

4 Interior ministry's WhatsApp hotline receives complaints 24/7



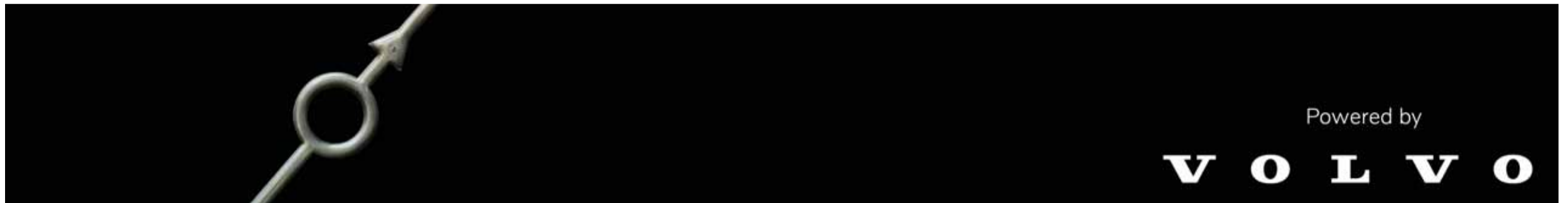
6 Drunk driver slams into group of children, kills 4 in Australia



24 Morocco's long-burdened 'mule women' facing new struggles



28 Djokovic beats Thiem in five-set epic to win 8th Australian Open



Manila vows labor ban stays until slain maid gets justice

Aqeel meets Bello, says 10,000 Filipino workers entered Kuwait last month



KUWAIT: Philippine Department of Labor and Employment Secretary Silvestre Bello III meets Kuwaiti Finance Minister and Acting State Minister for Economic Affairs Mariam Aqeel yesterday. — KUNA

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: At a meeting with Filipino community leaders late Saturday, Philippine Department of Labor and Employment Secretary Silvestre Bello III reiterated his country's desire to get justice for murdered Filipino housemaid Jeanelyn Villavende, saying Manila is not backing down on the total labor deployment ban to Kuwait until justice is served to Villavende.

"We are clear on our position - we will not back down. We will lift the ban only if justice is given to Villavende, and also more importantly, the long-overdue implementation of the standard or harmonized employment contract which we've been discussing between the technical working groups of both countries in accordance with the provision of the memorandum of agreement signed in 2018," Bello said.

Yesterday, Kuwaiti Finance Minister and Acting State Minister for Economic Affairs Mariam Aqeel met Bello and his delegation in the presence of Kuwait's Ambassador to Manila Musaed Al-Thuwaikeh. Aqeel said several issues were discussed with the visiting minister, including the killing of Villavende. The minister stated her rejection to what the maid was subjected to, adding that "what happened cannot be accepted and the entire Kuwaiti people do not accept any violations of labor rights in the country".

The minister said the case is in the courts now, expressing confidence in the Kuwaiti judiciary "which

restores rights to those who deserve them and applies the law on all". She also lauded bilateral relations between Kuwait and the Philippines, adding that the death of the helper is a "rare case" that must not affect relations between the two countries.

Aqeel said Kuwait receives a large number of Filipino workers every month to work in a stable market where labor rights are safeguarded, adding nearly 10,000 Filipinos of both genders entered Kuwait the previous month. She said the Filipino delegation will discuss the implementation of the labor agreement between Kuwait and the Philippines to reach the best results with regards to domestic helpers.

Some Filipino observers in Kuwait are confused. Speaking to Kuwait Times on the condition of anonymity, one of them said the Philippines is implementing the total deployment ban and demanding justice for Villavende, yet at the same time the delegation of Philippine officials is meeting several Philippine- and Kuwait-based recruitment agencies to talk business and the welfare of Filipino workers.

"It means business as usual - they want business to continue," he argued. "It means we are not serious on the ban and probably the call for justice for Villavende is far from reality. We are giving false hope to Villavende's family, or maybe it will follow later - I don't know. If we are indeed serious on justice for our kabayan (countrymen), which we all want, the

Continued on Page 24

Japanese warship heads to Gulf to patrol oil lifeline

YOKOSUKA, Japan: A Japanese destroyer left for the Gulf of Oman yesterday amid simmering Middle East tension to guard sea lanes that supply nearly all the oil that powers the world's third-biggest economy. "Thousands of Japanese ships ply those waters every year including vessels carrying nine tenths of our oil. It is Japan's lifeline," Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the crew at Yokosuka naval base near Tokyo, before they cast off in a ceremony attended by 500 family members and representatives from the United States, European nations and Middle East.

Abe's government has said it is prepared to authorize force to protect ships in danger, a controversial decision because

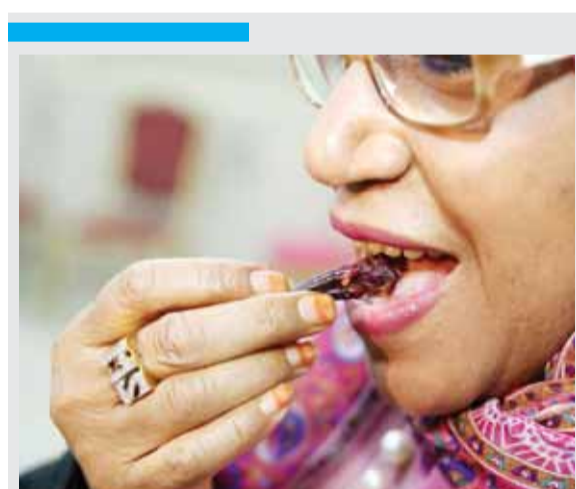
Japan's war-renouncing constitution forbids the use of military force in international disputes. The Takanami, which will be joined by two maritime patrol planes, will not, however join a naval force led by Japan's US ally or other naval coalitions in the region. Tokyo has chosen to operate independently as it navigates disputes in the volatile region. Japan maintains cordial relations with Iran and other countries there and Abe travelled to the region in January to brief Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman on the mission after earlier speaking with Iranian leaders.

Tension in the Middle East has heightened as friction between Iran and the United States escalated following US

Continued on Page 24



YOKOSUKA: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaks during a ceremony to mark the departure of Japanese destroyer "Takanami" for the Middle East yesterday. — AFP



KUWAIT: Moudi Al-Miftah, a 64-year-old journalist, tastes a locust that she just cooked at her home in Ahmadi on Jan 25, 2020. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Locust are a delicacy for some Kuwaitis

KUWAIT: Some people like them baked, others prefer them dried. Locusts are surprisingly nutritious and considered a delicacy by many in Kuwait but not everyone is enamored by the crunchy culinary offering. "I love their flavor, it's one of my memories of childhood and reminds me of my grandparents and my father," enthused Moudi Al-Miftah, a 64-year-old journalist who writes a weekly newspaper column.

But most of Miftah's loved ones stopped eating the bugs long ago. Locust consumption is dwindling across Kuwaiti society, particularly among the younger generation, many of whom are disgusted by the prospect. Locusts are consumed in many parts of the world and are a staple of some cuisines. Experts say they are an excellent, energy-efficient source of protein. In Kuwait, they retain a sturdy fan base among older citizens.

The first shipments, imported from Saudi Arabia, arrive in markets in January, transported in distinctive red bags weighing 250 gm. They are stocked alongside white desert truffles, another delicacy sought by Kuwaitis in winter at the Rai market. Larger females are known as "Al-Mekn" in Kuwaiti dialect, while the smaller males are called "Asfour". — AFP (See Page 2)

Researchers prime targets in Middle East power plays

PARIS: Authoritarian governments in the Middle East are increasingly willing to seize researchers and academics, who are seen as valuable bargaining chips in their joustings with Western nations, analysts warn. "The risks now facing researchers in the Middle East

are unprecedented," said Jean-Pierre Filiu, a historian at France's Sciences Po university. Filiu was speaking on Friday at a forum dedicated to two French colleagues, Fariba Adelkhah and Roland Marchal, who have been imprisoned in Iran since their arrest last June.

They have been charged with conspiracy or collusion against national security, while Australian Kylie Moore-Gilbert of the University of Melbourne is serving a 10-year sentence on espionage charges. Often authorities target their own citizens who have dual nationality, like Adelkhah, with Tehran in particular refusing to recognize a second passport.

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Muppets help kids in Arabic 'Sesame Street'

DUBAI: A band of Muppets, both old favorites and new friends, are starring in an Arabic retooling of "Sesame Street" with a regional twist. In its Western iterations, the long-running franchise addresses issues including family breakdown. The new Middle East version instead seeks to help children, especially young Syrian refugees, cope with emotions. — AFP (See Page 19)



DUBAI: Hadi, a character portrayed by a Jordanian actor Rami Delshad, poses for a picture with (from left) Grover (Gargur in Arabic), Ma'zooza and Basma from the Sesame Street television series on Jan 28, 2020. — AFP

UN in 75th year amid distrust, shifting power

UNITED NATIONS:

As the United Nations enters its 75th year, the world is still rife with mistrust: The United States remains the dominant superpower but is on the wane, while Asian power is growing in the face of an increasingly fractured Europe, with an explosive Middle East sandwiched in between. In the New York headquarters of the United Nations, the Cold War never really ended, as demonstrated by a scene recently observed in its hallowed hallways: a US diplomat spotted hiding behind a wall to listen in on what the Chinese ambassador was telling a group of journalists.

Even if the world has managed to avoid a third World War, conflicts drag on for years and the risk of a more widespread conflagration remain high, as

Continued on Page 24



Locusts boiled, baked or dried? Kuwait serves up a swarm

Once popular delicacy declining among younger generation



KUWAIT: Moudi Al-Miftah, a 64-year-old journalist, cooks locusts at her home in Al-Ahmadi, some 35 kilometres south of Kuwait City, on January 25, 2020. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Moudi Al-Miftah boils locusts at her home in Al-Ahmadi.

KUWAIT: Some people like them baked, others prefer them dried. Locusts are surprisingly nutritious and considered a delicacy by many in Kuwait but not everyone is enamored by the crunchy culinary offering.

"I love their flavor, it's one of my memories of childhood and reminds me of my grandparents and my father," enthused Moudi Al-Miftah, a 64-year-old journalist who writes a weekly newspaper column. Miftah awaits winter every year to stock up on locusts, which she cooks herself, with a preference for crispiness.

In her kitchen, she tipped a bag of the insects into boiling stock where they quickly turned red, filling her kitchen with an aroma similar to stewing mutton. After simmering for half an hour, the locusts are ready to eat but they can be baked for added crunch, or dried so they can be enjoyed year-round.

But most of Miftah's loved ones stopped eating the bugs long ago. Locust consumption is dwindling across the Kuwaiti society, particularly among the younger generation, many of whom are disgusted by the prospect.

Ali Saad, a man in his twenties who was shopping for groceries, was visibly repulsed by the idea of snacking on insects. "I've never thought of eating locusts," he said. "Why would I eat an insect when we have all kinds of red and white meats?"

'The flesh is very tasty'

Locusts are consumed in many parts of the world and are a staple of some cuisines. Experts say they are an excellent, energy-efficient source of protein. In Kuwait, they retain a sturdy fan base among older citizens. The first shipments, imported from Saudi Arabia,

arrive in markets in January, transported in distinctive red bags weighing 250 grams (nine ounces). They are stocked alongside white desert truffles, another delicacy sought by Kuwaitis in winter at the Al-Rai market nestled in an industrial area in the northwest of Kuwait City.

Abou Mohammed, 63, is originally from Ahvaz in Iran and normally sells fish at the market. But when the season arrives, he becomes a locust and truffle salesman. "The locusts are caught during the winter nights (when they are not flying) and we import them from Saudi Arabia," he said.

He described the bugs as "like a shrimp" and enthused that "the flesh is very tasty — especially the females which are full of eggs." The larger females are known as "El-Mekn" in Kuwaiti dialect, while the smaller males are called "Asfour." Abou Mohammed says he

sells almost a dozen bags a day at between three and five Kuwaiti dinars (\$8 and \$16) each. "I sell some 500 bags over the season, which is from January to April," he said.

'Stockpiling for next year'

Mohammed Al-Awadi, a 70-year-old Kuwaiti, has delivered locusts to retailers for many years and keeps a handy supply of the dried insects in his pocket for snacking. Dubbed "the king of the market," the salesman demonstrated how to eat the bug — snacking on a first locust, then another, and another.

"It's the best of dishes. I'm full, so I don't need to eat lunch today," he said. "The drier they are the better. My father always had a supply in his pocket."

A winter favorite sold at Al-Rai market



A locust vendor shows a bag full of edible insects at a market in Al-Rai, northwest of Kuwait City on January 25, 2020.

Authorities have sought in vain to ban the consumption of locusts over fears they could be contaminated. Locusts can rapidly multiply and form swarms that damage crops, forcing some countries to tackle them with pesticides.

Adel Tariji put his stock of two black sacks beside his vehicle and prospective clients pulled up alongside to examine his produce and haggle over prices. Tariji,

who has sold locusts since he was 18, said that despite reticence from some, he had seen glimmers of interest from health-conscious younger buyers.

They are more willing to pay higher prices because they are convinced of the benefits of eating "all natural" products, he said. "Some people are even stockpiling for next year out of fear that there will be no locusts next season." — AFP



Moudi Al-Miftah shows a locust that she just cooked at her home in Al-Ahmadi.



Abou Mohammed, 63, a seasonal locust and white desert truffle salesman, is pictured at a market in Al-Rai, northwest of Kuwait City on January 25, 2020.



A locust vendor shows a bag full of edible insects at a market in Al-Rai.



Locusts seen inside a bag full of edible insects at a market in Al-Rai.



A locust vendor shows an edible insect at a market in Al-Rai.



A locust vendor takes a locust from a bag full of edible insects at a market in Al-Rai.

Local

Crown Prince receives senior Kuwaiti officials at Bayan Palace



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

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel, and Undersecretary of the Oil Ministry Sheikh Dr Nimr Fahad Al-Malek Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Crown Prince also received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf then received Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh and Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah separately. He also met with Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Dr Khaled Ali Mohammad Al-Fadhel, who introduced to him the newly appointed Undersecretary of the Oil Ministry Sheikh Dr Nimr Fahad Al-Malek Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



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

KOC officials referred to prosecution

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) yesterday announced referring a number of officials at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), along "with others," to the public prosecution. They were submitted to the prosecution in line with a notification, filed by KOC about suspicious "corruption crimes" that incurred losses, Nazaha said, adding that the suspects were charged with negligence and slackness in management of projects in North Kuwait.

Dr Mohammad Bouzbar, Nazaha's official spokesman and the authority's assistant secretary general, said in a statement that the notification included results of a panel tasked with investigating and examining remarks by the State Audit Bureau for the fiscal year 2017-2018, regarding contracts and projects

of crude oil pipelines in northern regions. Dr Bouzbar noted that the report mentioned suspected corruption crimes worth KD 4.683 million (\$15.4 million). Based on results of the investigations, collection of evidences and witnesses' testimonies, there were suspicious crimes of facilitating seizure of public funds, intentional and non-intentional misappropriation of public funds, illegal profit making and aiding others to make such earnings.

These crimes are stipulated in the Law 1/1993 on protection of public funds; considered among the corruption crimes, according to Article 22 of the Law 2/2016 with respect of establishing the Public Anti-Corruption Authority and rules on revelation of financial assets. Bouzbar continued that after Nazaha was assured about existence of reasonable bases regarding suspicious corruption crimes as stipulated in the provision 22 and subjecting suspects to law 2/2016, it referred the case to the public prosecution. Nazaha is committed to securing required protection and secrecy for those suspects — as stipulated by the relevant law and the executive legislation. — KUNA

Kuwait, Britain seal numerous deals to push bilateral ties

KUWAIT: Kuwait and Britain yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and an "action plan" covering a wide range of issues, including health-care, defense and trade, amongst other fields. Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and Britain's Minister of State for International Development and the Middle East Dr Andrew Murrison signed the deals on behalf of their respective countries, amid talks involving a 'Joint Steering Group' from Kuwait and the UK. The talks revolved around plans for more cooperation across numerous fields, while yielding an MoU between Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and UK Department for International Development, aiming to "establish a

framework for operational cooperation." Another deal, between Kuwait Society of Engineers (KSE) and the UK Engineering Council, will provide membership to British engineers according to KSE requirements, read a joint statement issued after the talks. On the military front, the officials concurred that cooperation was satisfactory, pending upcoming joint endeavors between both countries as part of efforts to push defense cooperation. "The UK is proud of its strong relationship with Kuwait, a friendship which celebrated its 120th anniversary in 2019," Murrison said, adding that the "the fruits of our ongoing partnership will continue to flourish as we move into 2020 and beyond."—KUNA



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KUWAIT: Members of the Kuwait security force that will participate in the joint mobilization exercise (Arabian Gulf Security 2) hosted by UAE arrived yesterday. The exercise aims at enhancing coordination and joint field cooperation between the participating countries. The force will join workshops, training and coordination meetings to get ready for the final drills during the closing ceremony. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A woman takes a selfie while standing on a fishing pier in Kuwait City as the Jaber Causeway is seen in the background. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Ministry of Interior's WhatsApp number receives complaints 24/7

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Last month, the interior ministry launched a WhatsApp number for the public for quick and easy communication with the ministry regarding various issues. The WhatsApp hotline 99324092 was published on the website of the ministry and on other social media apps. The hotline operates 24/7 to receive complaints, suggestions, reports or queries for the Traffic Department. This service is also available in English for non-Arabic speakers.

The hotline receives an average of 121 messages daily, but this number is increasing with time, as more people are using it every day. Currently, 10 administrative employees are handling this line, in addition to a large number of responders in all the governorates to deal with the reports. The number is connected to various sectors of the interior ministry and other ministries and institutions. It deals with the Ministry of Public Works, Public Authority for Roads and Transportation, Kuwait Municipality and others.

Different sectors of the interior ministry all have accounts on various social media under the General



Directorate for Security Relations and Media. An expat sent a traffic violation to this number with the photo of the violation attached to this number on Saturday. Although it was the weekend, he received a response within 10 minutes. The information center required the address, and informed him that the report will be transferred to the Traffic Department and it will take the necessary action.

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PART
Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport
المدينة العامة للطرق و النقل البري

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Roads and Transport (PART) announced the opening today of the Ghazal Street's section running under the bridge from the Jahra Road's intersection in the direction of Abdulaziz Fahad Al-Musaeed Street (in red), as part of Jahra road development works.

Distillation unit of clean fuel project operated

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) announced yesterday operating the vacuum distillation unit at Al-Ahmadi refinery, affiliated to the clean fuel project. Abdullah Al-Ajmi, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and the KNPC official spokesperson, said in a statement to the press that the unit had begun production according to schedule. This unit had been

built according to state of art international specifications with an output capacity that can reach some 72,000 barrels of diesel per day. It is one of the key units affiliated to the clean fuel project, he said, adding that the step would pave the way for operating other facilities envisaged in the project at Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries. — KUNA

Local

No coronavirus in Kuwait; circulated video for hospital drill: Health Ministry

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Health ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said the ministry is transparent in announcing any coronavirus case, adding that information will be transmitted from trusted sources at the ministry. The statement was made after images and videos went viral that were taken during a training exercise to face epidemics. Sanad said the videos and images are from Jahra Hospital, and the claim that a patient is suffering from coronavirus there is not true, adding the pictures are from an exercise that was carried out at the hospital. He said that there are no coronavirus cases in Kuwait so far.

Fees' hike

Informed sources said the economic committee of the Council of Ministers did not reject a proposal that calls for authorizing the health ministry to increase charges for medical services at hospitals and health centers for expats whenever justified. The sources said this approval does not mean the health ministry will

increase its fees; rather it is a green light to increase fees when necessary, which must be submitted to the Council of Ministers first, explaining there is no indication that this increase could happen this year.

The sources said the approval of the ministerial economic committee is valid for increasing gasoline prices as necessary, with the approval of the Council of Ministers first, adding any gasoline price increase will be with measures related to compensating Kuwaitis, as required by the National Assembly.

The sources said a gasoline price increase does not represent a necessary move for the government, out of fear that it may be linked to price hikes in other sectors. They said increasing electricity and water tariffs again is also not being considered by the government for two reasons - because it needs legislation by the National Assembly and MPs are not likely to approve this. Also, MEW is thinking about privatizing its sectors and transforming into a power and water authority, besides having private power companies, and all of this will lead to price increases in the future.

Needs of teachers

The education ministry's public education sector began deciding its needs of teachers of both genders locally and from abroad, as well as the required specialties for the school year 2020/2021. Informed sources said the public education sector wrote to the acting education ministry undersecretary about its needs of non-Kuwaiti teachers.

Eleven specialties require local recruits next year: Arabic, English, French, Mathematics, Science, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Geology, Art and Music. Meanwhile, foreign contracts are needed in seven specialties including all of the above except for Arabic, Science, Art and Music.

Sources said the public education sector has designated two countries - Jordan and Palestine - to bring teachers from through foreign committees that are expected to start work early this year, as four committees will be formed for each country for English, French, Maths and Science. It said the coordination department has decided the number of required teachers in each specialty, and the total number is nearly 500 teachers.

MPs demand to debate coronavirus, Trump's plan

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly is scheduled to debate a number of important issues in its ordinary session tomorrow, led by a demand to debate the outbreak of the coronavirus, the housing issue and the new Middle East peace plan.

Eleven lawmakers yesterday submitted a request calling on the assembly to allocate one hour to debate new peace plan of US President Donald Trump in order to allow the assembly to issue a communique condemning the plan.

The lawmakers described the so-called the deal of the century as "shocking." Kuwait has insisted that any peace plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must allow for the creation of an independent Palestinian state in the Palestinian territories occupied in the 1967 war.

Lawmakers want also the assembly to allocate two hours to debate the government's preparations to face the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus that has killed over 300 people in China. Kuwait has already started screening passengers arriving from China and health authorities said they were prepared to deal with any cases that might be discovered.

The assembly will also discuss the housing problem and question the government over delays in providing houses to citizens or enough land for huge housing projects. The assembly was due to vote on a no-confidence motion against former minister of social affairs Ghadeer Aseeri, but the minister resigned to avoid the voting which as a result will not take place.

Kuwait appoints director for Joint Wafra Operations

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Acting chief executive officer of Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) issued a circular appointing Hamad Salem Al-Ajmi as director general for operations at the Joint Wafra Operations from Feb 2, 2020. The circular mentions the memorandum of understanding between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and the expiry of Saudi Arabian Chevron's presidency of the Joint Wafra Operations on Jan 31.

Arrest warrant lifted

The criminal court accepted the request of the defense of former MP Abdullah Al-Nafisi to lift the arrest warrant in the state security case in which Nafisi is accused of offending the United Arab Emirates. The court set March 8th

session to hear the arguments, during which the defense will plead for Nafisi's innocence. The criminal court had issued an arrest warrant against Nafisi based on a complaint submitted by the foreign ministry at the state security felonies department on Sept 12, 2019, while Nafisi's office said it did not receive any notice about the case until a decision was made on Jan 5, 2020. Meanwhile, a Kuwaiti man was sentenced to five years in jail and fined KD 1,000, for stealing an Egyptian woman's car. KD 10 and a diamond bracelet at knifepoint. Separately, an engineer at the municipality was sentenced to three years and four months in jail for forging descriptions of a building that had violations that couldn't be removed without demolishing it. The building's owner was declared innocent of forgery.



1,176 liquor bottles found in container

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle around 1,176 liquor bottles inside a container that arrived at Shuwaikh Port, with statements indicating it had paper rolls. The container seemed suspicious to

officers, so it was opened and the liquor was found within the paper. The contraband was handed to concerned authorities. The discovery was supervised by inspection and storing inspector at Shuwaikh Port Mohammad Sultan Al-Otaibi and his Assistant Mohammad Al-Khraiej.

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Milan	126	569	1,600
Vienna	129	729	2,500
Prague	140	778	1,800
Barcelona	143	878	1,700
London	159	699	1,597
Seoul	287	1,428	4,062

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Last train to Europe: All aboard Eurostar

Herbal remedies for the coronavirus spark debate in China



MOSHI: Moshi residents in Kilimanjaro region, northern Tanzania, queue outside Mawenzi hospital to identify their relatives after 20 people died and 16 injured in stampede yesterday evening at Majengo open ground during the church service who rushed to get blessed oil. —AFP

20 killed in Tanzania church stampede

Stampede occurred as thousands rushed to touch blessed oil

DAR ES SALAAM: At least 20 people in Tanzania were trampled to death at an open-air evangelical Christian church service in the north of the country, officials said yesterday. Government official Kippi Warioba, District Commissioner in the northern town of Moshi, said he feared the number of dead could still rise from the accident, which took place on Saturday afternoon.

"So far, 20 people have died, but the death toll could increase as there were also wounded," Warioba told AFP. At least 16 others were injured in the crush, he said. The tragedy happened when a crowd of worshippers was attending a prayer ceremony on Saturday led by the popular preacher, Boniface Mwamposa, who heads the Arise and Shine Ministry Tanzania.

The stampede occurred when Mwamposa, who calls himself the "Apostle", poured what he said was holy oil on the ground and the crowd surged toward to touch it in the hope of being cured of sickness, witnesses said. "The Apostle Boniface Mwamposa poured sacred anointing oil on the ground," one witness, Jennifer Temu, told AFP. "Dozens of people immediately fell being jostled and trampled, and some died. We have

counted 20 people killed-but there are also wounded."

Preacher on the run

"It was horrible, people trampled on mercilessly, jostling each other with elbows," said another witness, Peter Kilewo. "It was like the preacher had thrown bundles of dollars about... and there were all these deaths!" Mwamposa, the preacher, fled the scene after the stampede. Tanzanian police chief Simon Sirro, who confirmed the toll of 20 dead, spoke on national television yesterday morning in an appeal to Mwamposa to hand himself in for questioning. "We are looking for him," Sirro said, on the state-run TBCI television channel. "Police have launched investigations into the matter and Mwamposa should immediately report to police. He is famous, there is no way he can escape," Sirro added.

He said police would also look into how church organizations handle such large-scale crowd events in general. "We pray for them, but I must say that some churches are troublesome-and we will see how to handle them," Sirro added. President John Magufuli also issued a statement mourning the death of 20 people in



ARUSHA: Moshi residents in Kilimanjaro region, north Tanzania, grieve at Mawenzi hospital yesterday. —AFP

Moshi, as well as 20 others killed by floods in Tanzania's southern Lindi region this week. "I'm very sorry for these deaths of these Tanzanians in the two events," Magufuli said. —AFP

In Mexico, El Chapo's daughter ties knot in state cathedral

CULIACAN: The daughter of Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman married another offspring of a drug empire in a lavish ceremony held in the cathedral of Sinaloa's state capital Culiacan, Mexican media reported, in a new display of her family's prominence. Alejandrina Gisselle Guzman married Edgar Cazares, the nephew of Blanca Margarita Cazares, Mexican newspaper Reforma reported on Saturday, in the heartland of Mexico's powerful Sinaloa Cartel.

The wedding took place on Jan. 25, Reforma said. Photographs and videos, including performances of a popular Mexican band and singers, fireworks, and yellow tape around the cathedral, were shared on social media. A source at the Roman Catholic Diocese of Culiacan, confirmed the wedding took place, but declined to give details. The couple could not be reached for comment.

Culiacan citizens living and working near the cathedral told Reuters on Saturday that they had noticed an extravagant wedding though they had been unaware of who the couple was. "The church is for everyone," Sofia, who declined to give her surname, said. "But the church shouldn't give privileges to anyone." Others agreed. "With money, you can close any building here," Francisca added. "It's unfair."

Blanca Margarita Cazares was sanctioned by the US Treasury in 2007 for her "sophisticated money laundering apparatus" and links to Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada Garcia and Victor Emilio Cazares of the Sinaloa Cartel. Reuters could not determine charges against the couple. The Sinaloa Cartel has kept a firm grip on the drug trade even as "El Chapo" is serving a life sentence in prison in the United States; business has been proceeding unabated under the leadership of his sons and their associates.

Hundreds of heavily armed Sinaloa Cartel members, guns blazing, last year took the modern city of about a million people hostage after son Ovidio was detained. Within hours, he was released. Meanwhile, his daughter has been capitalizing on his legacy with the launch of the "El Chapo 701" brand last year. In January, she diversified the brand's business line from fashion into beverages with the launch of an "El Chapo" beer. The brand got its name from when Forbes named her father the 701st richest person in the world in 2009, estimating his net worth at \$1 billion. —Reuters

Drunk driver slams into group of kids, kills 4 in Australia

SYDNEY: A drunk driver slammed his pickup truck into a group of children in Sydney, killing two sisters, their brother and a cousin and seriously injuring three others, police alleged yesterday. The 29-year-old driver was charged with manslaughter and high-range drink driving following the incident late Saturday in the Oatlands suburb of western Sydney. The children were on a footpath when the four-wheel drive jumped the curb and rammed into them, police alleged.

Three girls aged 8 to 12 and a 13-year-old boy died at the scene and two other girls and a boy were injured and taken to hospital, where they were in a stable condition yesterday, police said. The dead included two sisters and their brother, three of the six children of Daniel and Leila Abdallah. "Yesterday I lost three of my children. I had a cousin, Bridget, she lost her daughter as well," Daniel Abdallah told reporters yesterday morning.

"I'm numb, probably that's how I feel at the moment," he said. "All I just want to say is, please, drivers be careful. These kids were just walking innocently, enjoying each others' company and this morn-



SYDNEY: People gather to pay their respects at a makeshift memorial at the site of an accident which killed four children the day before, in the Oatlands suburbs of Sydney. —AFP

ing I woke up, I have lost three kids." A makeshift memorial was later put up where the accident occurred, with people coming to place flowers, teddy

bears and candles as well as pay their respects. The driver, whose name has not been released, was due in court yesterday facing 20 charges. —AFP

International

Kidnapping of students sparks anti-govt protests in Ethiopia

Nobel Peace Laureate Abiy struggles to stem ethnic strife

ADDIS ABABA: Several thousand protesters took to the streets in Ethiopian cities this week, demanding Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed do more to tackle simmering ethnic violence following the kidnapping of a group of university students. Armed men abducted the students from Dambi Dollo University in the Oromiya region in early December, according to survivors who escaped. The government said earlier this week that the army had rescued 21 of the students, but at least 12 others are still missing.

While the kidnapers' identity or motive is not clear, the incident has revived widespread fears about ethnic violence ahead of this year's election and intensified pressure on Nobel Peace Laureate

Abiy, who comes from the Oromo ethnic group. Many of the students were Amhara, a group that has clashed with Oromos in the past. In the past six months, clashes on campus have killed 12 students and played a role in the decision of 35,000 to drop out of university, according to the higher education ministry.

Anger about the kidnapping has focused on Abiy, who won the Nobel Peace Prize last year for signing a peace deal with former enemy Eritrea and has overseen political reforms since coming to power in 2018. He has been unable, however, to stamp out ethnic violence in Africa's second-most populous nation, including among his Oromo group. Families of the

missing students met the prime minister and other senior government officials on Thursday, receiving assurances that their relatives were safe but no further information about their whereabouts or any plans to rescue them.

"We were just told by the officials that they are alive," said Yeneneh Adugna, a local priest and a farmer from Gondar, whose 23-year-old daughter Germanesh Yeneneh, a third-year biotechnology student, is missing. "The last phone call conversation I had with her was two weeks after her abduction," Yeneneh said. "She told me not to worry." Several thousand people took part in marches in a handful of cities during the week to demand their release and

activists made #BringBackOurStudents trend online. Another protest is planned in Gondar, the capital of Amhara yesterday, the families said.

Belay Abebe, father to a second-year journalism student, said his daughter had also called him after she was abducted and said she was safe. "We ... demanded to talk to the students over the phone," another relative of one of the students told Reuters, asking for anonymity for fear of possible reprisals. "There was no willingness from the officials to let us speak with the students." Endeshaw Tasew, general commissioner of the federal police, said on Wednesday that the government knows where the students are but declined to give further details. — Reuters

Israel attacks Gaza after rockets fired

JERUSALEM: Israel launched air strikes on the Gaza Strip yesterday in retaliation for projectiles fired from the Palestinian enclave into southern Israel, the army said. Military jets and helicopters struck targets linked to Hamas, the Islamist group that controls Gaza, shortly after midnight, with no reported casualties. Israel also suspended cement deliveries to the enclave and cancelled 500 commercial entry permits into Israel "until further notice".

