a period of time, some correction will happen," exposing the strong and the weak in the industry, said P N C Menon, chairman of Dubai-based multinational developer Sobha Group. The process, which will leave only the strongest firms standing, is likely to last for another three or four years, Menon told AFP at an industry expo where his firm was showcasing its latest multi-billion-dollar project, an 8.0 million square feet beachfront development of luxurious apartments and high-end townhouses.

Like Sobha Group, dozens of local and international property firms taking part in this week's Cityscape Global event were offering unprecedented payment terms to drum up business. Buyers are being asked to stump up as little as five percent of the value of the property, down from 25 percent in the boom times, and pay the rest over 10 years or more straight to the developer - without the need for a bank mortgage. Developers are also offering to cover the costly 4.0 percent municipality registration fee.

Property ownership in Dubai, which boasts the most diversified economy in the oil-rich Gulf region, is completely open to foreigners - both residents and visitors, and for investment or residential purposes. But real estate deals in Dubai plunged 21.5 percent to \$60.7 billion last year, according to government data. Property prices and rents have been on the decline since mid-2014, shedding around a third of their value. "As far as

downward trends go, this one has lasted far longer than most, and far longer than most of us expected," Lukman Hajje of research firm Property Finder said in a research paper. "With the amount of property still being launched, under construction, and being handed over - it's unlikely that we have seen the bottom of the market just yet."

Dubai property prices dropped by 5.8 percent in the second quarter of 2019, falling for the 11th quarter in a row according to central bank data. Despite the glut, last year some 22,000 new units were completed in the emirate, according to consultancy JLL, the highest number of new properties to enter the market in the past five years. JLL forecasts that up to 117,000 units could be added to Dubai's housing pool by 2020, putting further pressure on prices in a city where glitzy apartments line the coastline, and gated communities stretch back into the desert.

The rising cost of living in Dubai, a city with a population of 3.3 million - over 90 percent of them expats - is seen as a key element suppressing demand. The city state was ranked the 26th most expensive place in the world for expats to live in 2018 according to US consultancy Mercer, second behind only Tel Aviv in the Middle East. In 2013 Dubai ranked 90th on the same survey.

Companies whose profits have taken a nosedive have taken to setting up stands in the city's mega malls to display their products and court customers, and some are pivoting from vast condos and villas to more affordable projects. Raymond Khouzami, CEO of developer Al Thuria Group, was at Cityscape to promote the firm's 47-storey tower of mostly small studios and one and two bedroom apartments. "We have to go with the market. We have to extend our payment plans and go through bank facilities and longer payment plans. We have to drop the prices as the market requires," Khouzami said. — AFP.

MP: Kuwait's fiscal position sound...

Continued from Page 1

Social affairs ministry undersecretary Abdul Aziz

Lebanese stage protests over...

Continued from Page 1

Others chanted a popular refrain of the 2011 Arab Spring protests across the region: "The people want the fall of the regime". "We toil day and night just to be able to live," said a 52-year-old Lebanese woman, asking to remain anonymous. "They've starved us, stolen from us. Enough is enough," she told AFP, visibly enraged.

Parliament in July passed an austerity budget aimed at rescuing an economy crumbling under massive debt and unlocking billions of dollars in international aid. This week, fears of a dollar shortage have sparked anxiety over a possible devaluation of the Lebanese pound and price hikes. Local press reported that banks and money exchange houses were rationing their sales of dollars, which are used alongside the pound in daily transactions.

The head of the central bank has denied that the country is facing a currency reserve crisis, but it has become very difficult to withdraw dollars from ATMs in

Shuaib earlier said the total number of Kuwaiti women receiving social aid who had not updated their information dropped from 6,000 to only 1,130 since May. Shuaib added that in view of the increasing number of those upgrading their information, the ministry is coordinating with relevant authorities to accelerate the process so that beneficiaries can get their aid in time once the new information is attested by the ministry aid committee, which annually pays a total of KD 280 million to over 44,000 citizens.

Beirut. "There's a real problem with the high cost of living," said a 33-year-old protester who gave his name as Ali Hlshem. "The pound is getting weaker and the central bank won't admit it," said the bearded young man, a black and white keffiyeh scarf draped over his head to keep off the beating sun. If that is the case, "increase the minimum wage" of \$450, he said.

In the northern seaside city of Tripoli, dozens of protesters also gathered, some setting fire to tyres, the National News Agency said. Petrol station owners on Thursday declared a strike over banks refusing to supply them in dollars needed to pay importers. But they suspended it the following day after reaching a deal with the government to pay suppliers in Lebanese pounds.

