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Iranian satellite fails to reach orbit after 'successful' launch

Tehran unveils ballistic missile with 'new generation' engines



TEHRAN: An image grab shows the launch of the new Raad-500 missile yesterday. — AFP

TEHRAN: Iran "successfully" launched a satellite into space yesterday but it fell short of reaching orbit, a defense ministry spokesman said on state television. Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi admitted in a tweet that the launch "failed", adding: "But We're UNSTOPPABLE! We have more Upcoming Great Iranian Satellites!"

The satellite had been launched at 7:15 pm (1545 GMT) before it went "90 percent of the way", reaching an altitude of 540 km, said Ahmad Hosseini, spokesman for the defense ministry's space unit. "The Simorgh (rocket) successfully propelled the Zafar satellite into space but the carrier did not reach the required speed to put the satellite into the intended orbit," he told state television.

"Unfortunately, in the final moments the carrier did not reach the required speed. God willing with improvements made in future launches this part of the mission will be done as well," he added. "We achieved most of the goals we had and data has been acquired, and in the near future, by analyzing the data, we will take the next steps."

The satellite, which Iran says was to be

used for scientific observation, is part of a program that Tehran's arch enemy Washington has described as a "provocation". The arch foes have appeared to be on the brink of an all-out confrontation twice in the past seven months.

Long-standing acrimony between Tehran and Washington was exacerbated in 2018 when US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from a deal that froze Iran's nuclear program, before and issuing new demands that Tehran curtail its development of ballistic missiles. Washington has also raised concerns in the past about Tehran's satellite program, saying the launch of a carrier rocket in January 2019 amounted to a violation of limits on its ballistic missiles.

Iran maintains it has no intention of acquiring nuclear weapons, and says its aerospace activities are peaceful and comply with a UN Security Council resolution. Jahromi, had announced the impending launch by tweeting: "Beginning countdown to launch #Zafar_Satellite in the next few hours... In the Name of God."

On Feb 1, the head of Iran's space agency said the 113-kg Zafar - "Victory" in Farsi -

would be launched into orbit 530 km above Earth by a Simorgh (Phoenix) rocket. Its "primary mission" would be to collect imagery, Morteza Berari told AFP, adding that Iran needed such data to study earthquakes, deal with a range of natural disasters and develop its agriculture. The Zafar was designed to remain operational for "more than 18 months", he added. While the Islamic republic's satellite program has sparked concern among some Western countries, Berari said Iran supported the "peaceful use of outer space".

Iran also unveiled yesterday a new short-range ballistic missile and its "new generation" of engines designed to put satellites into space. The Guards' Sepahnews website said the Raad-500 missile was equipped with new Zoheir engines made of composite materials lighter than on earlier steel models. It also unveiled Salman engines made of the same materials but with a "movable nozzle" for the delivery of satellites into space. The Raad was "a new generation missile that has half the weight of a Fateh-110 missile but with 200 km more range," it added. The Fateh-110 is a ballistic ground-to-ground missile first unveiled in 2002.

Continued on Page 24

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Al-Shaheed Park tells story of Kuwait's history, rich culture

Landmark welcomed more than five million visitors in the last four years



KUWAIT: Al-Shaheed Park's exercise track with a view of Kuwait City. —Amiri Diwan photos

KUWAIT: In the heart of Kuwait City lies Al-Shaheed Park, an oasis of greenery and space that stands as an emblem of the nation's illustrious history, besides being a multifaceted destination that promises visitors a memorable experience. As the biggest public park in the country, nestled between adjacent high-rise buildings and stretching over 320,000 square meters, it paints a splendid image of Kuwait as an enduring memory of the nation's martyrs through hosting a wide array of festivities. Kuwait's Amiri Diwan has recently given the park a major facelift, as per the instructions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, according to its chief financial officer Abdulaziz Ishaq, who described the "novel initiative" as a development plan pioneered by Kuwaiti youth. The prominent government body has put youngsters in charge of the park's administration as an effort to encourage Kuwaiti youth to contribute towards national development plans, added the official, highlighting the safety of visitors as the administration's perennial concern.

Dishing out significant statistics, the official revealed that the park welcomed more than five million visitors from various age groups in the last four years, in addition to hosting more than 3,600 events running the gamut from sports spectacles to arts extravaganzas. He spoke of a vision behind the park's inception, which aims to transform the facility into a bastion of Kuwaiti culture and the sports epicenter of the country, pointing out that the myriad of activities the park offers are family-friendly and cater towards children and youngsters alike.

The park has recently enlisted the services of special guides, all of whom take visitors on a comprehensive tour of the facility, offering them some of Kuwait's most significant historical tidbits and geographical information, he revealed. As a recreational facility, it also allows visitors the chance to arrange rendezvous at some of the cafes and restaurants located inside, in addition to indulging in a shopping spree at some of the outlets available, the official added. —KUNA



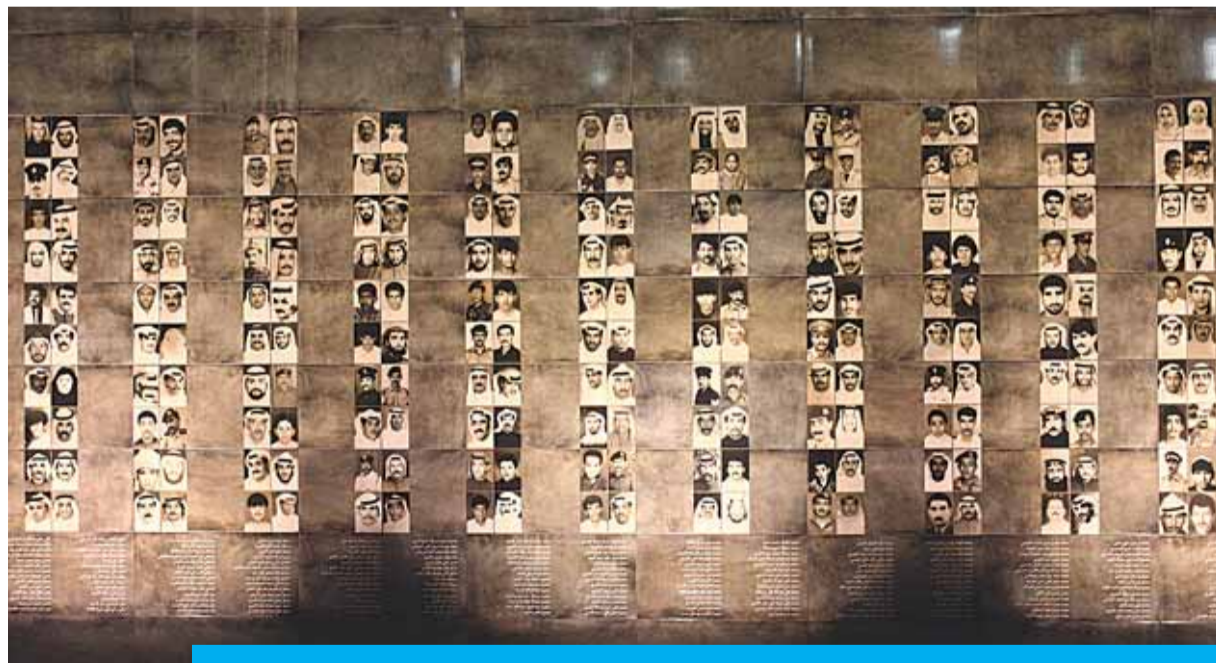
Lots of green inside Al-Shaheed Park.



Man-made lakes inside Al-Shaheed Park.



Man-made lakes inside Al-Shaheed Park.



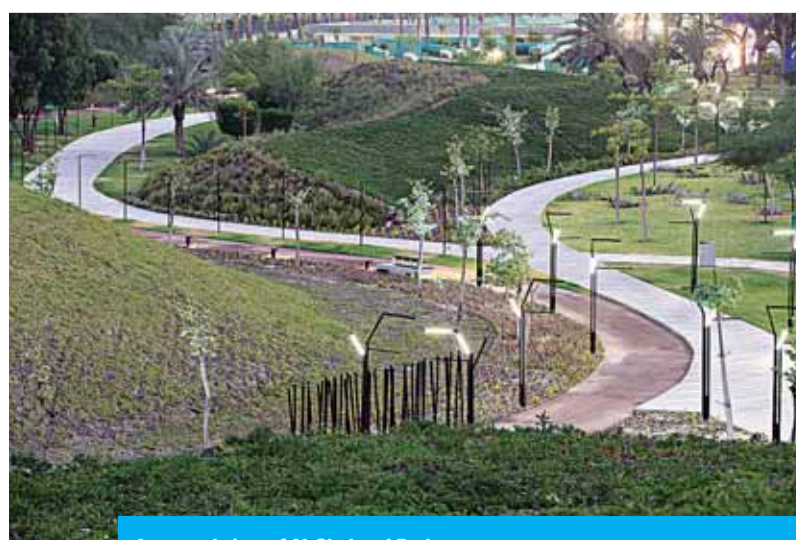
A mural displayed at the park depicting photos of Kuwaiti martyrs.



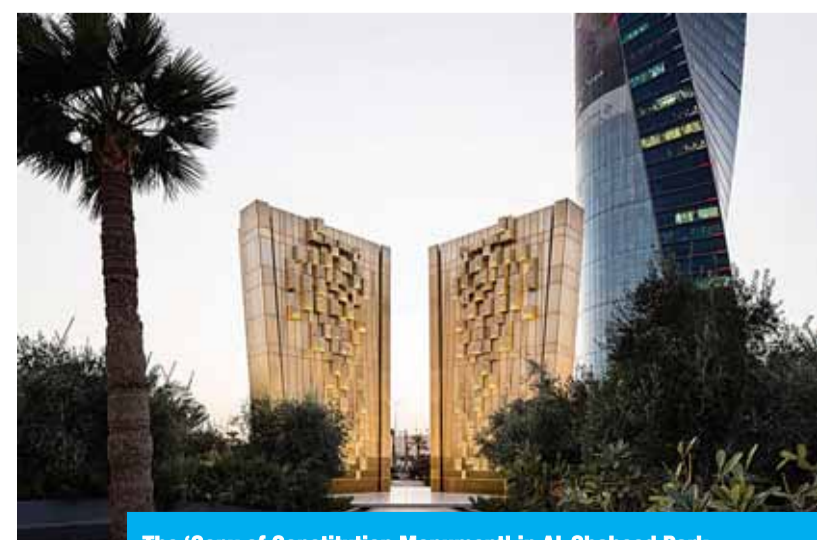
The Martyr's Monument in Al-Shaheed Park.



Young students visiting the park.



A general view of Al-Shaheed Park.



The 'Copy of Constitution Monument' in Al-Shaheed Park.

Amir receives top Kuwaiti officials at Bayan Palace

Sheikh Sabah to patronize 2019 KFAS award ceremony

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and members of the parliamentary caucus who participated in the 30th emergency session of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union in Amman, Jordan. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Chairman of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council, the Cassation Court and the Constitutional Court, Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Speaker Ghanem and members of his delegation, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa. In addition, His Highness received Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior Anas Al-Saleh, as well as Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is set to patronize the 2019 Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) award ceremony, today at 10:00 am at Bayan Palace. His Highness deputized His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to attend the event.

Separately, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of condolences to King of Thailand Maha Vajiralongkorn over the shooting rampage that killed dozens inside a shopping center in the capital Bangkok. In the cable, His Highness wished mercy for the deceased and a swift recovery for the injured, expressing Kuwait's condemnation of the shooting. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables, while National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent cables to his Thai counterpart Chuan Leekpai and president of the Senate. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and members of the parliamentary caucus who participated in the 30th emergency session of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union.



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chief Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa.

Kuwait Capital Markets Authority lists first 'Reit Fund' on bourse

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Capital Markets Authority (CMA) approved a request to list 'KFH Capital Reit Fund' on Kuwait bourse, as the first real estate yield-generating fund. The authority said in statement that this approval brings a new investment product that allows investment in real estate assets and generates a periodic income on the fund's assets to benefit from the income of these properties by up to 90 percent of operating income. The approval came after the request met relevant requirements and criteria, the statement added. In September 2019, with a fixed capital of KD 100 million (\$330 million), KFH Capital, the investment arm of Kuwait Finance House Group (KFH), has announced the launch of 'KFH Capital Reit Fund', the first local real estate



investment trust. This comes as part of KFH Capital's efforts to diversify investing opportunities for its customers, offering new tools that generate sustainable yields as well as strengthen the company's position as the best investment destination in the region. The fund invests mainly in income-generating real estate assets in various sectors in Kuwait including the investment, commercial and industrial sectors. Equipped with professional team with long experience in the local real estate market. — KUNA

Ready for the Beach ??



KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah visited Kenya's embassy to convey condolences of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti government and people over the passing away of former Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi. — KUNA

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Local

Philippine mission's mandate is to protect interest, welfare of fellow citizens: Embassy source

Official responds to rumors on Kuwait warning against 'sheltering' runaway maids

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Philippine Embassy responded to a news article published last week warning it against 'sheltering' runaway workers inside the embassy building, reminding the Philippines that sheltering absconding workers is against Kuwaiti law. "This was a mere proposal subject to further studies," said an embassy official who agreed to be interviewed on the condition of anonymity since the newly-designated ambassador to Kuwait Noordin Pendosina Lomondot is yet to arrive after taking the oath of office at Malacanang Palace before President Rodrigo Duterte over the weekend.

"I don't think it will be implemented soon. It was a proposal on the part of the Kuwaiti government and not from the Philippine side. I heard about it some time ago, even before the meeting last week. We told them it has to be studied first," said the embassy official. "Remember that we are only allowed to bring 50 runaway housemaids to the Kuwaiti government shelter. What I know is that Secretary Silvestre Bello III requested to increase the number from 50 to 100. This was mentioned during meetings with Kuwaiti officials, which they agreed, but our runaway housemaid numbers have always been at 300 or higher, so where are we going to take the 200 plus more maids in case they invoke this Kuwaiti law? Maybe if they increase the shelters, perhaps we will 'study' the matter, but then again we also have to ensure the safety of our citizens if their lives are being threatened by their

employers," the embassy source told Kuwait Times. "Our mission's mandate from our government in Manila is to protect the interests and welfare of our fellow citizens working overseas wherever they are in the world, and this includes Kuwait; this mandate has never been replaced or changed till now," the source added.

“Only 50 maids allowed in govt shelter”

There have been several cases of employers going to the Philippine Embassy to take back domestic workers who have fled and sought sanctuary there. In one instance, a former welfare officer at the embassy was involved in a physical altercation with a Kuwaiti employer who tried to physically remove his housemaid from the embassy and take her back to his home.

"It's a dangerous precedent if we shut the shelter and allow the government of Kuwait to take custody of our

runaway workers. The Kuwaiti government should instead help the Philippine embassy expedite the resolution of runaway housemaid cases so they can easily be reunited with their families. They are human beings too. While we don't blame the entire problem on employers as they are mostly arising from the housemaids, they are poor and disadvantaged - have mercy on them," a community leader said.

The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) opened a shelter for absconding domestic workers in 2014. It is designed to house more than 500 runaway housemaids of various nationalities, but the location is somewhere in the heart of Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, and it is not easy for runaway helpers to find. Many of them escape with friends who are also Filipino, and they mostly go to the embassy as a safe haven.

The question of the embassy shelter was reportedly mentioned in the minutes of meetings signed during the recent visit of Philippine Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment during the Joint Committee Meeting, in which they stressed on the need to do away with the so-called 'shelter center' inside the embassy headquarters, saying all complaints will be handled to ensure protection of the workers and necessary legal measures will be taken.

In the minutes of meeting, they also included a new provision related to the obligations of the second party (the employer), where the domestic worker is allowed to own a phone and use it outside working hours, allowing

Filipinos to keep their passports, giving them one day off a week and enough sleeping hours. At the same meeting, they also agreed to prevent the employer from assigning the domestic worker to work outside Kuwait without her consent.

The Philippines had imposed a total ban of its workers to Kuwait on Jan 15 - which was partially lifted on Feb 5 - after an autopsy by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in the Philippines revealed that Jeanelyn Villavende, 26, was allegedly raped and beaten to death. The autopsy also revealed that Villavende had suffered from past physical abuse before her death in December. DOLE had earlier said that Villavende had sought the help of her recruitment agency for repatriation, but help wasn't forthcoming.

The Kuwaiti authorities have detained Villavende's employers. The Philippine authorities condemned Villavende's death, describing it as a "clear violation" of the agreement signed by Kuwait and the Philippines in 2018. The 2018 agreement - which came at the end of a diplomatic crisis over the gruesome murder of Filipino worker Joanna Demafelis - sought to uphold the protection of the rights and welfare of Filipino workers in Kuwait.

A total of 250,000 Filipinos are currently working in various sectors in Kuwait, of which 65 percent are engaged in the domestic labor sector. At least five to 10 Filipinas run away to the embassy shelter daily, as per the Kuwait Times source at the Philippine Embassy.



KUWAIT: (From left) Asma Al-Kanan, University Librarian at AUK, Eman Al-Awadhi, Group Communications Director at KIPCO and Reem Al-Ali, project manager at AUK.

AUK Library, KIPCO launch 'Oral History' project

KUWAIT: The Library of the American University of Kuwait (AUK) launched the Oral History and Documentation Project (OHDP), in collaboration with KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding). The project, an initiative by AUK's Center for Gulf Studies led by its former Director Dr Farah Al-Nakib, made public its first set of life history interviews with pioneers in Kuwait to mark the launch of the project.

The project was established to actively conduct oral histories on a wide range of topics and themes in order to document the experiences of generations of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. The launching of the OHDP website marks the culmination of a four-year collaboration between AUK and KIPCO, which has supported the project since the early stages of planning. The aim of the project is to develop a substantial archive of recorded interviews that will serve as a valuable

resource to researchers, students and the general public. Asma Al-Kanan, University Librarian at AUK said: "It is not uncommon for libraries to nurture such projects. Libraries have always been places where content is created, shared and preserved for generations to come. We are very proud to launch the Oral History Project in Kuwait and make it available to the public through the latest technology of audio recording and archiving. All of this would not have been possible without the strong support of KIPCO and the university administration, as well as the dedication of the project team led by our project manager, Reem Al-Ali."

Eman Al-Awadhi, Group Communications Director at KIPCO said: "KIPCO is delighted to be supporting this important AUK initiative, the Oral History and Documentation Project. As we all work together to realize the vision of the future of Kuwait, we must look to lessons learnt from the past. Here rests the importance of preserving the voices, memories and experiences of the many men and women who have made significant contributions to shape this nation."

The OHDP is currently focused on recording the life histories of those born before the 1960s. The recorded interviews explore the memories of individuals who experienced the drastic shift in Kuwait's society with the advent of oil, as well as their experiences of major historical events such as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

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Boubyan Bank sponsors Kuwait Maker Faire 2020

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank has recently announced its platinum sponsorship of the world makers expo, Kuwait Maker Faire 2020, due to be organized for the fourth year in a row by Kuwait Investment Company (KIC) under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref, during the period from 11 to 15 February 2020.

In this regard, Waleed Al-Saqabi, Manager - Corporate Communications Division at the bank stated: "Out of the bank's keenness on supporting youth-targeting projects and activities, Boubyan Bank is taking part in this event for the first time ever since its launch three years ago."

He added: "The exhibition comes in line with Boubyan Bank's plans that target the youth, while focusing on technical aspects since Boubyan Bank is known as the most prominent bank in the field of digital banking services and products, where it has confirmed its leadership over recent years."

Kuwait Maker Faire aims at supporting and strengthening the Kuwaiti industry as much as possible, as it embraces innovative projects of citizens, especially those of young people, and works on highlighting them in front of specialists, investors, companies, and institutions from both the public and private sectors as well as before the public. A large number of those projects already receive care, support, and entry to industrial or commercial fields.

Active partner

Moreover, Saqabi added: "Boubyan Bank was motivated to become an active partner in the Maker Faire by the splendid success it has achieved over the past three years, which resulted in the emergence of a large number of important projects with added value to the society in general, and to the local economy and industry in particular, especially since the exhibition is garnering international attention, as it is organized in more than 80 countries worldwide."

"With this in mind, Boubyan Bank has decided to sponsor and take part in this major event, which aligns with aspirations towards the implementation of the New Kuwait Vision 2035 in light of the bank's social development strategy focusing on supporting Kuwaiti youth projects," Saqabi added.

Saqabi thanked the Faire organizers for organizing it under the auspices of His Highness the Amir, which confirms the extent of support and care the state provides to creative Kuwaiti youth. He also thanked KIC for embracing such a major event that presents a group of Kuwaiti and Arab youth talented in various fields for the first time in the region.

In my view

What did we prepare for coronavirus?



By Fatima Nasser Al-Azmi

KUWAIT: The categorization of crises around the world differs according to their nature or type, and there is no doubt that the world is currently facing a health crisis with the spread of the new 2019/2020 Wuhan coronavirus, which started in the middle of Dec 2019 in this city located in the middle of China, and it was given the name CoV2019.

The patient suffers from severe pulmonary infection that may lead to death, while scientists are still developing a vaccine against this highly contagious virus. Deaths will exceed 1,000, while the number of cases is approaching 40,000. Many countries around the world have evacuated their citizens from China and others banned travel to China as the disease is spreading at a fast pace.

We are facing a true health crisis, so was real and fast preparation made for it? What did GCC countries, in particular, do in the form of precautionary and preventive measures towards it? There are many Chinese communities working in them and businessmen who are linked to many fields there, in addition to vast commercial exchanges by commercial ships and others.

Not only that, there are cultural and scientific exchanges too. Countries of the GCC have students on scholarships in China, and have a large number of Chinese workers, in addition to official delegations to China. Some cases of this killer virus have appeared in some GCC countries, so are we informed on a daily basis? Were there daily information messages to describe this virus and means of prevention from it in all types of media?

The holy month of Ramadan is near, during which we visit the Grand Mosque for umrah. Also, the hajj season is approaching, with millions of Muslims around the world converging to perform pilgrimage. Was this taken into consideration? This global health crisis will not disappear within days or weeks, as deaths are on the increase and infections continue every day. We are facing a real health crisis, and if one case enters Kuwait (Allah forbids), fear and panic will spread among people, apart from the many frightening rumors.

I hope that effective precautionary measures are taken at both the official and popular levels in GCC countries to face this condition by those concerned, be it in the health sectors or others. All new developments of this killer virus should be discussed, and all material and human facilities should face it and exert more efforts to prevent it from reaching the GCC countries, while taking strict measures at the borders and activating the role of health information in all GCC health ministries.

Local

Ministry says schools still on as cold wave approaches

Temperatures expected to drop as low as zero degrees

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Responding to meteorologists' forecast of a cold wave and its impact on school students, Education Minister Saud Al-Harbi stressed that the Ministry of Education (MoE) is following the latest weather developments, noting that school directors are authorized to cancel morning assemblies if the weather is too cold. He stressed however that cold weather does not require closing schools.

Weather in Kuwait was dominated by dust and strong wind yesterday, causing low visibility and an imminent drop in temperature, said an official at Kuwait Control

and Meteorological Center (KCMC). Meteorologist Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi further predicted that the temperature would drop today, noting that the western region of the country will have temperatures reaching down to zero degrees Celsius while the highest temperature in the rest of Kuwait will be between 10 to 14 degrees Celsius. The wind, coming from the northwest, will be active at speeds of 20 to 50 kmph, indicated Qarawi who pointed out that the status of the sea will witness waves reaching over seven feet. The meteorologist indicated that the cold weather would continue until Thursday when temperatures are expected to rise.

In another educational concern, MoE announced its needs for new expat teachers for the school year 2020-2021 including male French, English, Science, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Geology, Maths and Craft teachers and female Maths and Music teachers from expats already residing in Kuwait, adding that applicants must hold university degrees and can apply online on the ministry's website. Moreover, informed sources said that MoE would make up for the remaining shortage by recruiting teachers from Palestine and Jordan (not Egypt and Tunisia) and that special committees will leave for this purpose by April or May at most. The sources added that around 500 teachers are needed for the new school year.

Spreading rumors

Kuwait Medical Association (KMA) yesterday filed a complaint against a blogger for slandering it on social media networks and spreading rumors that could undermine 'health security'. In this regard, KMA Chairman Dr Ahmed Thuwaini Al-Enezi said the blogger had questioned KMA's integrity and its major medical role as well as undermined public trust in the Ministry of Health (MoH), accusing it of not saying the truth about coronavirus infections. "Such tweets may cause panic," he warned, noting that freedom of speech is guaranteed for everyone but some people tend to misuse this right.