The action was taken "due to the continued rocket fire and launchings of incendiary balloons from the Gaza Strip into Israel," said a statement by Major General Kamil Abu Rukun, head of the Israeli military unit responsible for coordination in the Palestinian territories. Since the announcement Tuesday by US President Donald Trump of his plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rockets, shells and explosive balloons have been fired almost daily from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel, provoking Israeli retaliation.

Palestinians strongly reject the US plan, seen as heavily favoring Israel. The Trump initiative suggests that Israel would retain control of the contested city of Jerusalem as its "undivided capital" and gives the Jewish state the green light to annex settlements in the West Bank, which Israel occupied in 1967.

Rocket fire from Gaza on Saturday night forced Benny Gantz, a leading candidate in Israel's upcoming general election who was campaigning in southern Israel, to take refuge with his team in a shelter, local media reported. Former military general Gantz heads the Blue and White party and is the chief rival of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the March



RAFAH: A Palestinian demonstrator takes part in a protest against a US-brokered Middle East peace plan, while holding placard that reads in Arabic 'No to the deal of shame', in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP

2 election. The Israeli army said its overnight strikes on Gaza targeted infrastructure belonging to Hamas, the Islamist group that has controlled the enclave since 2007.

"Fighter jets and attack helicopters struck a number of Hamas terror targets in the northern Gaza Strip," it said in a statement. Among the targets was

"underground infrastructure... used as a situation room," it added. There were no casualties from the strikes, according to Hamas security sources. Hamas and Israel have fought three wars since 2008 but over the past year the Islamists have gradually shaped an informal truce with Israel, under which the Jewish state has eased its crippling blockade of Gaza. — AFP

Somalia declares locusts a 'national emergency'

MOGADISHU: Somalia yesterday declared a locust infestation sweeping the Horn of Africa to be a national emergency, as insects devastate food supplies in one of the poorest and most vulnerable regions in the world. "The Ministry of Agriculture... has declared a national emergency in view of the current desert locust upsurge, that poses a major threat to Somalia's fragile food security situation," the ministry statement read.

Experts say the locust swarms are the result of extreme weather swings, and Somalia's declaration — the first country in the region to do so — is aimed at boosting national efforts in tackling the hungry insects. The locusts — part of the grasshopper family — have led to what the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has termed the "worst situation in 25 years" in the Horn of Africa. "Food sources for people and their livestock are at risk," the agriculture ministry added. "The desert locust swarms are uncommonly large and consume huge amounts of crops and forage."

The emergency declaration was made to focus efforts and raise funds, because it was critical to contain the locust swarms before harvests are due in April, the ministry said. Desert locusts — whose destructive infestations cause major crop damage and hunger — are a species of grasshopper that live largely solitary lives until a combination of conditions promote breeding and lead them to form massive swarms.

"Given the severity of this desert locust outbreak, we must commit our best efforts to protect the food security and livelihoods of Somali people," said Minister of Agriculture Said Hussein Iid. "If we don't act now, we risk a severe food crisis that we cannot afford." According to the regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group, East Africa is already experiencing a high degree of food insecurity, with over 19 million people facing acute hunger.

Swarms formed in eastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia and have moved through the region. The FAO says the current invasion is known as an "upsurge" — when an entire region is affected — however, if it gets worse and cannot be contained, over a year or more, it would become what is known as a "plague" of locusts. There have been six major desert locust plagues in the 1900s, the last of which was in 1987-89. The last major upsurge was in 2003-05. — AFP

Iraqi protesters dig in heels despite new PM-designate

BAGHDAD: Furious anti-government youth dug in their heels in Iraq's capital and south yesterday, rejecting the previous evening's nomination of Mohammad Allawi as premier after months of demonstrations and political paralysis. Allawi was named prime minister-designate after a hard-won consensus among Iraq's rival parties, who had struggled to agree on a candidate since outgoing premier Adel Abdel Mahdi resigned under growing street pressure two months ago.

Mass rallies have rocked Baghdad and the mainly-Shiite south since October, with protesters demanding snap elections and an independent prime minister as well as accountability for corruption and recent bloodshed. Young demonstrators have expressed contempt for the ruling elite and yesterday, they slammed Allawi — a former lawmaker and minister — as part and parcel of the system they want to overhaul. "Mohammad Allawi is rejected, by order of the people!" read a new sign hung in the holy city of Najaf yesterday.

Young men with their faces wrapped in checkered scarves had spent the night torching car tyres in anger at Allawi's nomination and smouldering remains still blocked the main roads yesterday, an AFP reporter there said. In Diwaniyah, further south, protesters marched into government buildings to demand they close for the day while students began sit-ins at schools and universities. Protesters in Hillah blocked off all roads leading into the city and chanted, "Allawi is not the people's choice!"

Students revolt in Baghdad

In Baghdad, hundreds of students flooded the streets around the main protest camp of Tahrir Square, carrying Allawi's photograph with an "X" over his face. "We are here to reject the new prime minister because he has a well-known history within the political class," said 22-year-old university student Tiba.

Allawi, 65, served as a parliamentarian immediately after the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled ex-dictator Saddam Hussein, then was twice appointed communications minister under former prime minister Nuri Al-Maliki. But he resigned both times, accusing Maliki of turning a blind eye to graft in a country considered among the top 20 most corrupt in the world by Transparency International. His appointment came after days of crisis talks prompted by President Barham Saleh, who said he would select his own candidate if the political blocs of Iraq's parliament did not nominate someone by Saturday.

Allawi had been among the top contenders for the post, but the stalemate continued into the late afternoon, Iraqi government sources told AFP on condition



NASIRIYAH: Iraqis wave the national flag during a gathering, rejecting the nomination of Mohammad Allawi as premier, in the city of Nasiriyah in Iraq's southern Dhi Qar province yesterday. — AFP

of anonymity. The talks were very secretive and it remains unclear what finally unlocked a deal, but on Saturday evening, Allawi announced his own nomination in a video posted to Twitter. There was no official statement from Saleh, but Abdel Mahdi congratulated his successor and the pair pledged to meet soon to ensure a smooth transition.

Sadr seeks to curb rallies

In his first formal address, Allawi vowed to form a representative government, hold early parliamentary elections and ensure justice for protest-related violence. More than 480 people have died and nearly 30,000 have been wounded since the rallies began on October 1, but few have been held accountable for the bloodshed.

Allawi has one month to form his government, but ensuring its independence may prove a challenge, said Sajad Jiyad of the Iraq-based think tank the Bayan Center. "If we've learned anything from the previous PM, it's that this is the most difficult part: pushing back against the political blocs' demands," Jiyad said. In Iraq, cabinets are typically formed after complex horse-trading whereby parties demand lucrative and influential ministerial posts based on their share of parliament.

If Allawi fails to resist ministerial candidates proposed by parties, "it will back up what protesters are saying" about his allegiance to the factions, Jiyad added. Among the most powerful of Iraq's political players is populist cleric Moqtada Sadr, who welcomed Allawi's nomination on Saturday as a "good step". Sadr backed the protests in October and his die-hard followers are widely recognized as the most organized and well-equipped among anti-government demonstrators.

But yesterday, Sadr ordered members of his movement to organize with security forces to reopen roads and schools, contrary to what other protesters across Iraq were doing. "The revolution must go back to being restrained and peaceful," Sadr wrote on Twitter. That tweet and his endorsement of Allawi were seen as a betrayal by other protesters in Baghdad, who chanted "Don't tweet however you please," hinting at Sadr, and "We are a young, leaderless revolution!" — AFP

Iraq: Four months of anti-regime protests

BAGHDAD: Anti-government demonstrations that erupted in Iraq on October 1 have escalated into its deadliest protest movement in decades, with more than 480 dead.

Protests erupt

On October 1, hundreds of people gather in Baghdad and cities in the Shiite south in leaderless protests against corruption, unemployment and poor public services. Riot police disperse about 1,000 protesters in the capital's Tahrir (Liberation) Square, including with live fire. The first two demonstrators are killed, one in Baghdad and another in the south. Protests continue into October 2, getting the backing of influential Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr, who leads the biggest bloc in parliament.

Unrest spreads

On October 3, thousands defy a curfew in several cities, blockading streets and burning tyres. Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi defends his year-old government on television, asking for more time to implement reforms. On October 4, clashes intensify and Sadr calls on the government to resign. Two days later the cabinet announces reforms including in land distribution, social welfare and anti-corruption.

Deadly second wave

Protests resume on October 24, a day before the anniversary of Abdel Mahdi taking office. Protesters in the south torch dozens of provincial government buildings and offices linked to the powerful Hashed Al-Shaabi paramilitary force. At least 63 people are killed over two days, according to the Iraqi Human Rights Commission. On October 28, students, professors and schoolchildren join rallies in Baghdad and southern cities.

Death toll mounts

On November 3, demonstrators in the central city of Karbala attack the Iranian consulate amid charges that Iran is propping up the government. Four are shot dead. After a major strike and continuing demonstrations, on November 27 protesters torch the Iranian consulate in the holy city of Najaf. The following day is one of the bloodiest in the uprising, with 46 protesters killed and about 1,000 wounded across the country, including around two dozen in the southern city of Nasiriyah.

PM resigns

On November 29, top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani calls for a new government. Hours later Adel Mahdi offers to resign. Parliament accepts his departure on December 1. Talks to find a new prime minister intensify and include the commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Major General Qasem Soleimani, a key ally of Iraq's main Shiite parties. Washington denounces Tehran's "meddling".

Violence escalates

On December 6, at least 20 protesters and four police officers are killed when armed men attack a Baghdad building where anti-government protesters had been camped out for weeks. After several weeks of calm, protests intensify from December 22. Parliament votes through electoral reform, which fails to address most of the protesters' specific demands.

Protests resume

On January 10, 2020, thousands of Iraqis rally across the country, reviving the protest movement, which has been overshadowed by tensions between Washington and Tehran after the assassination of Soleimani in a US drone strike. Thousands of demonstrators seek to shut streets across the country on January 20, clashing with security forces who use live fire. On January 29, President Barham Saleh threatens to unilaterally name a successor to the premier, if parliament does not nominate a candidate within three days. Sistani urges free and fair elections "as soon as possible" on January 31. Sadr calls for a "massive" demonstration in Baghdad. — AFP



BAGHDAD: A Tuk tuk car, burned during ongoing anti-government protests, lies in the Iraqi capital Baghdad's Tehrir square as people walk. — AFP

International

Last train to Europe: All aboard the Eurostar as UK bids goodbye

Mixed emotions on last train to continent before Brexit

ON BOARD THE EUROSTAR: On the last train to Europe before Britain left the EU on Friday evening, passengers leaving London expressed sorrow, optimism and anger, reflecting the emotions of a nation conflicted ahead its great leap into the unknown. Martin Kavanagh, a security consultant, crammed his tall frame into a window seat and contemplated Britain's uncertain journey ahead after ending 47 years of European Union membership.

"It is just the saddest day, ever," he said, heading for Paris to watch England play France at rugby. "It sends a message to the rest of the world that we are turning inwards when we should be looking out." Bayan Patel, a 27-year-old British dentist on the way to Paris for a short break with his Spanish fiancée, said Britain's distinctiveness should be celebrated and there is too much pessimism about Brexit. "We can stand on our two feet," he said. "Leaving the EU might turn out to be a fantastic decision. Right now people are focusing too much on the negatives."

Destination unknown

The last Eurostar before Britain's historic exit left London's St Pancras station at 8.10 p.m. (2010 GMT) on Friday. There were no extra checks at customs. A transition period preserves Britain's EU membership in all but name until 2021. There were no protests, celebrations or tears on the journey. There was no official announcement over the intercom as the train went into the tunnel under the Channel.

Many passengers said this felt like just another train ride. But it was not. The Britain the train left behind will undergo the most significant change to its place in the

world in its recent history. The EU it arrived in faces a huge challenge to its project of forging unity after World War Two now that it has lost such a rich, powerful member state. "No one wins from this, we will all be worse off," said Alan Ron, a 35-year-old French citizen who works in London and was returning home to visit friends and family.

Grand ambitions

The idea of a tunnel between Britain and France has been around for centuries. In 1802, a French engineer envisaged a tunnel with horse-drawn carriages, illuminated by oil lamps and ventilated by chimneys poking above the surface of the Channel. But Victorian-era British Prime Minister John Palmerston dismissed the idea because "it would shorten a distance we already find too short".

It took a further 192 years after the first detailed plans were submitted to complete the job. Now the future of the Eurostar is uncertain. The service was seen as a symbol of a Europe without borders, but it has failed to meet expectations - especially in terms of passenger numbers. The ease of travel the train has depended on - with quick immigration checks for British and EU passport holders - seems certain to change.

The British and French government have warned that if the EU fails to agree an amicable trade deal then the Eurostar may be brought to a standstill. French passenger Jean-Marc Charles, a 47-year-old IT manager, struck a note of optimism, saying he hoped Britain might rejoin the EU before too long. "This could be just a short goodbye," he said. "We hope that you will be back with us soon." —Reuters



LONDON: Passengers wait to board the international high-speed Eurostar train to Paris at St Pancras International railway station in London. —AFP

Billionaires bombard US election with cash

WASHINGTON: Two billionaire Democratic presidential hopefuls, Michael Bloomberg and Tom Steyer, collectively spent about \$389 million last year on their campaigns, more than the rest of the remaining Democratic field combined, according to disclosures filed. Bloomberg launched his campaign in November and spent more than \$188 million in two months, a sum sourced entirely from his personal wealth.

Steyer, who was also considered a late addition to the field of candidates when he launched his campaign in July, spent \$201 million in 2019 which largely came from \$202.5 million of his own money he put into his campaign and about \$3 million raised in donations. While the rest of the Democratic field is heading to the Iowa caucuses that will be held on Monday, spending on advertising and staff in the small state, Bloomberg is skipping the first four contests. Instead, he has turned his focus to the more than one dozen states that will vote on "Super Tuesday" on March 3rd.

The Iowa caucuses are the first contest in a series of state-by-state votes that are used to pick nominees. There are 11 Democrats vying to be their party's pick to challenge Republican President Donald Trump in November 2020. Bloomberg is hoping to overcome any momentum winners in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada might gain by blanketing the airwaves in Super Tuesday states with television ads touting his candidacy.

Bloomberg's spending appears to be paying off, with his standing in national polls continue to climb. Steyer has done well enough to qualify for debates, but has struggled to exceed 2% in national polls. Spending by the rest of the Democratic field pales in comparison. US Senator Bernie Sanders, who ranked third in campaign spending, spent \$90.7 million over the 10 months in 2019 he was running for president.

Bloomberg even outspent Trump, whose campaign reported spending about \$148 million since he launched his reelection in January 2017. Candidates for president are required by law to file regular disclosures with the Federal Election Commission detailing the how much money their campaigns have raised and how it was spent. Bloomberg's spent more than \$132 million on television ads through the end of 2019. Independent media trackers estimate that the total Bloomberg has spent on his campaign exceeded \$250 million in January.

Steyer also spent mainly on advertising, pumping \$117 million into TV ads and \$44 million in online ads. US Senator Elizabeth Warren's largest campaign expense was salaries. She spent more than \$16 million on staff in 2019. Over the course of the year, Sanders also spent the most on staff, disclosing almost \$14 million in payroll. His spending on advertising was a close second, \$13.5 million on television and about \$9.7 million in online ads.

Former South Bend, Indiana Mayor Buttigieg's biggest expense for 2019 was online advertising, spending about \$11.6 million on the ads. His payroll came in at \$9.9 million and he spent \$9.4 million on television. Former Vice President Joe Biden also listed staff costs as his top category, spending \$11.7 million on payroll in the year. He spent \$7.2 million on online advertising, and trailed his rivals in television spending, spending on \$2.3 million on ads. —Reuters

Sinn Fein draws level atop opinion poll days from Irish election

DUBLIN: Irish nationalists Sinn Fein surged ahead of the governing Fine Gael party to draw level at the top of an opinion poll a week before an election that looks set to be a major breakthrough for the former political wing of the Irish Republican Army. The Business Post/Red C poll put the left-wing Sinn Fein up five percentage points in the space of a week to 24% and level with the centre-right Fianna Fail, which fell two points. Support for Fine Gael dipped by the same amount to 21%.

Sinn Fein stood at 11% in the last Business Post/Red C poll before Prime Minister Leo Varadkar called the Feb. 8 election that has focused on the high cost of housing and deficiencies in healthcare in the European Union's fastest growing economy. Setting out her

party's priorities in Dublin yesterday, Sinn Fein leader Mary Lou McDonald said voters had an opportunity to disrupt the political balance that has seen Fianna Fail and Fine Gael swap power since the foundation of the state.

"Fianna Fail and Fine Gael have been in power in this state for almost a century. They've had it all their own way and they've had their chance," she said. Running fewer candidates than it did in the 2016 election and around half the number being fielded by both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, all 42 Sinn Fein candidates would likely have to be elected to the 160-seat chamber to give it a shot at emerging as the largest party.

Such a scenario remains highly improbable, analysts say. However a marked improvement on its 22 outgoing seats would put pressure on the two traditionally dominant parties to drop their refusal to govern with Sinn Fein, both due to the party's IRA links and its opposing economic policies. Speaking on BBC's Andrew Marr Show yesterday, Leo Varadkar said "you won't see a coalition between my party and Sinn Fein, that's not going to happen".

"The likelihood is it's actually going to

Facebook's settlement puts spotlight on 'biometric privacy'

WASHINGTON: Facebook's massive settlement in a class action case over violating a state law on how it uses facial recognition is being hailed as a watershed moment for "biometric privacy." The leading social network said Wednesday it agreed to the \$550 million payout after failing to win dismissal of the case alleging it illegally collected biometric information for "face tagging" in violation of a 2008 Illinois privacy law.

The settlement could have wide-ranging implications

In deep-white Iowa, first Latino-majority town shows future

WEST LIBERTY: At the Catholic church in the small Iowa meatpacking town of West Liberty, the surrounding expanses of farmland covered with fresh white snow, the priest says Mass twice yesterday. The two sermons' messages of harmony are similar, although it feels a notch more crowded at the second Mass-offered in Spanish in this Midwestern state's first Latino-majority town. The choir from the English service three hours earlier makes way for a band with guitar and Mexican-style sing-alongs.

The jokes sprinkled into the sermons also don't translate. "I have to complete them with a different punchline," deadpanned the priest at St. Joseph Catholic Church, the Very Reverend Rudolph T. Juarez. As Iowa opens the US election season with its February 3 caucus to select presidential candidates, a team of AFP journalists spent a week driving here from Washington to feel the political temperature of a country in the midst of change. Iowa is the sixth whitest state in the United States but West Liberty was 52 percent Hispanic or Latino in the 2010 census, which counted the population at 3,736.

The Latinos-overwhelmingly Mexicans and Mexican-Americans but also increasingly Puerto Ricans displaced by Hurricane Maria-are pulled in by jobs at West Liberty Foods, a turkey slaughterhouse and processing plant, whose bilingual signs at the laundromat offer immediate employment at wages starting at \$12.18 an hour. West Liberty's transformation is immediately visible downtown,

where two Mexican eateries face a 110-year-old movie house and the Acapulco Mexican Bakery and Grocery adjoins the musty American Legion veterans' post.

President Donald Trump, who ran a campaign that demonized Mexican immigrants, won by more than six percentage points in West Liberty's county of Muscatine, which had twice voted by much wider margins for Barack Obama. The opposite end of Iowa is home to Representative Steve King, one of the most stridently anti-immigration members of Congress who has openly identified with white nationalism. But on the streets of West Liberty, no one, Latino or not, identified major tensions among residents, who speak proudly of their schools' dual-language programs.

Roselia Ocampo, 28, who has lived all her life in West Liberty and has taken over managing her parents' Mexican restaurant, said she was barely aware of the town's unique demographics until she took part in a statewide gathering of FFA, a farming club common in Midwest high schools. She and her classmates were told they didn't have to join an exercise involving books. The instructor said, "I didn't know you knew how to read English." And it was just like the first time I was exposed to someone kind of profiling me just by my color."

Political awakening

Ocampo's father immigrated legally to the United States and first worked on the West Coast before hearing about Iowa, where the vast fields and omnipresent hog farms reminded him of his native Oaxaca. In his off-time from work at another meat plant, he would approach Iowa farmers to buy their injured hogs, butchering them himself for juicy carnitas he served at weddings.

Eventually, the family started their restaurant, Carnitas Nino, with the father coming in at 2 am on the weekend to cook carnitas and menudo tripe soup. Ocampo thought little



BELFAST: Sinn Fein activists protest at the Parliament Buildings on the Stormont Estate in Belfast against Brexit and call for a border poll on Irish Unity. —AFP

be very difficult to form a government over the next couple of months." The other option is a second successive minority government, this time more likely led by Fianna Fail but needing

another "confidence and supply" deal with Fine Gael. The two historic rivals have never gone into coalition government together and Fianna Fail still resists such a move. —AFP

"Companies are going to have to take this seriously," Wessler said. "Hopefully a settlement of this size will be a deterrent." The deal is one of the largest settlements in a US privacy case, topped only by Facebook's \$5 billion deal with the Federal Trade Commission on its data practices. Both are awaiting court approval.

Facial recognition growing

The legal case comes amid an array of deployments of biometric technologies such as facial recognition for law enforcement and border control, but also for "tagging" in social networks and in applications for retail stores or unlocking personal devices and cars. Several US cities including San Francisco have passed bans on the use of facial recognition technology. There are concerns about creating large databases with the potential for errors in identifying some individuals. —AFP



NORTH LIBERTY: Former Secretary of State John Kerry speaks during a campaign event for Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden in North Liberty, Iowa. —AFP

about politics four years ago but this time will be sure to vote. She is deciding on a Democratic candidate to support in the Iowa caucuses, which for the first time will have Spanish-language gatherings, including in the nearby city of Muscatine.

Her political awakening included watching as her aunt was deported to Mexico. When she hears Trump's slogan "Make America Great Again," Ocampo said she wishes others could see Latinos' work ethic. "You can't do it without immigrants," she said. "No one is going to pick up the work that we are currently doing." At the church, Juarez, the priest, said immigration authorities have picked up some parishioners. "It's difficult enough to keep the domestic family together in these times without adding economic worries and the feeling you may be apprehended," he said. —AFP

International

New Chinese city locked down as first virus death abroad reported

Death toll hits 304; authorities report 45 new deaths

BEIJING: China imposed a lockdown yesterday on a major city far from the epicenter of a coronavirus epidemic, as its death toll from the disease soared to 304 and the first fatality outside the country was reported in the Philippines. The events added to deepening concern about the potential for the virus to spread further and more rapidly, as governments around the world closed their borders to people from China. Struggling to contain the virus, authorities virtually shut down the eastern city of Wenzhou yesterday - some 800 kilometers from Wuhan, the metropolis at the heart of the health emergency - closing roads and confining people to their homes. Since emerging out of Wuhan late last year, the coronavirus has infected nearly 14,500 people across China and reached 24 countries.

Most of the infections overseas have been in people who had travelled from Wuhan, an industrial hub of 11 million people, or surrounding areas of Hubei province. The man who died in the Philippines was a 44-year-old from Wuhan, according to the World Health Organization, which has declared the epidemic a global health emergency. China has embarked on unprecedented efforts to contain the virus, which is believed to have jumped to humans from a Wuhan animal market, and can be transmitted among people in a similar fashion to the flu.

Lockdowns

Those efforts have included extraordinary quarantines in Wuhan and surrounding cities, with all transport out banned, effectively sealing-off more than 50 million people. But 10 days after locking down Wuhan, authorities imposed similar draconian measures on Wenzhou, a coastal city of nine million people in Zhejiang province, part of the eastern industrial heartland that has powered China's economic rise over recent decades.

Only one resident per household is allowed to go out every two days to buy necessities, and 46 highway toll stations have been closed, authorities announced. The city had previously closed public places such as cinemas and museums, and suspended public transport. Zhejiang has 661 confirmed infections, with 265 of those in Wenzhou.

according to the government. This is the highest tally for any province in China after ground-zero Hubei.

Closing borders

Internationally, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Israel have banned foreign nationals from visiting if they have been in China recently, and they have also warned their own citizens against travelling there. Mongolia, Russia and Nepal have closed their land borders. The number of countries reporting infections rose to 24 after Britain, Russia and Sweden confirmed their first cases this weekend. The death toll in China climbed to 304 yesterday after authorities reporting 45 new deaths. There were 2,590 new confirmed cases in China, bringing the total to nearly 14,500. The number of confirmed infections in China is far higher than the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak of 2002-03. SARS, caused by a pathogen similar to the new coronavirus and also originated in China, killed 774 people worldwide - most of them in mainland China and Hong Kong. With hospitals in Wuhan overwhelmed, China will today open a military-led field hospital that was built in just 10 days to treat people stricken by the virus. And with the Chinese economy suffering, the central bank announced it would release 1.2 trillion yuan (\$173 billion) today to maintain liquidity in the banking system - the day markets re-open after the long holiday break.

Holiday ending

The emergence of the virus coincided with the Lunar New Year, when hundreds of millions travel across the country in planes, trains and buses for family reunions. The holiday, which was scheduled to end on Friday, was extended by three days to give authorities more time to try and deal with the crisis. With many due back at work today, people were starting to return on planes and trains over the weekend, with almost everyone wearing face masks. Custom authorities had ordered temperature checks at all exit-entry points in Beijing, according to state media.

Returning travelers were being checked and registered at residential compounds, while fever checks were in place in subway stations, offices and cafes. One 22-year-old



BENSLIMANE, Morocco: A Royal Air Maroc (RAM) Boeing 787-8 'Dreamliner' aircraft lands at Morocco's Benslimane airport, reportedly carrying repatriated Moroccan citizens from China's Wuhan province following the outbreak of the SARS-like 'Wuhan coronavirus.' — AFP

arriving at a Beijing train station from northeastern China said her family had urged her to delay her return. "But I was worried it would affect my job," she said. Security guard Du Guiliang, 47, said he would be starting back at work in Beijing yesterday, after returning from northeast Liaoning province. "Many colleagues (from Hubei) couldn't come back. Now, those who work the day shift at our company have to do the night shift as well," he said. Many businesses were to remain closed for at least another week, however, while some major cities including Shanghai - had also extended the holiday. Many foreigners, meanwhile, have started to leave China to wait things out abroad. "(My family) said I need to go home," said

22-year-old South African student Jamie Bosch as she waited for a flight out of Beijing yesterday.

Saudi evacuates 10 students

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has evacuated 10 students from the Chinese city of Wuhan where the new coronavirus outbreak began. Saudi state television reported yesterday citing a Saudi diplomat. Chinese authorities approved the special flight that flew the students to Saudi Arabia, the report said. It did not say when the evacuation took place. Wuhan, in China's Hubei province, has become the epicenter of a virus outbreak which has killed at least 304 and infected 14,000 people. — Agencies

How to survive coronavirus quarantine, the French style

CARRY-LE-ROUET: Twice a day they will have their temperature taken and nurses will check them for coronavirus symptoms: other than that, their main concern will be how to keep their phone charged and get their laundry done. The 179 evacuees - mostly made up of French nationals and their Chinese spouses - flown back from China were settling into their new life in quarantine on Saturday.

A holiday resort in the southeast of France that will be their home for the next two weeks. These special guests will have the run of their seaside base in Carry-le-Rouet, about 30 kilometers from the Mediterranean port city of Marseille - so long as they wear a mask. On Saturday, their first morning there, some were up to take in the sunrise, others sat outside in the mild weather reading while others explored inside the hotel complex.

"There are worse places," said Marc Zylman with a smile, as children's shouts echoed across the facility. "The easy solution would have been a disused barracks," Zilman, the senior Red Cross official on



AIX-EN-PROVENCE: French mobile security forces arrive at the ENSOSP firemen training center in Les Milles neighborhood in Aix-en-Provence, southern France where French citizens, who are overnight repatriated by plane from the coronavirus hot zone in Wuhan in China, are planned to be put under quarantine for 14 days. — AFP

site, pointed out. Instead, the French authorities opted to make the evacuees stay as comfortable as possible. "The site needs to be as agreeable as possible because people are going to pass 14 days there," he told AFP.

Gendarme patrols

There is volleyball for the teenagers, art

classes for the toddlers and a space for the grown-ups to relax over a coffee, making it more holiday resort than hospital or clinic. For the moment, no one here has shown any symptoms that could indicate they have caught the new coronavirus. Two possible cases identified as the evacuees came off their plane on Friday tested negative at La Timone hospital in Marseille.

The medical team looking after the evacuees is about 20 strong, including doctors, nurses and psychologists. Backing them are soldiers from France's civil security units and 30 Red Cross volunteers, who mainly take care of the logistics of their stay. On their first day back on Saturday, the new arrivals got down to solving the immediate challenges raised by their rather hasty repatriation: how to do their laundry, change their Chinese currency and get hold of cigarettes. A concierge service was already up and running to attend to their needs.

"Yesterday, they were tired, which is quite normal," said Zylman. They had their evening meal and went quietly to bed. "Now, life is back on course and it's going rather well," he added. As the special guests got their bearings, members of France's paramilitary gendarme force patrolled the site, keeping careful guard at the resort's only access point. But they are in any case at a fairly isolated site, in the middle of a pine forest, in a cove more than 3 kilometers from the seaside village of Carry-le-Rouet itself.

The parents of a student flown back from China were already outside, having come to deliver him a travel bag with clean clothes. They had to leave it with the gendarmes at the entrance. But the father seemed reassured that their son was being looked after in France. Their son had described the atmosphere there as "fairly convivial", he said. "I think they are all relieved to be there, in very good conditions, he told the journalists gathered outside. — AFP

Herbal remedies for the coronavirus spark debate in China

BEIJING: A claim by Chinese scientists that a liquid made with honeysuckle and flowering plants could help fight the deadly coronavirus has sparked frenzied buying of the traditional medicine, but doubts quickly emerged. As the death toll from the SARS-like pathogen sweeping the country continues to rise, shoppers have swamped pharmacies in search of "Shuanghuanglian".

The rush came after influential state media outlet Xinhua reported Friday that the esteemed Chinese Academy of Sciences had found the concoction "can inhibit" the virus. Videos shared online showed long lines of people in surgical masks lining up at night outside drug stores, purportedly in hope of snapping up the product, despite official advice that people avoid public gatherings to prevent infection.

It quickly sold out both online and at brick-and-mortar stores, but responses to the remedy's supposed efficacy have ranged from enthusiasm to skepticism on Weibo, China's Twitter-like social media platform. And state media sounded a more cautionary note on Saturday, with broadcaster CCTV publishing an interview with Zhang Boli, one of the researchers leading outbreak containment efforts, who warned of potential side effects from the medicine.

The People's Daily newspaper, a government mouthpiece, said experts advised against taking traditional remedies without professional guidance. But the claim comes as Beijing looks to incorporate traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) into its nationwide fight against the virus, which has killed more than 300 people and infected over 14,000 in the country, yesterday the Philippines reported the first death outside of China.

Researchers at the state-run academy, a top government think tank, are also studying the potential use of a plant commonly known as Japanese knotweed to alleviate symptoms. The National Health Commission on Tuesday said TCM practitioners were among nearly 6,000 reinforcement medical personnel being sent to Wuhan in Hubei province, ground zero of the outbreak.

'No difference'

The strategy has reignited fierce and long-running debate about the efficacy of TCM, which has a history going back 2,400 years and remains popular in modern-day China. Marc Freard, a member of the Chinese Medicine Academic Council of France, told AFP he believed traditional formulations could be used to treat people with symptoms ranging from fever to thick phlegm.