Economic growth in Lebanon has plummeted in the wake of repeated political deadlocks in recent years, compounded by eight years of war in neighboring Syria. Lebanon's public debt stands at around \$86 billion - more than 150 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) - according to the finance ministry. Eighty percent of that figure is owed to Lebanon's central bank and local banks. The small Mediterranean country has promised donors to slash public spending as part of reforms to unlock \$11 billion in aid pledged at a conference in Paris last year. — AFP



DUBAI: This photo taken on Sept 25, 2019 shows a view of the Cityscape Global exhibition at the Dubai World Trade Centre. — AFP

Fire hits Saudi high-speed...

Continued from Page 1

The railway runs 450 km via the Red Sea port of

Saudi king's bodyguard shot...

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The incident was triggered by a "personal dispute", Al-Ekhabariya state television reported without giving further details. It added that Fagham died in hospital from his injuries and that an investigation into the shooting had been launched.

The bodyguard, with his tall, slender bearing, was well known among Saudis and often pictured attending

Jeddah, transporting passengers at speeds of up to 300 km per hour. Saudi King Salman inaugurated the railway in Sept 2018. Officials described it as the biggest transportation project in the region. In 2011, the kingdom signed a deal for a Spanish consortium to build the rail track, supply 35 high-speed trains and handle a 12-year maintenance contract. Saudi is boosting its infrastructure spending and expanding its railways - including a \$22.5 billion metro system under construction in the capital Riyadh - as it seeks to diversify its oil-dependent economy. — AFP

closely to the king. He also guarded the late King Abdullah, taking after his father who served under the former ruler for three decades. The Okaz newspaper said the public took a liking to Fagham from the days when he guarded King Abdullah. "With this, he gained the leadership's trust and the love of the Saudis," the paper said. "News of the killing has come as a thunderbolt for Saudis, who were deeply saddened by his death," it said.

Okaz described him as "the most famous of all the royal guards" and said he was known for his vigilance and tact. It said that he accompanied the king on all his travels, inside and outside of the kingdom. Fagham was to be buried yesterday evening near the Great Mosque in Makkah - Islam's holiest site. — AFP

Sports

Breaking stereotypes, chess and boxing create 'essence of excellence'

Mix of chess and boxing played out in flesh and blood across the world

PARIS: Dripping with sweat, gasping for breath and desperately trying to refocus after fending off hooks and throwing uppercuts, Nikopol warily moves his bishop across the chessboard...

Once the literary creation of French artist Enki Bilal's illustrated books, chessboxing is now a reality, a mix of chess and boxing played out in flesh and, occasionally, blood across the world.

It combines the physical and the intellectual — and is growing in popularity. The sport, which makes its first fightnight appearance in the ring in France in November, has grown out of Nikopol's adventures in Bilal's 1992 book "Cold Equator", the final chapter in an epic trilogy in which the hero triumphs in a combat combining the strength of boxing and the intelligence of chess.

"At one point, I wanted my characters to confront each other in a spectacular way, in a gladiatorial way, just as sport does," Bilal told AFP.

"I wanted to find a sport that would epitomise the very essence of excellence in a human being, namely his supreme intelligence and his strength."

"What hit me straight away was chess. And boxing is important because it has a nobility. Behind the violence there is a whole philosophy of movement, of space. I immediately imagined them in a ring."

Ten years after Nikopol climbed through the ropes, Dutch performance artist Iepe Rubingh took the sport off the page and stuck it into a real ring.

In 2003, he organised the first fight — of which he was one of the two protagonists — and created the World Chess Boxing Organisation (WCBO) before promoting bouts around the world via the Intellectual Fight Club (IFC).

Today, there are 10 national federations and around

3,500 combatants, mainly in Germany, Britain and India and almost entirely men.

"It's the most complete sport," says Thomas Cazeneuve, a recruitment consultant who became France's first world champion in 2017.

"We work the body and the mind. It breaks the stereotypes, like that of the fighter who is a brute and that of the chess player who is a 'geek', not at all sporty, top of his class who will go on to be a computer expert."

The rules are straightforward enough. A contest breaks down into 11 rounds — six rounds of chess interspersed with five rounds of boxing. If it goes the distance, a match usually lasts around 45 minutes.

The chess is played under time controlled 'blitz' regulations with the fighters stripped to the waist and wearing a soundproofing helmet to cut out the noise of the crowd who bay and holler at every move on the board.

Cazeneuve grew up on chess as a kid before taking up kickboxing as a teenager. Now he has found the perfect outlet to blend his twin sports.

"You have to be able to switch from boxing to chess while remaining lucid so that the level of chess does not go down," he explains.

"We are used to playing chess in a room without noise, with a bottle of water, a bite to eat.

"But here we bleed, we hurt, we are out of breath, we don't know where we live and we have to play."

A victory, usually by knockout in the ring or checkmate on the board, wins and ends the entire contest. It is very rare that the decision has to go to the judges.

"It is a duel, no one gives an inch," says French federation president Guillaume Salanon who likens chessboxing to bullfighting.