A screenshot taken from Kuwait Meteorological Department's website yesterday shows the weather forecast for four days starting from today, which predicts considerable drop in temperatures.

Expats' replacement

Well-informed sources said that the parliamentary human resources committee urged the government to provide it with the measures to be followed to replace 25,000 expat employees with citizens this year and the next one. The sources added that, in order to achieve the goal of 100 percent Kuwaiti employees in government bodies by 2023, the committee condi-

tioned that replaced expats will not be rehired on monthly payment basis. "The only exemptions will be MoE and MoH due to a lack of Kuwaiti graduates in those specialties," the sources explained, pointing out that acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel will attend the committee's meetings soon to discuss the government's policy in this regard and respond to inquiries.



KUWAIT: Vehicles drive on a road in Kuwait City yesterday as the city's skyscrapers flanked by dust are seen in the background. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

In my view

Multi-headed tsunami

By Dr Khalid Ahmad Al-Saleh



A tsunami hit the Arab atmosphere as a result of a proposal by the United States of America, and this tsunami is growing larger against the proposal named the "Deal of the Century". The angry wave against the proposal was like a tsunami that sweeps away all that is in its path without discrimination, and it was also rejected by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League. This is a proposal against which all are grabbing the microphone to condemn it.

If this tsunami subsides and succeeds in tearing the proposal apart, the Palestinians will remain in camps and in countries wishing to get rid of them. The Palestinians will remain at the mercy of rulers and parties who use them as cards for gains, and Palestinians will also remain steadfastly in a state of jihad, being born and dying under occupation or in the diaspora.

We do not know who manipulates this angry tsunami - is it the Palestinians' opinions? Is it the action of sincere members of the Arab nation? Is it due to the actions of the Zionist leaders to prevent the creation of the State of Palestine? Or is it a multi-headed tsunami, where each speaks his own opinion? And finally, when the tsunami fades away and things become clear, who will enjoy the beauty of the landscape?

There are many issues that we do not know anything about. All we know is that there is a severe lack of seminars, discussions and symposiums for the owners of the cause, a major shortage in awareness to know the details of this deal written on tens of pages that have not been translated correctly yet.

Is this proposal harmful or beneficial? Is it a conspiracy to liquidate the Palestinian cause or an opportunity to revive it? Does this deal serve Israel's interests in total or partially? Is this deal harmful to Israel in total or partially? Tens of questions that the brains floating over the angry tsunami do not have the answer to any part of them.

The Palestinians are distinguished people - that is why they are in the diaspora, so the Zionists cannot face them. For this reason, Israel may create an angry tsunami each time the dream of a Palestinian state comes closer. Those who ride the tsunami may be addicted to slogans and mercenaries along with those comfortable in their beds and moved by the media, and those who created this tsunami could be the sincere who know how dangerous this deal is.

Today, everyone is afraid of this tsunami, as the packaged accusations are ready and everyone is seeking safety. The only ones who will pay the price are those who were born and will die without a homeland. I do not know what this deal contains - we need its publication in full after its translation. We need legal experts and intellectuals to debate and explain it to the Palestinian people with its entire details, then leave it to the Palestinians to choose freely. The choice of the Palestinian people should be away from other people's choices and interests.

You the Palestinian: It is easy to reject everything, but it is wise to study options and pick the best, including total rejection or joining negotiations - choices that carry the interests of your Palestinian people only.

MPs demand probe into suspected Airbus deal irregularities

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Nine lawmakers yesterday sent a letter to the National Assembly demanding that the State Audit Bureau be asked to conduct a probe into financial irregularities allegedly committed in the Airbus purchase deal several years ago.

The lawmakers based their demand on local media reports stating that official and private sector figures have received "illegal commissions or bribes" related to the deal of purchasing a number of aircraft from Airbus company by Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC).

The letter called for asking the State Audit Bureau to prepare a report including the outcome of examination and revision of the deal signed in 2014 and the probe should include all related transactions by Kuwait Investment Authority, KAC and others.

The lawmakers said the State Audit Bureau should investigate whether the deal for the purchase of 25 aircraft involved any illegal commissions or bribes and to do that, the Bureau will be entrusted with the necessary powers to carry out the probe. They also said the investigation should determine the types of violations and the names of suspects in addition to measures that the Bureau proposes to take.

They said the investigation should be completed within two months and the assembly budget committee should also study the findings of the report and submit a detailed report to be debated by the national assembly. Local media reported last week that KAC management sent documents to the Public Anti-Corruption Authority about suspected corruption in the Airbus deal.

Meanwhile, Opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri yesterday rejected proposals by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem to set up a special commission to investigate allegations of forgery in obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship.

Muwaizri said that the commission is illegal because it contradicts the work of the Kuwaiti judiciary, saying that any suspected forgery case should be immediately referred to courts. The lawmaker also disputed the speaker's talk about stateless people or bedoons, saying anyone suspected of betrayal should be sent to court and the cases of others should be resolved.

Ghanem told the assembly last week that close to 4,000 bedoons working in the Kuwaiti army had betrayed the country during the 1990-91 Iraqi invasion. He also said that thousands had obtained Kuwaiti citizenship through illegal means and called for a probe.

Former 'Tenders' official jailed in corruption case

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The criminal court yesterday sentenced a former Central Tenders Committee (CTC) member in absentia to 10 years in prison with labor, dismissal from office, mandating him to return the sum of KD 290,000 and fining him twice as much. The court also sentenced the owner of an automobile company to four years in jail and suspended the sentence with KD 4,000 in bail. It also acquitted an employee of the same company in a case filed against them by the Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha). According to the case, the three defendants were involved in bribery related to a tender to purchase ambulances for the Ministry of Health (MoH), where the first suspect received a bribe in the form of three vehicles worth KD 148,000 from the auto-

mobile company delivered by the third suspect to approve its offer to win the tender.

Type one diabetes

Lawyer Nasser Al-Ajmi announced that the administrative court yesterday mandated the disability authority to consider his client's daughter, who suffers from type one diabetes, as disabled, after the authority had rejected her demand.

January subsidies

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) yesterday announced that the total subsidies paid for subsidized consumer goods and construction materials in January was KD 20.5 million including KD 12.3 million for basic foodstuff, KD 552,000 for milk and baby formula and KD 8.2 million for construction material.

72,000 Kuwaitis in private sector

KUWAIT: The number of Kuwaiti citizens serving in the private sector reached 72,000, a labor official announced yesterday. The current figure is much higher than the one recorded in 2002, when the number of the nationals in this sector stood at 1,600 only, said Sultan Al-Shaalani, Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower for the affairs of national laborers. Shaalani was speaking on sidelines of a news conference held by the authority yesterday, launching the 'because you deserve' campaign for employing citizens in the private sector. The Kuwaitis' employment in the private sector will be done via an electronic website during the first quarter of

this year under sponsorship of the Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel. The campaign, due on Feb 12-13, aims at employing 400 male and female citizens in the banking sector. Shaalani said 1,356 were interviewed, 622 passed and 256 were hired in a single day. He indicated that the campaign provides communications for job seekers with 10 major banks in Kuwait, also noting that efforts were underway to find jobs for the nationals - particularly in cars dealership. The authority's director Ahmad Al-Moussa, affirmed keenness on aiding the young Kuwaitis to be involved and creative in the private sector.—KUNA

News in brief

Emergency landing at Kuwait airport

KUWAIT: A passenger plane made an emergency landing at Kuwait International Airport yesterday due to a technical fault in the aircraft. Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said. The DGCA said in a statement that the control tower received a contact from the plane's pilot at 12:07, requesting to make an emergency landing. Authorities at the airport dealt with the situation according to standard security and safety precautions, the authority said. The plane landed safely. —KUNA

'Kafeel' system remains

RIYADH: The Saudi Ministry of Labor and Social Development released a statement on their website denying social media rumors which claimed that Saudi Arabia has canceled the 'kafeel' (sponsorship) system for expatriate labor. In a statement posted on its official website, the ministry urged people to obtain relevant information from their official channels.

VACANCIES

Administrative coordinator

- 1- Proven work experience as an administrative coordinator , administrator or similar role.
- 2- Hands - on experience with ms office suite (particularly ms word and ms excel).
- 3- High school diploma: additional qualification in office administration is a plus.

Software developer

- 1- Experience with software design and development in a test - driven environment.
- 2- Knowledge of coding languages (e . g . c++ , javascript) and frameworks / systems (e . g . angular js , git) and databases.
- 3- BSC / BA in computer science , engineering or a related field.

Chef

- 1- Manage and set up the kitchen with cooking utensils and equipment.
- 2- Advanced knowledge of culinary , baking and pastry techniques.
- 3- Culinary school diploma preferred.

Business development manager

- 1- Follow up / monitor the company's existing projects and provide performance reports and recommendation .
- 2- Conduct research to identify new markets and customer needs .
- 3- BSc/ BA in business administration , sales or relevant field .

financial and economic consultant

- 1- Analyze company projects and investment plans.
- 2- Analyze market trends and identify risks and opportunities.
- 3- BS degree in finance , Accounting , Economics or related field.

greatjob.00002@gmail.com
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15W3pDqY05IXvUmngFpFzduwqYEn280VYsNpVm72wJ4/edit>



Thai gunman among 29 killed in mass shooting

Joe Biden, a presidential frontrunner in trouble

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SHANGHAI: A man wearing a protective facemask jumps as other people walk on an overpass in Lujiazui financial district in Pudong in Shanghai. — AFP photos

Coronavirus death toll surges past 800

Virus deaths overtake global fatalities in 2002-03 SARS epidemic

BEIJING: The death toll from the novel coronavirus surged past 800 in mainland China yesterday, overtaking global fatalities in the 2002-03 SARS epidemic, even as the World Health Organization said the outbreak appeared to be stabilizing. With 89 more people dying - most in Hubei, the province at the centre of the outbreak - the toll is now higher than the 774 killed worldwide by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), according to official figures.

The latest data came after the WHO said the last four days had seen "some stabilizing" in Hubei, but warned the figures can still "shoot up". Almost 37,200 people in China have now been infected by the virus, believed to have emerged late last year in Hubei's capital Wuhan, where residents are struggling to get daily supplies because of sweeping transport restrictions and instructions to stay inside.

The epidemic has prompted the government to lock down whole cities as anger mounts over its handling of the crisis - especially after a whistleblowing doctor fell victim to the virus. With much of the country still not back at work after an extended Lunar New Year holiday, cities including financial hub Shanghai ordered residents to wear masks in public.

Michael Ryan, head of the WHO's Health Emergencies Program, said the "stable period" of the outbreak "may reflect the impact of the control measures." While the

death toll has climbed steadily, new cases have declined since Wednesday's single-day peak of nearly 3,900 people nationwide. Yesterday, the number of new cases was just over 2,600.

'Public anger'

Millions of people are under lockdown in Hubei in a bid to stop the virus spreading. "The local government asked people to stay at home as much as possible, but there is not enough goods in shops each time we get there, so we have to go out frequently," said a woman surnamed Wei, who told AFP her husband was infected. Wang Bin, from the ministry of commerce, said challenges included poor logistics, price increases and labor shortages. "It is difficult for the market supply to reach normal levels," he admitted at a press conference yesterday.

In Hubei province there is five days of guaranteed pork and egg supplies, and three days of vegetables, he said. Melissa Santos, a student from the Dominican Republic living in Wuhan, said she planned to go out to buy food for the first time in a week yesterday. "I am a bit worried," she said. "I have read that the virus can be transmitted very fast, in a few seconds." China drew international condemnation for covering up cases during the SARS outbreak, whereas the measures it has taken this time have been praised by the WHO.

But anger erupted on social media after the death of a Wuhan doctor who police

silenced when he flagged the threat of an emerging virus in December. The doctor, 34, died early Friday, after contracting the virus from a patient. Chinese academics were among those angered by his death, with at least two open letters posted on social media demanding more freedoms. "Put an end to the restrictions on freedom of speech," one letter demanded.

'Percolating along'

Beijing responded by sending its anti-graft body to launch an investigation, attempting to ease the anger. But Ian Lipkin - a professor at Columbia University who worked with China on the SARS outbreak - said earlier intervention could have made a key difference. "This virus was percolating along without anyone realizing it was there," he said.