But he warned that many remedies on the market were of questionable quality and admitted that TCM "lacks scientific standards of efficacy" because it relied on "individualized treatment". Traditional medicines were widely used in China in conjunction with Western methods during the 2003 epidemic of SARS, or Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, which killed 774 people worldwide. But a 2012 study in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews found combining Chinese and Western medicines "made no difference" in battling the disease.

The Chinese government has increasingly promoted traditional medicine abroad in recent years, often with nationalistic undertones. Beijing issued its first white paper on TCM in 2016, laying out plans to build medicine centers and dispatch practitioners to developing countries in Africa and Southeast Asia. President Xi Jinping has called TCM a "treasure of Chinese civilization" and said at a meeting in October that it should be given as much weight as other treatments. China is "working hard to spread the message internationally about its traditional culture", and medicine is a part of this, Freard said. — AFP

US criticizes UN aviation body's Twitter actions

WASHINGTON: The US State Department has criticized an "outrageous" decision by a UN aviation body to block Twitter followers who asked why it refused to work with Taiwan. While the spread of novel coronavirus in central China has sparked alarm throughout Asia, it has also highlighted the self-ruled island's increased isolation from global bodies under pressure from Beijing. Last month the Twitter account of the Montreal-based International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) - which does not deal with Taipei directly and only recognizes Beijing - blocked users who suggested it should work with Taiwan.

The state department Saturday called the ICAO's decision to block users, including Taiwan-China academics and analysts, "outrageous, unacceptable, and not befitting of a UN organization." "Freedom of expression must always supersede the political insecurities of member states," the statement said, calling on the body to reverse the blocking. Neither the ICAO nor the Geneva-based World Health Organization (WHO) will deal with Taiwan directly and only recognizes Beijing.

That is because the People's Republic of China has since 1971 been the only one of the two allowed a seat at the United Nations. Taiwan - which has ten confirmed cases of the virus and is a significant regional air hub - was often allowed to attend annual assemblies and sideline meetings of such bodies as an observer. The coronavirus outbreak has prompted calls for international bodies to allow the island of 23 million people to be included.

But when academics and analysts made such suggestions on Twitter, many found themselves blocked by the ICAO, which is currently headed by Fang Liu, a former Civil Aviation of China official. — AFP

Virus won't turn you into 'zombie'

KUALA LUMPUR: The deadly coronavirus will not cause victims to act like zombies, Malaysia's government said on social media, as officials act to correct the spread of misinformation surrounding the outbreak. As medical authorities seek to contain the virus, some social media users in Malaysia made a connection between the disease and the walking dead.

Malaysia's health ministry dismissed the rumor in a tweet, however, saying: "The claim that individuals infected with this virus will behave like zombies is not true... Patients can recover." A number of posts in Malaysia on social media have wrongly claimed the number of deaths or infected people in the country.

Police have arrested six people for spreading misinformation about the virus, a Malaysian Communications and Multimedia statement said. In the latest arrest, last Thursday, a 28-year-old woman was investigated for "improper use of network facilities". If convicted, she can be fined up to 50,000 ringgit or be jailed for a year, or both. The virus has killed more than 300 people in China and infected thousands. Eight people in Malaysia have been found with the virus - all Chinese nationals.

Thailand sees success

Meanwhile, a Chinese woman infected with the new coronavirus showed a dramatic improvement after she was treated with a cocktail of anti-virals used to treat flu and HIV, Thailand's health ministry said yesterday. The 71-year-old patient tested negative for the virus 48 hours after Thai doctors administered the combination, doctor Kriengsak Attipornwanich during the ministry's daily press briefing. "The lab result of positive on the coronavirus turned negative in 48 hours," Kriengsak said. "From being exhausted before, she could sit up in bed 12 hours later." The doctors combined the anti-flu drug oseltamivir with lopinavir and ritonavir, anti-virals used to treat HIV, Kriengsak said, adding the ministry was awaiting research results to prove the findings.

The news comes as the new virus claimed its first life outside China - a 44-year-old Chinese man who died in



BEIJING: A passenger wearing a protective facemask pushes a trolley as he arrives at the Beijing Capital International Airport in Beijing yesterday. A virus similar to the SARS pathogen has killed more than 300 people in China and spread around the world since emerging in a market in the central Chinese city of Wuhan. — AFP

the Philippines - while the death toll in China has soared above 300. Thailand so far has detected 19 confirmed cases of the virus believed to have originated in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, which is under lockdown. That is the second most number of cases outside of China, with Japan recording 20. So far, eight patients in Thailand have recovered and returned home, while 11 remain in hospital.

In a video released yesterday, health minister Anutin Charnvirakul visited a patient from Wuhan who had recovered from the coronavirus, chatting with her amicably in Mandarin as she thanked him and the medical staff. Thai authorities are trying to balance screening of inbound Chinese visitors with the economic needs of its tourist sector, which is heavily reliant on arrivals from the mainland. Messages of support saying "Our hearts to Wuhan" in English, Chinese and Thai were plastered on a Bangkok mall popular with tourists. The bulk of confirmed cases have been Chinese visitors to Thailand, but on Thursday the kingdom recorded its first human-to-human transmission when a Thai taxi driver was diagnosed with the disease. The taxi driver had not travelled to China, but may have had contact with tourists. — Agencies

Analysis

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ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYANEDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.

Email: info@kuwaittimes.com

Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

How Sanders won backing of young stars

The scene was unexpected, to say the least: In the middle of a nail salon in gritty Detroit, controversial young rapper Cardi B sat across from 78-year-old Senator Bernie Sanders, questioning the would-be Democratic presidential nominee about the issues of the day. From healthcare to police violence, the former strip-tease dancer grilled the aging politician for 12 minutes. Once the interview was over, Cardi B posted snippets on social media, where they would be viewed millions of times.

Reaching potential voters with no great interest in politics is hugely important for candidates, who often seek celebrities' help in breaking through. And in the United States, where Hollywood awards shows are often politicized, many celebrities are only too happy to take their political views to a broader public.

If the other most left-leaning Democratic candidate, Senator Elizabeth Warren, can brag about the backing of soccer world champion Megan Rapinoe or superstar actress Scarlett Johansson, self-described democratic socialist Sanders has his own impressive list of supporters from among the country's youngest and trendiest stars. The oldest of the 11 Democrats still in the race, Sanders scored a major coup when he posed with global pop star Ariana Grande (who has 173 million Instagram followers) after a concert.

Sanders' attraction

The Sanders paradox - he galvanized youthful supporters in his 2016 campaign as well - is alluded to in a video by supermodel Emily Ratajkowski. "He is not a young, sexy candidate," she says, adding that "he is powerful not because of who he is as one person, but because of the way he invigorates people." Is Sanders stocking up on under-30 star supporters in order to distract from his own advanced age? His staff strongly denies this.

Cardi B, who herself recently expressed interest in pursuing politics, "grew up, you know, in a working-class environment in New York," said Brianna Joy Gray, Sanders' national press secretary. Having "only recently become successful," Gray added, the rapper knows something about issues like low-wage jobs. The interview in a nail salon "was her idea," said Rene Spellman, Sanders' deputy campaign manager, adding that "we have a lot of hip-hop endorsers."

Both women said it was the candidate's history as an anti-establishment figure from a culture of protest that has attracted youthful celebrities and others, not to mention older personalities like film makers Michael Moore and Jim Jarmusch.

The concert candidate

But do these endorsements make a real difference? Even more than this weekend's pre-rally concerts with indie groups like Bon Iver and Vampire Weekend or various fundraising events, they can reach different audiences. "We have to find ways to reach audiences that aren't the same people who are maybe watching the mainstream news," Gray told AFP. Spellman, who has worked in the music industry, added that politicians need to reach out to people who don't necessarily see the relevance of politics.

The support of stars, added Spellman, who is responsible for the campaign's relations with celebrities, can help a candidate appeal on a more personal basis. "When you know who Cardi B is... and then you see her pushing very hard for a particular candidate, you understand the connection between her experience and her involvement," Spellman said. "And then it starts to make the connection in your own life real and relevant." Celebrity endorsements "have been a part of US presidential politics for nearly a hundred years", said David Jackson, a political science professor at Bowling Green State University, in Ohio. "But in the past 30 years or so, celebrity involvement has grown." He said there were "lots of studies showing that celebrity endorsements do influence not just people's opinions about particular policies, but their votes as well." — AFP



Cardi B

Bernie Sanders

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Palestinian demonstrators take part in a protest against the US-brokered Middle East peace plan while holding a banner that reads in Arabic "Down with the deal of the century, down with Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu" in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday. — AFP

Washington Watch

Trump and Balfour compared

By Dr James J Zogby

Much has already been written about the Trump Administration's release of its long-awaited plan for Israeli-Palestinian peace. I will not repeat the criticisms. Instead, I will focus on what I found to be the striking and disturbing parallels between this Trump "Deal of the Century" and last century's infamous "Balfour Declaration". Though certainly longer and more pretentious than the "Declaration", in many ways, the "Deal" reflects much the same intent and logic as its predecessor. There are also, of course, some significant differences.

One initial difference, of course, is that while Lord Balfour's statement was just one rather complicated sentence of 67 words, President Trump's "Peace to Prosperity: A vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People" is over one hundred pages, including appendices of details, maps and charts. But here's what they have in common. Both are examples of the extraordinary arrogance of imperial powers. Both are inherently racist, viewing one group of people as superior, with their rights as more important than those of another less favored group. And both were motivated by callous political considerations.

In the 20th century, the founders of the political Zionist movement realized they could not achieve their ambition of founding a national home for the Jewish people unless they had an imperial sponsor to support them. In succession, they courted the Ottoman Sultan, the German Kaiser, and even the Russian Czar. When it became clear that Great Britain would be a willing accomplice, they focused energy on winning its support.

The British needed little convincing since they understood the potential role Jewish colonization could play in securing their Middle East ambitions. And the British government was hopeful that by issuing the Declaration, they might win the support of influential Jewish leaders in the US to support the Allied powers against the Central Powers in World War I.

In issuing his Declaration, Balfour pledged to support the creation of a Jewish "national home" that would help to secure their interests in the eastern Mediterranean region. In doing so, Balfour gave no consideration to the fact that the land he was promising wasn't his to give. Great Britain

was, after all, an imperial power and could whatever it wanted to do. He also demonstrated little or no regard for the rights of the inhabitants of that land. The Declaration did include a phrase saying "that nothing should be done which may prejudice the rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine;" but that was never intended to be taken seriously.

When chided by then US President Wilson, that the aspirations and rights of the inhabitants of Palestine should be considered, Balfour made his intentions clear, saying that "In Palestine, we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the inhabitants of their wishes...Zionism...is of far greater importance...than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who inhabit that land." Imperial arrogance, racism and disregard for the rights of the Palestinians, and callous domestic politics - these were the elements that motivated Balfour. They are the same elements that can be seen to be behind Trump's "Deal of the Century." There is, however, in the Trump "Deal" an additional element that makes it even more disturbing than its predecessor - and that is its blatant disingenuousness.

In awarding to Israel huge swaths of the West Bank, including all of "East Jerusalem," like Balfour, Trump "gives" away land that isn't his to give - but then, the US, under Trump, sees itself as a law unto its own and can do whatever it pleases. In subordinating Palestinians rights to Israeli security concerns and placing onerous burdens on Palestinians, while placing none on the Israelis, Trump, like Balfour, is demonstrating that, in his mind, Israeli needs and their very humanity are of greater importance to him than those of the "Arabs who inhabit that ancient land." And in timing the release of his plan to deflect from his trial in the US Senate and inviting to its launch his most ardent Jewish and right-wing Christian Evangelical supporters, Trump was making clear that domestic politics were of utmost importance in his calculations.

What makes this "Deal" more disturbing than the "Declaration" is that it ignores the history and consequential developments of the last century - two devastating World Wars, the emergence of a body of international law and conventions that sought to learn the lessons of those wars and regulate the behavior of nations in times of war,

and multiple Arab-Israeli wars that have taken the lives of tens of thousands, left millions as refugees, and created a deep well of bitterness among those who were expelled and those denied their legitimate rights under a cruel occupation. The Trump "Deal" pretends that it can brush all of this history aside, tear up this body of laws and conventions, and disregard the humanity of the victims of dispossession and loss of rights.

Most disturbing is that, like a real estate huckster, the "Deal" attempts to do all this with a trickster's "sleight of hand," saying "it's a great deal for the Palestinians, "theirs for the taking," "a win-win," "it's their last chance," and then cynically adding "if they don't screw it up." In this regard, the Trump "Deal" makes clear where it is ultimately different than Balfour's Declaration. At least Balfour was honest about his disregard for the rights of the Palestinians.

I'd like to be high-minded and state that this "Deal" will never succeed. But I've learned my own hard lessons from history. An uncontested imperial power can flaunt international law and wreak havoc, leaving vulnerable people to pay the price for its arrogance and callousness. As it is, the embrace of Trump's plan by the Israel right - and that includes both Netanyahu and his opposition - will embolden them to move aggressively to take advantage of this license they have been given to consolidate their hold over the Occupied Territories.

The divided and visionless Palestinian leadership is in no position to mount an effective challenge either to Trump or Israel. And the equally divided Arab World and the ineffectual EU will complain but take no meaningful action as Israel moves to consolidate its hold on the Territories. What we have, finally, is a one-state reality - an Apartheid state - and with that, we enter a new period of struggle for equality and human rights.

Welcome to the world ushered in by the "Deal of the Century". It is a world not unlike the one that confronted Arabs in Balfour's World War I era - the injustices it will bring forth and the struggle for justice it will give birth to will continue.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

A US dairy farmer works to cut back

Jim Davenport's alarm clock rings at 2:45 am every morning. That's when he climbs out of bed for the day's first milking of his 64 cows. It's not the long hours that scares this longtime dairy farmer, it's the string of lean years that has him weighing whether to just pack it in. If things aren't any better at the end this year than they were last year, Davenport promised himself "it's time to consider". "That's the first time I've ever said that, but that was my New Year's resolution," he says, standing in his barn in Ancramdale, a hamlet about two hours north of New York City.

On a windy and glacially cold January day, his milk cows - Holsteins and Ayrshires - stay inside the barn. They calmly chew their constantly replenished feed or lounge next to the 20 cats who keep the rodent population under control. Heavily bundled up and sporting a green baseball cap branded with the logo of his dairy cooperative, Davenport walks from one animal to another,



Jim Davenport

He rents his farm, where he lives with his wife - a retired teacher - and where they raised their two daughters.

'Last man standing'

After an exceptional year in 2014, the price of milk plummeted, not really picking up again until the end of 2019. The main problem, according to Davenport, is that Americans are "very efficient at making milk". Between genetic and nutritional advancements, cows produce

twice as much milk as they did in 1980. The consumption of dairy products has gradually increased every year, but overproduction is a chronic issue.

The costs of food production - in fuel, in labor - do not stop increasing. Davenport is particularly worried about a new state law that requires him to pay workers overtime if they work more than 60 hours a week. At the end of the day, "it's the last man standing," said Davenport, without bitterness. The larger farms have more chance of success, while the smaller ones will suffer. The reasons may vary - in too much debt, or at retirement age with no successor, or because the land is worth more than it can yield as a farm - many farmers have thrown in the towel.

The number of dairy farms in the US dropped 20 percent over five years, ending up at 37,468 at the end of 2018. "In my town here in 1987, there were 27 producing dairy farms," Davenport said. "Now there are three." The small rebound in milk prices at the end of 2019 has allowed for a little hope, but the situation is still tenuous. If Davenport makes it through, it will be due to the quality of his milk, for which he has won numerous awards. Everything comes down to cleanliness, he said. In the stable, the cow dung is regularly removed with a scraper. — AFP

Cloning musical heritage in the key of 3D

When Mina Jang played the same melodious tune on two different flutes behind a screen, she said the examiners grading her couldn't tell the difference. Yet the two instruments were in dramatically different ways. One was a handmade version of an original early 18th-century flute crafted in 2001, while the other was made of white plastic and "cloned" using a 3D printer in 2019.

The Museum of Music in Paris, whose collection includes a 2,500-year-old flute made of a vulture bone, has recently begun experimenting with the technique in an effort to better preserve period instruments. "The idea was to find out how to rapidly obtain a copy of an instrument whilst respecting the original flute," said the 35-year-old professional flautist and researcher in baroque music, who initiated the idea. Before being printed, the carefully copied 18th-century flute was x-rayed to identify its precise characteristics. The original it was based on was made by the celebrated French composer and instrument maker Jacques-Martin Hotteterre and is today preserved behind glass at the museum.

Musical time travel

3D printing has advantages over handmade instruments, taking just 24 hours to make, compared to a month in a workshop, and costing hundreds instead of thousands of euros. But Stephane Vaiedelich, in charge of the museum's laboratory which worked with other partners on the project too, says the move is purely about conserving musical heritage. "3D printing isn't about replacing instrument makers," he told AFP.

"The idea is to recreate a historical instrument so that the public can appreciate its sound and to revive an important heritage. It's an extraordinary way of travelling through time and recapturing old repertoires," he said, adding that a second flute had also been cloned. While 3D printing has become increasingly popular in different sectors over the last 20 years, including for reproducing instruments, Vaiedelich said the museum believed it was the first to experiment with the 3D reproduction of old instruments, using a scientific approach. A few orchestras play using original instruments from the period, such as the French group Les Siecles (The Centuries), but wind instruments struggle to withstand humidity. "It expands wood and can break" the instruments, Vaiedelich said. The museum chose to copy a transverse flute, precisely because - unlike an oboe - most of the musician's breath passes outside the instrument. "The material has less of an impact on the timbre," Vaiedelich said.

Using plastic for the 3D reproduced instruments also raises environmental issues. Vaiedelich said the ideal would



Musician Mina Jang holds a 3D-printing replica (left) of a wooden transverse flute (right) at the music lab of the Music Museum ("Musée de la Musique") at the Philharmonie in Paris on Jan 17, 2020. - AFP

be to print using recycled materials. Fanny Reyre Menard, vice-president of the trade union grouping together makers and repairers of instruments, said the material used was the only downside. "For craftsmen, plastic cannot be compared to wood," she said. "A wooden sound box is fundamental for a violin." On the whole though, Menard said that 3D printing presented an opportunity. "It's not a danger, but rather a very good tool for sharing information and prototypes between craftsmen," she said. — AFP

Business

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BEIJING: A woman wears a protective mask to prevent the spread of the SARS-like virus as she looks at a view from a hill at the Jingshan park in Beijing yesterday. — AFP

China CB to pump \$173bn into economy

Beijing ramps up support for fight against coronavirus as markets open today

BEIJING: China's central bank said yesterday it would pump 1.2 trillion yuan (\$173 billion) into the economy as it ramps up support for a nationwide fight against a deadly virus that is expected to hit growth. The People's Bank of China (PBOC) said in a statement it would launch a 1.2 trillion yuan reverse repurchase operation today to maintain "reasonable and abundant liquidity" in the banking system, as well as a stable currency market, during the epidemic. The country prepares to reopen its stock markets amid the coronavirus outbreak today.

It added that the overall liquidity of the banking system would be 900 billion yuan (\$129 billion) more than in the same period last year. The move will kick in on the day that China's financial markets reopen, following an extended Spring Festival break. The SARS-like virus which originated from the central Chinese city of Wuhan, has now infected over 14,000 people in the country and claimed more than 300 lives.

According to Reuters calculations based on official central bank data, 1.05 trillion yuan worth of reverse repos are set to mature today, meaning that 150 billion yuan in net cash will be injected. Investors are bracing for a volatile session in Chinese markets when onshore trades resume today after a break for the Lunar New Year which was extended by the government. China's stock, currency and bond markets have all been closed since Jan. 23 and had been due to re-open last Friday.

There will be no further delays to the reopening, the country's securities market regulator said in an interview published by the state-backed People's Daily newspaper yesterday. To support firms affected by the epidemic, the CSRC said companies that had expiring stock pledge agreements could apply for extensions with securities firms, and it would urge corporate bond investors to extend the maturity dates of debt.

The CSRC is also considering launching

hedging tools for the A-share market to help alleviate market panic and will suspend evening sessions of futures trading starting from today, it said.

"We believe that the successive introduction and implementation of policy measures will play a better role in improving market expectations and preventing irrational behavior," it told the People's Daily newspaper.

The PBOC also announced measures Saturday to step up monetary and credit support for enterprises which are helping in its fight against the virus, such as medical companies. China's central bank urged financial institutions to provide "sufficient credit resources" to hospitals and medical research units, among other measures. Authorities also relaxed tariffs on goods imported for use in the virus fight—including those from the United States, with which it has been engaged in a bruising trade war for around two years. The move to inject liquidity

into its financial system comes as authorities work to shore up confidence in an already slowing economy.

'Short-term' hit

The China Securities Regulatory Commission said yesterday that "the epidemic's impact on the market is short-term, and will not affect the longer-term trend", reported the state-run People's Daily. But China's travel and tourism sectors have already taken a hit over an unusually quiet Spring Festival break this year, with large-scale events cancelled, public attractions closed and people urged to stay home to help contain the outbreak. China has advised its citizens to postpone trips abroad and cancelled both overseas and domestic group tours.

Cinemas were made to close during what would otherwise have been a prime time for blockbuster releases. Other countries have told their nationals to avoid travel to the country as

well, with various airlines trimming their schedules.

Manufacturing has also been halted. Taiwanese tech giant Foxconn is keeping its factories in China closed until mid-February, allowing more local employees to delay their return after the new year break. Toyota, IKEA, Starbucks, Tesla, McDonald's and Volkswagen are among corporate giants temporarily halting production or shuttering outlets in China.

Tech giant Tencent was among companies telling staff to work at home until February 10. China saw economic growth of 6.1 percent last year, the slowest in around three decades. Analysts warn that this could weaken further if the spread of the mysterious pathogen goes on for an extended period.

Analysts at S&P said consumption contributed about 3.5 percentage points of China's growth rate in 2019. Even a 10 percent drop in consumption would knock about 1.2 percentage points off GDP, they warned. —Agencies

Sovereignty comes first: Britain lays out tough stance for EU trade talks

LONDON: Britain laid out a tough opening stance for future talks with the European Union yesterday, saying it would set its own agenda rather than meeting the bloc's rules to ensure frictionless trade.

After officially leaving the EU on Friday, Britain now must negotiate future trade relations with the bloc, to take effect when a standstill transition period expires at the end of the year. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government has been quick to send Brussels a message before trade talks begin in March: Brexit, for him, means sovereignty trumps the economy.

The EU has repeatedly told Britain the level of access to its lucrative single market will depend

on how far London agrees to adhere to a "level playing field"—shorthand for rules on environmental standards, labor regulations and state aid. But despite the appeals of many businesses for the government to ensure goods can trade across borders freely, ministers have been briefing companies that they should adjust to a new future when Britain will not adhere to EU rules.

Johnson, according to sources close to him, has taken last year's election, which handed him a large majority in parliament, as approval for his policy of putting Britain's right to set its own rules above the demands of businesses. He will outline that approach in a speech today.

"We are taking back control of our laws, so we are not going to have high alignment with the EU, legislative alignment with their rules," foreign minister Dominic Raab told Sky News. "But we'll want to cooperate and we expect the EU to follow through on their commitment to a Canada-style free trade agreement."

After more than three years of often tortuous talks, Johnson wants to draw a line under what has been an angry debate that has deepened divides across the country. His aim is a trade deal allowing for tariff- and quota-free trade in

goods, similar to terms the bloc now has in place with Canada.

Asked whether the government expected businesses to have to prepare for new checks on goods at the border, Raab said: "The agreement that we made with the EU was to avoid all of that, and I am sure they will want to live up to the undertakings they have made just as we'd expect to do the same."

Late on Saturday, a government source said if the EU would not offer a Canada-style trade deal, London would instead pursue a looser trade agreement, similar to the bloc's ties with Australia. "There are only two likely outcomes in negotiation - a free trade deal like Canada or a looser arrangement like Australia - and we are happy to pursue both," the source said.

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar called on the British government not to set strict red lines, saying this could make an already difficult negotiation even harder. "One thing I'd say to everyone is let's not repeat some of the errors that were made in the past two-and-a-half years," Varadkar told the BBC. "Let's not set such rigid red lines that makes it hard to come to an agreement and let's tone down the nationalistic rhetoric." —Reuters



LONDON: Passers-by pose for a photograph in front of the Department for International Trade, illuminated by red, white and blue lights in central London on Friday. —AFP

Business

NBK Money Markets Report

Fed leaves interest rate unchanged amid slowing growth, low inflation

UK leaves EU after three years of protracted discussions

KUWAIT: The Federal Reserve opted to leave its benchmark interest rate unchanged on Wednesday as it measures how rate cuts last year have cushioned the US economy facing weaker global growth. All ten members of the rate-setting committee voted to hold the benchmark rate in a range of 1.5 percent to 1.75 percent. "We're comfortable with our current policy stance and we think it's appropriate," Fed Chairman Jerome Powell said at a news conference after the central bank announced its decision. Inflation has remained below the 2 percent target since the central bank adopted it in 2012, with 2018 as an exception when officials most recently raised rates. Inflation then ran below 2 percent as the central bank cut rates three times and the global economy slowed. Trump has pressured the Federal Reserve to continue to cut interest rates to help lower debt costs.

"We're not satisfied with inflation running below 2 percent, particularly at a time such as now where we're a long way into an expansion and a long way into a period of very low unemployment, when in theory where inflation should be moving up," Powell said at the news conference. Following three cuts in 2019, policy makers now aim at supporting the country's expansion despite headwinds from trade and geopolitical uncertainty. Nonfarm payroll growth averaged 176,000 a month last year, while the unemployment rate held below 4 percent for most of 2019. Surveys show consumers also remain upbeat about their prospects. Last week, data revealed the Conference Board index climbed to 131.6 from an upwardly revised December reading of 128.2. The advance marked the highest reading in consumer confidence in five months, and was driven by a positive assessment of both the current and future job market. On the other hand, manufacturing has shown little improvement, consistent with a downshift in investment and sluggish markets for exports. The committee repeated that economic activity has been rising at a "moderate" rate, with "strong labor market conditions." The US dollar did not react significantly though

Rates - 02 February, 2020

Currencies	Previous Week Levels			Close	This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	High	Low		Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1019	1.1096	1.0990	1.1093	1.0895	1.1290	1.1260
GBP	1.3073	1.3208	1.2974	1.3199	1.3000	1.3400	1.3202
JPY	109.04	109.26	108.30	108.38	106.45	109.40	107.85
CHF	0.9713	0.9767	0.9626	0.9630	0.9535	0.9735	0.9623

remained strong and has risen 1.44 percent in the first month of 2020.

GDP below Trump's promised 3% target

The US economy grew by 2.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 2019, ending a year where GDP decelerated to its slowest pace in three years. On a yearly basis, the economy grew 2.3 percent from the 2.9 percent increase in 2018 and the 2.4 percent gain in 2017. Net exports helped, rising 1.4 percent amid the tariff war between the US and China, while imports fell 8.7 percent due to swings in tariffs. The US and China have recently come to a first-phase agreement on tariffs, though much of the levies remain in place today. Still, the partial agreement has the potential to stimulate corporate investment once again and shift the heavy lifting away from consumers.

Virus outbreak from China

The outbreak of the coronavirus in China has rattled financial markets as investors assess how much it will hurt the country's economy and whether that will weigh on the US and global growth. Equity and oil prices have swung sharply in recent days. Brent crude has fallen over 11 percent in January, dropping most recently to a 3-month low of 57.71. The S&P 500 has fallen over 1.5 percent in the past week, and was last seen at 3,225.52.

German Ifo business climate

The German Ifo business Climate announcement early last week failed to live up to expectations. The survey is seen as a strong predictive quality regarding what happens with the German economy, and

utilizes a large sample size. Companies provide their views on business conditions and whether or not they are leaning towards expansionary or contractionary conditions. The world was expecting business sentiment to improve in Germany, and was surprised by the decline. The announcement came in at 95.9, versus forecasts of 97.1 and lower than the 96.3 seen prior. Germany represents over 80 percent of the economic power in the EU, and as morale deteriorates, it drags down surrounding sentiment. Some of the reasons stated by businesses include a lack of exports and the overall global slowdown, and of course concerns surrounding Brexit.

Carney's final meeting

It was Governor Mark Carney's final meeting, and the Bank of England kept interest rates on hold waiting for more evidence of an economic rebound before supporting it with a cut. Policy makers voted 7-2 to keep the benchmark at 0.75 percent, and the split was unchanged from the last meeting. The committee added that surveys of business activity have picked up "quite markedly in some cases" since Prime Minister Boris Johnson's election victory removed much of the near-term uncertainty related to Brexit. Still, officials signaled easing may be needed soon. The central bank predicts GDP to reach its lowest level since the global financial crisis, and predicts inflation will only return to target by the end of 2021 if rates are cut to 0.5 percent next year. Looking ahead, the decision on a BOE response will fall to Carney's successor, Andrew Bailey, who will take post mid-March. The pound rose to its highest level in a week, reaching 1.3208 against the USD.



Britain's exit

On Friday, the UK formally left the EU after more than three years of deliberations. As the EU gave its final approval to Britain's exit deal from the bloc, the chamber broke into singing a traditional Scottish farewell song, after voting 621 for versus 49 against the Brexit deal, with 13 abstentions. It has now entered into an 11-month transition period, in which the UK will begin trade talks with countries around the world. As an EU member, the UK had not been allowed to enter into negotiations with countries like the US and Australia. Brexit supporters have argued that having the freedom to set its own trade policy will boost the UK's economy.

Australia inflation stubborn

Australia's consumer prices rose slightly more than expected in the fourth quarter of 2019, adding to the view that the Reserve Bank of Australia should keep interest rates on hold at its first policy meeting for the year. The consumer price index rose 0.7 percent in Q4

from Q3, and 1.8 percent on a yearly basis. Meanwhile, economists had expected a 0.6 percent quarterly rise. Looking at the core figure, the measure remained stuck at an even slower 1.6 percent y/y - marking four straight years below target. Still, December employment data showed unemployment falling to its lowest level in close to a year, allowing the RBA more time to consider its next move. The persistent weakness in inflation was a drive for the RBA to cut rates three times last year to an all-time low of 0.75 percent. RBA chief Philip Lowe has battled to reignite prices for over 3 years, but with limited success despite the easing. Lowe estimates the RBA has two cuts left before opening the door to unconventional policy. The Australian dollar has depreciated more than 5 percent in the past twelve months.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30380
The USDKWD opened at 0.30380 yesterday morning.

Wall Street Week Ahead

Earnings volatility set to kick in as coronavirus worries mount

NEW YORK: Concerns over the outbreak of coronavirus from China have largely overshadowed corporate results, but the back half of the earnings season could hold greater sway over the performance of individual stocks. Earnings-related stock moves have been smaller this season in comparison with the average over the past 12 quarters, according to data from options research company ORATS.

The muted moves reflect a broader trend of subdued volatility that had limited price fluctuations in a range of assets over the last several months. Some of that calm was dis-

rupted this week, as mounting concerns over the spread of the coronavirus on Friday dealt the benchmark S&P 500 stock index its biggest daily percentage loss since October.

The dampened earnings-related moves have benefited options sellers, who profit when the change in share price is smaller than expected. Yet betting that earnings-related moves will remain subdued could soon become more costly. Options traders have priced in more volatility for broader exchange-traded funds. Implied volatility on the SPDR S&P 500 ETF Trust, which shows expectations for future stock swings, has climbed since mid-January, according to data from Trade Alert. That rise coincides with mounting concerns over the potential economic impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

"The options market is reflecting this new risk, this coronavirus risk," said Ophir Gottlieb, chief executive of Capital Market Laboratories in Los Angeles.

Moreover, risks from the virus outbreak are beginning to spill over into earnings commentary. Companies such as Starbucks Corp, Levi Strauss & Co and Oreos maker Mondelez International Inc have warned of a financial hit from the outbreak. As such

remarks pile up, they could also bump up volatility among shares of certain companies, Gottlieb said.

"Some CEOs are openly saying, 'Hey, things are going to be a little harder,'" Gottlieb said.