PARIS: Chessboxers play a round of chess during a chessboxing training in Paris, on September 22, 2019. Chessboxing combines rounds of boxing with chess. It was born 18 years ago when its founder Iepe Rubingh brought to life a seemingly far-fetched idea from a French graphic novel, "Cold Equator" by French author Enki Bilal. —AFP

"It's a performance where you know something will happen, an artistic performance. It's completely mystical, powerful, moving, something you don't always have in sport." And with skateboarding and break dancing

being welcomed into the Olympic fold, is it too fanciful to imagine chessboxing taking off at Paris 2024 or Los Angeles 2028? Nikopol and his creator Enki Bilal would certainly approve. —AFP

Hamilton wins in Russia to foil Ferrari renaissance

SOCHI: A euphoric Lewis Hamilton extended his world championship lead to 73 points yesterday when he rode his luck to claim a strategic victory for Mercedes in a roller-coaster Russian Grand Prix.

The defending five-time champion came home 3.829 seconds ahead of team-mate and nearest championship rival Valtteri Bottas as Mercedes took advantage of Ferrari's reliability and tactical problems by delivering a Silver Arrows one-two.

Having grabbed the lead from pole man Charles Leclerc on the opening lap, Sebastian Vettel ignored team orders to let him pass before he suffered a mechanical failure and stopped on lap 28. The resultant Safety Car period gifted Mercedes, who started on medium tyres while their rivals all used softs, a chance to extend their Sochi supremacy to six consecutive wins.

Leclerc came home a frustrated and disgruntled third, claiming he expected Vettel to repay him for his slip-stream in a race punctuated by two Safety Car

interventions and one use of the Virtual Safety Car.

Hamilton's win was his first since the Hungarian Grand Prix on August 4, his ninth in 16 outings this year and the 82nd of his career, lifting him 73 points clear at the top of the drivers' title race. He scored an additional point for fastest lap.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen finished fourth, having started ninth, ahead of team-mate Alex Albon, who had started from the pit lane. Carlos Sainz was sixth for McLaren ahead of Sergio Perez of Racing Point, Kevin Magnussen of Haas, Lando Norris in the second McLaren and Renault's Nico Hulkenberg.

"That's exactly what we needed," exclaimed a delighted Hamilton on the team radio following a flawless strategic performance by Mercedes. "It was an incredible job by all the team - not giving up. Keeping up with Ferrari was a hard task, but we kept pushing."

CLEAN START

Leclerc remained poised, despite his disappointment. "At least we are consistent," he said. "It's a shame for the team not to have both of us up here... I will always trust the team, but our tactic was for me to give the slipstream, which I did - and then, well I need to speak to the team about that."

Leclerc had made a clean start, but behind him Vettel enjoyed a superb launch from third to pass Hamilton by the first corner and, after slip-streaming the Monegasque, taking the lead.



SOCHI: Winner Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton celebrates on podium after the Formula One Russian Grand Prix at The Sochi Autodrom Circuit in Sochi yesterday. —AFP

Before the order settled, Ricciardo collided with Grosjean at Turn Four sending the Haas driver spinning into the barriers. A Safety Car was deployed and Grosjean retired. "We are looking into the swap further into the race," Ferrari told Leclerc, running second, suggesting they had agreed to repay him for punching through the air for his team-mate.

This was confirmed when Leclerc was told 'Sebastian will let you by next lap' - an order not welcomed by Vettel as he

stayed in front by 1.4 seconds with Hamilton adrift in third. Vettel said Leclerc, beaten in Singapore by a strategic decision in Vettel's favour, needed to close up. "I respected everything," answered Leclerc. "We will speak later, but now it is difficult to close the gap. Obviously." A revitalised Vettel was 3.6 seconds clear by lap 16 as Leclerc held off Hamilton until the team freed him to attack before he pitted for mediums on lap 23, Hamilton taking second. —AFP

Kuwait shooters win medals at Asian Clay Target tourney

KUWAIT: President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng. Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi lauded the good results Kuwait shooters made during the 9th Asian Clay Target tournament being held in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

As Kuwait's Nasser Al-Miqliq won the gold medal in individual trap event, while Kazakh Victor Khasinov

won silver and Oman's Salem Al-Nasiri was third. The trap team of Nasser Al-Miqliq, Khalid Al-Mudhaf and Abdelrahman Al-Faihan won the silver medal, while the juniors Salah Al-Rashidi, Yousuf Al-Rashidi and Bader Al-Adwani won bronze.

Al-Otaibi praised the improved performance of Kuwait's shooters, specially the juniors who will be relied on in the future to continue the achievements in the name of our beloved Kuwait.

Al-Otaibi thanked HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his generous support for the development of the sport of shooting. He also thanked HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and all those who contributed to the sport of shooting.