If the quarantine measures have been effective, the epidemic should peak within the next fortnight, Lipkin added - but he warned there is also the risk of a "bump" in numbers when people return to work. "If, in fact, the methods for containment have been adequate or effective at all... I think we will start to see some dramatic reduction in China around the third week of February," he said. Lipkin also said warmer weather would help to slow the number of cases.

Global fears

Wuhan has converted public buildings



MILTON KEYNES: A convoy of coaches carrying British nationals evacuated from Wuhan in China amid the novel coronavirus outbreak, arrives at Kents Hill Park conference centre and hotel in Milton Keynes yesterday, where they will be kept in isolation and monitored for 2019-nCoV strain of the virus.

into makeshift medical centers, and built two new field hospitals. But Wuhan resident Chen Yiping told AFP her 61-year-old mother has severe symptoms and is still waiting for a hospital bed because there are "there are too many people in need of treatment". The first foreign victim in China was confirmed this week when an American diagnosed with the virus died in Wuhan.

The only fatalities outside the mainland have been a Chinese man in the Philippines

and a 39-year-old man in Hong Kong. Several countries have banned arrivals from China while major airlines have suspended flights. Air China announced Saturday it would cancel some of its flights to the US including from Beijing to New York and Washington. Sixty-four people on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship off Japan's coast have tested positive, with all passengers told to stay inside their cabins to prevent further infection. — AFP

Death of whistleblower ignites calls for political reform in China

BEIJING: The death of a whistleblowing doctor who was reprimanded for warning about the new coronavirus has sparked rare calls for political reform and free speech in China. Li Wenliang, an ophthalmologist in Wuhan-ground zero of China's virus epidemic which has killed more than 800 - succumbed to the disease Friday over a month after he first raised alarm about the SARS-like virus. He was among eight physicians punished by Wuhan police for "rumor-mongering". But after his death struck a collective nerve, a number of academics have spoken up to demand more freedoms in China.

At least two open letters demanding free speech have circulated on social media since the 34-year-old's death-one signed by 10 professors in Wuhan. Li's efforts "vigorously maintained the interests of the country and society", read that letter, which has since been censored on Weibo, China's Twitter-like social media site. "Put an end to the restrictions on freedom of speech," it demanded,

and "openly apologise" to Li and the seven other doctors punished for discussing the emergence of the virus in December.

The other letter-signed on Friday by an anonymous group of alumni from the prestigious Tsinghua University in Beijing-called on authorities to "guarantee the constitutional rights of citizens". "Resolutely oppose making political security the top priority-that is an extremely selfish goal of a small organization!" it said. The letters are a rare call for political reform in China, a country where dissidents are often jailed and criticism of the government is quickly scrubbed. Many references to the two letters had been removed from Weibo.

'Law-breaking actions'

While the World Health Organization and other experts have heaped praise on China, saying it took decisive steps to try to contain the virus, critics say precious time was lost by early inaction from the local government.

Li-diagnosed with the virus on February 1 - said in a Weibo post in late January that local police had forced him to sign a statement agreeing not to commit any more "law-breaking actions".

He said police had summoned him after he saw test results from some patients suggesting a SARS-like virus and reminded colleagues in a group chat to take stronger precautions. Since his death, Beijing has sought to quell public anger by positioning the doctor as a hero. Criticism is being deflected towards local authorities in Hubei province who are taking the bulk of public anger over the handling of the epidemic.

China's anti-graft watchdog announced Friday it was sending a team to Wuhan where it would investigate "issues involving Dr Li Wenliang reported by the masses". "It sends a clear message that the central authorities are determined to get to the truth and hold those responsible accountable," said the state-run China Daily newspaper in an editorial on Friday. Meanwhile Cui Tiankai, China's ambassador in the United States, said he was "really saddened" by the doctor's death. "We are so grateful to him for what he has done in our joint efforts" fighting the virus, Cui tweeted. — AFP



HONG KONG: People wearing protective face masks cross a street in Hong Kong yesterday, as a preventative measure after a coronavirus outbreak which began in the Chinese city of Wuhan. — AFP

International

Suspicion, uncertainty cloud murder of Chechen in France

Emergency services found body mutilated with scores of stab wounds

LILLE: At the end of January, French emergency services found the body of a man in a hotel room close to the train station in the northern city of Lille, mutilated with scores of stab wounds. The man was Imran Aliev, 44, originally from Russia's restive northern Caucasus region of Chechnya but who had lived for the last few years in Belgium. He had gained a following as a video blogger at times critical of the Chechen leadership under its strongman ruler Ramzan Kadyrov.

Suspicion immediately emerged that the killing was a political assassination and could be the latest in a series of suspected moves against troublesome figures living in exile in Europe critical of the Kremlin or Russia's regional leaders. Sources close to the investigation told AFP in Lille that the murder bore the hallmarks of having a political motive. But caution has also been urged due to the lack of clear evidence so far and the complexity of Aliev himself, who was prone to unpredictable and vulgar outbursts on his YouTube and Facebook video channels, where he went by the pseudonym of Mansur Staryi.

Travelled with killer?

Aliev had arrived in Lille from neighboring Belgium on the night of January 29 to January 30 along with another man who was also travelling on a Russian

passport. They both checked into a room in a hotel in the square in front of the Lille-Flandres train station. The emergency services entered the room around 1030 GMT on January 30 and discovered Aliev's body. The source close to the investigation said that the crime scene was marked by extreme savagery and Aliev had 100 stab wounds. A knife was found in the room.

Asylum in Belgium

A prominent exiled Chechen blogger based in Europe who goes by the name of Tumso Abdurakhmanov swiftly wrote on his Telegram channel he believed the killer had flown to Spain from Russia, then moved on to Berlin, before going to Belgium by train on January 20. The men then spent a week in Belgium before travelling together with Aliev to Lille, where he allegedly murdered his companion. Abdurakhmanov claimed that the man, whom he even identified by name, then returned to Russia and is now safely back in Chechnya. Aliev's video blogs, usually in Chechen language

rather than Russian, were marked by strong diatribes against Kadyrov who stands accused by rights groups of using a personal militia to attack opponents. But according to the Caucasian Knot Russian-language news site, Aliev's comments were often vulgar, expletive-ridden and also inconsistent. In one video, rather than criticizing Kadyrov he had even sworn an oath of allegiance to him. According to the source close to the investigation, Aliev had obtained the status of a political refugee in Belgium at the end of 2012 after making a second request for asylum — a first request in 2011 had not succeeded.

Refugee status was granted to all his family, including his wife. He has several children born between 2002 and 2008. The source said that Aliev has the profile of a figure who is violent and aggressive. Nonetheless, he was never the subject of a criminal conviction in Belgium, although he did spend several months in prison in 2015 for making threats and carrying a

banned weapon, another source close to the investigation said.

'Political motivation'

Lille prosecutors have opened an investigation against "X" for murder. Such investigations against "X" are opened in France when prosecutors believe the crime was pre-meditated but don't yet know by who. Lille police are carrying out the investigation and no arrest has been made yet. The murder "bears all the characteristics of having a political motivation" but "it is wise to be prudent", said a source close to the investigation. "Many people could have wanted him," added another source. Attention on the case in Lille has been magnified by a row between Germany and Russia over the killing of the former Chechen rebel commander in a Berlin park in late 2019.

Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, a 40-year-old Georgian national, was shot twice in the head at close range in Kleiner Tiergarten park on August 23, allegedly by a Russian man who was arrested shortly afterwards. President Vladimir Putin has vowed to help Germany with the investigation but has described Khangoshvili as a "fighter, very cruel and bloody" who had taken part in separatist activities and also been involved in blasts on the Moscow metro. —AFP



Suspicion emerges over Aliev's death

Cameroon elections overshadowed by violence, boycott

YAOUNDE: Cameroon voted yesterday in polls overshadowed by a partial opposition boycott and separatist violence that has displaced hundreds of thousands of people. Elections for the central African country's legislature and local councils are taking place for the first time in seven years, after two postponements.

They are unlikely to ruffle the enduring rule of President Paul Biya, one of the world's oldest and longest-serving leaders, who has held a tight grip on power for 37 of his 86 years. As voting began large numbers of police and soldiers were seen deployed on the streets of Buea, the capital of the Southwest Region, one of two provinces gripped by bloody separatist violence.

But the polling stations in the city were almost deserted an hour after they opened at 8am. The main opposition party, the Movement for the Rebirth of Cameroon (MRC) is refusing to field a single candi-

date. The boycott will all but guarantee a crushing victory for the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (RDPC in its French initials), which in the outgoing legislature had 148 out of 180 seats. The other large opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), which currently has 18 seats, will take part in yesterday's vote, going back on a threat to snub it. In the capital Yaounde, it appeared that enthusiasm for the vote was subdued, with no crowds outside polling stations as they opened in the district of Briqueterie. "I want to do my duty as a citizen," said Abdias Lah, one of the few voters to cast an early ballot.

'Spiral of violence'

Cameroon is struggling with two conflicts. In the two English-speaking regions - the southwest and northwest - the armed forces are battling separatists who want to secede from the majority French-speaking country. The 28-month conflict has claimed more than 3,000 lives and caused more than 700,000 people to flee, according to tolls compiled by NGOs.

Amnesty International said there has been a "surge in violence" by the



YAOUNDE: A man is seen at the voting booth during the general and municipal elections in Yaounde yesterday. —AFP

Cameroon military in the weeks leading up to the vote, resulting in killings and the displacement of thousands in the English-speaking regions. "In recent weeks, brutal military operations have been con-

ducted while crimes committed by armed separatists continue unabated. Civilians are finding themselves trapped in a spiral of violence," said Fabien Offner, Amnesty's Lake Chad Researcher. —AFP

UK, Ireland hit as Storm Ciara whips northwest Europe

LONDON: Britain and Ireland were lashed by howling winds and inundated with driving rain yesterday as Storm Ciara left homes without power, wiped out sports events and disrupted travel around northwestern Europe. The bad weather also hit France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany throughout yesterday, causing scores of flights to be cancelled.

In Britain, more than 30,000 homes were left without power, largely in eastern England. The highest wind speed recorded was 93 miles per hour at Aberdaron, on the tip of northwest Wales's Llyn peninsula. At Wet Sleddale Reservoir in northwest England's Lake District national park, 151.8 millimeters of rain fell in a 24-hour period. Rail companies urged passengers not to travel and operated reduced timetables and speed restrictions.

In the central Scottish city of Perth,

three people were injured after part of a pub roof collapsed on Saturday. Sports events were also hit. The English Premier League fixture between champions Manchester City and strugglers West Ham was called off due to "extreme and escalating weather conditions". City said in a statement. The entire Women's Super League football program was called off, including derbies between Arsenal and Tottenham, and Everton and Liverpool.

The north London clash was a sell-out, while the latter was due to attract a 20,000-plus crowd to Goodison Park. In London, organizers cancelled a 10-kilometre race in which 25,000 runners were due to take part, while major city parks closed. In rugby league, both Super League fixtures were postponed. Meanwhile Queen Elizabeth II, staying at her Sandringham country residence in eastern England, did not go to church due to the high winds. The 93-year-old is the supreme governor of the Church of England.

About 120 flights to and from Amsterdam Schiphol, the third-busiest airport in Europe, were cancelled, largely affecting KLM, British Airways, easyJet and Lufthansa services. Several airports in Germany had to cancel flights



NEWHAVEN: Waves crash over Newhaven Lighthouse on the south coast of England yesterday, as Storm Ciara swept over the country. —AFP

as the storm swept in from the north. Frankfurt, Berlin, Munich, Cologne and Hanover were among those affected, while at Dusseldorf, 111 flights were scrapped yesterday.

In Belgium, the Royal Meteorological Institute issued an alert for yesterday of winds reaching 130 kph, or more, with the risk of property damage nationwide.

Some 60 flights departing or arriving at Brussels Airport have been cancelled as a precaution, according to an airport spokesman, who said further delays were possible. In Ireland, around 14,000 homes and businesses were without power, national broadcaster RTE said, as the republic began counting ballots in its general election. —AFP

After fleeing war, Syria families say 'nowhere to go'

MAARET MISRIN, Syria: Exhausted from days of driving in search of shelter in northwest Syria, 38-year-old Ghossoon has no idea where her family will go after fleeing regime and Russian bombardment. "Thank God we have this car to sleep in, even if it's not comfortable," she said, after parking the grey people-carrier by the side of the road. "We've spent two nights in it so far," she said, sitting on a blanket and leaning back against the vehicle in Maaret Misrin, a town in Idlib province. "This will be the third night. We'll stay in it again because we can't find anywhere else to go," she added.