At the same time, the fourth and fifth weeks of the six-week earnings season have usually reaped the greatest rewards for traders buying options in anticipation of out-sized stock moves, according to ORATS data. Earnings-related moves tend to be greater in those weeks in part because smaller companies, whose stocks are often more volatile, tend to report later in the season, said Matt Amberson, founder of ORATS, in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Options for several S&P 500 companies reporting next week - including Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc, Twitter Inc and Coty Inc - show a gap of several percentage points between investors' expectations for share moves and past share performance after quarterly reports. It appears that the cost of buying options on individual stocks ahead of a company's earnings report is "getting cheaper when it should be getting more expensive," Amberson said. — Reuters



NEW YORK: Traders working on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Friday in New York, United States. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.811
Indian Rupees	4.269
Pakistani Rupees	1.987
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.675
Nepali Rupees	2.665
Singapore Dollar	225.330
Hongkong Dollar	39.239
Bangladesh Taka	3.547
Philippine Peso	5.996
Thai Bhat	9.935
Malaysian Ringgit	77.916

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.294
Qatari Riyal	83.730
UAE Dirham	791.813
Bahraini Dinar	809.490
UAE Dirham	83.000

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.550
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	19.326
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.224
Tunisian Dinar	114.100
Jordanian Dinar	429.960
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.375

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.650
Euro	341.660
Sterling Pound	405.640
Canadian dollar	232.380
Turkish lira	52.260
Swiss Franc	320.010
US Dollar Buying	297.200

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.300
Canadian Dollar	231.185
Sterling Pound	397.480
Euro	336.325
Swiss Frank	298.470
Bahrain Dinar	809.245
UAE Dirhams	83.250
Qatari Riyals	84.490
Saudi Riyals	82.040
Jordanian Dinar	430.480
Egyptian Pound	19.320
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.673
Indian Rupees	4.259
Pakistani Rupees	1.967
Bangladesh Taka	3.552
Philippines Peso	5.976
Cyprus pound	18.105
Japanese Yen	3.795
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.669
Malaysian Ringgit	75.305
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.290

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.395778	0.409678
Czech Korune	0.005391	0.014691
Danish Krone	0.041117	0.046117
Euro	0.330992	0.344692
Georgian Lari	0.110527	0.110527
Hungarian	0.001148	0.001338
Norwegian Krone	0.029170	0.034370
Romanian Leu	0.065299	0.082149
Russian Ruble	0.004825	0.004825
Slovakia	0.009111	0.019111
Swedish Krona	0.027615	0.032615
Swiss Franc	0.310285	0.321285
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.196102	0.208102
New Zealand Dollar	0.190808	0.200308
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.225004	0.234004
US Dollars	0.300550	0.305100
US Dollars Mint	0.301050	0.305100
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002904	0.003705

Chinese Yuan	0.042423	0.045923
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037270	0.040020
Indian Rupee	0.003663	0.004435
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002727	0.002907
Korean Won	0.000245	0.000260
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070681	0.076681
Nepalese Rupee	0.002627	0.002967
Pakistan Rupee	0.001296	0.002066
Philippine Peso	0.005864	0.006164
Singapore Dollar	0.218427	0.228427
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001320	0.001900
Taiwan	0.010134	0.010314
Thai Bhat	0.009524	0.010074
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.000103
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.801938	0.809998
Egyptian Pound	0.019261	0.022001
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000199	0.000259
Jordanian Dinar	0.424786	0.433785
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000103	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021038	0.045038
Omani Riyal	0.786168	0.794069
Qatar Riyal	0.083024	0.083858
Saudi Riyal	0.080153	0.081453
Syrian Pound	0.001292	0.001512
Tunisian Dinar	0.103748	0.111748
Turkish Lira	0.044517	0.054362
UAE Dirhams	0.082266	0.083094
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

Business

Huawei's 5G problems to test Nordic competitors' bandwidth

Britain imposes a 35% cap on the role of 'high-risk vendors'

HELSINKI: Tougher UK and EU rules restricting 5G network supplier Huawei should be a golden opportunity for competitors Nokia and Ericsson, but the companies may struggle to meet the increased demand, analysts warned. On Tuesday, Britain imposed a 35 percent cap on the role of "high-risk vendors" in building the country's next-generation communications network, over security concerns.

The change will hit Chinese giant Huawei, whom critics accuse of being ultimately under the control of Beijing, an allegation it strongly denies. The EU followed by releasing guidelines urging member states to avoid dependency on "high risk" suppliers, though the bloc stopped short of naming Huawei or calling for an outright ban. On the face of it, the biggest beneficiaries from this week's announcements appear to be the Chinese firm's two largest competitors, Nokia and Ericsson. "BT in the UK thinks it's going to cost it £500 million (\$660 million) to switch out Huawei, so a good chunk of that will now be going to Nokia and Ericsson," analyst Matthew Howett of Assembly Research told AFP.

On Friday, Nokia welcomed the EU's guidelines and commitment to cybersecurity, saying in a statement that "5G starts and ends with trust and security." Ericsson greeted the "comprehensive approach" agreed by the EU countries. "Ericsson stands ready to support this process to ensure a high level of protection for European citizens and business".

But industry watchers claim that fulfilling the increased demand left by market leader Huawei may not be straightforward. Huawei is widely seen as providing the most advanced 5G for the super-fast data transfers, necessary for self-driving cars and remote-controlled robots in factories or operating theatres.

"A discussion needs to take place about Huawei's perceived leadership position, and how ready Nokia and Ericsson are to step up to that over the next three year period," Howett said.

"Can they give network operators the equipment they need in the timescale?" Last year Nokia downgraded its 2020 earnings forecast in the face of fierce competition over the 5G networks market, while chief executive Rajeev Suri

played down the firm's delays in delivering some equipment orders.

Any difficulties in meeting demand will be felt by European consumers, said smartphone analyst Neil Mawston of Strategy Analytics. "Restricting Huawei kit from the network potentially means the cost of 5G will be slightly higher and the rollout slightly slower," Mawston said.

Worldwide concerns

Britain and the EU are not the first powers to act on security questions around Chinese network equipment. Washington has imposed a total ban on Huawei's involvement in the rollout of the US's fifth-generation mobile network.

Back in 2010 the Indian government banned imports of Chinese telecoms equipment for several months following a row over hacking. Telecom analyst Anders Elgemyr from investment bank Carlsquare believes Nokia and Ericsson have already benefited, as operators begin to steer clear of Huawei for fear of driving away clients. "If you lose customers by using Huawei equipment, then you avoid it," Elgemyr told AFP.

On Friday, both Nokia and Ericsson won contracts with one of Europe's largest mobile operators, Orange France, to deploy 5G networks across the country. However, the battle for network contracts in Europe remains fierce, with Orange having used Huawei in its other markets including Spain, Belgium, Poland and Romania. In Germany, the Chinese firm secured a contract to provide 5G for Telefonica.

As of mid-January, Ericsson told AFP it had signed a total of 79 contracts for 5G while Nokia announced 63. Huawei told AFP in December it had secured 65 orders.

Elgemyr expected Huawei to fight back by aggressively targeting markets in Asia, South America, the Middle East and Africa—which in turn could lead to more pressure on Nokia. Meanwhile critics have accused Huawei of enjoying unfair levels of state aid. A Wall Street Journal analysis of annual accounts found that between 2013 and 2018, the Chinese firm reported receiving 17 times more government



LONDON: In this file photo, pedestrians use their mobile phones near a Huawei advert at a bus stop in central London. —AFP

money than Nokia, while Ericsson received none at all.

Political tug-of-war

The question of who benefits in the longer term will in part depend on how Britain's and the EU's new regulations are implemented in practice.

"Will the 35 percent UK limit for outer 5G networks be a soft guideline or a hard stop?" Neil Mawston said. "Is the 35 percent UK cap a political cover to eventually trend

Huawei down toward zero?"

Unlike the United States, Britain has been using Huawei technology in its systems for the past 15 years.

But US officials insist there is "no safe option" for Huawei to control any part of the network, and are not convinced by UK and EU plans to exclude risky operators from "sensitive" locations such as nuclear sites and military bases. "This political 5G tussle will rumble on for the rest of the decade," Mawston predicted. —AFP

India bets on barren land, rail tracks to raise solar capacity

NEW DELHI: India aims to boost solar power generation by encouraging the installation of panels along rail tracks and on barren land, the finance minister said on Saturday as the country looks to cut its carbon footprint and accelerate clean energy production.

Looking to expedite clean energy as some coal-fired power plants face closure, Asia's third-largest economy has set a target to raise renewable energy capacity to 175 gigawatts by 2022. Its renewable capacity rose 16 percent to 85.9 GW in 2019, while coal-fired capacity rose 3.9 percent to 198.5 GW.

"A scheme to enable farmers to set up solar power generation capacity on their barren/fallow lands and to sell it to the grid would be operationalized," Nirmala Sitharaman said in her budget speech.

She said a proposal is under consid-

eration to set up large solar power capacity alongside rail tracks and raised the outlay for the renewable energy ministry by 48 percent for 2020/21. She also extended lower tax rates to utilities, which some experts say should mostly help boost renewable energy.

"The announcement to bring new energy companies under the lower corporate tax rate is expected to encourage investments in new energy projects," said Sumant Sinha, chairman of Goldman Sachs-backed ReNew Power. India needs to boost power generation to fuel its expanding economy, which the government estimates will grow at between 6 percent and 6.5 percent in the next fiscal year. It also needs to cut pollution as parts of the country including the capital New Delhi are plagued by poor air quality. Some local power plants have missed the deadline to install equipment to cut pollution and others are set to miss the emissions target. Close to 29 old coal-fired plants would be shut by 2022, Power Minister R K Singh said on Saturday.

Utilities, struggling to recover more than \$11 billion due from power distribution companies, often cite higher costs for the failure to install emission-cutting



MUMBAI: People watch on a screen a television channel live broadcast of India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presenting the 2020 union budget, at the Bombay Stock Market (BSE) in Mumbai on Saturday. —AFP

kit. Singh said the government will set up a fund to help utilities recover those dues. In a further measure to reduce carbon emissions, India has launched a scheme to encourage farmers to use solar instead of diesel-fired irrigation pumps. Sitharaman said the scheme will

be expanded to cover 3.5 million farmers. India also plans to expand its gas pipeline network to 27,000 kilometers from 16,200 km and will undertake reforms to deepen its gas markets by making price discovery more transparent, she said. —Reuters

Brexit's new chapter: The 'impossible' trade deal

BRUSSELS: Britain has left the European Union after 47 years of membership and today chief negotiator Michel Barnier will lay out the EU's strategy for the next phase: negotiations to hammer out a new future with the UK. Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to also swiftly reveal Britain's game plan for talks where both sides will "have to rebuild everything", in the words of Barnier.

Here are the main battle lines for the coming weeks: No extension

Throughout his campaign, Johnson said he would seal a trade deal by December 31, the deadline set by the EU-UK divorce agreement. London could request an extension of one or two more years, but it would have to do so by July 1. Johnson insists he will not.

That leaves only eight months, from late February to October, to reach an agreement and allow time for ratification, which could require the approval of roughly 30 national and regional parliaments, depending on the final scope of the deal.

"It's an impossible task," warned one European diplomat. "By the end of the year, we could get the skele-

ton of a trade agreement plus something on internal and foreign security, but there is no guarantee," the diplomat added. Negotiations cannot officially begin before EU ministers approve Barnier's mandate on February 25.

'Negotiation tables'

Months of intense discussions, to alternate between London and Brussels, will be coordinated by Barnier and his UK counterpart, probably David Frost. The tight deadline allows "about 40 days of pure negotiation" in eight to ten-week sessions, an official warned. This is a far cry from the years devoted to trade deals with Canada, Japan or South Korea. Barnier said negotiators would open about ten "negotiating tables" in parallel. "We will give each subject two or three weeks and see what is possible. If the divisions are too great, we drop it and move on," a diplomat said.

An EU-UK summit is planned for June to gauge where talks stand.

New 'no deal'

Johnson has scrapped his predecessor's goal of close ties with Europe that would minimise disruption to the cross-Channel economy. Pushed by big business, Theresa May's government had proposed a "dynamic alignment", where London would find a way to match EU rules on the environment, state aid and other standards to guarantee UK companies easy access to Europe.

Instead, Johnson wants to pursue a far more minimal trade deal, sometimes called a hard Brexit, that will seek zero tariffs and quotas on

goods, but make no binding commitment on maintaining standards.

"The prime minister has been clear that he wants a Canada-style free trade agreement with no alignment," a UK official told AFP. This refers to the EU's trade deal with Canada that Europeans consider too narrow for an important neighbor like Britain.

Given London's stance, Barnier said that some items will be a priority "otherwise we will create a fracture". He wants handshakes on fisheries, internal and external security and above all trade in goods. If there is no deal by December 31, when the unextended transition closes, ties would devolve at a stroke into the most rudimentary relationship, with high tariffs, grave disruptions and major aftershocks to Britain's and Europe's economy.

Threat to unity

Many in Brussels fear that Johnson's low-bar strategy could split the Europeans. "It will be difficult to maintain European unity," said an EU diplomat with eastern European countries attaching greater importance to auto construction and others pushing financial services. In any case, a trade deal on goods only means no alignment on EU standards, which means custom checks, paperwork and all sorts of new limits to commerce and that will most affect Britain's closest neighbors such as France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Those countries are also under pressure to keep access to British waters for local fishermen: Britain and the EU have pledged to agree that touchy issue by July 1. —AFP

Protesters occupy disputed German coal mine plant

FRANKFURT: Activists occupied Germany's newest power plant yesterday to protest against a law passed last week to end coal electricity generation, but which environmental groups argue is insufficient. Police said more than 100 protesters entered the site of the Datteln 4 coal-fired power plant in western Germany.

The organisers, a protest group called Ende Gelände (Game Over), put the number at 150. The group said in a statement that their activists were "blocking crucial infrastructure". "Their action of civil disobedience is a protest against the coal law of the German government," they said. On Wednesday, ministers signed off on a 202-page draft law—under the clunky German title of "Kohleverstromungsbeendigungsgesetz"—to exit from coal by 2038 at the latest, by which time all coal-fired power plants and coal mines in Germany should be inactive. However, environmentalists say the law is too little, too late. Plant shutdowns are due to start on December 31 this year with one mine to be closed at Garzweiler, just west of Cologne.

The government view is that it makes more sense to close down old and more polluting plants rather than scrap the opening of Datteln 4. "The law is a disaster," said Kathrin Henneberger, spokeswoman for Ende Gelände. "We cannot continue burning coal for 18 years." In a plan adopted last month, Germany set itself the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55 percent compared to 1990 levels by 2030 although it is set to miss its 2020 climate targets.

Berlin has promised to set aside 4.35 billion euros (\$4.7 billion) to help coal plant operators offset shutdown costs and aid the coal phase-out. Employees working in the sector will also receive assistance while 40 billion euros of aid has been earmarked for mining regions through to 2038.

November saw activists block coal mines in the Lausitz Basin in eastern Germany and Ende Gelände is planning further protests in August at lignite mines in the west of the country. The anti-coal movement has been gaining support in Germany since a 2011 decision to scrap atomic energy led to an increased dependence on coal. —AFP



The picture shows deer in front a coal power plant of German energy giant RWE in Niederaussem, western Germany. Bowing to public pressure on climate change, Germany had promised to speed up its exit from coal power generation and to pay operators compensation in a strategy instantly rejected by environmental campaigners. —AFP

Al-Tijari announces winners of Al-Najma draws

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly and monthly draws on Al-Najma Account. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representatives Budour Al-Azmi and Dalal Al-Mutairi.

The results of the draws were as follows:

1- Al-Najma monthly account - the prize of KD 20,000 was for the share of Waleed Saqer Al-Ghanim.

2- Al-Najma weekly account - the prize of KD 5,000 was for the share of Jaber Mashaallah Jamalpour.

The bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000. Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

Business

Gulf Bank announces commitment to Kuwait Vision 2035 'New Kuwait'

Gulf Bank welcomes GSSCPD Secretary-General Dr Khaled A Mahdi

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank welcomed Dr Khaled A Mahdi, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) of Kuwait, at the Bank's Head Office to discuss Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait," the national development plan that was developed by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Gulf Bank's role in financing current and upcoming national projects in order to achieve the country's vision.

The Kuwait National Development Plan "New Kuwait" aspires to transform the country into a financial and trade hub that is attractive to investors. Under the new plan, the private sector leads the national economy, creating competition and promoting production efficiency. The development plan also aims to drive government institutions while safeguarding cultural values and protecting social identities. The plan aims to develop the country's human resources while providing stakeholders with necessary infrastructure, advanced legislation and an inspiring business environment.

Commenting on this, Dr Khaled A Mahdi said: "I am pleased to see the engagement of the banking sector with



Dari Al-Bader

Kuwait's Vision 2035. Without a doubt the banking sector plays a pivotal role within this vision as per H H The Amir's wishes to transform Kuwait to financial and trading hub."

Dari Al-Bader, General Manager of Corporate Affairs at Gulf Bank, noted: "At Gulf Bank, we are aware of the impact of our role in achieving His Highness the Amir of Kuwait's Vision 2035. We will spare no effort in collaborating with relevant stakeholders in both the public and private sectors in order to transform Kuwait into the financial and commercial center we aspire it to be."

It is worth noting that the Kuwait Vision 2035 development plan includes multiple projects that have been funded, or continue to be funded, by Gulf Bank. These projects include the Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Hospital,



the Opera House at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, the new Kuwait University construction project, and the Sheikh Jaber Causeway. Work is still underway for other projects, including: the Kuwait International Airport

expansion, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation initiative environmental fuel project, the clean fuels project, the South Al-Mutlaa city project, the Al-Zour refinery project, the municipal solid waste treatment project, and more.



KUWAIT: Ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the opening of first branch of NB Chocolate House of Luxembourg in Kuwait at the Phase 4 of The Avenues Mall.

NB Chocolate House opens its first branch in Avenues Mall

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister of Luxembourg Etienne Schneider and in the presence of Elizabeth Cardoso, Ambassador of Luxembourg to Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, Tea Garden Hospitality Management Company opened its first branch of NB Chocolate House of Luxembourg in Kuwait at the Phase 4 of The Avenues Mall. A cocktail party was held for selected invitees including ambassadors of various European countries and members of the media.

On this occasion, the Chairman and Founder of Tea Garden, Ahmed Khorsheed, said, "Since the formation of Tea Garden Hospitality Company in 2005, the company has expanded its scope of services related to leading hospitality players in the market with major hotels, food and beverage establishments under the portfolio. We also own and operate Jneinetna Lebanese Restaurant & Studio Kuwait restaurant concepts," he said.

As an ambitious Kuwaiti entrepreneur, Tea Garden always strives to present unique and exclusive products to the Kuwait market and also act as a pioneer in various sectors of Kuwait hospitality industry.

NB Chocolate House opened its first branch in the



Avenues Mall, Kuwait. It also operates in Luxembourg, Germany, France and China. "This is a qualitative addition to what we offer to our guests in Kuwait and the Middle East. We take careful attention to the sourcing of all raw-materials required for each and every product by following the original recipes and ingredients used in NB Chocolate House in Luxembourg," he explained.

Toufic Salman, General Manager of Tea Garden Hospitality Company, added, "we are pleased to cooperate with Mrs. Nathalie Bonn, who shares the same vision and strives to provide a unique experience for our customers as they are in Luxembourg".

Salman also pointed out that the "NB Chocolate House of Luxembourg" in the Avenues, will be a chocolaterie where you can eat. It will serve as an integrated restaurant and chocolate boutique with various food & beverage exquisites. In addition to the finest pralines and our flagship Choco Spoon, NB Chocolate House is home to wide varieties of unique Cake Collection which will provide unforgettable gastronomic experience to our guests. We also provide special and distinctive for-



mations of services in Weddings, Public and Private events," he said. The grand opening of NB Chocolate House in Avenues Mall, represents a new addition to the

company's portfolio, with plans for expansion in various parts of Kuwait. "Our next venture will be in Assima Mall Kuwait City in late 2020," he added.

3 super cool and unique features of Huawei Mate 30 Pro 5G

KUWAIT: The Huawei Mate 30 Pro is the king of 5G smartphones. The phone is recognized for its super performance and its ability to support both modes of 5G networks in addition to its iconic design, marvelous videography, super battery and of course safe and solid security features. Here are three super cool and unique features of the Huawei Mate 30 Pro 5G.

Amazing videography

When we say Huawei Mate 30 Pro 5G has super videography and easily rivals professional video camera, we mean it! The King of 5G smartphones comes with the world's first 40MP dual main camera. The quad camera setup is made up of a 40MP SuperSensing Cine camera, a 40 MP SuperSensing Camera in addition to an 8MP Telephoto Camera and a 3D Depth Camera. All these cameras have truly revolutionized smartphone videography.

Huawei Mate 30 Pro 5G Ultra Slow-Motion shoots Video at 7680fps, which was previously only

possible by professional video cameras. It is now possible to shoot a video of a cheetah chasing a gazelle and you will be able to catch every little detail. Starting from the moment the cheetah starts running all the way to the second it catches its prey, we cannot promise it will catch the gazelle but we promise you will shoot one of the finest Ultra Slow-Motion video there is on mobile smartphones.

Another off the charts feature in the Huawei Mate 30 Pro 5G is Ultra Low-light Video of ISO 51200, the highest sensitivity for mobile videography. Imagine you are attending a concert of your favorite singer/band and it is dark but you also don't want to miss out on having a video to look back on or to share on social media. It is now possible to shoot clear videos in very lowlight surroundings and environment.

Super cool AI interactions

Huawei Mate 30 Pro 5G will blow your minds off with its one of a kind AI Gesture Controls. It is now possible to complete tasks, surf the web and navigate your phone without having to touch the screen at all! All you have to do is wave your hands up, down or sideways. You can even take a screenshot by gesturing a pinch in front of the screen, really, how cool is that?

There is also another unique feature - AI Auto Rotate. Simply put, the phone automatically detects the angle you're looking at the screen and then the AI Auto Rotate feature will adjust the screen for you accordingly. You really don't have to manually flip

the phone, just assume your favorite viewing position and then watch magic happen. Multi-Screen Collaboration* is another intriguing and convenient feature which is made possible in the Huawei Mate 30 Pro 5G. Thanks to improved EMUI 10 which has made it possible to mirror your screen with Huawei MateBook and transfer data, files and documents conveniently, all you've literally got to do is drag and drop the file with your fingers, piece of cake right?

Solid, cool and secure

The King of 5G smartphones is also renowned for its solid and unique security features. Thanks to its isolated Trusted Execution Environment (TEE), which ensures all sensitive data such as fingerprints, facial information and voiceprints are stored in the most secure part of the chipset.

Your messages and notifications are also safe from inquisitive eyes when you receive them thanks to AI Private View, which automatically hides content when extra eyes are detected. Unlocking your phone is also made more reliable and secure with dual-biometric authentication comprising of 3D Face Unlock and In-Screen Fingerprint.

The new Huawei Mate 30 Pro 5G does not pre-install Google Mobile Services, and you will be able to download and enjoy the applications from the Huawei AppGallery preinstalled in the device. The King of 5G Smartphones is not just about performance and power. There are also super cool and unique features to match the Huawei Mate 30 Pro 5G prowess.

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. Kholoud Abdullah Yaser Al-Shatti
2. Farhan Saeed Mohammad Saeed
3. Mansour Hameed Abass Jaragh
4. Abdullah Benaih Abdullah Al-Enezi
5. Rasmayah Abd Al-Hasan Thejeel

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.

What's On



The wives of ambassadors during the ceremony. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Sheikha Intisar Al-Ali and Sheikha Hanouf during the opening ceremony.

IWG celebrates National and Liberation Days of Kuwait

By Faten Omar

The International Women's Group (IWG) held a ceremony to celebrate Kuwait's National and Liberation Days yesterday at Crowne Plaza Hotel. The event was attended by honorary president Sheikha Hanouf Al-Bader Al-Sabah, female ambassadors, wives of ambassadors to Kuwait, members of the IWG and prominent women in Kuwait.

During her opening speech, Rima A-Khaldi, wife of the Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Kuwait and Vice President of IWG, congratulated HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the people of Kuwait on the occasion of the National and Liberation Days. Sheikha Intisar Salem Al-Ali expressed her happiness on attending this event, noting that Kuwait is a small country but is home to more than 100 nationalities living in peace and security on its land.

She praised the activities undertaken by IWG, indicating that Kuwaitis have a great cultural heritage as well as their great love for their country. "Since independence, people of Kuwait are keen to commemorate the national days, which is a sign that the liberation is a very precious memory in the hearts of Kuwaitis, because they triumphed over injustice and united to get back their land," Sheikha Intisar added. She emphasized that Kuwait enjoys very good relations with the countries of the world, which made representatives of these countries share the celebrations with the Kuwaiti people.

Rami Tahboub, Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait, expressed his thanks for Kuwait's continuous support



Titi Abera posing with the traditional Kuwaiti dress.



Zina Hong, wife of the ambassador of South Korea dressed as a Kuwaiti bride in traditional Kuwaiti wedding.

to the Palestinian cause, pointing to the speech of Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah at the Arab ministerial meeting held at the headquarters of the Arab League to come out with an Arab position towards the so-called deal of the century that US President Donald Trump had spoken about, which according to him is an excellent deal for the Palestinians.

The ceremony included a stereoscopic display of the old Kuwait market, followed by the Kuwaiti Army's military music band playing the national anthem. They also played some Kuwaiti national songs, with which the

audience interacted enthusiastically. Khaldi then invited the honorary president of IWG, guests, and members of the board of directors of the group to cut the cake.

During the ceremony, the students of the British School played a movie showing their love of their beloved country of Kuwait, in addition to a short film titled "Kuwait is a small country with a big heart". A falcon was brought with its trainer to the hall to publicize its importance as a mascot of Kuwait.

The celebration included an important part of Kuwaiti heritage - the "Kuwaiti wedding corner", to inform guests on the importance of this ceremony as it

represents the customs of marriage in Kuwait in the past with its joyful and distinctive rituals and shows the simplicity of the customs and traditions of the people of Kuwait.

There were also several entertainment competitions and many gifts were distributed to everyone after the ceremony. IWG honored the National Council and the Military Music Band for their participation and contributions to the success of this event. In conclusion, attendees enjoyed Kuwaiti traditional cuisine prepared by the chefs of Crowne Plaza Hotel exclusively for this celebration.

CBK partakes in Food Buzz exhibition

The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently took part in the two-day Food Buzz exhibition held at Al-Raya Complex outdoor court and organized by a number of ambitious Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.

CBK's presence and participation aimed at supporting talented Kuwaiti youth and contributing in creating a creative generation in terms of private sector careers. CBK also supports and adapts ambitious Kuwaiti youth ideas in various fields.

At the Food Buzz sidelines, CBK presented a number of gifts for participants and had a special section in which it introduced its new 'YOU' account for youth, which has been created to provide youth



between age 14-24 with unique benefits and privileges in terms of banking services.

CBK explained that youth could open the account with KD 10 only and get a KD 50 cash gift on transferring their social aid allowance adding that the account holders

would also enter monthly draws with two chances to win KD 250. "Current customers who transfer their aid will get one chance to enter the draws and the annual draw winner will get a 2020 model Chevrolet Blazer."

Celebrate Love the Jumeirah Way this Valentine's Day

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa is adding sparkle and delight to Valentine's Day with a room package to celebrate the most romantic day of the year with your loved one, a plethora of romantic dining options, specially curated set menus and lavish spa treatments.

Experience the ultimate romantic getaway. Guests can cherish everlasting moments with Valentine's Day package with a luxurious stay in a Grand Deluxe Room or Deluxe Suite decorated in rose petals in breath-taking detail for the special occasion. Couples choosing this offer can enjoy complimentary benefits of in-room breakfast, decorated cake to suit your special occasion, flowers, access to executive lounge and pool & beach area, 24-hour check-in and check-out and to wrap up the memorable day, guests can indulge and cherish romantic moments with a lavish 3-course set menu dinner for two at Salt, the hotel's seafood and international cuisine restaurant.

Whether enjoying an intimate candle light dinner at Pepper, indulging in authentic Italian cuisine at Olio, or simply sharing relaxed moments of togetherness at Salt and Mint, couples can celebrate precious moments to an unforgettable Valentine's Day.

Pepper Steakhouse

Couples can enjoy a truly unique dinner this Valentine's Day with set menu of fine cuts of meats flame-grilled to perfection. An enticing dining experience awaits, with a saxophone player for live entertainment and a caricaturist for an unforgettable souvenir to take home.

Salt Restaurant

Create memorable moments with a culinary experience crafted by a brigade of talented chefs at the award-winning restaurant. Lit by glowing candles and mesmerising set up, guests can gaze into each other's eyes while enjoying a sensory inspired menu that has been carefully crafted for this special day. The sounds of soulful live pianist and violinist will whisk guests away throughout the evening. Private dining venue also available at both restaurants.

Olio Restaurant

Celebrate love the Venetian way. This



perfectly romantic spot combines the Italian devotion to food with Venetian hospitality, leaving you devouring only the best Italian cuisine while embracing the view over the Arabian Gulf. Create an everlasting memory beneath the glittering stars with your loved one this Valentines.

Mint Poolside Cafe

Couples are in for a treat with a romantic lavish BBQ dinner buffet under the sky at poolside cafe. Start your Valentine's day with a special someone by the pool overlooking the sparkling Arabian Sea. Then sit under the stars for an unforgettable dining with live performance artist and photo booth for memorable souvenirs.

Gazebo

Romance the love of your life on the shores of the Arabian Gulf with an unparalleled, private beach dining experience. Right by the sea, couples will discover a romantic escape unlike any other. Savour every bite with an exquisite 4-course set menu as you look across to the gentle waves hitting the shoreline.

Secret Garden

Couples in the mood for a more private Valentine's Day experience can treat their loved one to a luxurious private venue. Enjoy personalized service and exquisite menu with complimentary non-alcoholic champagne, fresh rose bouquet and a heart-shaped cake while the couple relishes the violinist's romantic tunes under the starry sky.

Talise Spa

Pamper your special someone this Valentine's Day with a dreamy spa session for two at Talise Spa. Begin your journey to ultimate bliss, unwind and enjoy a 60-minute couple's massage followed by an indulgent 30-minute foot massage and access to facilities. Cosy bathrobes await to then relax in comfort and style while making the most of one another's company following the treatment. The ultimate indulgence this Valentine's Day.

Congratulations



It was an exciting moment at the Life Abundant International Fountain Church as families, friends and well-wishers celebrated with Emmanuel and Deborah as they said 'Yes I Do.' May God guide you and bless your marriage Amen.



First Int'l Investment Forum in Tashkent

On March 5-6, 2020 the capital of Uzbekistan will host the first Tashkent International Investment Forum. The forum will serve as an exclusive platform aimed at bringing together more than 1500 heads of foreign and national business, investors, exporters and representatives of international mass media.

The event is being held by the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Agenda of the forum will feature discussions within several tracks. Among them are "Openness for Business", "Deepening Regional Ties" and "Utilizing Technological Innovations".

Forum organizer: Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Registration for the upcoming event is available via the following link: <http://www.tiif.uz/en/>

TIES Center

The TIES Center cordially invites you to our Tafseer (Divine Wisdom from the Last Testament) class today, February 3rd, at 7pm. In that class, we will focus on verses 18 and 19 of Surat Al-Mujadilah (She who Argued). We will learn what Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told his companions about some hypocrites who secretly insulted him, their response, and the outcome. We will also discuss other vices of the hypocrites and the polytheists, how they will lie even on the Judgment Day, how the Devil will distance itself from them.

We will learn the consequences of lying, how the Devil tempts people to sin, and why his forces and followers will eventually lose everything.

Finally, we will discuss what Allah (SWT) said about devils who distract His servants from worshipping Him, and examine Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) guidelines on swearing. Come and learn more about the Book of Allah (SWT) in a serene, friendly and encouraging environment.

Health & Science

US universities set up front-line defenses to keep coronavirus at bay

WASHINGTON: On its sprawling campus in America's heartland, thousands of miles from China, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has taken aggressive steps to keep the fast-spreading coronavirus away from its classrooms and students.