Vettel makes light of Sochi failure

SOCHI: Sebastian Vettel made light of claims that he ignored Ferrari team orders yesterday after an engine failure ended his hopes of winning the Russian Grand Prix. The four-time world champion, who made a blistering start and led for 27 laps, smiled when he was told he had been voted 'driver of the day' in a fan vote.

But, he said, he was disappointed Ferrari had failed to land a one-two triumph. "I don't know exactly what happened," said Vettel, when asked about a pre-race agreement he had with team-mate Charles Leclerc, who gave him a first lap slipstream to take the lead from third on the grid.

"I think we had an agreement. I spoke with Charles especially before the race. It was quite clear. Maybe I missed something?" "I'm sure we'll talk about it," he added with an enigmatic smile. "It's bitter for us today because we wanted to have a one-two and it's not the result we wanted. I don't want to share (details about our agreement) and I don't want to put the team in a bad light."

"We talked about a strategy to get past Lewis and I had a good start. I was in third and Charles was first - we raced and I think that's what we did until the pit stop when obviously I lost the lead and then the car broke down."

Vettel, whose victory in Singapore a week earlier was his first for 13 months, admitted: "It's bitter for me because this year has been tough. I unlocked the car - yesterday Charles was quickest and I can't be happy with that - and I was on the rhythm today and fastest to the stop."

"The positive thing for me is that the car is faster now. In raw pace, Mercedes have an edge, but this should give them a headache." —AFP

Spence stops Porter by split decision in Staples Center slugfest

LOS ANGELES: Errol Spence successfully defended his IBF belt and seized the WBC title on Saturday, defeating Shawn Porter by a split decision in a welterweight unification fight. The 29-year-old Spence had to go the 12-round distance for the victory in a close slugfest with two belts on the line in one of the deepest divisions in boxing.

"I wanted to show everybody that I can sit there and bang with one of the roughest, toughest fighters in welterweight," said Spence. "I feel like I am the bigger, stronger and smarter welterweight."

The two fighters traded blows throughout, especially in close quarters where Spence did some of his best work in front of the crowd of 20,000 at the Staples Center. He recorded the only knockdown in the 11th round when he hit Porter with a vicious left that wobbled the former WBC champ. Porter didn't hit the canvas but his knees buckled and his left glove touched the ground, preventing him from going down.

But Spence (26-0, 21 KOs) failed to follow up with the knockout after Porter rose to his feet and said "let's go". Two judges had Spence winning 116-111 and the third gave it to Porter 115-112.

Spence was thought to be in line for a fight against Manny Pacquiao but the promoter Al Haymon poured cold water on that mega showdown by having officials in the ring announce Spence would fight Danny Garcia next.

Porter (30-3-1, 17 KOs) may have lost a close decision but he won the hearts of many boxing fans with his dogged, aggressive style. He would charge forward, at times trying to smother Spence with a barrage of blows. But it didn't always work as by the middle rounds, Spence figured out he could step aside and land short left hooks to Porter's head.

Some of the exchanges between the two were so wanton and the blows rapid-fire that the fighters landed simultaneously punches to each other's heads. Spence said Porter's mauling style made him uncomfortable at times.

"Porter is a rough fighter. I looked sloppy at times but give credit to Porter. He comes to fight," said Spence. On the undercard, David Benavidez regained the WBC super middleweight title with a ninth-round stoppage of fellow American Anthony Dirrell.

Benavidez, who was stripped of the crown after a positive drug test, was overpowering Dirrell when the champion's corner threw in the towel. The 22-year-old Benavidez improved to 22-0 with 19 knockouts. He was coming off a stoppage of J'Leon Love in March.

Dirrell, who was giving up 12 years to his rival, suffered a nasty cut over his right eye in the seventh round. By the time the fight was stopped, he could only see out of his left eye.

Dirrell took the vacant crown in February by beating Turkey's Avni Yildirim. He suffered just the second loss of his career to go with 33 wins and one draw. —AFP

Sports

Wales hold off Australia with thrilling 29-25 victory in Rugby World Cup

Unbeaten Six Nations champions Wales top Pool D

TOKYO: Six Nations champions Wales took a massive step towards topping Pool D with a thrilling 29-25 victory over valiant Australia in the Rugby World Cup yesterday. The Welsh were 23-8 ahead at half-time but they had to withstand a furious second-half onslaught when Australia fought back to within a point late in the game.

Wales, 43-14 winners over Georgia in their opener, will now be confident of finishing their pool unbeaten, with their next opponents Fiji in Oita on October 9 before taking on Uruguay in Kumamoto four days later.

"Relief at the moment," said Wales coach Warren Gatland, when asked what he was feeling after the match. "Tough second half but the boys pulled through. It was a tough Test match. Very pleased with the first half. We didn't have a lot of ball in the second half and Australia kept coming at us and putting us under a huge amount of pressure. But we were able to hold on thankfully."