By her side, Ghossoon's husband crouches with their baby daughter in his arms, while their young son, who is wrapped up in a winter coat, clutches a packet of plain biscuits. Russia-backed regime forces have pounded Syria's last major rebel bastion over the past two months, forcing more than 580,000 people from their homes and onto the roads. In the jihadist-ruled region of some three million people, entire families have headed north in cars piled high with blankets, chairs and pans as they

seek to survive the winter. But many are struggling to find protection from the cold along the Turkish border, which was closed by Ankara in response to waves of displacement earlier in Syria's nine-year civil war.

'More people than homes'

Ghossoon and her husband have stuffed warm blankets and pillows in the back of their car, while they have strapped large plastic woven mats to the roof. "We went to the camps, but there wasn't any space there," Ghossoon said. "We looked for a home but the rent was really expensive. Where am I supposed to find the money?"

The average monthly rent in Idlib's northern countryside was around \$150 per apartment before the latest wave of displacement; the few available are now priced as high as \$350, according to an AFP correspondent. On Wednesday, eight organizations called for an immediate ceasefire, describing the situation as a "humanitarian catastrophe". Bahya Zrikem from Humanity Inclusion said "there are simply more people than (there are) homes available". "Many of those who have fled are sleeping in their cars or camping by the side of the road."

In a newly-established camp on the edge of Maaret Misrin, tents made available for newcomers are already packed. Entire families are sleeping on the muddy floor, with carpets, mattresses, and household appliances stacked around them, an AFP



MAARAT MISRIN, Syria: Displaced Ghossoon drives with her family in search of a shelter in this town in Syria's Idlib province on Feb 6, 2020, after fleeing regime and Russian bombardment. —AFP

correspondent said. Designed to host 350 families, the camp is now brimming with more than 800, and people keep flooding in.

Mustafa Haj Ahmad arrived in the camp only days ago along with 30 relatives, including his wife and seven children. The 40-year-old said he fled fighting near his hometown of Sarmin carrying nothing but clothes. When he arrived in the camp, he couldn't find a tent for his family. "We have been sleeping under trees for the past two days," he told AFP. —AFP

Mali calls for reparation after US customs break traditional instrument

BAMAKO: Mali has called for reparation and condemned "immense cultural damage" after a Malian musician said United States customs agents broke his traditional instrument, sparking outrage online. Renowned kora player Ballake Sissoko landed in Paris on February 4 after touring the US, to find that his instrument had been "completely destroyed" by customs agents in New York.

The traditional West African 21-string lute had been dismantled, with a note left by the agents, in Spanish, reading "intelligent security saves time," according to a post on Sissoko's Facebook page. "Would US customs have dared to dismantle a Stradivarius?," Sissoko said, referring to a class of fabled violins. "These kinds of custom-made koras are simply impossible to replace," he added. Mali's Culture Minister N'Diaye Ramatoulaye Diallo released a statement on Saturday saying that she "deeply regretted" the incident.

"While its deliberate nature has yet to be established, this immense cultural damage challenges us and will require us to do everything legally and diplomatically possible to obtain reparation," she added. The broken kora generated significant media interest and social media comment around the world this week after Sissoko suggested white musicians would have been treated better. "This is an unprovoked and sad act of aggression, a reflection of the kind of cultural ignorance and racism that is taking over in so many parts of the world," he said. —AFP

Russian plane crash-lands on belly

MOSCOW: A Russian plane carrying 100 people crash-landed on its belly in the north of the country after problems with its landing gear yesterday, the company and officials said, adding no one was seriously hurt. The Utair Boeing 737 was buffeted by a sudden change in wind direction as it was landing at Usinsk airport in the northern Komi region, the airline said, and it was already on the tarmac when it suffered a malfunction.

At the time of the crash landing, the airport's instrument landing system was not working and the runway lighting was out, Utair said. Images online showed a Boeing sitting on its belly on the snow-covered tarmac as passengers scrambled to evacuate. None of the 94 passengers or six crew members were badly injured, the airline said. One passenger sought medical assistance.

"Thanks to the crew's quick and highly-professional actions it was possible to keep the plane on the landing strip until it came to a full stop," Utair said. It praised its "experienced" crew, saying the chief pilot has more than 6,900 hours of flight time. A spokeswoman for the local branch of the emergency ministry told AFP that "the plane landed on its tail".

The passengers and crew evacuated via emergency slides, she said. "What's happened at Usinsk airport today is unacceptable," the head of the Komi region Sergei Gaplikov said in a statement. "Thank God no one has been seriously hurt." Utair said it had grounded Monday's scheduled flight from Usinsk to Moscow because of the landing strip's "unsatisfactory condition". Russia, with poor aircraft maintenance and lax safety standards, has one of the worst air safety records in the world, critics say. —AFP

International

Political gridlock looms for Ireland as Sinn Fein surges

Three main parties tied on 22%: Exit poll

DUBLIN: Ireland began counting votes yesterday in a national election that an exit poll indicated would show a historic breakthrough for left-wing nationalists Sinn Fein but leave a fractured political landscape with no clear path to a governing coalition. In a major realignment, Sinn Fein support surged 50% to bring it into joint first place on 22% with Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, the two centre-right parties that have dominated Irish politics for a century, according to the poll released on Saturday evening after voting ended.

But Sinn Fein, the former political wing of the Irish Republican Army which has reinvented itself as the country's main left-wing party, is likely to fall behind the other two because it fielded fewer candidates for parliament. "I think it's the most extraordinary exit poll in the history of state and the most extraordinary election in the history of the state ... because of the rise of Sinn Fein," said Gary Murphy, Professor of Politics at Dublin City University. Prime Minister Leo Varadkar's Fine Gael and rival Fianna Fail are likely to be left slugging it out for first place in terms of seats - before starting what is likely to be a torturous process of forming a governing coalition in the 160-seat parliament.

"Obviously on these numbers it's going to be very hard for any combination of 80 (seats) to be achieved, we'll have to wait and see," Fine Gael minister Heather Humphreys told national broadcaster RTE. Counting under Ireland's complex single transferable vote system

began at 0900 GMT yesterday with some results expected from early afternoon. The final and potentially decisive seats may not be filled until Monday or even later.

The exit poll result was an improvement for Varadkar's Fine Gael, in power since 2011, after opinion polls a week ago showed it in third place. But the party's strategy of focusing on economic growth and its success in negotiating an EU exit deal for neighbor Britain failed to capture the imagination of voters, who were far more focused on domestic issues like health and housing, where Sinn Fein focused.

Centre-right parties battle to lead the government

Coalition conundrum

Fianna Fail has ruled out going into coalition for the first time with Fine Gael and both parties say they will not govern with Sinn Fein, meaning there is no obvious government to be formed, analysts said. Both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail have said they will

look to smaller parties to form what would likely be another minority government - requiring support of one of the two main parties from the opposition benches. The parties have swapped power at every election since emerging from the opposing sides of Ireland's 1920s civil war. They have similar policies on the economy and trade talks on the post-Brexit ties between Britain and the EU.

Sinn Fein has moved on from the long leadership of Gerry Adams, seen by many as the face of the IRA's war against British rule in Northern Ireland - a conflict



CORK: Counting gets under way at Nemo Rangers GAA club in Cork, southern Ireland, the day after the vote took place in the Irish General Election. —AFP

in which some 3,600 people were killed before a 1998 peace deal. The party's candidates were the biggest gainers by vote share, up from 14% at the last election in 2016. "It's clear that Sinn Fein are poised to have a

very good election," Sinn Fein's deputy leader in the Irish parliament, Pearse Doherty, told RTE. "That's the message we were getting, that there was a palpable mood for change." —Reuters

Food-share apps seeking to help environment

LONDON: Jack Convery pops into a London branch of Italian eatery Coco di Mama to grab a cut-price lunch ordered on his smartphone's food-sharing app Karma. The 27-year-old Amazon employee — with an eye for a bargain and for helping the environment — uses a mobile phone app that sells surplus food from hundreds of UK restaurants at discounted prices. "Anything I can do to help the environment and look after the budget as well is beneficial, so yeah, it's a win-win," Convery tells AFP after collecting his bag from the counter near Old Street Tube station.

"It ends up working out much cheaper than to go to (British supermarket) Tesco and buy a meal for one," he adds, noting that he can usually source his daily dinner for about £3.50 (\$4.54, 4.10 euros) via the app. Decomposing food waste is a key source of greenhouse gases — and a staggering one third of all food is thrown away, according to industry estimates.

Environmental danger

Amid growing public outcry over the climate emergency, consumers are switching on to the environmental danger of carbon dioxide and methane emissions. Britain's cafes and restaurants are also embracing apps that generate some revenue from rescued food that would otherwise be destined for landfill. However some restaurants happily give unsold food to homeless charities on a daily basis. Swedish start-up Karma was founded in Stockholm in 2016 and its app now helps serve 1.0 million users in Britain, France and home market Sweden. In the UK alone, it offers 2,000 outlets. Rival app Too Good To Go also offers cut-price meals with a similar approach.

Britain-based Olio, meanwhile, enables its 1.7 million customers worldwide to give their own unused food items free to other users, via collection from their homes. "We do not plan for the day to end with zero waste, because at the end of every day we want to have some stock on our shelves" for customers not using the apps, says Sara McCraight, head of branding at Coco di Mama. "When we give to charity partners, that's great. But with Karma we get some money recovered: (it) doesn't cover costs but it helps."

'Apps are important'

Joao Campari, food expert at environmental campaigners WWF International, argues that apps are an "important" way to cut waste. "With food loss and waste creating at least eight percent of all emissions, it's vital that as many people as possible reduce their personal food waste," Campari said. "To do this, we need tools that are easy to use, and also help raise awareness of the scale of the problem. "Most people have a mobile device so apps are an obvious and important way of educating and enabling action."

Wastage occurs throughout the food supply chain: on farms, during transport, in retail stores like supermarkets. "In truth, the best way to cut emissions from food loss and waste is to prevent food being lost on the farm and in the supply chain before it reaches end-consumers," adds Campari. Yet in developed nations, most food waste occurs in restaurants and private homes — at a time when an estimated 820 million people in the world do not have enough to eat, according to the World Health Organization.

'Main competitor is rubbish bin'

"We throw away one third of food we produce each year," says Tessa Clarke, co-founder of Olio. "What that means is that roughly 10 percent of annual greenhouse gas emissions come from food waste alone, which I like to point out to people is four to five times greater than the carbon emissions that come from the global aviation industry." She adds: "I like to say that our main competitor is the rubbish bin." —AFP

US border patrol agents: Part police, part bloodhound, and part rescuer

MARFA: It only took a moment for US Border Patrol agents to spot a flash of color in a steep-sided canyon, then to identify a man in a black cap lying on a rock. The man, agents discovered, was from Guatemala and part of a group of undocumented migrants making an illicit crossing of the Rio Grande river which separates Mexico from Texas in the United States.

Left behind when he injured his knee after making it across the river, the man was stranded for three days in a desolate ravine in the San Rosendo Canyon of west Texas until Border Patrol agents found him. Operating in remote and inhospitable terrain miles from anywhere, the green-clad Border Patrol agents are on the frontlines of a wave of Central American migrants heading into the US that has prompted a crackdown by President Donald Trump.

AFP journalists accompanied the Border Patrol for three days in Texas, documenting the routine of the agents

tasked with guarding the frontier amid growing controversy over Trump's immigration policy. "If we were born somewhere else, we would do the same," Thaddeus Cleveland, the agent in charge of the Border Patrol station in Sanderson, Texas, said of the northward-bound migrants he encounters.

Technique and technology

Border Patrol agents play a complex role along the US-Mexico border, something between a police officer, a bloodhound and a rescuer. "The agent has to be an athlete," said operations officer Arain Carrera, 35. In Texas's Big Bend sector, agents are responsible for monitoring hundreds of miles of terrain, including 515 miles of the Rio Grande river, lined by perilous canyons and arid deserts where operations to track and arrest people can last for days.

Patrols can be on foot, on horseback, or in trucks, and agents have access to night-vision goggles, motion sensors, cameras and dogs trained to detect drugs. Yet making arrests is often more about technique than technology. "We're looking for footprints, and since there's no dirt, we have to look for kicked-over rocks, for broken brush and things of that nature, that give us a sign that someone has been through this area," Cleveland said, describing the tracking skills agents use.

how stupid it is, we are very patient!"