The school, with one of the highest percentages of Chinese students among US universities, has suspended academic programs in China for the spring semester and banned students from traveling to the country for academic-related matters. It has advised faculty and staff to follow federal travel advisories that, as of Friday, warned against going to China.

"We want to take all of the precautions we can so, in the worst-case scenario, we keep our community healthy," said Robin Kaler, associate chancellor for public affairs at the University of Illinois, 135 miles (217 km) south of Chicago, where the first human-to-human transmission of the disease in the United States was confirmed last week.

More than 350,000 Chinese students are pursuing higher education in the United States and 10,000 American students are enrolled in academic programs in China. The sheer number of the students, many of whom have traveled to their home country in recent weeks, makes schools a potential incubator for a widespread outbreak in the United States, given the close proximity of dormitory life.

"Colleges and universities are very much on the front line of those because of our role as global institutions," Sarah Van Orman, chief health officer at the University of Southern California (USC) said. "The challenge is making sure that we are being prudent without overstating the risk." In dealing with the new

outbreak, officials at US colleges and universities can draw from their experiences with previous public health scares, including the 2003 outbreak of the SARS coronavirus.

A 'delicate balance'

At University of Illinois, with some 5,800 Chinese students, Kaler sees a challenge in keeping the campus free of the new coronavirus without infringing on rights or fanning xenophobia. There is a need to strike a "delicate balance" between public safety and personal freedom when dealing with a growing public health issue, Kaler said.

Even so, officials would prefer to err on the side of caution. "If they want to come and fuss at us later, we would rather have them be alive to be able to come fuss at us than not," she said. USC, where 6,600 students from China attend college, has taken similar steps in banning students from traveling to China and strongly advising against faculty making the trip.

Officials at the school have encouraged concerned students from Wuhan, the outbreak's epicenter in central China, to talk with school counselors about their concerns for loved ones back home, while trying not to stigmatize Chinese students on campus.

While the new coronavirus has spread to more than 20 countries, all of the nearly 260 deaths as of Saturday have occurred in China, with the vast majority of the thousands of cases recorded in and around Wuhan, capital of Hubei province.

"There's an unfortunate history about many communicable diseases that have started in one population," said Van Orman, whose school has a total student

population of 48,800. "It leads to harm for those individuals and does nothing to stop the spread of the illness." New York University (NYU), where more than 7,000 Chinese students go to college, has pushed back the start of its spring semester at NYU Shanghai by two weeks to Feb. 17. The 60,000-student school has also made available online course work and alternative programs abroad to students affected by the postponement and travel restrictions.

The university's health center staff "are being particularly vigilant about getting travel and contact histories as they evaluate students who present with respiratory ailments and complaints," said NYU spokesman John Beckman. University of Illinois officials contacted each of its 150 students from Wuhan and asked them to take the necessary precautions and, if they were feeling ill, to immediately seek medical attention. Many students who went home to Wuhan recently responded to the school and said they were self-quarantining. The dean of students is helping those students work with their professors in order for them to continue their studies while at home.

"The students obviously are very concerned themselves," Kaler said. "We have found our students very responsible and receptive when we have asked them to take precautions." The sight of many Asian students wearing masks as a preventative measure when they are on campus may lead to stereotyping and discrimination, according to Kaler.

"We try to be sensitive to that sort of thing because we don't ever want any of our students to feel singled out or unwelcome simply because of where they come from," she said. — Reuters

Flu, HIV drugs appear to help fight coronavirus

BANGKOK: Thai doctors have seen success in treating severe cases of the new coronavirus with combination of medications for flu and HIV, with initial results showing vast improvement 48 hours after applying the treatment, they said yesterday.

The doctors from Rajavithi Hospital in Bangkok said a new approach in coronavirus treatment had improved the condition of several patients under their care, including one 70-year-old Chinese woman from Wuhan who tested positive for the coronavirus for 10 days. The drug treatment includes a mixture of anti-HIV drugs lopinavir and ritonavir, in combination with flu drug oseltamivir in large doses.

"This is not the cure, but the patient's condition has vastly improved. From testing positive for 10 days under our care, after applying this combination of medicine the test result became negative within 48 hours," Dr Kriangska Atipornwanich, a lung specialist at Rajavithi, told reporters. "The outlook is good but we still have to do more study to determine that this can be a standard treatment."

Chinese health officials have already been administering the HIV and flu drugs to fight the coronavirus. The use of the three together in a cocktail seemed to improve the treatment, the Thai doctors said. Another doctor said that a similar approach in two other patients resulted in one displaying some allergic reaction but the other showed improvement. — Reuters

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American Board Certified in General Surgery
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation
Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- ◆ Day case surgeries
- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant

http://www.international-clinic.com
Tel: 1886677

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single-Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery

◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

مسشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele:1802 555

daralshifa
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368
Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

- ◆ Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- ◆ (IFSO) member .
- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
- ◆ Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

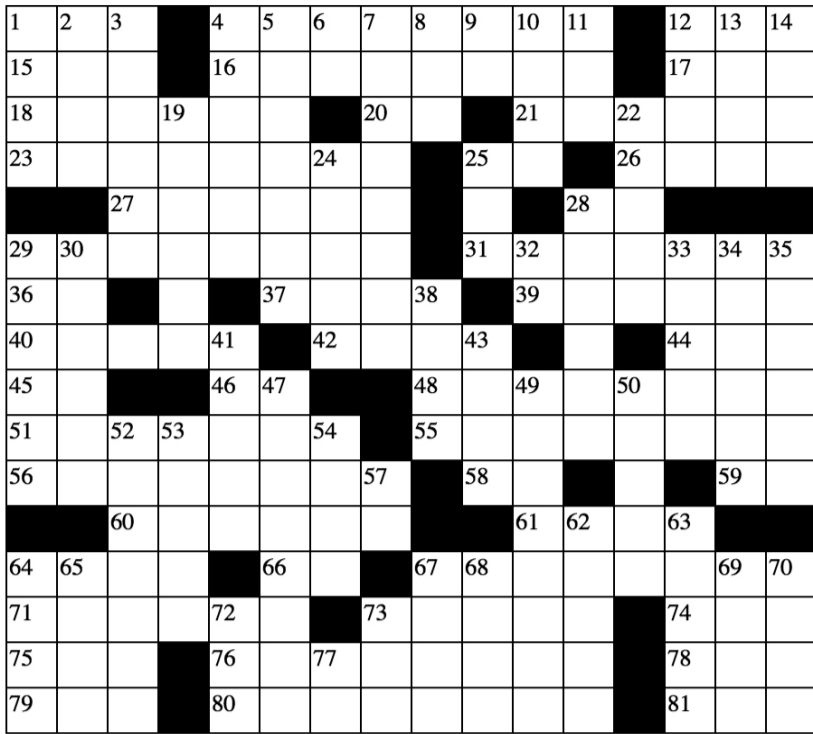
Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ Bariatric surgeries.
- ◆ Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com
Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228
Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

Stars

CROSSWORD 2426



ACROSS

- 1. 3 to 30 gigahertz.
- 4. An official residence provided by a church for its parson or vicar or rector.
- 12. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- 15. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
- 16. Covered with or as if with a glossy and usually brightly colored coating.
- 17. A long projecting or anterior elongation of an animal's head.
- 18. A unit of potential equal to one-hundred-millionth of a volt.
- 20. A soft silvery metallic element.
- 21. Accumulate on the surface.
- 23. United States theoretical physicist (born in 1933).
- 26. Stable gear consisting of either of two curved supports that are attached to the collar of a draft horse and that hold the traces.
- 27. Having the surface burned quickly with intense heat.
- 29. A country on the island of Dominica.
- 31. Acquire by preemption.
- 36. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- 37. A master's degree in library science.
- 39. Be fully aware or cognizant of.
- 40. Of a pale purple color.
- 42. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- 44. Rate of revolution of a motor.
- 45. The local time at the 0 meridian passing through Greenwich, England.
- 46. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- 48. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- 51. The police sergeant on duty in a police station.
- 55. A blunt needle for threading ribbon through loops.
- 56. Having an illustrious reputation.
- 58. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- 59. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
- 60. On a ship, train, plane or other vehicle.
- 61. A female domestic.
- 64. Largest known toad species.
- 66. A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- 71. In the Arabian Nights a hero who tells of the fantastic adventures he had in his voyages.
- 74. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- 75. A United Nations agency that invest directly in companies and guarantees loans to private investors.
- 76. Semisoft pale-yellow cheese.
- 78. A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
- 79. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series.
- 80. Fortification consisting of a strong fence made of stakes driven into the ground.
- 81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- 1. Greatly shredded cabbage.
- 2. (Greek mythology) The goddess of youth and spring.
- 3. Anemia resulting from eating fava beans.
- 4. Periwinkle plant derivative used as an antineoplastic drug (trade name Velban) that disrupts cell division.
- 5. Serving during an intermediate interval of time.
- 6. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- 7. An almond-shaped neural structure in the anterior part of the temporal lobe of the cerebrum.
- 8. (informal) 'johnny' was applied as a nickname for Confederate soldiers by the Federal soldiers in the American Civil War.
- 9. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- 10. Wild or seedling sweet cherry used as stock for grafting.
- 11. A doctor's degree in education.
- 12. Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
- 13. Anything that provides inspiration for later work.
- 14. A French abbot.
- 19. A member of the Iroquoian people formerly living east of Lake Ontario.
- 22. The visual property of something that shines with reflected light.
- 24. A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
- 25. An abnormally large amount of this fetoprotein in the fetus can signal an abnormality of the neural tube (as spina bifida or anencephaly).
- 28. Popular music originating in the West Indies.
- 30. Small genus of Australian shrubs or trees.
- 32. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- 33. A variety of leaf bug.
- 34. A genus of Stromateidae.
- 35. A river of central Italy.
- 38. Singing jazz.
- 41. Engraving or carving in low relief on a stone (as in a brooch or ring).
- 43. United States tennis player who was the first Black to win United States and English singles championships (1943-1993).
- 47. Small toothless ant eater with prehensile tail and four-clawed forelimbs.
- 49. Crushed or broken by being stepped upon heavily.
- 50. Of or relating to a speaker of the Tamil language or the language itself.
- 52. Firm and dependable especially in loyalty.
- 53. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- 54. A student who studies excessively.
- 57. A doctor's degree in religion.
- 62. Lighted up by or as by fire or flame.
- 63. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
- 65. Something acquired without compensation.
- 67. A fricative sound (especially as an expression of disapproval).
- 68. A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
- 69. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- 70. God of love and erotic desire.
- 72. The basic unit of electric current adopted under the System International d'Unites.
- 73. Black tropical American cuckoo.
- 77. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Are you worried about the psychological and emotional state of a friend, Aries? Don't get yourself too worked up over it. Your friend is probably more troubled about money than anything else. If this is your love partner, you should be especially careful not to push for confidences, as this could be a turn-off. Your beloved will talk to you when the time is right. In the meantime, be patient and a good listener.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your current love interest could be experiencing some family problems, Taurus. Therefore, don't expect too much scintillating conversation this evening. Your partner may seem preoccupied and not be in the best of moods. Rest assured that this has nothing to do with you. Don't let your insecurities get the best of you. Don't demand an explanation. Be there, even if it means being silent, and let your partner think things out. This is tactful and will certainly be appreciated.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Is someone you know having a birthday, Gemini? If so, beware of all the great food that will undoubtedly be brought to the party! If you're trying to improve your level of health and fitness, you'll be sorely tempted to depart from the program. Be as firm as you can, but remember that we all need a little indulgence occasionally. Chocolate cake and ice cream might not be on your diet, but think of them as emotional health food. Enjoy a little bit!



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Are you into abstract art forms, Cancer? Today you could find yourself irresistibly drawn to them, whether blank verse, abstract painting, or New Age music. If you're into the arts yourself, you might want to try your hand at whatever discipline appeals to you the most. If you aren't, attend a concert, stroll through an art gallery, or go to a poetry reading. Whatever you do, enjoy your day!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Have you been toying with the idea of redecorating your house, Leo? If so, you might actually come up with a few solid ideas, although you'll have a difficult time deciding among them. Sometimes making a list can help you work out the details of each and discern which is the most workable at this time. Look at home decorating magazines and furniture catalogs. Write down what appeals to you. You'll decide something. What fun!



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Emotions run high today as a love partner calls on you to discuss some troubles, Virgo. These don't directly concern you, but you'd still like to see them straightened out, as you tend to feel helpless when someone you care for is upset. At times like this, it's really best to listen rather than try to give advice. Your partner probably just needs to talk it out. Be patient and all will be well.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

A close friend or your love partner may present you with a gift, Libra. You'll be touched but you'll also feel uncomfortable. Maybe the present is costly or not something you really like. You might also feel that your friend is too eager. What you do in this situation is, of course, up to you. Tip: don't refuse the gift unless you genuinely feel it's totally inappropriate. And definitely don't give it back because that's what your mother would do!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Love matters may seem to be far worse than they really are, Scorpio. Emotion runs high as your current love interest seems preoccupied and uncommunicative; however, it wouldn't be a good idea to let your insecurities get the best of you and lash out. Your partner's heart is with you, though the mind is another matter. Family or career problems are getting in the way of your enjoyment of each other. Bite your tongue, be patient, and hang in there.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Is your imagination brimming over with ideas for new projects, Sagittarius? Are you drawing upon old memories for inspiration? Your past can be a very fruitful resource; however, today you may find that some of these recollections make you feel more emotional than you should. Let them all go. This is a necessary release. Channeling your feelings into creative work could prove cathartic. By the end of the day you should feel great. Go with the flow.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Are you suddenly falling for an old friend, Capricorn? This may have you confused and a little frightened since you've never viewed this person in this way before. However, this person probably does reciprocate the attraction, so don't completely write it off. Consider this: could this person be a strong part of your future? How well do you know each other? Do you respect this person the way you should? If the answers to these questions are positive, give it a try!



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Are you in love, Aquarius? You might find that thoughts of your beloved haunt you today, even while you're apart. Desire and passion could be practically obsessive, and they'll interfere with your other projects if you aren't careful. Try to stay focused on the tasks at hand and make a date to get together with your partner later. After all, you want to keep all departments of your life in their proper perspective!



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

A picture of an art object from a different culture could arouse some strange feelings in you, Pisces. You won't know why, but it will spark a new interest in that culture. This probably relates to events deep in your past that you don't remember. Go ahead and explore this new interest. It will be intriguing and at the same time could help you release old traumas or phobias. Enjoy!

Wordsearch Puzzle

Moods & Emotions 1

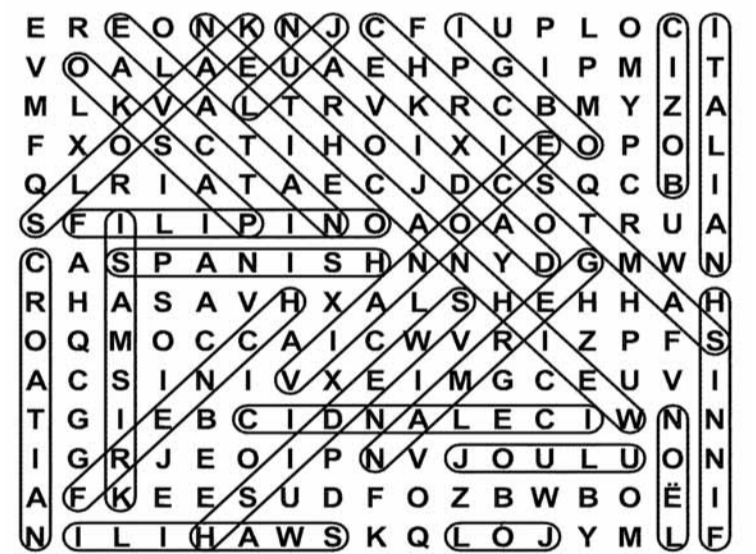
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 12 letters spell an additional word.

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

- AFRAID
- ELATION
- JADED
- PEACEFUL
- AGITATED
- FURIOUS
- JOVIAL
- PLEASED
- ANGUISH
- GENIAL
- LONGELY
- REMORSE
- BLUE
- GLOOMY
- LOVE
- SOMBER
- BORED
- GROUCHY
- MELLOW
- CHEERY
- HELPLESS
- MERRY
- SYMPATHY
- DARK
- HOPEFUL
- MISERY
- UNEASY
- DOWN
- HUMILIATED
- OFFENDED
- UPBEAT
- DREAD
- HURT
- ORNERY
- WEARY
- EDGY
- IRKED
- PANTIC

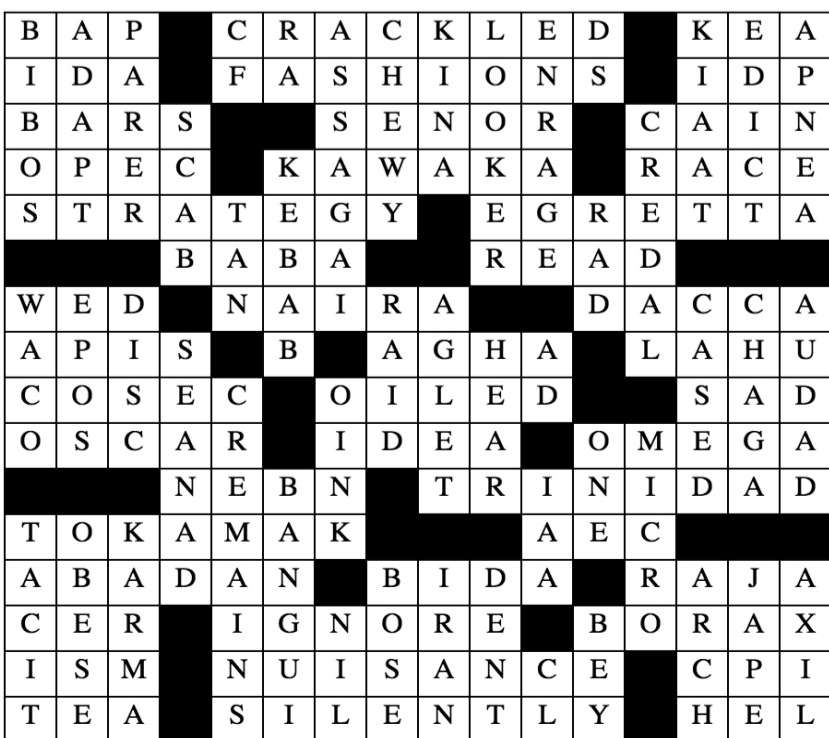
Yesterday's Solution

Christmas Around the World 1 - Solution

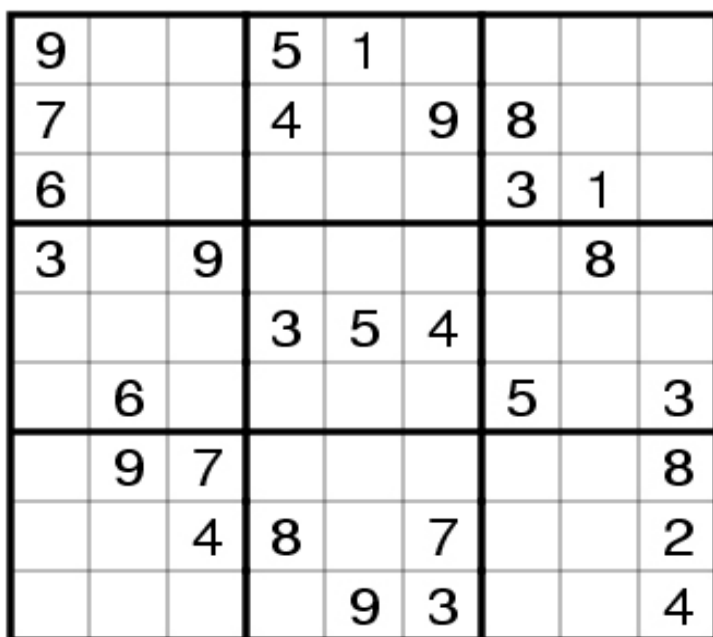


- CROATIAN
- GERMAN
- SLOVAK
- Božić
- WEIHNACHTEN
- VIANOCE
- FILIPINO
- ICELANDIC
- SPANISH
- PASKO
- JÖL
- NAVIDAD
- FINNISH
- IGBO
- SWAHILI
- JOULU
- CHRISTMAS
- KRISMASI
- FRENCH
- ITALIAN
- SWEDISH
- NOËL
- NATALE
- JUL

Yesterday's Solution

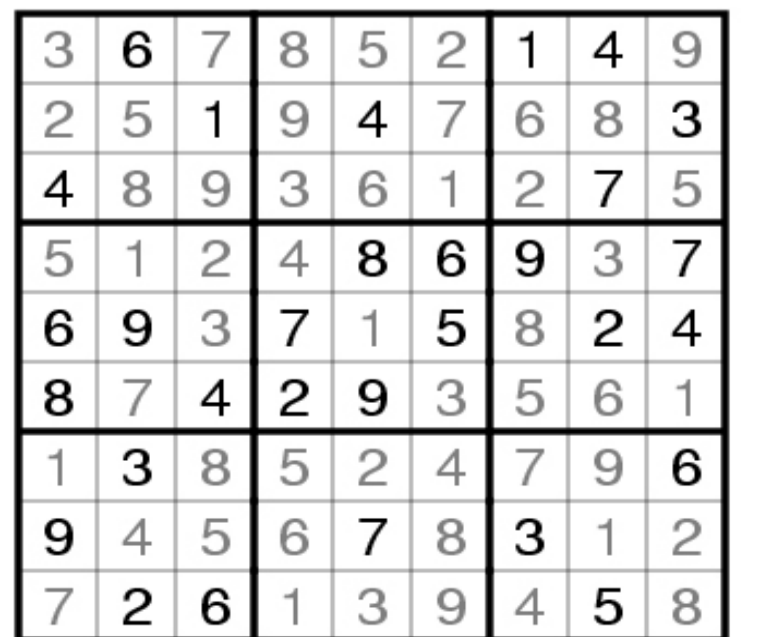


Daily SuDoku



medium

Yesterday's Solution



hard

Lifestyle

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2020



This handout photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau shows Tibetan monks visiting the Florida Keys from the Drepung Gomang Monastery in southern India, watching a loggerhead sea turtle named "Drifter" head to the Atlantic Ocean in Islamorada, Florida, January 30, 2020. The 170-pound female was rescued in November 2019 and rehabilitated at the Keys-based Turtle Hospital. — AFP

Muppets help conflict kids in new Arabic 'Sesame Street'

A band of Muppets, both old favorites and new friends, will star in an Arabic retooling of "Sesame Street" with a regional twist. In its Western iterations, the long-running franchise addresses issues including family breakdown. The new Middle East version instead seeks to help children, especially young Syrian refugees, cope with emotions. New characters will join Cookie Monster (Kaa'ki), Grover (Gargur), Elmo and others in the new show in Arabic, called "Ahlan Simsim!" (Welcome Sesame). "We always play and sing and try new things and have many adventures," new puppet Basma, a five-year-old purple girl with a twin twist hairstyle, told AFP on a publicity tour in Dubai.

"We have a lot of friends in the neighborhood, but Jad is my best friend," she added of her new co-star, a yellow boy with a tuft of canary-coloured hair. Basma, Jad and their gluttonous goat friend Ma'zooza, will take to the airwaves six days a week on Middle East satellite channel MBC 3 from Sunday February 2. The show is a partnership between the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Sesame Workshop, which is responsible for the program worldwide. The aim is to offer "nurturing care to children and caregivers affected by the Syrian conflict", according to a statement. Since erupting in 2011, the war has displaced over 5.1 million Syrian children, with 2.5 million of them now living in regional host countries including Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan.

'Emotional ABCs'

"Jad and I are not that similar. He is an artist and a painter. I love to sing and dance and he likes things in order. He thinks and plans while I get bored," said Basma. "Sesame Street" mainstay Grover, meanwhile, sets out to interview children from across the Arab world, tackling myriad issues including jealousy and how to care for loved ones. "We are all different from each other," Grover told AFP. "Some of us like to sing and some of us like to dance and some like to exercise," added the gangly blue character, beloved of children and grownups since his 1970 "Sesame Street" debut. "But I discovered we are all alike because we love each other."

The new show is produced in Jordan and is the result of a two-year-long collaboration with numerous child development specialists. "We have the emotional 'ABCs' and at the same time we present coping mechanisms to deal with these emotions. In every episode, we have a coping mechanism," said executive producer Khaled Haddad. He said Arab children had difficulty expressing their emotions. "They don't know what their emotion is, the child does not know he is terrified or angry or even jealous. Through our episodes we talk about these emotions and how to deal with them," he added.

'Inhale and exhale'

In one episode, Basma and Jad learn from big brother figure Hadi how to



Hadi, the name of the character portrayed by a Jordanian actor Rami Delshad, poses for a picture with Grover (Gargur in Arabic) (left), Ma'zooza (center) and Basma (right) from the Sesame Street television series, in Dubai. — AFP

handle fear. "You put your hand on your tummy then you take a breath through your nose-inhale and exhale. It calms you down," Basma said, demonstrating the technique. Jad's character, who didn't join the trip to Dubai, is portrayed as new to the community. But "we don't label him as a refugee in the show", Haddad stressed. "He is new to the neighborhood, meets all the kids and becomes friends with them."

He noted that across the region, "you have kids going from one place to another". "Our show speaks to all the children of the Arab world", he added. "This is not for a certain group". The first Arabic version of "Sesame Street", known as "Iftah ya Simsim" (Open Sesame), aired in the region from 1979 until 1990 and enjoyed immense popularity. Filming for a second season of the new series will begin in March. "We hope children will become smarter, kinder and better at expressing their emotions after watching this show," Haddad said. — AFP

Elon Musk drops surprise techno track

He is known as billionaire tech investor, inventor and space entrepreneur, and now Elon Musk is showing off another talent-for-dance music. The founder of carmaker Tesla and the private space firm SpaceX announced on Twitter he had released an electronic dance track, changing his social media handle to EDM. "Just wrote a song called 'Don't doubt yer vibe,'" he tweeted late Thursday, along with pictures of himself in what appears to be an improvised music studio. "I wrote the lyrics & performed the vocals!!"

Musk said the track was being released on "Emo G Records" which posted the four-minute song featuring pulsating electronic sounds overlaid with his vocals on its website. The lyrics say: "Don't doubt your vibe/because it's true/don't doubt your vibe/because it's you." He offered no clues about the inspiration behind the song or what his next step in music would be. Musk is best known as the chief executive of Tesla, whose market value recently topped \$100 billion, triggering a payout plan that gives him shares worth \$346 million. If the value keeps rising, he could get as much as \$50 billion under the compensation plan. — AFP



Elon Musk



Red, white and blue lights illuminate 10 Downing Street, the official residence of Britain's Prime Minister, in central London on January 31, 2020, after Britain left the European Union. — AFP

Bitter sweet symphony: EU anthem tops UK download chart

As Britain starts life outside the European Union, pro-EU diehards could at least claim a tiny consolation victory on Friday in the weekly pop charts. Having fought a titanic political contest for three years over Brexit, Britain's "Leavers" and "Remainers" did battle in the singles charts, trying to get rival songs to number one. While both sides fell well short, Remainers managed to get the EU's anthem "Ode to Joy" to number 30 — and

it was the most downloaded track of the week.

The piece from German composer Ludwig van Beethoven's "Symphony No. 9" was performed by the Johann Strauss Orchestra, led by Dutch conductor Andre Rieu. That trumped comedian Dominic Frisby's profane rival tune "17 Million F***-Offs" backed by Brexiters, which made it to number 43, the UK Official Charts Company said. The novelty pro-Brexit song takes aim at the Brussels and London establishments as well as pro-EU celebrities.

Overall, Scottish singer-songwriter Lewis Capaldi topped the charts with "Before You Go". Britain opted to leave the EU by a margin of 17.4 million to 16.1 million votes in the seismic 2016 referendum. After years of bitter wrangling and mud-slinging between Leavers and Remainers, the UK's departure from the European Union was set for 2300 GMT on Friday. — AFP

Lifestyle | Gossip

La Roux believes in ghosts

La Roux believes in ghosts. The 31-year-old singer - who is bringing out her long-awaited third album 'Supervision' in February - is adamant she can feel the presence of paranormal activity because she is open to the supernatural world. When asked if she believes in the supernatural, La Roux told Stylist magazine: "Yeah, of course. There's a whole other fabric to life. You can feel it if you're open to it. "The power of positivity is incredible. It can feel supernatural, especially when things come true. Manifestation is a bit of woo-woo word but I believe in it." Although the 'Bulletproof' hit-maker takes a positive outlook on the afterlife, she is slightly worried about what will happen to her after she dies. She added: "I'm scared that I won't see people I love again." And one way she would hate to pass away is by being involved in a plane crash, and she tries not to think or speak about her fear in case it manifests itself. When asked about her greatest fear, she replied: "Dying in a plane crash. I shouldn't even say that, I feel like I'm giving it energy." To make the most of her time on earth, La Roux - whose real name is Elly Jackson - is taking the steps to get to know herself inside and out after five years out of the limelight. When asked what she wants to know before she dies, she said: "To really know and understand yourself before you die is a real privilege." However, the Grammy award winner claims she isn't a fatalist as she doesn't like to think of the future. She added: "That's a dodgy way to think. Trying to predict the future or thinking of the future as already predicted is a bit unwise."



Redknapp promises Eternal songs on tour

Louise Redknapp has promised fans her 'Heavy Love Tour' will include plenty of Eternal songs. The 45-year-old singer is heading out on the road in support of her new album - her first studio LP for almost 20 years - and although her set will include fresh tracks like 'Stretch', 'Hurt' and 'Lead Me On' and her older solo hits she insists there will be a home for the tracks she recorded with her former band such as 'Stay', 'Crazy' and 'Save Our Love'. Although Louise is staying tight-lipped on what Eternal songs will make the final set list she has come up with the idea to include some "mash-ups" in her concerts. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz at The Gatsby Gala in London, she said: "There is a lot back catalogue material to try and squeeze in so I have to find ways to get them all in. I can't get leave a few of those Eternal songs out, I think it's really important that they are in there, but also some of my bigger hits and the tracks from the new album have to go in. There's going to be a few mash-ups, it's really exciting." Before re-launching her pop career, Louise competed on the fourteenth series of BBC ballroom show 'Strictly Come Dancing' in 2016, getting to the final with her professional partner Kevin Clifton. Although the 'Naked' hitmaker mastered her moves and got to the final of the competition she insists there will be no Latin or ballroom influences in the choreography of her dance routines for her tour. When asked if fans could expect some 'Strictly' steps in her shows, Louise answered: "Absolutely not! No cha cha cha or fox trot in my concerts at all." Louise - who was previously married to England and Liverpool soccer player Jamie Redknapp, with whom she has two sons, Charley, 15, and 11-year-old Beau - also hopes to play some festival dates this summer but she can't commit to many because she will be returning to her role as Violet in the stage show '9 to 5: The Musical', which is based on the movie of the same name that starred Dolly Parton. She said: "At the moment I'm not doing that many festivals, that's because after my own tour I'm then going back into '9 to 5: The Musical', so I'm kind of busy, but we'll see, maybe a couple." The Gatsby Gala was organized by Professor Tiong Ghee 'TG' Teoh to raise money for premature birth research at Imperial College London. Louise kicks off her 'Heavy Love Tour' of the UK on March 12 in Southampton and it will finish on March 26 at London's O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire.