Australia captain Michael Hooper said the game "came down to the wire". "Some big calls there. Some went our way, some didn't," said Hooper. "We've got to pick ourselves back up. We'll review it. Probably right now recovery's key. We've got a six day turnaround. This sort of format, competition, you've got to move on pretty quick."

WALTZING MATILDA

An electric game full of enterprising, interlinking play from both sides on a balmy late afternoon in the Japanese capital made for a marvellous spectacle of running rugby. The 47,885-strong crowd had barely taken their seats after the anthems when Wales were on the scoreboard.

The ubiquitous Aaron Wainwright turned over esteemed Wallaby jackler Michael Hooper from the kick-off, Gareth Davies finding Dan Biggar in the box for a straightforward drop-goal with just 37 seconds on the clock.

Biggar went wide on his first penalty attempt minutes later as Wales continued to attack with fluidity, George North being brought down with the line begging.

The largely red and yellow crowd at Tokyo Stadium traded respective ballads, 'Hymns and Arias' for 'Waltzing Matilda' with mutual applause for both renditions. A hearty round of collective boos, however, rang out when an image of England coach Eddie Jones was shown on the big screen.

Biggar spurned a second shot at goal as Wales looked to build on their momentum. The ball was quickly recycled from the attacking line-out, Biggar putting in an inch-perfect crosskick that Hadleigh Parkes gathered, the Kiwi-born centre outleaping Marika Koroiibete and spinning past Dane Haylett-Petty to dot down in the corner.

The Welsh fly-half hit the extras but saw a second, long-range drop-goal go wide. Hooper escaped punishment for a late, high hit on Biggar, French referee Romain Poite deciding a penalty was sufficient.

BIGGAR HEAD INJURY

Wales lost their throw-in from the kick, handing Australia the chance to fire back down the pitch, a Parkes tackle on opposite number Samu Kerevi preventing a sure try.

The Wallaby forwards arrived en masse, and with the Welsh defence scrambling, Bernard Foley cross-kicked perfectly to veteran Adam Ashley-Cooper, the winger stepping inside Josh Adams with aplomb to scramble over for a deserved try.

Foley scuffed the conversion, but with both sides more than willing to throw the ball around, it didn't seem to matter. Biggar bundled Serevi into touch after the strapping Fiji-born centre had two-stepped around Jonathan Davies, but the fly-half paid for that defensive showing by being subbed off with a head injury, replaced by Rhys Patchell.



TOKYO: Wales' lock Alun Wyn Jones (C) is tackled by Australia's lock Rory Arnold (C-L) during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool D match between Australia and Wales at the Tokyo Stadium in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

Foley and Patchell traded penalties before Gareth Davies pounced to intercept a deep pass from a stuttering Will Genia to sprint home from 60 metres.

Patchell converted to make it 23-8 at half-time and dropped a goal four minutes into the second period as Wales looked to turn the screw.

Australia were far from done, however, David Pocock providing the perfect offload for Dane Haylett-Petty to score the Wallabies' second try, Matt Toomua converting. The Welsh defence, built around No 8 Josh Navidi and skipper Alun Wyn Jones, winning a Wales-record

130th cap, could only hold firm for so long as Australia proceeded to camp out in their 22m area with a series of set-pieces, Hooper eventually being driven for an invaluable try Toomua converted.

Games between the two sides are traditionally tight and so it again proved, Toomua hitting a 69th-minute penalty to reduce Wales' lead to just one point. Patchell responded in kind, Tomos Williams kept an Australian kick to touch in play and Wales saw out a tense final five minutes to set themselves up as likely Pool D winners. —AFP

Powerful Georgia slay giant-killers Uruguay

KUMAGAYA: Georgia overpowered Uruguay at the Rugby World Cup for a 33-7 bonus-point win yesterday, the popular South American underdogs unable to repeat their heroics against Fiji four days earlier.

A dominant forward display laid the foundation for an impressive victory by Georgia, who will now target an upset against Australia on October 11 as their path to a shock quarter-final place from Pool D.

Uruguay had rocked the tournament with its first shock result, beating highly talented Fiji by 30-27 in a pulsating match in Kamaishi on Wednesday. But Georgia coach Milton Haig had targeted yesterday's clash as a "must-win" game and made 12 changes from the side that lost 43-14 to Wales.

"Really proud of the boys and of how we played. It was important for us to get this first win out of the way," said Haig. "We've worked so hard over the last four months — even four years really — so pretty stoked that we ended up getting the job done."

"The pack is a strength of ours, scrum time, maul time, stuff like that. We knew they would come down, four-day turnaround for Uruguay. We knew it would be tough for them." It was Haig's side — ranked six places above Uruguay — that started the brighter, a sustained spell of forward dominance at the scrum leaving space out wide for winger Alexander Todua to score in the left corner.