Recently elected governor of Lagos, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, banned motorbike-taxis known as "okadas" and three-wheeled "kekes" saying they caused road accidents and were out of place in a modern city. Okadas in particular are infamous in Lagos for their anarchic approach to traffic laws but are often vital on its poorly connected, pot-hole ridden roads. But they do come at a cost - between 2016 and 2019, there were more than 10,000 traffic accidents and 600 deaths recorded, just at the General Hospital in Lagos.

Buses unsuitable for Lagos

To mitigate the effects of the ban, the government announced there would be 65 additional buses — in a rapidly growing megacity of more than 20 million people. Critics say buses are in any case unsuitable for Lagos' narrow, damaged roads, where okadas and kekes are crucial for both transport and jobs.

Commuters who would normally leave their cars at home to avoid sitting in traffic, now have little choice but to drive, clogging up the roads even more. Thousands of workers who do not drive and were reliant on



MARFA: The desert landscape is pictured at dusk near Marfa, Texas. —AFP

Surge halted

Their adversaries are the traffickers who guide migrants in exchange for thousands of dollars, and employ scouts to stand on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande and watch the agents' movements. Last year, the approximately 500 agents in the Big Bend sector detained 1,624 people. That was just a small segment of the nearly one million undocumented migrants apprehended between October 2018 and the end of September

2019, most of whom were from violence-torn Central American countries like Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras and aiming to claim asylum in the US.

Trump campaigned on cracking down on illegal migration, and has pressured Mexico into deploying troops along its southern border to stop the migrants. The measures have paid off: just over 52,000 arrests of undocumented migrants were made in September 2019, down significantly from months prior. —AFP

Motorcycle taxi ban brings Lagos to a halt

LAGOS: Even before a sudden controversial ban on motorcycle taxis and tricycles in Nigeria's commercial capital, Lagos, crippling traffic jams were a daily ordeal for its more than 20 million inhabitants. Now just a week on, getting around the city has become even more difficult. There are endless queues at bus stops and crowds of tired and exasperated pedestrians, assaulted by acrid exhaust fumes and the cacophony of drivers stuck in traffic jams honking their car horns.

"Monday, when the ban started, I spent seven hours on the road. Tuesday I spent almost nine hours in traffic jams," says Ayobayo Babade, a real estate agent. He tries to remain upbeat. "Now I bring my laptop and I work in the taxi," he smiles. "Nigerians are the most resilient people in the world!" declares 30-year-old Olaniji Odina. "Put a policy in place, Nigerians will adapt, no matter

Joe Biden, a presidential frontrunner in trouble

MANCHESTER: After suffering a drubbing in Iowa and bizarrely conceding he will likely lose New Hampshire's Democratic primary next Tuesday, Joe Biden is under immense pressure to turn his floundering US presidential campaign around. The popular former US vice president has been the national frontrunner for more than a year, but his enviable position

is increasingly under threat, and rivals — including a socialist-leaning senator and a small-city mayor — smell blood in the water.

The 77-year-old moderate is being eclipsed on the campaign trail by younger candidates with sharper stump speeches, more hustle, and telegenic debate performances. An average of polling in New Hampshire, which votes Tuesday in the first-in-the-nation primary (following Iowa's troubled caucuses this past week), shows Biden plunging from first place to third, behind Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg.

"To not be concerned I think would be foolish," acknowledged Biden-backer Will Johnson, a 23-year-old law student from northern Pittsburgh, said in one of several conversations voters had with AFP about the candidate. "Hopefully a more concert-

ed effort is made by the campaign to really push out the vote and get people to support Biden," he said, adding Biden was "the best shot we have" at defeating President Donald Trump in November.

The big crowds, however, are going to Buttigieg, 38, and Sanders, 78, the two candidates who won the most votes in Iowa and are leading in New Hampshire. Biden took a day off the trail Thursday, five days before the primary, to huddle with top advisors about the path forward. But instead of coming out swinging at the start of the next day's debate, Biden committed a glaring unforced error. "I took a hit in Iowa, and I'll probably take one here," Biden said onstage, startling Johnson and other supporters who are looking for him to grab the reins, not admit defeat. —AFP



LAGOS: Passengers queue to board a bus provided by the government as a palliative to cushion the effect of the ban of motorbike taxis at the Ojodu Terminal in Lagos. —AFP

okadas and kekes, have been forced to trek or take the despoiled buses, now charging higher fares. "Before I used to pay 50 to 100 naira (28 cents US) for a journey, now you can go for 200 or even 300," Goodluck, 34, said.

The business community too has attacked the ban, saying it is catastrophic for Lagos. "It is not a good policy and it is

not a sustainable policy," the president of the Lagos chamber of commerce, Muda Yusuf said. The ban makes Lagos less attractive to private investors and makes logistics more difficult in an already overcrowded city, he said. "This policy needs to be urgently reviewed, at least for tricycles to be re-introduced," he said. —AFP



MANCHESTER: US Presidential Candidate and former Vice President Joe Biden takes selfies with supporters after speaking at a rally at the Rex Theatre in Manchester. —AFP

International

Thai gunman among 29 dead in unprecedented mass shooting

Hundreds rescued from shopping centre in hours-long siege

NAKHON RATCHASIMA: A soldier angry over a property deal gone sour killed at least 29 people and wounded 57 in a rampage that spanned four locations in and around the northeastern Thai city of Nakhon Ratchasima before he was shot dead yesterday. Most of the victims were at the city's Terminal 21 shopping centre, where the shooter held out against an overnight siege with an assault rifle and ammunition stolen from his army base.

Police named him as 32-year-old soldier Jakrapanth Thomma. He initially posted written messages on Facebook during the attack before his account was shut down by the company. "It was a personal conflict...over a house deal," Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha told reporters yesterday from Nakhon Ratchasima after travelling there to meet wounded survivors. Prayuth added that the conflict was with a relative of the soldier's commanding officer.

Hundreds of shoppers fled the mall in groups crouching low, and the police and army launched several rescues during the more than 12-hour standoff, with armed forces at one point emerging at a run carrying small children. "It was frightening because I could hear the occasional gunshot...we waited a long time for the police to come and help us, many hours," said Suvanarat Jirattanasakul, 27, her voice trembling.

Another survivor told local Amarin TV that

the shooter was "aiming for the heads" and said his colleague died on the scene. "He was shooting everywhere and his shots were very precise," said the man, identified as "Diaw". At a morgue in Nakhon Ratchasima, the family of 13-year-old Ratchanon Karnchanamethee sobbed as they identified his body. "He's my only son. He hasn't even had dinner," said his father, Natthawut Karnchanamethee. "I allowed him to do anything he wanted to. I never set expectations for him. I only wanted him to be a good person."

The province's governor, Wichien Chantaranochai yesterday night said a total of 29 people had been killed and 57 were wounded. Also known by the historical name Korat, Nakhon Ratchasima has a population of about 250,000. It is close to a national park popular for its wild elephants but the relatively poor northeastern region is one of the less visited areas for Thailand's tens of millions of tourists.

Stolen arsenal

CCTV footage from inside the mall posted on social media showed the gunman dressed in black and wearing a mask, his gun slung over his shoulder with no sign of other people around. According to local media, Jakrapanth worked at an army base close to Nakhon Ratchasima, which is about 250 km from the capital Bangkok. He was a sharp shooter and

took many special courses on carrying out attacks, including planning ambushes, army sources said.

Thai media reported he often posted photos of weapons on social media. The killings began at around 3 pm on Saturday when the soldier opened fire in a house before moving to an army camp and then driving to the mall in a stolen Humvee. The soldier's commanding officer was one of the people reported killed before the soldier moved on to the shopping mall and began shooting.

At some point during the day, the soldier raided the army camp's weapons storage to arm himself, said Lt General Thanya Kiatsarn, Commander of the Second Area Command. "He attacked the guard to the weapon arsenal, who later died, and he stole an official jeep and an HK33 gun and an amount of ammunition to do what he did," Thanya said.

'Spend the money in hell'

Hours before he began shooting on Saturday, Jakrapanth had posted on his Facebook account denouncing greedy people. "Rich from cheating. Taking advantage of other people. Do they think they can spend the money in hell?" read one post in Thai. He later posted written updates during the attack. "Death is inevitable for everyone," he wrote. Later, he complained about his fingers cramping and asked "Should I give up?" before the



NAKHON RATCHASIMA: A video grab shows CCTV footage of Thai soldier Jakrapanth Thomma holding a gun as he walks through the Terminal 21 shopping mall in Nakhon Ratchasima. — AFP

account was no longer available. Hours after the mall siege began, Facebook said it had removed the suspect's account. "There is no place on Facebook for people who commit this kind of atrocity, nor do we allow people

to praise or support this attack," a Facebook representative said in a statement. Major shootings are rare in the Southeast Asian country other than in the far south, where a decades-old insurgency persists. — Reuters

Azerbaijan votes in elections decried as sham by opposition

BAKU: Azerbaijanis voted yesterday in snap parliamentary elections decried by the opposition as a sham ballot that will strengthen President Ilham Aliyev's grip on power without bringing any real change. Critics say that Aliyev, 58, seeks to address growing public discontent over an economic slowdown and to improve his government's image by holding early elections and replacing discredited old elites with younger technocrats. The opposition accused the government of limiting their ability to campaign and several parties are boycotting the vote.

One of the leaders of the opposition Musavat party, Gulaga Aslanly, decried "mass electoral violations" yesterday. He reeled off a litany of alleged irregularities, saying some ballot boxes were not transparent and that others had openings that were too wide. "One can even drop a mid-sized book into these boxes," he said, adding that monitors faced "obstacles" and pointing to problems with voter lists. Video footage showed a smiling Aliyev and his family voting at a polling station in the capital Baku.

Vafa Alekperova, a 43-year-old schoolteacher, said she voted for a candidate of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan party. "I trust the party and my hopes for a better future are tied to it," she said. At the same polling station in Baku, 58-year-old taxi driver Ilgar Gasymov said he "voted for an opposition candidate because only the opposition cares about ordinary people's problems". More than 5.3 million people are eligible to vote. Turnout stood at more than 27 percent as of 0800 GMT, election officials said.



BAKU: Azerbaijan's servicemen vote at a polling station during the parliamentary elections in Baku yesterday. — AFP

'Protest sentiment'

Parliamentary elections had been scheduled for November this year, but in December 2019 Aliyev called early polls after a surprise self-dissolution of the legislature that is dominated by his ruling party. The move followed a replacement of the prime minister and a number of veteran officials within the presidential administration and the government.

Aliyev's party, which faces little challenge from the embattled opposition, is expected to retain its majority in the legislature. It promised that the election would be democratic. Yeni Azerbaijan campaign chief Mubariz Gurbanly, speaking to AFP, insisted that "the elections are free, fair, and democratic". Electoral commissions are controlled by Aliyev's party and all of the oil-rich country's television stations have refused to allocate airtime to representatives of the opposition.

Highly dependent on energy exports, the country has since 2015 been hit by a drop in energy prices and the global economic downturn, and has sharply devalued its currency, the manat. Analyst Anar Mammadli noted that public anger over economic problems has been growing in the South Caucasus country of nine million people. "Aliyev chose to hold elections eight months ahead of schedule as he fears that protest sentiment would grow further by November," he said.

Neither free nor fair

With most powers concentrated in the presidency, parliament has a limited role in the Caspian nation's political system. "There aren't even minimal conditions in Azerbaijan for holding democratic elections," said Ali Karimli, leader of the opposition Popular Front party which is boycotting the polls. Another prominent opposition leader, Isa Gambar of the Musavat party, decried draconian restrictions on the freedom of assembly in Azerbaijan where "people are being arrested and tortured" for taking part in peaceful protest rallies.

Karimli said there were now 130 political prisoners in the country. None of the elections held in Azerbaijan since Aliyev came to power have been recognized as free and fair by international observers. Aliyev has ruled the ex-Soviet state with an iron fist since he was first elected in 2003, after the death of his father, Azerbaijan's Soviet-era Communist leader and former KGB general Heydar Aliyev.