Kiwanuka planned to be a guitar teacher

Michael Kiwanuka planned to teach guitar in schools because he didn't think he'd ever land a record deal. The 32-year-old British singer/songwriter always doubted whether he would fulfill his dream of being a recording artist and so he made alternative plans to make a living from his musical talent by instructing youngsters how to play the guitar. Speaking on BBC Radio 2, Michael explained: "I was getting to grips with playing in bands, so I thought maybe I could play guitar for singers and then I could teach guitar in schools or in the evenings. "That was my thing, but deep down I knew ... I wanted to do my own music but it was never going to happen." From his teenage years Michael knew that he wanted to make it a professional musician but he had no idea how he would ultimately fulfill his ambition. He said: "My ambition was to become a musician in whatever way possible. I knew from 13 years old that music is what I wanted to do, but I didn't know how that could happen. "When you say to people you want to be a musician it's like, 'Oh, it's very hard,' and it is." The 'Rolling' singer released his third LP 'Kiwanuka' at the end of 2019 and he has been nominated for two BRIT Awards, Male Solo Artist and Album of the Year. Despite his plaudits, Michael likes the fact he has not achieve mass notoriety and aims to stay out of the limelight. Michael explained: "It's a dream [to go unnoticed]. There was no master plan, it just happened. "I find that if you just make your music and not worry about much else, you can go under the radar and have some amazing experiences, but at the same time you can chill out at the pub and no one bats an eyelid."

Morrissey releases new single 'Love Is On The Way Out'

Morrissey has released a new single 'Love Is On The Way Out'. The former Smiths singer - who will be dropping his 13th solo album 'I Am Not A Dog On A Chain' on March 20 - has unveiled the second track from the upcoming collection. The songs were recorded in Saint-Remy-de-Provence in France, and Morrissey has described them as: "The very best of me ... too good to be true ... too true to be good." The new single comes after the 60-year-old musician recently announced he will be playing two UK shows to promote the LP. On March 6 he will be performing at Leeds First Direct Arena, and he'll take to the stage at the SSE Arena, Wembley in London on March 14. The European run will also see him playing at the Palladium Cologne on March 9, and the Salle Pleyel in Paris on March 11. And the Mancunian has also released single 'Bobby,



Don't You Think They Know' from the upcoming follow-up to 2019's 'California Son'. Morrissey recruited Grammy-winning Motown star Thelma Houston for the epic duet, who said: "I think the blend of what Morrissey is singing and what I'm singing really works on 'Bobby'. "And it was a lot of fun working with M in the studio too!" The 'Mute Witness' singer's long-time producer, Joe Chiccarelli, teased that the upcoming LP is "the boldest and most adventurous" record ever recorded by Morrissey. He added: "I have now produced four studio albums for Morrissey. This is his boldest and most adventurous album yet."

GANG OF FOUR STAR ANDY GILL DIES AT 64



Gang of Four star Andy Gill has died aged 64. The guitarist - who co-founded the band in 1976 - passed away following a short respiratory illness, with the news being announced via a statement posted on the group's official Twitter account. The statement read: "This is so hard for us to write, but our great friend and Supreme Leader has died today. "Andy's final tour in November was the only way he was ever really going to bow out; with a Stratocaster around his neck, screaming with feedback and deafening the front row. (sic)" The statement - which is signed by bandmates John Sterry, Thomas McNeice and Tobias Humble - describes Gill as "one of the best to ever do it". They said: "His uncompromising artistic vision

and commitment to the cause meant that he was still listening to mixes for the upcoming record, whilst planning the next tour from his hospital bed. "But to us, he was our friend - and we'll remember him for his kindness and generosity, his fearsome intelligence, bad jokes, mad stories and endless cups of Darjeeling tea. He just so happened to be a bit of a genius too. "One of the best to ever do it, his influence on guitar music and the creative process was inspiring for us, as well as everyone who worked alongside him and listened to his music. And his albums and production work speak for themselves. Go give 'em a spin for him..." "Love you mate (sic)".



Healy reassures fans about his health

Matty Healy has taken to social media to reassure fans about his health. The 1975 star was recently hospitalized, prompting the popular band to cancel a live performance in Brisbane, Australia - but Matt has now taken to Twitter in a bid to calm the fears of his fans. He wrote on the micro-blogging platform: "Guys thank you for all your lovely wishes :) I am alive and well just got way too vibey I'm still taking it easy but I'll see you tonight for maybe quite a calm set which could be nice anyway!! (sic)" The band originally revealed news of Matt's health issues in a statement issued via their official Twitter account. They said: "We hope to be back on track for tomorrow's show in Sydney. Thanks in advance for everyone's understanding and apologies for the lateness of this announcement. We are all devastated to

miss tonight's show but have to put Matty's welfare first X (sic)" Meanwhile, Matt has recently become involved in a feud with pop star Ellie Goulding. The row was ignited when Matt seemingly criticized her music in a recent interview. He said: "The artists whose single streams are in the billions, people don't buy their albums, necessarily ... Ellie Goulding, people will listen to her music at the gym and they will listen to it on playlists." However, Ellie wasted little time in hitting back at the star, defending her own career achievements. She wrote on Twitter: "I've had 3 multi-platinum albums so I feel like people have been fairly invested but ok I'll let you have it. (sic)" —BangShowbiz

KESHA has no limits on High Road

Kesha says "nothing is off-limits" on her new album. The 32-year-old singer released 'High Road' on Friday and she admitted the liberating record sees her with the shackles off with "no boundaries" for her music. Speaking to The Sun newspaper, she said: "I am really excited because the record sums up all sides of my personality and nothing is off-limits. I am bare and there are no boundaries. "I'm not being stuck mentally, or by anyone else, in a box. I am happy with all the different ways that I have used my voice. "In the past, I've been so super critical of my voice because I just want it to be so good. I've started being kinder to myself." The new collection is a contrast to her 2017 effort 'Rainbow', which was written in the wake of her failed lengthy legal battle to get out of her recording contract with producer Dr. Luke. However, the fresh material comes as Kesha is feeling more "life assured" - although she initially second guessed herself when it came to singing "about being happy". She explained: "After everything I have been through and am still going through, I didn't know whether I deserved to be happy or if I did feel happy, I didn't know if I should sing about it." Her brother Lagan helped convince her to return to her fun pop roots - and she quickly realized "he was right". She added: "He told me, 'You love pop music, you are good at making pop music, why don't you write a pop song?'. "Then I came in the studio and I knew that he was right - that I was depriving myself from making fun poppy songs."



Lifestyle | Gossip

Radcliffe's named wig in Escape from Pretoria after Cooper

Daniel Radcliffe named the wig he wears in 'Escape from Pretoria' after Jackson Maine from 'A Star Is Born'. The former 'Harry Potter' star plays South African political prisoner Tim Jenkin in the film, which tells the story of how an anti-apartheid activist escaped from a Pretoria Prison in 1979. The role required Daniel to wear a hairpiece, which he named after Bradley Cooper's character Jackson from the 2018 movie. Daniel told Empire magazine: "Initially, I wasn't against the wig. But even if I grew my hair out it wouldn't grow like a dude's in the 70s. So we tried one out and I was like, 'Is it me, or does this fit really well?' "We named it Jackson after Bradley Cooper's character in A Star Is Born." The 30-year-old actor also opened up about meeting the real-life Tim Berkin, who has a non-speaking role in the movie. He explained: "Tim is a really fascinating guy. I was very intimidated by him because I really wanted to do his life justice. "He's actually in the film - he came on set for a few days, and we were filming in a real prison, and they put him in prison clothes again. I was like, 'I guess this is nice?' But he was totally up for it." Daniel admitted that he had trouble perfecting Tim's South African accent, which was made even more difficult as the project - which also stars Daniel Webber and Ian Hart - was being made in Australia.



Skarsgard would play Pennywise again

Bill Skarsgard admits that he would love to play Pennywise again. The 29-year-old actor portrayed the dancing clown in both 2017's 'It' and the sequel 'It Chapter Two' in 2019, and admits he is tempted to play the character for a third time, despite the franchise only being meant to have two cinematic outings. When asked if he'd slip into the clown costume again, Bill told SFX magazine: "Yeah, for sure. We've been talking about it ever since we started doing the first one. They're like 'Is there a potential third one? What would that be?' " Bill suggests that there are plenty of ideas left in the franchise - which is based on Stephen King's 1986 horror novel - although he insists that a new project should be isolated from the previous films. He said: "If we do a sequel, it would be something really different, which could be cool. We have some ideas we've been talking about - like going back to the 19th century or something ... "Where did It get inspired to take on this form of Pennywise? Was there a Bob Gray? Was there a person before? It's these things that are slightly hinted (at) in the second movie." Bill adds: "But I wouldn't want to do the same type of thing again. I think if we were to do something, we'd switch up the character a little bit, and kind of surprise people." The 'Deadpool 2' star also considers 'It Chapter Two' to be the "end of a chapter". He said: "This is, from what we know at least, the end of a chapter in terms of me and Andy (Muschietti, the director), who have been working on these past two movies for the last couple of years. This is the end. It's saying goodbye to a character." The first installment of 'It' became the highest-grossing horror film of all time, and Bill admits that the success may lead to more movies. He joked: "If you have a success, they're going to milk 14 out of them!"



Elizabeth Winstead wants a Scott Pilgrim vs. the World sequel

Mary Elizabeth Winstead thinks a 'Scott Pilgrim vs. the World' sequel could be "really interesting". The 35-year-old actress starred in the 2010 movie alongside the likes of Michael Cera, Anna Kendrick and Chris Evans, and Mary has now expressed interest in appearing in a follow-up film. Asked about the possibility of a sequel, Mary told ComicBook: "You know what, I think that would be so cool. "I would be so curious to know what happened to these characters when they're in their mid 30s as opposed to the sort of 20 slacker thing. "So I think it would be really interesting. We always talked about a sequel when we were doing it, but we always imagined it would be like, still like a year later." Mary also confirmed she'd be keen to reprise her role from the original film if the opportunity arises. She added: "I think it's way more fascinating to know where they'd be 10 years later. I'm down for it." The original movie was directed by Edgar Wright, who subsequently described the film's central character as "an unconventional hero and an unconventional romantic lead". He said: "The thing about Scott Pilgrim is, I think, not so much that he's awesome, but it's more that he thinks he's awesome. "He has an inflated opinion of himself at the start of the film, which quickly gets pricked. It's really about him being an unconventional hero and an unconventional romantic lead."



Blum wasn't a horror fanatic

Jason Blum was never a fan of horror movies, despite making his name in the genre. The 50-year-old producer has served on a number of horror films, such as 'Hush' and 'Happy Death Day', as well as being the founder of Blumhouse Productions, which has produced successful franchises in the form of 'Paranormal Activity' and 'Insidious'. But the filmmaker admits that he was never into the horror genre. In an interview with Total Film magazine, Jason said: "I really love all kinds of movies, but I wasn't a horror fanatic at all." Jason also admits that Hollywood has misconceptions when it comes to horror directors. He said: "I think Hollywood thinking is you have to have made a good horror movie to make another horror movie, but I'd much rather have someone who's made a great drama direct a horror movie than have somebody who's made an OK horror movie direct another horror movie. "I've always thought sort of thought that the scares are the easy part. The tricky thing about making a horror movie is getting the drama and the story to work, so that the audience believes what's happening in between the scares." Jason suggests that Blumhouse prefers to judge a filmmaker on their "body of work" rather than just their most recent film, using 2015's 'The Visit', helmed by M. Night Shyamalan, as an example.

Gunn plans to 'wrap up' Guardians of the Galaxy stories

James Gunn plans to "wrap up" the stories started in 2014's 'Guardians of the Galaxy' with the next installment of the franchise. The 53-year-old filmmaker is poised to helm the much-anticipated 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3', and James has teased what fans can expect from the movie in a new Instagram post. Responding to fan questions on the photo-sharing platform, James - who directed the original 'Guardians of the Galaxy' and 'Guardians of the Galaxy 2' - shared: "If everything goes to plan it will wrap up the stories I started in Guardians 1. (sic)" There had previously been doubts as to whether the third 'Guardians' film would even be made, after Disney fired James following the emergence of a series of offensive tweets. The company subsequently rehired the filmmaker, who took "full responsibility" for the controversy. The director previously said: "I feel bad for that and take full responsibility. "Disney totally had the right to fire me. This wasn't a free speech issue. I said something they didn't like and they completely had the right to fire me. There was never any argument of that. That first day ... I'm going to say it was the most intense of my entire life. "There have been other difficult days in my life, from the time I got sober when I was younger, to the death of friends who committed suicide. "But this was incredibly intense. It happened, and suddenly it seemed like everything was gone."



Netflix extends Adam Sandler deal

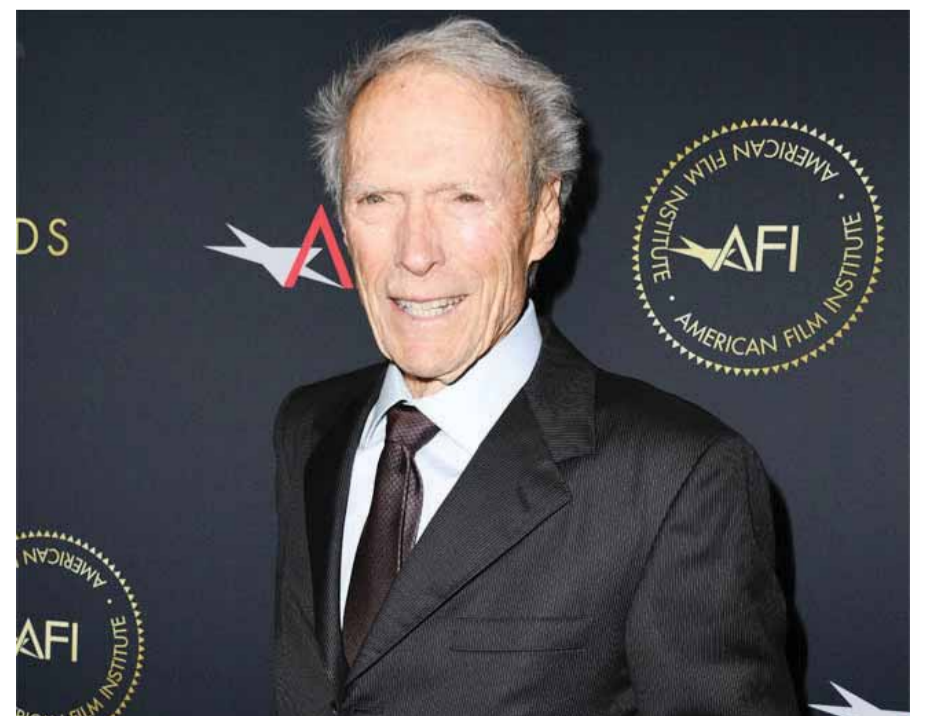
Netflix has extended its deal with Adam Sandler for four more films. This is the third time the streaming giant has extended its partnership with 'Uncut Gems' star Sandler and his Happy Madison Productions, which was first signed in 2014. Netflix chief Ted Sarandos said: "Whether you know him as Sandman, the Water Boy, Billy Madison, Happy Gilmore, Nick Spitz or simply Adam, one thing is clear: our members can't get enough of him. They love his stories and his humor, as we saw with Murder Mystery. So I could not be more excited to extend our partnership with Adam and the Happy Madison team and deliver more

laughs around the world." It was also revealed that Adam, 53, will write, produce and voice star in an animated feature for Netflix, as part of his previous deal. No other details on the animated project or his four new films have been revealed. His next project for Netflix will be 'Hubie Halloween', which also stars Kevin James, Julie Bowen, Ray Liotta, Maya Rudolph, Rob Schneider and Shaquille O'Neal. His previous titles for the streamer include 'The Ridiculous 6', 'The Do-Over', 'Sandy Wexler' and 'The Week Of'. Sandler's 'Murder Mystery', co-starring Jennifer Aniston, was the most popular title on Netflix in the US last year. — Bang Showbiz



Eastwood feels Jewell development issues were fate

Clint Eastwood admits that it was "fate" that 'Richard Jewell' was delayed, as he would never have worked with Paul Walter Hauser. The legendary filmmaker helms the movie, which tells the story of how the titular character - played by the 'I, Tonya' star - is wrongly accused of placing a bomb at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. Clint previously had trouble getting the project off the ground, but is glad at the timing of the release, because he wouldn't have cast Paul for the lead role if it had gone ahead earlier. Clint told HeyUGuys.com: "It was just a story I wanted to tell. I really liked the script and tracked it around for a few years. We had it going but then it stopped. "Perhaps it was fate, though, as four or five years ago I would never have met Paul and seen his work." The 89-year-old star, famed for movies such as 'Unforgiven' and 'Dirty Harry', also tipped Paul to have a long career in the industry and praised his performance during the picture. Clint said: "I think Paul is going to have a long career but this will always be a highlight for him, because he really nails it." Clint suggested that the cast of 'Richard Jewell', which features Sam Rockwell and Olivia Wilde, is amongst the best he has worked with during his illustrious career. When asked how he gets actors to put in natural performances, Clint said: "I don't do the getting, they just do the delivering. I was lucky enough to have a cast in place which is as good as any cast I've ever had in a movie." Meanwhile, Paul has claimed that Clint creates an ideal on-set environment for actors to perform. The 33-year-old actor said: He sets an environment where you don't feel overshadowed by his greatness or the people around you. You feel like you're in a collaborative setting where there is no wrong movement."



Lee to direct movie version of Byrne's American Utopia

Spike Lee will direct a movie version of 'David Byrne's American Utopia'. The 62-year-old filmmaker has signed up to direct a film adaptation of the Broadway show, which will be released in 2020 and executive produced by Participant along with Byrne and Lee. Byrne said in a statement: "Pinch me. This couldn't have worked out better for this project. Spike Lee directing and Participant producing - two socially engaged teams, well, three if you count us in the band, coming together in what I feel will be something moving, important, and unlike anything anyone has seen before." Participant CEO David Linde added: "'American Utopia' is a true celebration from a great artist and a beautiful reminder to our nation that we are all born barefoot and wearing the same suit. We are incredibly excited to work with Mr. Byrne and the incomparable Spike Lee, along with RadicalMedia, River Road and Warner Music Group in bringing this one-of-a-kind event to audiences around the world." The film will include a live performance from the Broadway show, which opened in October and will run until mid-February. The Broadway show includes Byrne and 11 musical artists performing songs from his 2018 album of the same name, along with songs from Talking Heads and his solo career.



'Joker' leads the pack at Bafta awards



Creator of #OscarsSoWhite movement, April Reign, poses for AFP during a photo session in Hollywood, California. — AFP

#OscarsSoWhite: The Hollywood 'hashtag' activists demanding diversity

April Reign remembers precisely where she was in January 2015 when she launched the #OscarsSoWhite movement with a simple, off-hand tweet. "I'd love to have a sexy story that I was sitting in a board room ideating and strategizing," she told AFP in an interview. "But no-I was half-dressed in my family room, to be very frank. I picked up my phone and wrote, '#OscarsSoWhite they asked to touch my hair.' That was it." Within hours, the tweet-sent from Washington, as Reign followed the Oscar nominations announcement over breakfast, and realized all 20 actors were white-had gone viral worldwide. Five years later, the phrase has become a universal clarion call for more diversity at the Oscars, in Hollywood and the entertainment industry in general. But the hashtag made an unwelcome return to Twitter this month as the 2020 Oscar shortlists were announced by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Cynthia Erivo was the only actress of color to earn a nomination, for anti-slavery biopic "Harriet." All of the male acting nominees were white. Industry website Deadline Hollywood called the announcement "basically #OscarsSoWhite Part 2." For Reign, a former Washington campaign finance lawyer who quit her job in the US capital and now works on inclusion and representation issues full-time, it was no great surprise. "We are now in year six, and every single year #OscarsSoWhite is mentioned again," she said. "I would love to see an end point-but the end comes when we no longer have to talk about issues of inclusion and representation."

'Truth to power'

Underlying Reign's viral message about the Oscars is a much more expansive campaign to force Hollywood to boost diversity, broaden its horizons and stop relying on old habits and closed-shop networks. Reign says this is something studios have shown themselves incapable, or unwilling, to do. "Outside activists or advocates are incredibly important-to say, you know, we're out here, we want to be represented," she told AFP. "I think that there is something interesting about speaking truth to power from the outside." Reign points out that campaigners such as singer Harry Belafonte and actress Rita Moreno have been banging the diversity drum in entertainment for decades. — AFP

The hit film "Joker" lead the nominations for yesterday's Bafta awards but "1917" is hotly tipped for best film at the last major prize ceremony before the Oscars. Hollywood stars will pack the Royal Albert Hall in London for the glitzy bash, where Joaquin Phoenix and Renee Zellweger are tipped to scoop the main acting awards. The psychological thriller "Joker", with Phoenix in the Batman villain title role, leads the way with 11 nominations, followed by crime flick "The Irishman" and comedy-drama "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood".

However, Sam Mendes' World War I epic "1917", which has nine nominations, is the favorite to win the best film and best director categories. The British Academy of Film and Television Arts' 73rd annual movie awards could indicate which way the Oscars might go in Los Angeles on February 9. Last year, Bafta gave the best acting prizes to Rami Malek and Olivia Colman; Alfonso Cuaron won best director, and Mahershala Ali won best supporting actor-honors all replicated at the Academy Awards.

Diversity row

This year's Baftas have faced some criticism for lacking ethnic diversity among the acting categories' nominees, all 18 of whom are white. Andrew Onubolu, known as Rapman, the director of the critically acclaimed gang drama "Blue Story", said "the lack of black faces is ridiculous". Fellow director Nadia Latif called the nominations "beyond a joke", saying: "This industry does not welcome or want us and does not think we are



good enough."

The British academy said it would review its voting system in time for next year's awards. The winners and nominees in most categories are voted for by the 6,500 members, who are industry professionals and creatives from around the world. In previous years, senior Bafta figures said the awards could only reflect the cinema industry's output. "It's infuriating. We can't make the industry do something; all we can do is encourage," said Bafta film committee chairman Marc Samuelson.

Top five

At this year's British event, the same



five movies fill the best film and best director nominations. Joining "1917" and Mendes are "Joker" (Todd Phillips); South Korean comedy thriller "Parasite" (Bong Joon-ho); "The Irishman" (Martin Scorsese), and "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" by Quentin Tarantino. In the best actor category, Phoenix is up against Leonardo DiCaprio ("Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"), Adam Driver ("Marriage Story"), Taron Egerton ("Rocketman") and Jonathan Pryce ("The Two Popes").

The best actress nominees are Zellweger for her turn as Judy Garland in "Judy", Scarlett Johansson ("Marriage Story"), Saoirse Ronan ("Little Women") and Charlize Theron ("Bombshell"). Tom Hanks, Anthony Hopkins, Al Pacino, Joe Pesci and Brad Pitt are vying for the best supporting actor BAFTA. The best sup-

porting actress gong will be disputed between Johansson for the six-times nominated "Jojo Rabbit", Laura Dern, Florence Pugh and Margot Robbie.

Kennedy, Serkis honored

The ceremony will be hosted by TV chat show presenter Graham Norton. Prince William and his wife Kate are due to add some royal glamour in his 10th year as Bafta president. The prince is due to present the Academy Fellowship, its highest accolade, to American producer Kathleen Kennedy, the boss of Lucasfilm. She has been behind some of the biggest-grossing movies ever, including the Star Wars sequels, "Jurassic Park", "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" and the "Back to the Future" trilogy. — AFP

After 'Hustlers' and turning 50, Jennifer Lopez takes on Super Bowl

It's been a pretty big year for Jennifer Lopez. She turned 50, went on tour, earned rave reviews for her turn as a shrewd stripper in "Hustlers," judged a new season of "World of Dance" and got engaged to retired baseball star Alex Rodriguez. And yesterday she took on the Super Bowl halftime show, one of the most-watched half-hours in American television, with Colombian singer Shakira. "It's a lot of energy, it's very entertaining-there are heartfelt moments," Lopez told reporters on Thursday in Miami.

"It's very Shakira and it's very Jennifer." Lopez literally does it all-"Jenny from the Block" is an actress, singer, dancer, producer and businesswoman. And she says she is finally used to "being the boss." "Nobody in my family was really the boss of anything. We all had bosses," she told entertainment industry magazine Variety in an interview last year. "But I guess in the past few years, I've come into my own in believing in myself and giving myself credit, knowing that 'OK, you're running the ship.'"

Lopez was born in July 1969 in New York's Bronx borough to a security guard father and stay-at-home mom (later a

school teacher) from Puerto Rico. After taking singing and dancing lessons in her youth, Lopez was cast in the 1986 film "My Little Girl," and she caught the showbiz bug. Her big break came a few years later, when she was hired as a Fly Girl dancer on the popular television variety show "In Living Color." That led to dance work with Janet Jackson, and a few small screen roles. But Lopez's huge break came in 1997 when she was cast as slain Mexican-American singer Selena in the film of the same name.

She was chosen from more than 22,000 actresses for the role and became the first Latina actress to earn \$1 million in Hollywood-a salary which she says set a precedent and helped blaze a trail. "Maybe 30 years ago, it was very 'Oh, you're the Latin girl. You'll do Spanish roles-you'll play maids, you'll only be limited to this little box,'" she told Variety. "It's about getting people in the business... to believe this girl can do more."

JLo: film star, pop star

The year after "Selena" hit theaters, she starred opposite George Clooney in the thriller "Out of Sight"-a role that for many



Pepsi Super Bowl LIV Halftime Show Performers Jennifer Lopez and Shakira hold a press conference at the Hilton Miami Downtown in Miami. — AFP

critics showed she had acting bona fides. And then in 1999, Lopez dropped her debut album "On the 6." It included the mega-hits "If You Had My Love," "Let's Get Loud" and "Waiting for Tonight." A pop star was born.

Her parents thought acting was a dead end for Latinas. Her agents kept insisting that she choose between singing and acting. Lopez refused and the rest is history. JLo, as she is more or less universally known, has sold tens of millions of albums

worldwide, including more than 10 million in the US alone. Concerts on her last tour were nearly all sold out.

Her acting career has run the gamut, from the mega-flop "Gigli" with former beau Ben Affleck to her acclaimed performance as Ramona in "Hustlers," a film she also produced. She earned a Golden Globe nomination for the role, which featured an athletic pole dance that left tongues wagging-and many thought she should have won an Oscar nod. — AFP

Masset-Depasse thriller 'Mother's Instinct' sweeps Belgium's Oscars

Olivier Masset-Depasse's retro psychological thriller "Mother's Instinct" swept the Magritte Awards on Saturday, winning nine of the 10 categories it was nominated in at Belgium's version of the Oscars. Favorite and Cannes-winner "Young Ahmed" won just two gongs-most promising actor for Idris Ben Ali, 14, who

plays a radicalized teenager, and best supporting actress for Myriem Akheddiou, who plays his teacher and victim.

Adapted from Belgian author Barbara Abel's detective novel "Behind the Hatred" and with nods to David Lynch and Alfred Hitchcock, "Mother's Instinct" took home best film, best director and best original screenplay, in a night to remember for the 49-year-old director from Charleroi. Veerles Baetens won best actress for her role in Masset-Depasse's third offering that explores how the friendship between two neighbors descends into tragedy after the child of one of them is killed in an accident. Belgian actor Bouli Lanners won in the best actor category for his role in Claire Burger's "Real Love".

"Mother's Instinct" also swept the field for technical awards, taking home gongs for best sound, best editing and best cinematography. Belgian-Guatemalan director Cesar Diaz won best first film for "Our Mothers", which delves into Guatemala's civil war and the search for "missing politicals". It also won the Camera d'Or at Cannes last year for best first feature. Belgian Mya Bollaers, 23, won most promising actress for her role in "Lola", which tells the story of a young transgender woman's struggles with her father as they both come to terms with the death of her mother.

And it was only by chance that Bollaers, who is herself transgender, auditioned for the role. "The casting was wild," she told a French newspaper in December. "The announcement was made on social media. It was a Sunday, I had nothing to do. I said to myself: 'OK, I'll reply. If I get through the casting then that could be funny.'" "Young Ahmed" and "Lola" will be in competition at the Cesar awards in France at the end of this month for best foreign film. — AFP



Director Olivier Masset-Depasse (front) holding his awards for Best Movie and Best Original Screenplay poses on stage with other winners during the 10th edition of the "Magritte du Cinema" Belgium's French speaking film awards ceremony in Brussels on Saturday. — AFP photos



Italian actress Monica Bellucci poses with her award during the 10th edition of the "Magritte du Cinema".



Actress Veerles Baetens poses with her award for Best Actress.



Actress Myriem Akheddiou poses with her award for Best Supporting Actress.



Director Olivier Masset-Depasse poses with his awards for Best Movie and Best Original Screenplay during the 10th edition of the "Magritte du Cinema".

Classifieds

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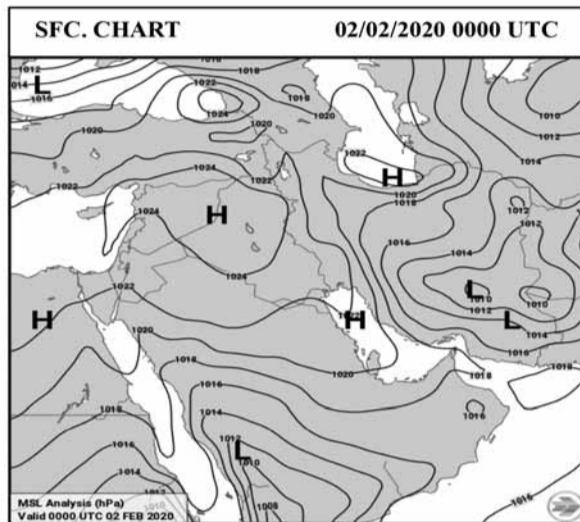
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

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

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

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
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STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.
KUWAIT CITY	18 °C	10 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20 °C	04 °C
ABDALY	18 °C	04 °C
BUBYAN	18 °C	06 °C
JAHRA	18 °C	07 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	18 °C	07 °C
SALMIYAH	17 °C	13 °C
AHMADI	17 °C	11 °C
NUWAISIB	19 °C	06 °C
WAFRA	19 °C	04 °C
SALMY	16 °C	06 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	02/03	Fair	20 °C	05 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Tuesday	02/04	Rather cold and Clouds will increase gradually with a chance for scattered rain	18 °C	08 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Wednesday	02/05	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear later on	20 °C	10 °C	SE	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	02/06	Warm and Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	25 °C	12 °C	SE	12 - 42 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:15
Sunrise	06:36
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:05
Sunset	17:26
Isha	18:45

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	19 °C
MIN. Temp.	11 °C
MAX. RH	99 %
MIN. RH	18 %
MAX. Wind	N 39 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

Given name is Abdul Tayyeb Zainy now change to given name Abdul Tayyeb and last name Zainy. Add. Shergarhwalah Mohalla, Yusufpura Partapur, Dist. Banswara (Raj.) (C 5626) 3-2-2020

I Mohammed Amir S/O Esa Amir Perwaz holder of Indian Passport No. Z2519609 & Civil ID No. 2800200199 has changed my name from Mohammed Amir to Mohammed Amir Perwaz hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Mohammed Amir Perwaz. (C 5625) 30-1-2020

LOST

I Abdul Aziz Riaz S/O Riaz Hussain Residence of Salmiya, Kuwait announce through daily newspaper that my SSC/HSSC certificate bearing Roll No. 684345 of the year 2016 issued by Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Islamabad has been lost during transit etc. Whoever finds it, shall send it to the address Pakistan school Salmiya or call on the No. 97200842 Kuwait. (C 5624) 29-1-2020

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

EMERGENCY
112

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Turkish Airlines	1884918
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
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1

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

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Monday 3/2/2020				Departure Flights on Monday 3/2/2020			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
PIA	239	Sialkot	00:05	KAC	614	Bahrain	13:50
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05
AIC	989	Mumbai	00:10	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10
JZR	716	Sohag	00:35	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
JZR	254	Amman	00:45	KAC	752	ELQ	14:20
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	KAC	742	Dammam	14:35
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	774	Riyadh	14:40
KAC	102	London	00:55	KAC	672	Dubai	14:40
KAC	504	Beirut	01:05	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45
DLH	625	Dammam	01:30	KAC	364	Colombo	14:50
RJA	642	Amman	01:40	KAC	118	New York	14:50
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:55
IGO	1759	Delhi	01:55	KAC	618	Doha	15:00
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:55	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:10
UAE	853	Dubai	02:15	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:25
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	JZR	222	Riyadh	15:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	562	Amman	15:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:40
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	JZR	732	Cairo	15:50
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:55
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	JZR	152	Mashhad	16:00
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	JZR	140	AAN	16:05
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	JZR	212	Jeddah	16:25
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:30	QTR	1072	Doha	16:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	04:40	JZR	116	Doha	16:40
JZR	540	KTM	04:45	KAC	546	Cairo	16:45
JZR	702	Asyut	04:50	FDB	051	Dubai	16:45
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	KAC	502	Beirut	16:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	KAC	516	Tehran	16:50
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	SAW	705	Damascus	17:00
KAC	358	Kochi	05:10	FEQ	341	Sohag	17:20
KAC	382	Delhi	05:20	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:25
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:20	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:45
JZR	654	OSS	05:25	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:35	JZR	302	Istanbul	18:15
JZR	502	Lahore	05:35	FDB	063	Dubai	18:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:35	JZR	124	Dubai	18:20
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:45	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
JZR	216	Jeddah	05:50	QTR	1080	Doha	18:30
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	JZR	306	Istanbul	18:55
KAC	344	Chennai	06:10	RJA	640	Amman	19:10
KAC	544	Cairo	07:00	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:20
BAW	157	London	07:05	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
KAC	678	Dubai	07:05	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
RBG	213	Sohag	07:10	QTR	1090	Doha	19:35
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	KAC	744	Dammam	19:35
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	KAC	782	Jeddah	19:50
JZR	120	Dubai	07:35	JZR	104	Bahrain	19:55
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KNE	381	Taif	20:00
PVV	733	AQJ	08:00	KAC	776	Riyadh	20:05
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:25	KAC	616	Bahrain	20:30
KAC	622	Doha	08:30	AZQ	4565	Baku	20:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	QTR	1088	Doha	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	174	Munich	20:45
JZR	102	Bahrain	08:55	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:55
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	674	Dubai	20:55
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	ALK	229	Colombo	21:20
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
KAC	304	Mumbai	09:30	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
KAC	384	Delhi	09:30	UAE	859	Dubai	21:30
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	KAC	168	Paris	22:00
JZR	114	Doha	10:20	KAC	620	Doha	22:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	564	Amman	22:00
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:50	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
JZR	714	Sohag	10:50	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
JZR	708	Luxor	10:55	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:30
JZR	122	Dubai	11:15	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:50
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	GOW	061	CNN	23:00
KAC	352	Kochi	11:35	QTR	1092	Doha	23:10
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	SVA	502	Jeddah	23:10
MSR	610	Cairo	12:25	MSC	411	Asyut	23:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JZR	002	LGW	23:15
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	JZR	128	Dubai	23:15
				KAC	542	Cairo	23:45
				FDB	071	Dubai	23:45

Morocco's long-burdened 'mule women' facing new struggles

FNIDEQ, Morocco: After years of back-breaking toil, Fatima El-Hanani now fears being reduced to begging in the street because of Morocco's closure of its border with a Spanish enclave to thousands of "mule women". The impact has been felt on both sides of the frontier, with the Moroccan porters who lugged duty-free Spanish goods left out of work and shops closing as livelihoods dry up for traders. "They want to turn us into beggars," says Hanani, who had spent all her working life transporting heavy loads from Ceuta to the town of Fnideq in the North African kingdom.