WATER BREAKS

Both sides struggled to impose themselves early in energy-sapping humidity in Kumagaya, which saw the first water breaks at this year's Rugby World Cup. Georgia's next score came on the half-hour mark. The forwards shoved Uruguay



KUMAGAYA: Georgia's full back Soso Matiashvili (R) is tackled by Uruguay's wing Nicolas Freitas during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool D match between Georgia and Uruguay at the Kumagaya Rugby Stadium in Kumagaya yesterday. — AFP

back with another powerful scrum, leaving number eight Otari Giorgadze to pick up at the base and dive over.

Uruguay hit back against the run of play, a clever inside ball slicing up the Georgian defence and leaving inside centre Andres Vilaseca a free run in under the posts. Esteban Meneses' men could have reduced their arrears further but Felipe Berchesi pushed a penalty attempt wide and the teams turned with Georgia leading 12-7.

Georgia extended their advantage only minutes after half-time, with Uruguay again unable to resist pressure from the heavy forwards and letting prop Levan Chilachava force his way over for a try brilliantly converted from the touchline.

A catch-and-drive from a line-out fin-

ished off by Giorgadze secured the bonus-point for Georgia as Uruguay found no answer to the heavier pack. Uruguay were wilting in the heat and humidity, and a tired error on their own line let outside centre Giorgi Kveseladze in for an easy try to put the result well beyond doubt.

And with only three minutes left on the clock, Uruguayan replacement Facundo Gattas saw a red card for a high shoulder charge to the head, the tournament's second on-pitch dismissal.

Meneses refused to blame the four-day turnaround for Uruguay's defeat, saying: "We knew (about) this. We were preparing for this. We (made) preparations, physical and technical and mental. "We were prepared for this." —AFP

Victory at the Hanazono Stadium was all but assured by a four-try salvo that yielded a bonus point inside 26 minutes, with Argentina hooker Julian Montoya scoring a hat-trick. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the Pumas' performance fell away from that point, with Tonga fullback Telusa Veainu scoring two tries for the Pacific islanders.

Argentina, however, had done enough and England forwards coach Steve Borthwick told reporters on Sunday: "In that first 30 minutes they delivered the performance they needed to win the game."

"They got the tries and had won the game by that point in time so it was a pretty professional performance." Two of Montoya's tries came from line-outs, with a clever blindside play followed by a conventional catch and drive.

But while impressed by their set-piece form, Borthwick said there was more to 2007 and 2015 World Cup semi-finalists Argentina than scrum and line-out power. "They have a very good forward pack," said former England captain Borthwick, a lock in his playing days.

"We know that and we've seen that over

a period of time. Their scrum has improved from where it was which you would expect with a coach like (Mario) Ledesma now he has been there for a period and had a chance to address that.

"While Montoya played very well yesterday they have another outstanding hooker in (Agustin) Creevy who came on later in the game." "Then they have some backs who have got the X-factor. (Nicolas) Sanchez and (Emiliano) Boffelli are two that spring to mind straight away," added Borthwick.

Both head coach Eddie Jones and long-time assistant Borthwick were due to travel to Tokyo to watch Australia's match against Wales on Sunday, with one of those teams likely to be England's quarter-final opponents should they reach the last eight.

Nevertheless, Borthwick insisted England's attention was firmly fixed on Argentina. "We want to focus on improving on our recent performances and being the best team we can possibly be next Saturday," he said. "We know that they are a very good side and we will be preparing accordingly." —AFP

Ireland's Sexton: Japan loss could be 'blessing in disguise'

KOBE: Ireland star Johnny Sexton believes a stunning World Cup defeat by Japan could yet prove to be a "blessing in disguise" because it took place during the group stages. Fly-half Sexton missed Saturday's shock in Shizuoka with a thigh injury and could only watch helplessly as tournament hosts Japan won 19-12 to throw Pool A wide open.

But the playmaker, who featured in Ireland's dominant opening 27-3 win over Scotland at Japan 2019, took heart from the fact that his side can still get their World Cup campaign back on track.

Sexton contrasted Ireland's current position with the past two World Cups, where they eased through the pool phase only to suffer quarter-final defeats by Wales and Argentina in 2011 and 2015 respectively.

"The only blessing in disguise is that in the last two World Cups I've been involved in, we've not cruised through the group, but we've had everything go our way in the pool stages," Sexton told reporters in Kobe on Sunday.

"And then we've had the day we had yesterday (Saturday) in the quarter-final. And we'd be going home today. "So the great thing now is that we've got the rest of the pool to get things together."

Matters are still in Irish hands, Sexton said, if they can win their last two games

against Russia and Samoa and score a healthy number of tries. Ireland need "two big performances" to get to the knockout stages. "And we know that if we can get there, we've got a chance."

'RESPONDED REALLY WELL'

Sexton added Joe Schmidt's men had a proven ability to bounce back from defeat, noting that Ireland had been battered 57-15 by England and then beaten Wales twice before impressing in their opening World Cup win against Scotland.