Under the Aliyev dynasty, Baku has faced strong international criticism for persecuting political opponents and suffocating independent media. Yesterday's ballot is being monitored by international observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. More than 1,300 candidates from 19 parties are standing for the 125-seat, single-house parliament, the Milli Majlis. Polls close at 1500 GMT. — AFP

Scientists race to develop vaccine for new coronavirus

SINGAPORE: Scientists from the United States to Australia are using new technology in an ambitious, multi-million-dollar drive to develop a vaccine in record time to tackle China's coronavirus outbreak. The new virus has spread rapidly since emerging late last year in China, killing more than 800 people in the mainland and infecting over 37,000. Cases have been reported in two dozen other countries.

Coming up with any vaccine typically takes years, and involves a lengthy process of testing on animals, clinical trials on humans and regulatory approvals. But several teams of experts are racing to develop one quicker, backed by an international coalition that aims to combat emerging diseases, and Australian scientists hope theirs could be ready in six months. "It is a high-pressure situation and there is a lot of weight on us," said senior researcher Keith Chappell, part of the group from Australia's University of Queensland.

But the scientist added he took "some solace" knowing several teams around the world were engaged in the same mission. "The hope is that one of these will be successful and can contain this outbreak," he said. But even a timeframe of six months looks agonizingly slow with the virus, believed to have emerged from a market selling wild animals, killing close to 100 people every day in mainland China.

Efforts are being led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), a body established in 2017 to finance costly biotechnology research in the wake of an Ebola outbreak in West Africa that killed more than 11,000 people. With a mission to speed up the development of vaccines, CEPI is pouring millions of dollars into four projects around the world and has put out a call for more proposals.

Attack the virus

The projects hope to use new technology to develop vaccines that can be tested in the near future. The body's CEO, Richard Hatchett, said the aim was to start clinical testing in just 16 weeks. German biopharmaceutical company CureVac and US-based Moderna Therapeutics are developing vaccines based on "messenger RNA" - instructions that tell the body to produce proteins - while Inovio, another American firm, is using DNA-based technology.

DNA- and RNA-based vaccines use the genetic coding of the virus to trick the body's cells into producing proteins identical to those on the surface of the pathogen, explained Ooi Eng Eong, deputy director of the emerging infectious diseases program at the Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore. The immune system learns to recognize the proteins so that it is ready to find and attack the virus when it enters the body.

The Australian researchers are using "molecular clamp" technology invented by the university's scientists that allows them to rapidly develop new vaccines based solely on a virus DNA sequence. French scientists at the Pasteur Institute are modifying the measles vaccine to work against the coronavirus, but do not expect it to be ready for about 20 months. Meanwhile, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention has also started developing vaccines, according to the state-run Xinhua news agency.

Health authorities weigh the risks and benefits in vaccine approvals and if there is a public health emergency, the process could be shortened, said Ooi of the Duke-NUS Medical School. But he added that "paradoxically, if the situation improves, then actually the pathway for vaccines would be longer".

"If there's a lot of these new coronavirus cases around, then you accept some risk, because of the tremendous amount of benefit you can derive, whereas if there are not many cases, the tolerance for risk would be very low." While there is no vaccine for the coronavirus, some doctors are trying out a potent brew of anti-retroviral and flu drugs to treat those infected, but the science is inconclusive as to whether they are effective. Ultimately, scientists may end up in the same situation they were during the 2002-2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) - it died out before a vaccine could be fully developed. — AFP

India Kashmir hit by general strike

SRINAGAR: Indian-held Kashmir was hit by a general strike yesterday called by the separatist Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) to mark the anniversary of the death of a Kashmiri man who was executed for his part in an attack on India's parliament in 2001. The JKLF on Thursday called for strikes on Feb 9 and Feb 11 to observe the anniversary of the death of Afzal Guru, and then that of its founder Maqbool Bhat.

Shops and businesses were shut yesterday, while there was little traffic on the roads in Srinagar and other parts of Indian-held Kashmir. Indian troops have erected iron barricades and laid concertina wire in parts of the region to block roads, with armed soldiers in full riot gear patrolling the streets to prevent any protests, a government official said.

He said low speed mobile internet, which was restored last month, had also been shut down as a precautionary measure. Last month, India's Supreme Court rebuked the government for shutting down the internet and telecommunications in Jammu and Kashmir, which was India's only Muslim-majority state before it was split into two federally administered territories. Indian police, meanwhile, have launched legal proceedings against JKLF for calling the strikes.

The JKLF was banned by India last year as part of a massive clampdown in Kashmir after an attack on Feb 14 in which 40 Indian troops were killed. Its offices were closed and main leaders, including its chairman Yasin Malik, were detained. On Feb 9, 2013, Afzal Guru was hanged after the Supreme Court upheld a verdict that he was involved in a 2001 attack on parliament. Maqbool Bhat was hanged in New Delhi's Tihar jail on Feb 11, 1984, following his conviction for the killing of a police official. — Reuters

2 US troops killed by Afghan soldier

KABUL: Two American troops were killed and six others wounded by an Afghan soldier armed with a machine gun, the US military confirmed yesterday. The deaths come at a sensitive time in the 18-year-old war, with President Donald Trump eager to bring troops home and end the longest conflict in US history. The incident occurred late Saturday at a base in Sherzad district, in Nangarhar province, eastern Afghanistan.

"Current reports indicate an individual in an Afghan uniform opened fire on the combined US and Afghan force with a machine gun," US Forces-Afghanistan spokesman Sonny Leggett said in a statement yesterday. The defense ministry said one Afghan soldier was killed and three local security forces injured during the shooting, and added that an investigation had been launched while vowing to continue fighting "terrorism" with the US.

"Incidents such as this fail to have negative effects on the friendship and spirit of cooperation and between the ANDSF and US military forces," the ministry said in a statement. Provincial governor Shah Mahmood Meyakhil had earlier said it was not immediately clear if the incident was a deliberate act by an "infiltrator" or an accident. "It was not a clash between the forces. We are investigating," Meyakhil said. Leggett also stressed the cause or motive behind the attack were not immediately known.

In a tweet, the US Army's 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) said "several" of its soldiers had been killed or injured during combat operations in Afghanistan. According to Sherzad resident Najebullah—who goes by one name - gunfire could be heard coming from an Afghan security forces base



DEH BALA: US Army soldiers from NATO look on as US flag files at a checkpoint during a patrol against Islamic State militants at the Deh Bala district in the eastern province of Nangarhar Province. — AFP

nearby late Saturday followed by immediate air evacuations.

"We heard the sounds of gunfire and immediately helicopters landed inside the base and evacuated the casualties," added Najebullah. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the incident. Taleban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid later declined to comment on the incident, saying in a message sent to AFP only that the insurgents were "investigating" the attack.

Trump and the Taleban

Last year was the deadliest for US forces in Afghanistan since combat operations officially finished at the end of 2014, highlighting the challenging security situation that persists. Depending on how one qualifies combat deaths, about 20 American troops were killed in 2019. Since the US-led invasion in October 2001, about 2,400 US troops have been killed in combat in Afghanistan.

In December, Taleban infiltrators in the Afghan military killed nine Afghan soldiers in central Afghanistan. In July, an Afghan soldier killed two US troops as they were visiting an Afghan army base in Kandahar. Such insider attacks are sometimes called "green-on-blue" incidents. That came two weeks after another Afghan soldier shot and killed an influential Afghan army colonel while he was conducting a security assessment in Ghazni province.

US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad has been negotiating with the Taleban for about 18 months for a deal that would see the Pentagon pull thousands of troops from Afghanistan. In return, the Taleban would guarantee the country is not used as a jihadist safe haven. Many are skeptical of the proposed deal and Trump himself declared talks "dead" in September amid continued Taleban violence. Negotiations have since resumed in Qatar. — AFP

Analysis

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Washington Watch

Angry and vindicated

By Dr James J Zogby

In January, the Israeli daily newspaper, Haaretz, ran an article, "Secret Israeli Document Reveals Plan to Keep Arabs Off Their Lands." I found the piece unsettling for several reasons. Given the headline, at first I thought the story was going to be about Israel's policies in the West Bank where Israel's military administration has, since the beginning of the occupation, set aside large areas of the territories as "closed" to Palestinians, presumably for reasons of "security." Other areas were designated "green spaces" - which, while appearing to be an environmental designation, simply meant that Palestinians couldn't build on or otherwise make use of these lands.

Over time both the "closed" and the "green spaces" gave way to settlements - since that had been Israel's intention in the first place. For example, the massive Israeli settlement called Har Homa was built on a hill of Palestinian-owned land between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, called Jabal Abul Ghnaim. Early on, Israel zoned the jabal "a green space." Their concern wasn't to keep it "green;" it was to keep Palestinian owners from using the land until Israel was ready to build a Jewish-only settlement on that same location.

As I began to read the Haaretz story, however, I realized that it wasn't about Israel's current practices in the territories occupied in 1967. Rather, it was about the Israeli defense establishment's decades-long effort to bury or suppress documentation of the very same land-grab practices that the Israelis had implemented during the first few years of their state.

Haaretz, to its credit, has been running quite a few of these historical pieces exposing the outrageous policies Israel used to "ethnically cleanse" Palestinians from their land in order to insure that the new state was "more Jewish and less Arab." As I've read each of these articles, I must say that my reactions have ranged from anger to indignation to vindication.

I've felt angry and indignant because 40 years ago, when I first wrote about these same practices in a little book titled, "Palestinians: The Invisible Victims," I was denounced by major pro-Israel and American Jewish organizations for my anti-Israel views. Back then, these mainstream groups were operating in much the same way as today's shadowy Canary Mission or Campus Watch. They created defamatory and threatening background briefs on Arab American writers and activists.

And they would use these briefs to pressure colleges, radio, and TV programs to disinvite us. They accused us of distorting history, fabricating lies, and being motivated by an anti-Jewish animus. Of course, we were doing none of the above. We were merely reporting on the history of what Israel had done and was still doing to remove Palestinians from their lands and to deny them their rights.

When I now read the very same history in an Israeli newspaper, I can't help think of the price so many Arab American intellectuals and activists were forced to pay for simply telling the truth. So, yes, I am angry and indignant. At the same time, I feel somewhat vindicated that despite the heavy-handed efforts of major American Jewish groups to silence our voices, the truth is finally coming out.

One final aspect of the article that I found intriguing was the effort expended and the means used by Israeli authorities to bury the historical record that would prove the grave injustices they committed in establishing their state. According to the Haaretz article, this record includes evidence of "the looting and destruction of Arab villages during the Independence War [and]...evidence of acts of expulsion and testimony about camps set up for captives."

What the article makes clear is that the "cover up" was not only designed to hide the truth, but to provide Israeli propagandists the opportunity to disingenuously "question" whether these things even happened or to simply deny that they happened at all and then discredit those who said otherwise. As one official quoted in the article says about the imperative of hiding any documentation of what Israel had done to the Palestinians, "if someone writes that the horse is black, if the horse isn't outside the barn, then he can't ever prove that it's really black." The lesson: if you hide the records or destroy, no historian can prove it ever happened.

The Israeli plan in a nutshell: first, whitewash history denying all the claims made about the repressive policies put in place; then denounce anyone who refuses to accept this fictional account of "history"; and finally, hide from the public as much of the real history is possible - so that it becomes difficult to counter the "whitewashed" fictive historical narrative.

In the end, what is especially disturbing about this Israeli practice, is that it is still their modus operandi. They continue to dispossess Palestinians of their lands using the same tactics which they used to "Judaize the Galilee." In the early 1950's, Israelis used the Emergency Defense Regulations they inherited from the British to declare any Palestinian area "closed."

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

All articles appearing on this page are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein.



A photograph taken on Dec 15, 2019 shows an employee working on a computer during a training at the Humans In the Loop (HITL) office in Sofia. — AFP

Digital lifeline for refugees in Bulgaria and beyond

Single mother-of-two Sara Faizi from Afghanistan faced a dead end when she arrived in Bulgaria in 2018: The former bank branch operations manager needed a job but neither spoke the local language nor had any contacts. An energetic Bulgarian, Iva Gumnishka, 25, and her social enterprise Humans In The Loop (HITL) lent her a hand, linking Faizi to work created by the booming machine learning and artificial intelligence industry. "Before I couldn't take any job because I had to take care of the kids. Now I can work from home and the job is easy," Faizi said.

The 31-year-old is among an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 refugees - mostly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria - who have settled over the past five years in Bulgaria, the EU's poorest member where state aid for them is almost non-existent. The work for HITL is project-based and requires only a computer and Internet connection. It includes the collection, sorting and categorization of various types of images and data necessary to power algorithms essential to AI technology, Gumnishka told AFP in her enterprise's tiny office and classroom in Sofia.