Like thousands of other Moroccan women - and also men - she would cross every day into the Spanish enclave and come back laden with merchandise for traders. Goods brought on foot through the crossing on a hill looking over the Mediterranean are not subjected to import duties, unlike those brought by vehicles. But four months ago, Morocco suddenly stopped porters from crossing, in a move aimed at curbing the entry of contraband.

"Business was good before," says Hanani, who is in her 50s, but now "there is no more work". Nicknamed "mule women", the Moroccan porters would often be seen bent double, overburdened by goods approaching or exceeding their own bodyweight.

Rights groups repeatedly denounced the work as "humiliating", saying it was tantamount to trafficking tolerated by the authorities. At least four women porters were trampled to death in 2017, in stampedes at the border post - the only land frontier between the EU and Africa. But it was vital work for Hanani, who says she has raised five children on her own thanks to the long-tolerated practice. Now she sells trinkets in a souk in Fnideq. "I don't make any money anymore," Hanani laments, her wares spread out on the ground.

The delivery of bundles of clothes, food products and household goods created business that benefited the economy on both sides of the border. Porters and shopkeepers say they are now waiting for alternative employment. Meanwhile, a metal gate blocks the passage for porters at the border crossing, under the watchful eye of the Moroccan guards.

The Moroccan authorities have talked a lot about the need to regulate the informal sector, but have largely kept mum about the change. Nabyl Lakhdar, the country's director-general of customs, told local daily *LEconomiste* in January that the contraband hurt Morocco's economy by destroying its productive sector. Lakhdar called the porters "the first victims" of the smuggling, saying "certain mafias" profited from their "precariousness and sometimes from their suffering".

In 2018, Ceuta authorities and traders launched an initiative encouraging the women to use trolleys instead of carrying the heavy weights on their backs. But without the porters, the economy in Fnideq and Ceuta is just barely ticking over. "The impact is enormous," says Abdellah Haudour, a shopkeeper who sells Spanish blankets on the Moroccan side. "Prices have gone up, purchasing power has gone down. There are no more customers," he says, showing his empty till. "Many have left the town."

The normally packed bus station, used by those picking up goods from across the border, is deserted. "I now earn a third of what I used to," says Mimoun El-Mourabit, a 67-year-old driver sitting on the bonnet of his vehicle. At the beginning of January, a Moroccan parliamentary report recommended creating an industrial area to provide new jobs for the porters. But "who will employ 50-year-old, illiterate 'mule women'?" asks Haudour, the



FNIDEQ, Morocco: Women wait to cross from Morocco into the Spanish territory of Ceuta from this Moroccan city on Jan 17, 2020. — AFP

shopkeeper. The Moroccan move has also caused a "serious trade crisis" in the Spanish port city, the Confederation of Ceuta Entrepreneurs (CECE) said in mid-December. At the entrance to the border crossing, corrugated iron hangars house all types of goods, sent by boat from continental Europe to Ceuta. The crux of the trade took place here.

Jamal, a grocer, says the crisis is unprecedented and

that his turnover has collapsed. "Our products are expiring," he says as he displays his unsold goods. Rachid, 48, says from his shoe shop: "Stores have shut. Business is at a standstill. We are wasting our time." Both men decline to provide their surnames. "If this continues, I will have to close," Rachid says. "We depend on the Spanish authorities. We're protected by the social security system. But what about the Moroccans?" —AFP

Researchers prime targets in Middle...

Continued from Page 1

In October, Iran confirmed the arrest of British-Iranian anthropologist Kamil Ahmadi before releasing him, and in December it freed Xiyue Wang, a Chinese-American researcher serving a 10-year term on spying charges.

Wang was released in exchange for Masoud Soleimani, an Iranian who had been held in the US for allegedly breaching sanctions - and Tehran said it was open to other such exchanges. But over the decades, the targeting of academics has often been more violent. "It started with gunshots at the office of Malcolm Kerr, president of the American University of Beirut, who was murdered in 1984 by Hezbollah, already an arm of the Revolutionary Guards" of Iran, Filu said. Two years later, French sociologist Michel Seurat died in a Lebanese prison after his arrest because he was "denied medical care," he said. "They were victims of the settling of scores by Iran with Washington and Paris."

More recently, Italian doctorate student Giulio Regeni disappeared in Egypt while researching trade unions, one of the country's last independent civil actors - and increasingly in the crosshairs of the authorities. His badly mutilated body was found more than a week later by the side of a road on the outskirts of the Egyptian capital, with an Italian post-mortem later indicating he had been tortured.

And in May 2018, British researcher Matthew Hedges was arrested in the United Arab Emirates and held in solitary confinement for months before beginning a life sentence on spying charges. He was released less than a week after his sentencing - and just as the United Nations dropped a UK-sponsored resolution demanding a halt to the UAE and Saudi Arabia offensive in Yemen.

"Mr Hedges may be their bargaining chip to get

London to back off from a UN resolution calling for a halt to the war in Yemen," Mark Almond, director of the Crisis Research Institute at the University of Oxford, wrote in *The Telegraph* newspaper a few days before his release. "Miraculously the stars aligned, and his release finally came as the British initiative was abandoned," Filu agreed.

Yet analysts say the crackdown on academics comes as on-the-ground research becomes increasingly vital for understanding the political and socio-economic dynamics in play across the Middle East. Threats from jihadist forces as well as the rise of nationalist and authoritarian tendencies are prompting officials to severely restrict access to outsiders.

Iran in particular is holding "10 to 15" foreigners including Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe of the Thomson Reuters Foundation, who is serving a five-year term on charges of sedition, Jean-Francois Bayart of France's CNRS research institute told the forum on Friday. His colleague Bernard Hourcade, a geographer and Iran specialist, blamed a new generation of Republican Guard elites who grew up in an "ostracized republic". "Many of them have no international experience. They don't speak French, English or German," Hourcade said.

"If today Fariba and Roland are in prison, when normally you take diplomats or business executives hostage, it's because they were trying to see what's really happening," he added. "These people are panicked by the idea that people would know what's going on in their country." According to Filu, "access is increasingly denied by powers and organizations which know perfectly well that the research can help counter the lies and propaganda used to sow terror among their own peoples".

Washington's killing of the Revolutionary Guard commander Qasem Soleimani last month, and Iran's own accidental downing of a Ukraine airliner, has turned up the heat on Tehran. But even if Iran appears more vulnerable, "they are not necessarily in any position to negotiate or make any offers", said Olivier Roy, a specialist on Islam at the European University Institute in Italy. Hence the temptation, analysts say, to keep a handful of foreign researchers behind bars. — AFP

Kokuka Courageous. Tehran denies the accusation.

In addition to the Gulf of Oman, the *Takanami*, with 200 sailors and two helicopters, will patrol the northern Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden, but will not enter the Strait of Hormuz, a strategically important choke point between Iran and the Arabian peninsula. The Japanese destroyer will share water in the region with a growing number of warships from other countries, including vessels from the United States, France and Britain. "Japanese merchant ships were attacked in June, and other nations have increased patrols so Japan too is acting to gather intelligence there," the mission commander, Captain Yosuke Inaba told reporters before he departed. — Reuters

of many OFWs who are affected by the ban - returning OFWs who were unable to go back to their employers," she said.

On Saturday, the delegation from Manila arrived in Kuwait and immediately set a meeting with concerned parties. First on the list of appointments in Kuwait was the joint meeting of the technical working groups of both countries. Yesterday and today, the TWG discussed the welfare and protection of household service workers, which includes the standard employment contract to prevent abuse and mistreatment by employers.

Through this contract, housemaids can keep their passports, mobile phones, have a day off a week and prevent being transferred from one employer to another without the written consent from the workers subject to approval by the Philippine Labor Office in Kuwait. Before meeting the community, Bello was accorded a warm welcome at an event organized by the Kuwait Union of Domestic Labor Offices (KUDLO), along with groups of foreign and Philippine recruitment agencies.

At the community meeting, a majority of Filipino community leaders wanted the total deployment ban to be downgraded to a partial ban and allow returning domestic workers to go back to their employers. "The government should ban the deployment of domestic helpers, but should lift the ban on returning workers," one community leader said at the meeting.

Bulgaria's fugitive gaming mogul arrested in UAE

SOFIA: Bulgaria's runaway gaming mogul Vasil Bozhkov, who was indicted this week for tax fraud and organized crime, has been arrested in the United Arab Emirates, the chief prosecutor said yesterday. Bozhkov, 63, one of the country's richest and most powerful businessmen, fled Bulgaria just days before prosecutors raided his home and the offices of his lottery companies in a tax evasion probe. He was indicted in absentia on seven counts, including as a leader of an organized crime group, for extortion and for bribery of an official.

Prosecutors said that Bozhkov's private lottery companies used a loophole in the legislation to avoid paying 559 million leva (\$317 million) in lottery fees to the state since 2014. Bulgaria had unofficial information that Bozhkov was detained in the UAE on Friday and Chief Prosecutor Ivan Geshev said yesterday that he had received an official notification about the arrest. "The prosecution will perform its duties and send the necessary documents (for Bozhkov's extradition) in a timely manner," Geshev said. Two of Bozhkov's closest associates were also detained.

Prosecutors also indicted the current and the former chiefs of the country's commission regulating gambling for "opening an umbrella" over Bozhkov's lottery business - protecting it against competition and allowing the financial irregularities to pass unnoticed. Bozhkov spoke to several Bulgarian media before his arrest, denying any wrongdoing and his company Nove Holding issued a statement saying that the charges "aim to take a legal business by force".

On the day of the raids, Bulgaria's parliament passed changes to the gaming bill that envisage making the state-run Bulgarian Sports Totalizator the only operator allowed to organize lottery games. Bulgaria, the EU's poorest member state, has long mulled better regulations for the lucrative sector as thousands of people have been gripped by a craze for scratchcards in recent years. "For 2018, the money spent on scratchcard tickets amounted to over 1.0 billion leva. This money came from people with predominantly low economic status," parliamentary budget committee chairwoman Menda Stoyanova told public BNR radio yesterday.

Bulgaria and the UAE do not have a bilateral agreement for legal cooperation and experts warned that Bozhkov's extradition might take time. In the meantime, authorities prepared to confiscate Bozhkov's archeological collection of over 3,000 ancient history artifacts, including what media say is the world's richest collection of golden, silver and bronze rhytons. Also yesterday, Bulgarian officials said they had busted a cocaine trafficking route from Colombia after finding an estimated 500 kg of the drug in two trucks loaded with citrus fruit. The cocaine, which was found on Friday, was concealed in the cardboard of some 6,700 boxes. Interior ministry chief of staff Ivaylo Ivanov said police estimates showed that each box contained between 80 and 100 gm of the drug, putting the total amount at "about 500 kilograms".

"The evidence collected even at this very early stage of the investigation signals about the existence of an international drug trafficking route," a court statement said. It remained in custody two men, whose companies were listed as recipients of the cargo, for "participation in an organized crime group for cocaine trafficking from Colombia to Bulgaria". One of those arrested is a former director of the Sofia Customs Agency. — AFP

UN in 75th year amid distrust...

Continued from Page 1

witnessed by the recent near-miss when US President Donald Trump ordered the killing of a top Iranian general in Baghdad while the Security Council simply looked on. "With turbulence on the rise, trust within and among nations is on the decline," Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in a recent address, calling the multiple challenges "a grave test to multilateralism."

"We see this trust deficit in streets across the world, as people vent their frustrations and voice their feeling that political establishments are out of touch, incapable or unwilling to deliver," Guterres said earlier in January during a debate on the UN Charter. "We see it in the work of the United Nations, including the Security Council, when member states struggle or fail to find reasonable common ground," he added.

The UN's promise as a global forum for resolving conflicts has dimmed dramatically since the powers that emerged from the ruins of World War II hatched the idea at the Yalta conference in Feb 1945. For some, the cracks in the edifice started to really show in 2011 with the start of the Syrian civil war and the overthrow of Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi led by western powers. For others, it was the 2003 US-British invasion of Iraq that dealt the international system a resounding blow.

Asymmetric warfare has replaced the high-stakes balance of power that marked the heyday of the Cold War, with attacks on the streets of Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East now so frequent as to seem almost humdrum. The old threat of nuclear proliferation has raised its head once again, accompanied by the new dangers of global warming. The US pull-back from the world stage over the past decade, combined with European fractiousness, has opened the door to Russian expansionism, which has proved hard to stop in crisis areas such as Syria, Libya, Venezuela or North Korea.

"Russia's approach to the UN is often more tactically intelligent than Western diplomacy," Richard Gowan of the International Crisis Group, said in an

interview with AFP. "The US and Europeans often see the Security Council as a stage for making big moral statements rather than pursuing real diplomatic deal-making."

China has become the second-largest funder of the UN after Washington, but has kept a measured pace internationally. "China has an ever more visible foreign policy, but one which aims to dissociate a conquering economic imperialism from a multi-sector intervention, which it distrusts," Bertrand Badie of the Institute of Political Studies, or IEP, in Paris, told AFP.

Compared to 75 years ago, there are very few points of reference left. Since its founding, the UN has had five permanent members of the Security Council with veto rights, and its worldview reflects that old distribution of power. The South "has never really been integrated in the global game", said Badie, noting that there is a "new order that the old powers do not perceive".

"During the Cold War, the Security Council passed relatively few resolutions," said Gowan. "Diplomats from that era would not recognize the gargantuan resolutions the Council now passes on peacekeeping operations, covering everything from humanitarian affairs to climate change." He observed that these days, "even UN officials feel that most Security Council resolutions are so long and complex that they cannot be implemented."

Not to mention those resolutions that have failed to pass, or whose conditions members have failed to meet, such as climate deals, the Iran nuclear agreement and disarmament treaties. "The Security Council has lost its credibility which was never more than a formality back in the day," said Badie. "Today it has lost even that in the face of the anarchic nature of great power games." One UN ambassador deplored a "world of egos who use crises as a chance for a show of force," while during the Cold War there was more effort towards "protecting civilian populations and human rights". "It used to be easier to negotiate with one's adversaries," said one UN official.

For Guterres, there is a very real fear of what the UN chief in September called a "Great Fracture: The world splitting in two, with the two largest economies on earth creating two separate and competing worlds, each with their own dominant currency, trade and financial rules, their own internet and artificial intelligence capacities, and their own zero sum geopolitical and military strategies." — AFP

Japanese warship heads to Gulf to...

Continued from Page 1

President Donald Trump's decision to pull the United States out of a 2015 international nuclear deal with Iran and re-impose sanctions on it. The United States has blamed Iran for several attacks on international merchant vessels, including a Japanese-owned tanker, the

Manila vows labor ban stays until slain...

Continued from Page 1

Philippine government should wait until justice is served regardless of the pace or how many years the trial takes. As we all know, justice has to undergo a process - let us wait for that to be served before bringing these recruitment agencies to talk about business and opportunities," he added.

Sandigan Kuwait Domestic Workers Association's Founding Chairperson Anne Abunda, who is actively campaigning for a "moratorium" to be implemented on the deployment of Filipino domestic helpers in Kuwait, expressed dismay over the fact that many foreign and Manila-based recruitment agencies were present at the event.

"We are supporting the ban, and we are happy with the decision of Secretary Bello; however, you can see foreign recruitment agencies and Philippine-based agencies trying to lobby for the immediate lifting of the ban," Abunda said. Is Bello giving false hope to recruitment agencies or maybe the lifting of the ban has already been planned? I see it as unfair to the sacrifices

Sports

New era beckons as Chiefs, 49ers clash in Super Bowl

Stage set for Mahomes to crown his emergence as the best quarterback in the league

MIAMI: The Kansas City Chiefs chase their first Super Bowl title in 50 years yesterday when they face the San Francisco 49ers in a championship clash poised to usher in a new era for the NFL. Around 100 million Americans are expected to tune in for the biggest event on the US sporting calendar, which kicks off at Miami's Hard Rock Stadium at 6.30pm (2330 GMT).

The eagerly anticipated showdown could mark a changing of the guard for the NFL's quarterback hierarchy as the curtain comes down on the league's 100th season. With Tom Brady and the New England Patriots failing to reach the Super Bowl for the first time since 2016, the stage is set for the Chiefs' Patrick Mahomes to crown his emergence as the best quarterback in the league.

The gifted 24-year-old Texan could become the second-youngest quarterback to win a Super Bowl if he leads the Chiefs to victory in only his second full season as a starter. Mahomes, who became only the second quarterback in history to amass 5,000 passing yards and 50 touchdowns in a season in 2018, has cut a relaxed figure during this week's build-up.

HAVING FUN

"I'm going to go out there and try and have fun and play the way I've played all season long," Mahomes said earlier this week. True to form, Mahomes and his teammates laughed and joked their way through a final practice session on Saturday under the watchful eye of veteran head coach Andy Reid.

"They're loose, to a point," Reid said of his team. "They know the job at hand against a real good football team, but at the same time, we try to let our personalities show. That has been an emphasis, and I don't expect them to stop doing that now."

Attempting to frustrate Mahomes and the Chiefs are a 49ers unit chasing a record-equaling sixth Super Bowl. Led by the 28-year-old quarterback Jimmy

Garoppolo — who won two Super Bowl rings during his stint as a back-up to Brady in New England — the 49ers boast a fearsome defense which will attempt to knock Mahomes out of his stride.

Garoppolo has an array of weapons at his disposal. Against the Green Bay Packers in the NFC Championship game, the 49ers blew away their opponents with a fearsome ground game that saw running back Raheem Mostert rush for four touchdowns and more than 200 yards.

On the defensive side, the 49ers boast a fearsome pass rush led by Nick Bosa, who was given a pre-Super Bowl fillip on Saturday after being named rookie of the year at the NFL's annual awards.

The 49ers are also bound to have a few offensive tricks up their sleeve as they prepare under the guidance of head coach Kyle Shanahan, one of the most innovative minds in the NFL. "We're as ready as we can be," Shanahan said on Saturday. "We just need the game to get here. It has been two weeks of (practice), and we are itching to go."

Shanahan took his players on a walkthrough at the Hard Rock Stadium on Saturday to prepare them for the extended half-time break in today's game, where Jennifer Lopez and Shakira will perform for the sell-out 65,000 crowd.

At around 30 minutes, the Super Bowl's half-time interval is more than double the usual interval. "It's going to feel like forever," Shanahan said. "We're not used to that."

FATHER-SON DOUBLE

A win today would see the 49ers coach emulate his father Mike Shanahan, who won back-to-back Super Bowls with the Denver Broncos in 1998 and 1999. But Shanahan's coaching wizardry may prove moot if the 49ers defense is unable to contain Mahomes and a Chiefs offense bristling with pace in the form of receiver Tyreek Hill and power in the shape of tight



MIAMI: (L-R) Former NFL player Danny Kanell, NFL official Gene Steratore, NFL official Mike Pereira and SiriusXM host Adam Schein speak onstage during day 3 of SiriusXM at Super Bowl LIV in Miami, Florida. —AFP

end Travis Kelce.

The Chiefs have averaged 43 points per game in two playoff contests, and during the regular season averaged just over 28 points per game. Kansas City's ability to produce devastating bursts of scoring was showcased in their playoff game against Houston last month, when they came back

from a 24-0 deficit to win 51-31.

But the Chiefs are all too aware that conceding an early lead against the 49ers and their stingy defense could well be fatal. "We obviously want our guys to go out there and have a faster start," said Chiefs offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy. "You certainly never ever want to spot a team 24 points." —AFP

Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah to inaugurate Nadal Tennis Academy

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of Arab and Kuwait Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said Honorary President of Kuwait Tennis Federation Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah accepted the invitation to patronize the opening ceremony of the Spanish Rafael Nadal Tennis Academy in Kuwait, located at Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex, on Wednesday with

a large number of dignitaries, athletes, players and tennis fans expected to attend.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber said that Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will tour the complex to inspect its facilities including the main indoor stadium that has a capacity for 5,000 fans, indoor and outdoor courts, and Rafael Nadal Academy facilities.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber said, the honorary president will move to the main outdoor stadium to declare the official opening of Rafael Academy in Kuwait, and watch activities to be carried out by Kuwait national team players prior to the scheduled match between the world number one Rafael Nadal and David Ferer.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber thanked H.E. Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah for all his contributions to the game of tennis in Kuwait, through continued support to Kuwait Tennis Federation and national team members, that in addition to recognizing those with outstanding achievements at all levels.

President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations thanked the world champion Rafael Nadal for visiting Kuwait for the first time to participate in the exhibition match with which we open the academy, which is the first of its kind in the Middle East, which will reflect positively on tennis in Kuwait and the region.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah also thanked the Public Authority for Sport, headed by its Director General Dr Humoud Fualiteh, and his Deputy Dr Saqer Al-Mulla, and thanked all those who contributed to the construction of the complex.



Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Women's tennis 'never been more open' as Kenin becomes Slam surprise

MELBOURNE: The last five women's Grand Slams have now been won by five different players. Good luck trying to predict who triumphs at the French Open. Sofia Kenin's three-set victory over Garbine Muguruza in Saturday's final at the Australian Open underlined just how open the women's game is.

The young American was seeded 14th in Melbourne and her best performance at a Slam prior to this was reaching the round of 16 at Roland Garros last year. But here the fiery 21-year-old was, beating world number one and home hope Ashleigh Barty in the semi-finals and then defeating two-time Slam champion Muguruza.

A Kenin-Muguruza final was 750-1 with British bookmakers before the tournament. Kenin's victory was the last episode in a wildly unpredictable draw in which six of the top-10 women's seeds, including Serena Williams and holder Naomi Osaka, went out in round three.

Moscow-born Kenin, who will now jump to seventh in the world and above Williams as the top-ranked American, has confidence in bucketfuls. The unwavering belief that she was destined for the biggest stage in tennis shone through in the past fortnight in Melbourne.

Yet she was reticent when asked if she will be the one who emerges from the pack behind the 38-year-old Williams to win multiple Major titles. "I would love to, that would be amazing," said Kenin, glass of champagne in hand after defeating Spain's Muguruza.

"Right now I still can't believe what just happened. I need to somehow come down and just let it all sink in. "Hopefully I can just keep going, build up on everything that I've done these past two weeks, just move forward."

FREE-FOR-ALL

There is a marked contrast between men's and women's tennis. Last year's Grand Slam titles in the women's game were won by Osaka (Australian Open), Barty (French Open), Simona Halep (Wimbledon) and Bianca Andreescu (US Open).



MELBOURNE: Sofia Kenin of the US poses with the 2020 Australian Open winner's trophy on the bank of the Yarra river in Melbourne yesterday, following her victory over Spain's Garbine Muguruza in the women's singles final of the tennis tournament. —AFP

Yet in the men's game Novak Djokovic triumphed at last year's Australian Open and Wimbledon, and Rafael Nadal won the French and US Opens. Those two, along with 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer, have reigned over men's tennis for the best part of two decades.

There is at least a chance for Austria's Dominic Thiem to gate-crash the "Big Three" when he plays Djokovic in the men's Melbourne final. But the 33-year-old Spaniard Nadal will once more be hot favourite at the French Open in May-June, having won the crown there a remarkable 12 times.

In comparison, the women's draw in Paris looks like being another bun fight. Williams will once more be chasing a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam title, but it is her least-favourite surface. She may need to wait until Wimbledon if she is to equal Margaret Court's record for career Slam titles.

Defending champion Barty and former winners Halep and Muguruza will be expected to challenge at Roland Garros. Now add Kenin to the mix. Osaka has never been past round three. Or could it be another Jelena Ostapenko, the then-47th ranked Latvian who — much like Kenin — came out of left field to win in 2017? She has lifted one title since.

Some argue that, Williams aside, it shows up the weakness of women's tennis. British coach Nigel Sears believes the opposite.

"I think the women's tour is very open, I felt that for quite a while now," said Sears, coach of Estonian quarter-finalist Anett Kontaveit. "I have said quite often that I feel there are at least 35 quality players on the WTA Tour now, and any one of 20 different players could win this Slam or any of the others," he said prior to Kenin's victory. "I think it's never been more open, I think the depth in women's tennis has improved enormously." —AFP

Meet Alex, the taxi driver who became a Grand Slam-winning coach

MELBOURNE: It wasn't so long ago that Sofia Kenin's father was driving New York taxis and spoke English so poorly that he didn't know where he was supposed to be going. These days Alex Kenin, despite starting with close to zero tennis knowledge, is coaching a Grand Slam champion.

Russian-born Alex, an unassuming, grey-haired man with a receding hairline, introduced Sofia to tennis, brought her up around the game and pushed her to achieve the extraordinary — crowned by her victory at the Australian Open on Saturday.

Sofia said her "crazy smart" father had no prior experience of the game, but simply picked it up by observing those around him. "He's seen how all the other coaches have been coaching their players, but he knows everything," Sofia said, after stunning Garbine Muguruza in her first Grand Slam final.

"He knows what he's talking about, he really knows it and he comes up with the right plans, the right strategies." If Sofia's achievement is remarkable, it owes a great deal to her father, who was ever-present courtside during her increasingly impressive run through the Melbourne women's draw.

Teenage prodigy Coco Gauff, world number one Ashleigh Barty and, in the final, two-time Major-winner Muguruza all fell victim to tough-as-boots Sofia, who was following strategies drawn up by her wily father.

He joins a long list of tennis dads who have produced champions, including Richard Williams, father of Venus and Serena, Mike Agassi (Andre) and Yuri Sharapova (Maria). But unlike some other fathers, whose influence has been resented or even negative, Alex and Sofia, 21, remain close and affectionate.

"I really have him to thank. We've been dreaming about this — it's a dream come true for us," Sofia said. "He's told me a lot of positive things. He knows exactly what he's talking about. "Even though I don't like to admit it sometimes, to tell him he's right. Yeah, he really works hard. Just thank you to him. We can share this forever." —AFP



MELBOURNE: This handout photograph supplied by Tennis Australia, shows Sofia Kenin of the US and her father Alex as they pose with the trophy in the locker room after winning against Spain's Garbine Muguruza in the women's singles final match on day thirteen of Tennis Australia tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

Sports

India hail 'winning habit' in T20 series sweep against N Zealand

Ross Taylor celebrates his 100th Twenty20 international

MOUNT MAUNGANUI: India hailed their "winning habit" as they rallied to pull off a dramatic seven-run win over New Zealand in the fifth and final Twenty20 at Mount Maunganui yesterday to sweep the series.

New Zealand looked on course for a consolation win until India engineered a collapse that saw six wickets fall for 25 runs with Jasprit Bumrah finishing with an impressive three for 12 off his four overs.

It was the third consecutive game the tourists had successfully fought back when New Zealand were in a position of strength.

"It's a winning habit that we've cultivated over the years and all of us, when we step on the park, we want to win," said KL Rahul who ended up captaining India in the final game after Virat Kohli was rested and the original stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma limped from the field with a calf injury.

"It's good to be standing here 5-0. Every time we were put under pressure and every time we felt there were no answers we came up with the answers and somehow squeezed the win."

With teams building towards the World Cup later in the year, Kohli said India's philosophy was to never give up.

"The conversation we had in the changing room was always look at finding a way to win and that's something we have been working on as a team and when it comes together nicely it feels really good," he said.

After India made 163 for three batting first, New Zealand appeared to be cruising towards victory with senior batsman Ross Taylor, celebrating his 100th Twenty20 international, leading the chase after a disastrous start.

TAILSPIN

New Zealand were three for 17 after 20 deliveries before Taylor (53) and Tim Seifert (50) put on 99 for the fourth wicket.



MOUNT MAUNGANUI: Indian players celebrate with the trophy after winning the fifth Twenty20 cricket match between New Zealand and India at the Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui yesterday. — AFP

When they smacked 34 off Shivam Dube in the 10th over — with two sixes and a four each, plus a single for Seifert and an extra run from a no ball — the momentum was firmly in New Zealand's favour.

With 45 balls remaining, New Zealand were three for 116, but when Seifert was dismissed the innings went into a tailspin.

By the start of the last over New Zealand had been reduced to nine for 143

and although Ish Sodhi belted two sixes India retained control.

After winning the toss and electing to bat, India lost Sanju Samson for two in the second over.

Sharma put on 88 with Rahul (45) for the second wicket and had added 42 with Shreyas Iyer before he was injured.

Iyer was unbeaten on 33 at the close with Manish Pandey on 11.

Tim Southee, who led New Zealand

with Kane Williamson injured, maintained that the margin between the two sides was not great despite the series outcome.

"I don't think it's a massive gap. I know the series scoreline suggests that but the way the games being reasonably close it's just doing those small things a little bit better," he said.