"We've responded really well in terms of the other recent setbacks," he said. "A five-game winning run now would be great, that would do nicely." Sexton, who expects to be fit to face a Russia side unlikely to trouble the Irish, said he understood why he had not been risked against Japan.

After suffering a strain against Scotland, he could not train fully on Monday and Tuesday, meaning "the preparation time was so short the guys made the decision for me to sit this one out." "You want to play every game but hopefully I can pay back the squad this week and next week too."

Connacht centre Bunde Aki could be recalled in place of the concussed Chris Farrell, although veteran fullback Rob Kearney has passed a head injury assessment (HIA).

"Chris Farrell has a confirmed concussion, so he won't recover in time for Thursday," said Ireland forwards coach Simon Easterby. "Rob Kearney passed his HIA two so he's in that process."

Meanwhile Ireland have summoned back-row forward Jordi Murphy to Japan after Jack Conan was ruled out of the rest of the World Cup with a broken foot. —AFP

Pedersen survives storms to win cycling world title

HARROGATE: Denmark's Mads Pedersen created a huge surprise when he emerged from a rain-drenched Yorkshire road race with cycling's world title yesterday. The 23-year-old timed his last-gasp run to perfection to beat a devastated Italian Matteo Trentin and Swiss rider Stefan Kung in silver and bronze positions after 261km and over 6 hours and 27 minutes of exhausting racing.

"That's an unbelievable day, I didn't expect this morning," said the Leopard-Trek team rider who won much as an under-23's racer. "It was just survive, survive, survive. Then hope for the best in the sprint," said Pedersen, who was far from favourite to beat Italian 30-year-old Trentin, usually a crack in the sprints.

"When I saw the finish line I thought

anything can happen," he said. The race was shortened Sunday morning as relentless overnight rain took its toll on the narrow roads through the Yorkshire dales, flooding an iconic hilly section of the route which was cut out altogether.

The rain also turned the Harrogate fan park into a quagmire and grounded the television helicopters. Dutch 24-year-old Mathieu van der Poel had looked set for victory with a lap to go but cracked suddenly and spectacularly.

The conditions took a huge toll. Only 46 of the 182 starters crossed the finish line. Among the early victims, defending world champion Alejandro Valverde cut a sorry figure as he pulled out with 100km to go.

Ireland's Dan Martin and Belgian Philippe Gilbert, world champion in 2012, former Tour de France winner Geraint Thomas and reigning Vuelta champion Primoz Roglic of Slovenia, all dropped out.

But the rain gave Pedersen his chance. In 1993 the Oslo worlds were also run in a downpour as the now disgraced American former rider and admitted doper Lance Armstrong won in short sleeves in a deluge, crossing the line in near darkness. —AFP

England wary of Argentina's 'X-Factor'

KOBE: England expect to face an Argentina side boasting both forward power and "X-factor" backs when they continue their Rugby World Cup campaign against the Pumas in Tokyo next weekend.

Eddie Jones's men, one of the pre-tournament favourites for the title, have enjoyed comfortable wins over second-string nations Tonga (35-3) and the United States (45-7) in their first two fixtures at Japan 2019.

But a sterner challenge should await them in the so-called 'group of death' when they face Argentina in Tokyo on Saturday, October 5. After an agonising 23-21 loss to France in their Pool C opener, Argentina beat Tonga 28-12 in Osaka on Saturday.

25 Chess and boxing create 'essence of excellence'



26 Wales hold off Australia with thrilling 29-25 victory in Rugby World Cup



27 Balotelli scores but Brescia fall to Napoli, Dzeko seals Roma win



Coleman withdraws from 200m

Coleman roars to 100m title, race walkers tame heat



DOHA: USA's Christian Coleman (L) crosses the finish line ahead of USA's Justin Gatlin (C) and Italy's Filippo Tortu to win the Men's 100m final at the 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships at the Khalifa International stadium in Doha. — AFP

DOHA: Newly crowned world 100m champion Christian Coleman has withdrawn from the 200m at the World Championships, the United States Track and Field Federation confirmed yesterday. US sprinter Coleman, who blasted to a brilliant gold medal in the 100m on Saturday, had been due to take part in the heats of the 200m.

However a revised start list for the event at the Khalifa Stadium showed the American's name absent. A USA TF spokesman later confirmed Coleman was not racing the event but would be available for the relays. No reason for his 200m withdrawal was given.

Earlier, Coleman stamped his mark on world sprinting with a dominant performance to sweep to the global 100 metres title and suggest the heir to retired Jamaican icon Usain Bolt has arrived. The 23-year-old American, who escaped a doping ban earlier this month on a technicality, swept over the finish line in a world-leading personal best of 9.76sec to claim his first major outdoor championship gold medal.