The teams start the first of a three-match one-day international series in Hamilton on Wednesday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Completed scoreboard in the fifth Twenty20 international between New Zealand and India at Mount Maunganui yesterday:

India	
K. Rahul c Santner b Bennett	45
S. Samson c Santner b Kuggeleijn	2
R. Sharma retired hurt	60
S. Iyer not out	33
S. Dube c Bruce b Kuggeleijn	5
M. Pandey not out	11
Extras: (lb1, w6)	7
Total: (three wickets: 20 overs)	163
Fall of wickets: 1-8 (Samson), 2-96 (Rahul), 2-138 (Sharma retired), 3-148 (Dube)	
Did not bat: Washington Sundar, Shardul Thakur, Yuzvendra Chahal, Navdeep Saini, Jasprit Bumrah	
Bowling: Southee 4-0-52-0 (1w), Kuggeleijn 4-0-25-2 (1w), Bennett 4-0-21-1, Sodhi 4-0-28-0, Santner 4-0-36-0.	

New Zealand	
M. Guptill lbw Bumrah	2
C. Munro b Sundar	15
T. Seifert c Samson b Saini	50
T. Bruce run out (Samson/Rahul)	0
R. Taylor c Rahul b Saini	53
D. Mitchell b Bumrah	2
M. Santner c Pandey b Thakur	6
S. Kuggeleijn c Sundar b Thakur	0
T. Southee b Bumrah	6
Ish Sodhi not out	16
H. Bennett not out	1
Extras: (lb1, nb1, w3)	5
Total: (nine wickets: 20 overs)	156
Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Guptill), 2-17 (Munro), 3-17 (Bruce), 4-116 (Seifert), 5-119 (Mitchell), 6-131 (Santner), 7-132 (Kuggeleijn), 8-133 (Taylor), 9-141 (Southee)	
Bowling: Sundar 3-0-20-1, Bumrah 4-0-12-3, Saini 4-0-23-2, Thakur 4-0-38-2 (2w), Chahal 4-0-28-0 (1w), Dube 1-0-34-0 (1nb)	
Result: India won by seven runs	
Series: India 5-0	

WCup champions England, South Africa square up

CAPE TOWN: World Cup champions England return to one-day international action when they start a three-match series against South Africa at Newlands tomorrow.

Both countries have made numerous changes from the squads that played in the global event between May and July last year. Only eight of England's winning squad will be in action, while South Africa, the first team to be eliminated from contention for the World Cup semi-finals, have retained only five players.

Eoin Morgan has been widely praised for his leadership of the England team, while Quinton de Kock is something of an unknown quantity in charge of South Africa after the selectors decided to 'rest' Faf du Plessis from this series. Interim director of cricket Graeme Smith said recently that De Kock would have an extended run as captain of the one-day side with Du Plessis expected to quit international cricket later this year - long before the next World Cup in 2023.

Apart from being captain, De Kock is by far the most experienced batsman in what seems a largely experimental squad. To reduce his responsibilities, a second wicketkeeper in Kyle Verreynne has been chosen and will probably make his international debut at some stage in the series.

Star all-rounder Ben Stokes, the hard-hitting Jos Buttler and fast bowlers Jofra Archer and Mark Wood were all given this series off after being part of the World Cup-winning team and playing in the recently-finished Test series, with Archer subsequently ruled out because of injury. Among those with a chance to win longer-term one-day exposure are seam bowler Saqib Mahmood, leg-spinner Matt Parkinson and Test all-rounder Sam Curran, who joins his brother Tom in the squad.

South Africa have lost a slew of players to retirement or non-selection, including Du Plessis, Hashim Amla, JP Duminy and Imran Tahir, while fast bowler Kagiso Rabada was given an overdue rest from a series after being virtually ever-present for South Africa in the past three years. Janneman Malan, younger brother of Test opener Pieter, is regarded as one of the country's most exciting young players, as is Verreynne, while Temba Bavuma, having become a marginal player for the Test side, could get an extended run in the one-day team.

Lungi Ngidi was hailed as a potential fast bowling star when he made a match-winning Test debut against India two seasons ago - but injuries and lack of fitness have held him back. He had to prove his fitness for this series and made a successful return for the Titans franchise in a domestic one-day match on Friday. Lutho Sipamla is another exciting prospect and South Africa will be hoping the two young bowlers start a steep upward curve over the next three matches. England have lost raw pace in the form of Wood and Archer but will be watching the progress of Saqib Mahmood with particular interest when he makes his one-day international debut.

Squads

South Africa: Quinton de Kock (capt, wkt), Temba Bavuma, Bjorn Fortuin, Beuran Hendricks, Reeza Hendricks, Sisanda Magala, Janneman Malan, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Andile Phehlukwayo, Tabraiz Shamsi, Lutho Sipamla, Jon-Jon Smuts, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne (wkt).

England: Eoin Morgan (capt), Moeen Ali, Jonny Bairstow (wkt), Tom Banton, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Joe Denly, Chris Jordan, Saqib Mahmood, Dawid Malan, Matt Parkinson, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Jason Roy, Chris Woakes. — Reuters

Oilers dominate heated win over Flames

CALGARY: Connor McDavid scored twice, and Leon Draisaitl collected four assists to lead the visiting Edmonton Oilers to an 8-3 win over the Calgary Flames on Saturday night in an old-time Battle of Alberta matchup. The Oilers, who collected wins on consecutive nights, have an 8-1-2 record in their last 11 games. They scored twice in the first 65 seconds and led 4-1 early in the third before the Flames scored consecutive goals. Edmonton responded to Calgary's rally with two more goals from Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Caleb Jones to regain control before madness ensued. A line brawl broke out in the final minute of the second period, including a rare fight between Oilers goalie Mike Smith and Calgary netminder Cam Talbot. The fracas began with Talbot throwing punches at Sam Gagner in the Flames' end, and Talbot also got into it with Alex Chiasson before Smith approached center ice and invited Talbot to tussle.

RANGERS 1, RED WINGS 0

Henrik Lundqvist recorded his first shutout since the 2017-18 season, and visiting New York notched its second win over Detroit in as many nights.

New York won 4-2 on Friday on its home ice in the first game since the All-Star break for both teams. The 37-year-old Lundqvist, who is having the worst season of his storied career, made 33 saves Saturday while collecting his first shutout since Nov. 19, 2017. Lundqvist has five career shutouts against the Wings. Mika Zibanejad scored the only goal of the game on a power play in the opening period. Detroit's losing streak reached eight games despite 30 saves from Jonathan Bernier. The Wings, who have the league's worst record, have been shut out five times this season.

LIGHTNING 3, SHARKS 0

Steven Stamkos had a goal and an

assist, and Curtis McElhinney made 30 saves for his first shutout of the season as Tampa Bay won at San Jose.

Nikita Kucherov and Ondrej Palat also scored for the Lightning, who went 3-0-1 on their four-game trip to Dallas, Los Angeles, Anaheim and San Jose, and improved to 15-2-1 in their past 18 games. Tampa Bay also improved to 8-0-0 this season against Pacific Division teams. San Jose goaltender Aaron Dell stopped 32 of 34 shots, but the Sharks lost their second straight and dropped to 1-5-0 in their past six games.

BRUINS 6, WILD 1

Defenseman Torey Krug collected two goals and two assists as Boston breezed past Minnesota in Saint Paul, Minn. All-Star Game MVP David Pastrnak recorded his career high-tying 38th goal to highlight his three-point performance for the Bruins, who went 3-for-3 on the power play in the second period. Brad Marchand and Jake DeBrusk each had a goal and an assist, and Jaroslav Halak made 25 saves to help Boston improve to 7-2-1 in its last 10 games overall. The Bruins have also won six in a row versus the Wild.

CANUCKS 4, ISLANDERS 3 (OT)

Quinn Hughes scored his second goal of the game 42 seconds into overtime as visiting Vancouver remained red-hot with a win over New York. Hughes' goal on the only shot of overtime gave the Canucks their fifth straight win and improved them to 14-3-0 since Dec. 19. J.T. Miller and Tim Schaller also scored, and Jacob Markstrom made 34 saves. Brock Nelson's goal during the final minute of regulation forced overtime for the Islanders, who have lost four of five (1-2-2) and are just 13-12-4 since a franchise-record 17-game point streak from Oct. 12-Nov. 23. Michael Dal Colle and Jordan Eberle also scored for New York, while goalie Thomas Greiss recorded 20 saves.

JETS 5, BLUES 2

Jack Roslovic scored twice and added an assist as Winnipeg beat visiting St. Louis to snap a five-game losing streak. Connor Hellebuyck made 38 saves for the Jets, who won for just the second time in their last nine games. Andrew Copp, Blake



CALGARY: Ryan Nugent-Hopkins #93 of the Edmonton Oilers takes a shot on the net of Cameron Talbot #39 of the Calgary Flames during an NHL game at Scotiabank Saddledome in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. — AFP

Wheeler and Patrik Laine also scored for Winnipeg, and Sami Niku and Mark Scheifele each had two assists. Brayden Schenn and Ryan O'Reilly scored, and Jordan Binnington stopped 28 of 31 shots for the Blues, who are 1-6-1 in their last eight road games.

CANADIENS 4, PANTHERS 0

Defenseman Jeff Petry posted a career-high four assists, and Carey Price stopped 29 shots to lead host Montreal over Florida. Petry has seven points (one goal, six assists) in two games against the Panthers this season. He logged helpers on goals by Nick Suzuki, Arturi Lehkonen, Tomas Tatar and Brendan Gallagher. The Panthers, who lost captain Aleksander Barkov in the second period with a lower-body injury, had their six-game winning streak snapped. Coach Joel Quenneville said afterward that Barkov's injury did not appear to be serious.

FLYERS 6, AVALANCHE 3

Kevin Hayes and Joel Farabee scored two goals apiece to lift host Philadelphia past Colorado. Matt Niskanen had a goal

and an assist. Scott Laughton also scored and Sean Couturier recorded three assists for the Flyers, who improved to 18-4-4 at home. Hayes also had an assist. Flyers goaltender Alex Lyon made 28 saves. Andre Burakovsky and Nikita Zadorov each had a goal and an assist, while Mikko Rantanen also scored for the Avalanche, who had their three-game winning streak snapped. Avalanche goaltender Philipp Grubauer stopped 22 shots.

SABRES 2, BLUE JACKETS 1 (OT)

Jack Eichel scored the game-winning goal 36 seconds into overtime as Buffalo cooled off visiting Columbus. The Sabres gained possession on the faceoff in the extra period and never relinquished the puck. Eichel entered the offensive zone from the left, moved over into the right circle and zipped home his career-high 31st goal on the only overtime shot. It was his team-best third OT winner this season. Evan Rodrigues scored, and Rasmus Dahlin, Rasmus Ristolainen and Sam Reinhart contributed assists for the Sabres, who improved to 5-1-0 in matinee contests this season. — Reuters

Finau fires 62 to grab one-shot lead in Phoenix

LOS ANGELES: Tony Finau was on fire in the Arizona desert Saturday, posting an eagle and seven birdies in a nine-under par 62 for a one-shot lead in the US PGA Tour Phoenix Open. Finau's 16-under par total of 197 put him one in front of fellow American Webb Simpson, whose seven-under 64 included a hole in one at the par-three 12th.

Overnight leader J.B. Holmes carded a one-under 70 on the TPC Scottsdale Stadium Course and was tied for third with Hudson Swafford (66) on 199. "I hit more fair-

ways today, so I was able to give myself some short irons into the par-fours," said Finau, who started the day four strokes off Holmes' lead.

He hit 12 of 14 fairways in regulation and 15 of 18 greens and said the round didn't require a lot of thinking. "Not too much going on upstairs, you're looking and you're hitting," he said. "The big thing is to capitalize. The greens are so good here, the golf course is in such great shape, you've got to capitalize when you hit it close."

Finau was five-under for the day when he rolled in a 20-foot eagle putt at the 13th. He had a six-footer for eagle at 15 but settled for a birdie. At 16 — where thousands jam the bleacher seats and pricier hospitality suites to create a raucous atmosphere at the par-three hole — Finau again donned a Kobe Bryant jersey in honor of the NBA great who died in a helicopter crash last week at the age of 41.

He belted a tee shot that hit inches from the cup and left him a five-footer for his last birdie of the day. "I had a

perfect number for a sand wedge and went ahead and just fired at the pin," Finau said. "Damn near made it."

"That would have been pretty sweet with the Kobe jersey on, but I liked that," added Finau, who is seeking a second US PGA Tour title to go with the Puerto Rico Open victory in 2016. Simpson's biggest shot of the day came before a smaller but equally enthusiastic gallery at the 12th, where his tee shot from 196 yards took a couple of bounces and rolled right in.

"It was a perfect number for a seven-iron," he said. "I quit watching it because I'm getting older and I can't see it once it hits the green so I wasn't even watching. "But the crowd got excited so I looked up ... I was shocked."

Simpson said he'd have to keep the accelerator down yesterday to claim his first win since the 2018 Players Championship. "Tony played great today, there's guys within reach," Simpson said. "I would imagine it's going to take another really solid round, maybe even a really low round to win." — AFP

Sports

Ronaldo penalty double sends Juventus six points clear

'Referees cannot decide matches'

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo stretched his scoring streak to nine consecutive league games with a penalty double yesterday as Juventus bounced back from last weekend's defeat to Napoli with a 3-0 win over Fiorentina.

The Portuguese striker slotted in both his goals from the spot in either half in Turin with Dutch defender Matthijs de Ligt heading in a third in injury time. Maurizio Sarri's side opened up a six-point lead at the top of the Serie A table on second-placed Inter Milan, who travel to lowly Udinese later yesterday.

Juventus had fallen to just their second defeat of the season last weekend at Sarri's former club Napoli, despite Ronaldo scoring. "Cristiano Ronaldo continues to score repeatedly and for him it's important psychologically," said Sarri of the player who turns 35 years old next Wednesday.

"Physically he's good and making a difference. The other forwards are doing well too." Fiorentina, in 14th position, have had a resurgence since Giuseppe Iachini took over on December 24, but suffered their first league defeat this year.

Club president Rocco Comisso was furious at the penalty decisions. "I am disgusted with what I saw today," blasted the Italian-born US businessman who bought the Tuscany club last year. "Juve are very strong, a team with a wage bill of 350 million doesn't need help. Referees cannot decide matches."

"Today they gave two penalties against us, maybe

the first was there but the second certainly wasn't." His side tested Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny early with the Pole getting his hand to Federico Chiesa's back-heel kick and a Pol Lirola effort.

Fellow Pole Bartlomiej Dragowski denied Rodrigo Bentancur at the other end before a VAR review confirmed Fiorentina's German Pezzella had handled the ball in the area. Five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo made no mistake, slotting in five minutes before the break.

His second came 10 minutes from time for a disputed Federico Ceccherini foul on Bentancur. Ronaldo made it 14 goals in nine games to bring his tally to 19 this season, including seven penalties. The former Real Madrid player has now scored 50 goals in 70 games since moving to Juventus in 2018.

He also becomes the first Juventus player to achieve a run of goals in nine consecutive league games since David Trezeguet in December 2005. De Ligt nodded in a Paulo Dybala cross in stoppage time for his first goal at the Allianz Stadium, as Iachini fell to his first league defeat with the Tuscany side.

Third-placed Lazio will try to close the gap on Juventus against struggling SPAL later. Roma's hold on fourth however is now at risk after losing 4-2 to Sassuolo on Saturday. Atalanta are just a point behind in fifth before they play relegation candidates Genoa looking to move into the final Champions League berth. —AFP



TURIN: Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (R) works around Fiorentina's Spanish defender Pol Lirola (L) during the Italian Serie A football match Juventus vs Fiorentina yesterday at the Juventus Allianz stadium in Turin. — AFP

Lakers blitz host Kings early, cruise to 129-113 victory

SACRAMENTO: Anthony Davis had a team-high 21 points. LeBron James ran up a triple-double and the Los Angeles Lakers used a 44-point first quarter Saturday night to power a front-running 129-113 victory over the host Sacramento Kings. Avery Bradley poured 16 of his 19 points into the first 12 minutes for the Lakers, who were coming off a 127-119 home loss that followed a tribute to the late Kobe Bryant on Friday night. The Lakers improved to 7-0 on the second night of back-to-backs, riding Bradley's four early 3-pointers to lead by as many as 24 in the first 12 minutes. James' finished with 15 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists for his 11th triple-double of the season, one off Luka Doncic's league lead, and the 92nd of his career. Only Oscar Robertson (181), Russell Westbrook (146), Magic Johnson (138) and Jason Kidd (107) have more career triple-doubles. De'Aaron Fox scored a game-high 24 points, and Buddy Hield had 22 for the Kings, who had won three of their last four.

PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS 124 - UTAH JAZZ 107

Damian Lillard continued his torrid roll with 51 points on 17-of-29 shooting from the field, and he added 12 assists to lead host Portland past Utah. Lillard also made all eight of his free throws en route to his third 50-point effort over the past six games and fourth of the season. He is averaging 48.8 points during the six-game stretch. Hassan Whiteside added 17 points, 21 rebounds and three blocked shots as the Trail Blazers won their fourth straight game and fifth in their last six. Donovan Mitchell scored 25 points, and Bojan Bogdanovic and Mike Conley added 22 apiece but couldn't prevent the Jazz from losing their season-worst fourth straight game.

BOSTON CELTICS 116 - PHILADELPHIA 76ERS 95

Jaylen Brown scored 32 points, Jayson Tatum added 25 and Boston avoided a season sweep at the hands of visiting Philadelphia. Marcus Smart had 16 points, Brad Wanamaker chipped in 15 and the Celtics won for the sixth time in their last seven games. Boston played without leading scorer Kemba Walker, sidelined by a sore left knee. Ben Simmons led the 76ers with 23 points, and Joel Embiid was held to 11 on 1-of-11 shooting. Philadelphia shot 36.9 percent (31 of 84) for the contest and 21.2 percent (7 of 33) from 3-point range in losing its second straight. The 76ers had beaten the Celtics in their first three meetings this sea-

son, including Dec. 12 at TD Garden.

LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS 118 - MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES 106

Kawhi Leonard scored 31 points in 24 minutes, his ninth straight game of scoring at least 30 points, as host Los Angeles defeated Minnesota. Paul George, playing in his second contest after missing nine due to a left hamstring strain, had 21 points and seven rebounds in 25 minutes. Lou Williams added 17 points, and Montrezl Harrell contributed 16 points and six rebounds. Karl-Anthony Towns had 32 points and 12 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who lost their 11th straight game. Andrew Wiggins, limited with foul trouble in the first half, had only 13 points on 4-of-11 shooting. Josh Okogie had 13 points, while Robert Covington chipped in 12 points.

MIAMI HEAT 102 - ORLANDO MAGIC 89

Jimmy Butler scored 24 points, and Tyler Herro added 23 as Miami handed host Orlando its season-worst fifth straight defeat. Aaron Gordon led the Magic with 24 points, and Nikola Vucevic added 21. Evan Fournier, who entered the game as Orlando's leading scorer at 18.8 points, was held to 12 points, including five in the first three quarters. Playing with a sore back, he shot just 3-for-13 from the floor. Butler and teammate Bam Adebayo played their first game since being named All-Stars on Thursday. Adebayo had a poor shooting night, going 1-for-8 with four points, but he grabbed 14 rebounds, had five assists and blocked a season-high four shots.

DALLAS MAVERICKS 123 - ATLANTA HAWKS 100

Jalen Brunson scored a season-high 27 points to help host Dallas defeat Atlanta and secure coach Rick Carlisle's 500th win with the team. In 12 seasons leading the Mavericks, Carlisle is 500-435, a winning percentage of 53.5. Brunson, starting for injured NBA All-Star Luka Doncic, was 12-for-22 from the floor, two of them 3-pointers, with eight assists in his ninth start of the season. The Mavericks were also without Kristaps Porzingis for the second half in the back-to-back game. Atlanta was led by John Collins with 26 points and 11 rebounds — his 12th double-double in 24 games — and 20 points from Kevin Huerter, who made six 3-pointers. Trae Young was limited to 12 points and left early with a sprained ankle.

WASHINGTON WIZARDS 113 - BROOKLYN NETS 107

Bradley Beal scored 15 of his game-high 34 points in the fourth quarter as host Washington rallied late and defeated Brooklyn, which lost Kyrie Irving to a knee sprain in the fourth quarter. All of Beal's fourth-quarter points came in the final 7:02, as he scored 15 of the team's last 21 during the comeback after the Nets had led most of the game. Thomas Bryant pitched in for the Wizards with 17

points and 10 rebounds. Irving finished with 11 points. ESPN reported he will undergo an MRI Sunday. Spencer Dinwiddie led Brooklyn with 26 points, and Garrett Temple added 17, all in the first half.

SAN ANTONIO SPURS 114 - CHARLOTTE HORNETS 90

DeMar DeRozan scored 24 points, and Jakob Poeltl added a season-best 17 on 7-for-8 shooting as San Antonio dominated the second half on the way to an easy home win against Charlotte. The Spurs trailed by 13 points at the half but stormed back in the third quarter. After trailing 70-51 at the 9:22 mark, San Antonio ripped off runs of 13-2 and 15-2 to jump back in front at 79-74. Poeltl and DeRozan each had eight points in the pivotal stretch, which set the table for a 35-point fourth quarter. Miles Bridges led all scorers with 25 points for Charlotte, with Cody Zeller adding 14 points and 12 rebounds. Malik Monk totaled 11 points, and Willy Hernangomez and Terry Rozier scored 10 each for the Hornets, who have lost two straight games and 16 of their past 19.

NEW YORK KNICKS 92 - INDIANA PACERS 85

Marcus Morris Sr. scored 12 of his game-high 28 points in the fourth quarter, and his jumper with 5:50 left gave New York Knicks a lead it would not relinquish in an upset of host Indiana. Julius Randle had 16 points and a season-high 18 rebounds for the Knicks, who entered Saturday tied for the worst record in the Eastern Conference but rode dominant defensive efforts in the first and fourth quarters to win for just the fourth time in the last 16 games. Taj Gibson added 10 points. Domantas Sabonis had 25 points and eight rebounds for the Pacers, who lost for only the third time in 11 games. Indiana scored only 11 points in the first quarter — its lowest output in a quarter all season — before being outscored 20-14 in the fourth. Myles Turner had 12 points, while Malcolm Brogdon finished with eight points and 12 assists.

GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS 131 - CLEVELAND CAVALIERS 112

Draymond Green matched his career high with 16 assists, including eight during a 44-point third-quarter explosion that propelled Golden State to a romp at Cleveland. The Warriors shot 10-for-14 on 3-pointers in their third-quarter blitz, which began with a two-point halftime lead and ended with a commanding 105-78 advantage. Glenn Robinson III added 22 points for the Warriors, while D'Angelo Russell contributed 19 points, seven rebounds and eight assists. Collin Sexton had a game-high 23 points to pace the Cavaliers, who dropped their 10th in a row at home and 10th in 11 games overall. Kevin Love recorded a 14-point, 11-rebound double-double for the Cleveland, which fell to 0-3 on a four-game homestand. — Reuters



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

UC Sampdoria v SSC Napoli 22:45
beIN SPORTS

Arsenal held in Burnley stalemate

BURNLEY: Arsenal lost more ground in the race to finish in the Premier League's top four after being held to a 0-0 draw at Burnley yesterday. Mikel Arteta's side are trailing 10 points behind fourth placed Chelsea and look certain to fall well short of the Champions League places. It was another frustrating afternoon for Arteta, who saw his team squander several chances to take the lead in a match they could easily have lost with better finishing from Burnley.

Arsenal are without a win in their last four league games, having drawn all four of them, and Arteta has won just once in seven league matches since replacing the sacked Unai Emery. Arteta can point to only one defeat in that period and there is no doubt Arsenal are more competitive than they were under Emery.

Even so, they still look creaky at the back and lack a cutting edge up front, a concerning issue given the supposed wealth of attacking options in Arteta's squad. Arsenal have now drawn five consecutive away league matches for the first time since August 1948 and actually sit closer to the relegation zone — seven points away — than the top four. New signings Cedric Soares and Pablo Mari were missing from the Arsenal squad due to fitness concerns. But Pierre Emmerick-Aubameyang returned after serving a suspension for his red card at Crystal Palace.

Mesut Ozil made his 250th Arsenal appearance after reports Arteta has blocked the German from joining a Qatari club. Ozil and Aubameyang combined to carve open the Burnley defence in the opening moments, but Alexandre Lacazette headed wide from the Gabon striker's cross.

Arteta had his players run into boxing bags at the club's training ground this week in an unusual attempt to prepare for the physical test posed by Burnley.

Arsenal were up for the challenge, moving the ball quickly and with purpose at times. But Aubameyang should have done better than shoot harmlessly wide after getting behind Matt Lowton to reach David Luiz's long pass.

After a slow start, Burnley threatened when Jay Rodriguez tested Bernd Leno with a stinging drive before Dwight McNeil blasted just over. Arsenal remained dangerous on the counter and Burnley keeper Nick Pope did well to block Aubameyang's chip. Kept in the contest by their relentless work ethic, Burnley could have snatched the lead when Jeff Hendrick scooped wastefully over from McNeil's cross. Arsenal suffered a blow when young left-back Bukayo Saka was forced off at the interval after initially playing through his first-half injury. Arteta's defence were exposed in the air time and again as Burnley dominated after half-time. They stood rooted to the spot when James Tarkowski headed a free-kick wide before Hendrick nodded past the post from McNeil's cross.

Aubameyang has seven goals in four games against Burnley, but he couldn't break the deadlock this time, diving to head wide from Lacazette's cross. Rodriguez should have won it for Burnley when he met McNeil's cross with a close-range volley that hit the bar and bounced down on the line, with goalline technology confirming the whole ball did not go over. — AFP

Bolaca guides Fiji to Sydney Sevens win

SYDNEY: Fiji claimed their first World Sevens Series title in Sydney after an enthralling 12-10 win over South Africa yesterday. The Pacific Islanders had won five times on Australian soil — in Adelaide, Brisbane and on the Gold Coast — but never in Sydney.

But two first half tries from the dynamic Napolioni Bolaca was enough to see them home against the South Africans. Fiji had signalled their intent this weekend when they comfortably accounted for New Zealand in the pool stages on Saturday. They then held off England 17-14 in the semi-finals to set up the decider against South Africa, who saw off the USA 19-12 in their semi. In a final played in pouring rain, the Fijians opened the scoring in the second minute when Bolaca took advantage of an overlap to score his 11th try of the tournament. The Blitz Boks struck back two minutes later with an unconverted try out wide to JC Pretorius. But right on halftime Bolaca glided through the South African defence to give his side a crucial seven point lead at the break. The weather conditions made a free flowing game difficult but the South Africans got back in the game with a try in the corner to Zain Davids with three minutes remaining. However, the conversion attempt missed to the left and Fiji held on to win in front of thousands of local Fijian fans.

"Before we went on the field the message I told my team was just to come out here and enjoy it and just do the job," Fiji captain Meri Derenalagi said. "We delivered on that so I just want to thank the soldiers behind



SYDNEY: Angelo Davids of South Africa is tackled in the men's rugby sevens final match against Fiji during the Sydney Sevens rugby tournament at Bankwest Stadium yesterday. — AFP

me for the great effort they showed today."

Earlier, New Zealand's women made it four tournament wins this season when they downed Canada 33-7. Player of the match Tyla Nathan-Wong put the Kiwis ahead in the fifth minute, but two minutes later Canadian speedster Charity Williams scored under the posts to level the match.

However, New Zealand's Gayle Broughton scored right on half-time and the series leaders asserted their dominance with second-half tries to Niall Williams, Therena Fitzpatrick and Alena Saili. "They're a quality team, New Zealand captain Sarah Hirini said of her Canadian opponents. "It's pretty tough to tackle those girls so I'm just so proud of our efforts." — AFP

25 Meet Alex, the taxi driver who became a Grand Slam-winning coach

26 India hail 'winning habit' in T20 series sweep against N Zealand

27 Ronaldo penalty double sends Juventus six points clear



Djokovic beats Thiem to win Australian Open



MELBOURNE: Serbia's Novak Djokovic holds the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup trophy after beating Austria's Dominic Thiem (R) in their men's singles final match on day fourteen of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic battled through a five-set thriller with Dominic Thiem to maintain his dominance at the Australian Open yesterday, claiming a record eighth title and returning to world number one in the process.

The indomitable Serb stretched his unbeaten streak this season to 13 but he had to rally from two sets to one down to beat the courageous fifth-seeded Austrian 6-4, 4-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 in a nearly four-hour marathon.

It was his 17th Grand Slam title, moving him within two of Rafael Nadal and three of Roger Federer on the all-time list. "Definitely my favourite court, my favourite stadium in the world and I'm blessed to hold this trophy once again," said Djokovic.

Victory put him alongside his fellow legends as only the third man in history to win eight or more titles at the same Slam after Nadal (12 at the French Open) and Federer (eight at Wimbledon). It also ensured he will once again be world number one when the new rankings are released today, usurping Nadal. Federer remains third with Thiem moving up a place to a career-high fourth. But it wasn't easy with the Serb looking lethargic and out for the count in sets two and three before regaining his mojo after a medical timeout to grind down the talented Thiem. Djokovic had never before won a Slam final in seven previous attempts when finding himself two sets to one down.

"You and two other guys (Nadal and Federer) brought men's tennis to another level. I am happy I can compete in these times," said Thiem. "I fell short today but I hope soon I can compete with you again."

The Serb, 32, was the overwhelming favourite, but the supremely fit and fast Thiem, 26, always had the weapons to trouble him, which he deployed successfully for much of the match, taming his serve and unleashing some explosive groundstrokes.

It was a nerveless start from Djokovic, who comfortably held then put big pressure on the Austrian's serve, with a forehand into the net giving him an immediate break and a psychological edge after some monster rallies. Thiem, though, is as strong mentally as he is physically and he finally got on the scoreboard after

another tough service game.

And against the run of play, with Djokovic seemingly in control, he broke back, unleashing pinpoint groundstrokes to make the most of some loose Djokovic shots.

But the world number two was unrelenting, breaking again as Thiem served to stay in the set, with the Austrian sending down his first double fault of the match at the crucial moment.

Remarkably, a rare Djokovic double fault handed Thiem a break to go 2-1 up in set two with the courageous Austrian refusing to go away. The Serb was getting frustrated, looking at his coaching box and pointing out the set — the first the Serb had dropped in an Australian Open final since 2015.

Djokovic appeared dejected and was immediately broken twice in set three as Thiem raced to a 4-0 lead, having won six games in a row with Djokovic imploding. The Serb was heard telling a trainer he was tired and after losing the set, he went for a medical timeout. He came back and the fourth set went with serve until a Thiem double fault handed the Serb two break points and he converted to regain control, serving out the set with an ace.

Djokovic drew on all his experience to force another break in the deciding fifth set to take a 2-1 lead and kept his foot on the gas to claim an eighth crown from the last 13 Australian Opens.

"It wasn't meant to be tonight," Djokovic told Thiem. "Tough luck. It was a tough match. But you were very close to winning it. "You know, you definitely have a lot more time in your career and I'm sure that you will get one of the Grand Slam trophies. And more. More than one." — AFP

Tottenham sink Manchester City

LONDON: Steven Bergwijn made an instant impact on his Tottenham Hotspur debut with a stunning opener in his side's 2-0 win over champions Manchester City in an incident-packed Premier League game yesterday.

The Dutch midfielder, signed this week from PSV Eindhoven, swept home a right-foot volley three minutes after City had been reduced to 10 men when Oleksandr Zinchenko was shown a second yellow card on the hour.

With City stretched Son Heung-min added a second in the 71st minute with a deflected effort, allowing Spurs manager Jose Mourinho to get the better of his old adversary Pep Guardiola for only the sixth time in 23

clashes.

City remain 22 points behind runaway leaders Liverpool and only had themselves to blame for a sixth defeat of the season as they wasted several gilt-edged chances and missed yet another penalty when Hugo Lloris saved Ilkay Gundogan's spot kick.

Sergio Aguero was unusually profligate for City, striking the post in the first half and missing two other chances. While City's pursuit of Liverpool has long run out of steam, a second successive league win revived Tottenham's push for a top-four finish. They moved up to fifth in the table, four points behind London rivals Chelsea. — Reuters



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's South Korean striker Son Heung-Min (L) has this shot blocked by Manchester City's Brazilian midfielder Fernandinho (R) during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester City at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London, yesterday. — AFP