Defending champion Justin Gatlin took silver in

9.89sec at the age of 37 while Canada's Andre De Grasse claimed bronze in 9.90sec. It completed a flawless championship campaign for Coleman, who had been the only man to duck under 10 seconds in both Friday's opening rounds and Saturday's semi-finals.

Coleman has angrily denied any suggestion he is guilty of taking performance-enhancing drugs. Coleman let out a roar of triumph as he crossed the line before punching the air in jubilation after a performance which makes him the sixth fastest man in history.

"It is an incredible time, it is a PR for me. I think the sky's the limit, I think I still have a lot of things I can work on and improve, I think I can keep dropping my time," the indoor 60 metres world record holder said.

Coleman may be just starting to accrue titles but Jamaica's Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce suggested a fourth 100m women's world crown is on the cards.

The 32-year-old two-time Olympic champion timed an impressive 10.80sec, the fastest women's 100m heat in world championship history. There were also first world titles for Ethiopia-born naturalised Dutch distance

runner Sifan Hassan in the 10,000m and DeAnna Price of the United States, who celebrated victory in the women's hammer.

Price, 26, has only one kidney and suffered several serious injuries down the years. "I didn't even think I was going to compete this year," Price said after her win. "I was in a lot of pain. I couldn't even throw over 70 metres." Jamaica's Tajay Gayle upset the form book to strike men's long jump gold, producing the leap of his life to defeat favourite Juan Miguel Echevarria. The 23-year-old Gayle launched himself 8.69m with his fourth attempt while Cuba's Echevarria only managed 8.34m for bronze.

Day two concluded with all eyes on the men's and women's 50km walk races, with organisers nervously monitoring the progress of athletes chasing medals in sweltering conditions.

The walks took place 24 hours after a casualty-filled women's marathon, where 28 of 68 starters failed to finish. However despite steamy conditions on Qatar's waterfront course, the two races largely passed off without the sort of scenes that dogged the marathon, where

several exhausted athletes were taken away from the course on stretchers.

The men's race was won by Yusuke Suzuki, who became the first Japanese athlete to win the 50km men's race. Suzuki's pillar was almost outshone by Portugal's silver medalist Joao Vieira who at 43 became the oldest male athlete to win a medal at the world championships. Canada's Evan Dunfee took bronze.

The women's race saw a Chinese 1-2 with Liang Rui taking gold in 4hr 23min 26sec and Li Maoou the silver. Italy's Eleonora Giorgi took the bronze — defending champion Ines Henriques failed to finish.

The IAAF's decision to award the championships to Doha came under renewed scrutiny following the marathon carnage, with French decathlon world champion Kevin Mayer adding his voice to the criticism on Saturday. "Clearly by organising the championship here, they (the IAAF) didn't put the athletes first, they've mostly put them in jeopardy," said Mayer. "Even if people aren't saying it out loud, it's obvious it's a catastrophe." —AFP

Bekele wins Berlin marathon, misses record by two seconds

BERLIN: Ethiopian Kenenisa Bekele won his second Berlin Marathon yesterday in a time of two hours one minute and 41 seconds, just two seconds short of the world record. Bekele left it late to hit the lead, overtaking countryman Birhanu Legese on the 38th kilometre before hitting top speed as he chased the world record of 2:01:39 set in Berlin last year

by Kenyan Eliud Kipchoge.

Bekele was more than a minute behind the world record time with 10 kilometres to go, but finished in a flurry to better his personal best of 2:03:03 set at the 2016 Berlin Marathon. Legese finished second with fellow Ethiopian Sisay Lemma in third.

Ashete Bekere, also from Ethiopia, was the fastest of the women, finishing just eight seconds ahead of countrywoman Mare Dibaba in a time of 2:20:14, highlighting the African nation's dominance in the sport. Bekere and Dibaba were elbow to elbow as they ran through the Brandenburg Gate with just a few hundred metres to go, before Bekere pulled away with the finish line in sight.

Bekele was more than a minute behind the world record time with 10 kilometres to go, but finished in a flurry to better his personal best of 2:03:03 set in 2016. Bekele put his

slow start down to a hamstring complaint.

"I felt something in my hamstring early on and of course I am coming back from injury, I was still in rehab two or three months ago," he said. "My preparation wasn't 100 percent. I feel sorry to have missed the world record, it is painful."

"I'm not lucky, but I know my potential and I know I can do this." Women's winner Bekere was thrilled with her victory, saying she put her performance down to intuition rather than tactics. "I am especially delighted to have managed it. I didn't prepare especially for this race, tactics wise, I just ran my own race today."

While Bekele was favourite for the men's event, women's pre-race favourite Gladys Cherono left in tears with half of the course completed due to an apparent muscle problem. —AFP



BERLIN: Winners Kenenisa Bekele of Ethiopia (L) and Ethiopia's Ashete Bekere celebrate during the winner's ceremony of the 46th Berlin Marathon yesterday. —AFP