The data is then used for products ranging from augmented reality games to smart drones, CCTV face recognition, or even self-driving cars for clients from around the world, she added. HITL grew out of the English and digital skills classes that the Bulgarian started giving to a handful of refugees in Sofia two years ago in a bid to help them find work as freelancers. Gumnishka then decided to tap

this "very specific niche" to directly link refugees to work from start-ups in Europe and the US that did not require any particular skills or knowledge of the language. It was also a market that was set to grow, she said.

'Had to Google it'

Having no technical background herself, she remembered with a smile an early conversation with a client asking her if the company was able to provide a certain AI-related task. "I answered: 'Yes' and then had to Google it to find out what it was," said Gumnishka, who studied human rights at Columbia University in New York before returning to Bulgaria. But she has become an expert on the work since then, often personally training her team that grew to include about 100 refugees in Sofia within a year and a half.

As the volume of work from clients expanded, Gumnishka decided it would be even more beneficial to send work directly to conflict-affected regions. HITL teamed up with Roia, a non-profit organisation training young people in Syria and Syrian refugees in Turkey, and WorkWell, which organizes various digital courses for refugees and other vulnerable people in Iraq.

Together, the three organizations have so far trained and employed on various projects 150 people in Syria, Turkey and Iraq, mostly refugees, women and youngsters. "The best thing about working on projects is that it isn't tiring and you can work anywhere at any time,"

Syrian refugee Shyar Qader Ali, who lives with his family in a camp in Iraq, said in comments emailed by WorkWell. The 21-year-old earned enough money as a freelancer to start a small business in his camp fixing mobile phones.

'Ethical rewards'

Roia CEO Khaled Shaaban said the HITL projects have opened up new employment prospects for youngsters, whose only other options were jobs on the black market or working for donors or armed groups. "The biggest challenge now is to secure more clients. We don't want donations, we want people to hire us," Shaaban said. What of the possibility that a vulnerable workforce might be taken advantage of through this form of insecure work?

WorkWell figures emailed to AFP showed that 76 workers made approximately \$12,500 from completing seven projects between May and Dec 2019. Qader Ali was among the most active, earning \$1,300 on his last project. Back in Sofia, Gumnishka insisted she never used the fact that HITL works with refugees as a selling point to clients and added that the high quality of the work ensured that all workers would be ethically rewarded.

"We mostly insist that these people are really very well prepared and trained, that they work in small dedicated teams, that they have supervisors working with them, so our quality that we provide to our clients is the most important thing," she said. — AFP

As nations bicker, a greener future evolves in finance

Away from the toxic atmosphere at climate summit talks, in boardrooms, banks and trading houses, a transformation in green finance is under way. Its backers hope it could profitably help save the planet. Regardless of the politics of climate change, there is real money to be made today in the exploding market for bonds and other instruments invested in environmentally sustainable projects. But in the final analysis, uniform regulation derived from collective political action will be vital both for the markets and for the planet itself, observers acknowledge.

Hard-nosed US investors in fields such as solar panels are not necessarily driven by anxiety about global warming. Climate Bonds Initiative chief executive Sean Kidney said. "Most of them are Republicans for god's sake," he said at a conference on climate finance organized by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in London. "They care only about price," he added, predicting the transition to a low-carbon future would generate \$90 trillion investment by 2050 in areas including low-energy cooling, urban farming and greener transport.

Kidney's independent organization certifies "green bonds" issued by governments, municipalities and companies whose proceeds are devoted to sustainable devel-

opment. Notable issuers last month included the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York, one of a slew of US cities unwilling to wait on President Donald Trump's climate-skeptic administration as they vie to adapt their creaking infrastructures to a low-carbon future.

Tipping point

The investment community more broadly is running ahead of climate politics, which have been stymied by the refusal of the United States and other major economies to chart a way forward on the 2015 Paris accord. BlackRock, the world's biggest asset management fund, shook the industry last month by announcing it would transition out of coal-based investments. "Climate risk has become mainstream (for investors). It does feel we have reached a tipping point," said Nick Anderson, board member of International Financial Reporting Standards, which is crafting new climate guidance for company accountants.

In 2019, the green bonds market worldwide expanded by more than half to about \$258 billion, and further breakneck growth is expected this year, according to the Climate Bonds Initiative. Departments at major banks in charge of environmental, social and governance (ESG) matters, once a backwater in high finance, now have real teeth as banks get serious about profitable alternative investments and their wider public image.

Environmental finance is "absolutely real and tangible", said Alexandra Basirov, global head of sustainable finance for financial institutions at French bank BNP Paribas. Banks such as BNP and ING have pioneered lower-interest loans that give greener projects an edge over more carbon-intensive ones. But Basirov also cau-

tioned at last week's EBRD conference: "Ultimately markets don't operate efficiently without adequate data." Therein lies the rub for many engaged in the ESG business: How to tally assets at risk from climate change, and how to quantify the risk itself given the array of catastrophic outcomes in store as temperatures rise.

Green for greenbacks

Credit risk agencies have been writing new models that seek to calculate corporate exposure, such as the weight of assets that companies already hold in potentially obsolete carbon investments. Green investments are already turning into greenbacks for firms, according to James Leaton, vice president for climate risk at Moody's Investors Service. Sustainable projects show a "lower default rate" because investors see them as more future-proof and creditworthy, he said.

The Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, an initiative launched by former New York mayor and now US presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg, aims to rationalize what companies must report to investors on their climate exposure. In the acronym-heavy field of climate finance, central banks are also getting in on the act. One initiative derived from the Paris accord is the Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS), a platform for central bankers to examine the global financial risks of climate change. A notable hold-out has been the US Federal Reserve, hobbled by Trump's vocal objections to climate action. Fed chief Jerome Powell hinted last month that it might soon sign up. Morgan Despres, head of the NGFS secretariat and deputy chief of the financial stability department at the Banque de France, told AFP that network staffers were in contact with Fed counterparts "on a regular basis". — AFP

Port chaos leaves Liberian fuel pumps dry

Liberians have faced long queues at petrol pumps for nearly two weeks as sloppy bookkeeping and poor port infrastructure have triggered economically damaging fuel shortages. Incorrect fuel-reserve figures in the impoverished West African country partly led to the shortage, which has dragged on since late January, an industry official said. But an un-dredged port in the capital Monrovia has also prevented large fuel tankers from docking, according to port and government officials.

Liberia's Commerce Minister Wilson Tarphe told AFP the shortage has caused an "economic downturn", without giving precise figures. Consumers are spending less on household items as fuel prices rise, he said, and businesses are operating under capacity. Liberia suffers frequent fuel shortages, but the current one has lasted an unusually long time. Queues forming before dawn at petrol stations are now commonplace, and scarcity has forced taxis and buses to hike fares.

"I have been here since 5:00 am but until now I am yet to receive gasoline," said Victor Gray, 45, at a Monrovia petrol station at 8:00 am this week. "I think the kids will miss class today," he added, exhausted after he and his children slept in the car. The shortage is another blow to President George Weah, who is under increasing pressure to improve living

conditions in the country of some 4.8 million people. He inherited an economy already devastated by back-to-back civil wars from 1989 to 2003, and by the 2014-2016 West Africa Ebola outbreak. Inflation is now running at about 30 percent, according to the World Bank, which has incited anger and protests. Compounding economic difficulties, fuel scarcity means it is harder to move goods around the country. "My store is empty," said Anthony Kai, who sells dried goods in the town of Zwedru, some 550 km east of Monrovia. "Very soon the population will lack the necessary things they need," he added.

Clogged port

Fuel distributors which overstated their reserves are also partly to blame for the shortage, according to an official from the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company (LPRC) who requested anonymity. The LPRC is a state-owned company charged with ensuring a consistent oil supply. The greater problem, officials say, is that large petrol tankers have been unable to dock in the port of Monrovia for weeks because of unusually shallow waters.

Silt and detritus have accumulated in the port since summer, when heavy rains prevented crews from dredging, said the managing director of the National Port Authority, Bill Tweahway. Ships with a draft of more than 10 m can no longer enter the port. Tweahway said, although smaller ones can still dock, which has averted a crisis. The government said it would start dredging, after which ships with a draft of over 13 m would be able to dock.

Losses and frustration

Liberia is also expanding the port so that more than one vessel can dock at a time, Weah's office told AFP, pointing



The driver of a rickshaw waits in line outside a fuel station during a fuel shortage in Monrovia on Feb 5, 2020. — AFP

to the port as the main cause of the fuel shortage. An importer who declined to be named said that businesses are losing "a huge amount of money" chartering several smaller ships rather than one freighter. But a foreign official in Monrovia, who declined to be named, said the smaller ships meant that some petrol was still arriving. "I don't think this is an existential crisis, just a screw-up," he said.

Everyday frustration is nonetheless rife. Civil servant Emmanuel Gaye said he would not be able to afford his fare to work if the fuel shortage lasts another week, since it has doubled. "We can't continue like this," said Solomon Fayah, a driver, sitting in a fuel queue in Monrovia. — AFP

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2020

12 Dollar shines amid trade progress and an acquitted US president**13** Gulf Bank records net profit of KD 63.6 million in 2019**14** KFH pioneer in recruitment, raising bar of Kuwaiti youth

NBK and Zain sign agreement to serve Kuwait's biggest SME customer base

Signing ceremony held during Kuwait Tech Expo 2020



Hamad Al-Marzouq and Mohammed Al-Othman sign the agreement.



Hamad Al-Marzouq and Mohammed Al-Othman exchange the documents.

Hamad Al-Marzouq: We were keen to join forces with NBK to serve Kuwaiti SMEs; the most vibrant segment of the business community and the future of our nation's economy
Mohammed Al-Othman: We are excited to be partnering with a leading institution such as Zain to support young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs in building their promising future

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait and Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the signing of an agreement to offer a number of discounts and unique benefits to their Small and Medium Enterprises customers who represent the biggest joint base of SME customers in the State of Kuwait.

The signing ceremony was held in the presence of Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq, NBK Consumer Banking Group General Manager Mohammed Al-Othman, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, as well as the executive management teams from both companies.

As part of this agreement, Zain will offer SME owners who are NBK cardholders a number of discounts and unique benefits on Zain Business solutions, which are specially designed to guarantee them the highest levels of business efficiency, productivity, and continuity. The National Bank of Kuwait will also offer a number of discounts and special prices on bank cards and services dedicated to NBK's SME customers when they open a new Zain Business account.

During the signing ceremony, Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq commented: "We are

extremely pleased today to collaborate with the National Bank of Kuwait to offer an added value to the biggest joint base of SME customers in the State of Kuwait. This is especially true as Kuwait's entrepreneurial community continues to grow rapidly, and as we witness a leap in the number of bright Kuwaiti entrepreneurs who are passionate about being productive and contribute to further pushing the local economy wheel".

Al-Marzouq added: "While Zain is the leading and biggest digital service provider in Kuwait, NBK is also the leading and biggest bank in the country. That is why it was essential for the both of us to join forces together and serve Kuwaiti entrepreneurs who own SMEs, as they represent the most vibrant part of the business community and the future of our nation's economy. This collaboration is a clear reflection of our role as leading companies in the Kuwaiti private sector".

Al-Marzouq further explained: "We recently launched the all-new Zain SME App, dedicated for our SME customers. The app offers SME owners a wide range of digital services, including immediate digital onboarding to our 'Zain Business' solutions without the need for personal presence or the use of papers. With this launch, Zain became the first and only telecom operator

in Kuwait to offer this comprehensive digital platform for SME owners. Today, we continue our efforts in serving this productive segment in the community by partnering with Kuwait's biggest and oldest bank".

Al-Marzouq concluded: "We at Zain are well aware of the important role played by Small and Medium Enterprises in achieving economic and social development in Kuwait. SMEs represent a big part of the country's production channels, and they play an essential role in the growth of our nation's economy. That is why we are always committed to offering them the best and most advanced solutions being the leading digital service provider in Kuwait and the region".

During the signing ceremony, Mohammed Al-Othman, General Manager of Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait, said: "We are excited to be partnering with a leading institution such as Zain to support young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs in building their promising future. The agreement is a continuity to our long-standing commitment towards small and medium enterprises in Kuwait, having built strategic partnerships with most of them as we continue to offer them comprehensive services at our branches in Kuwait and across the world. We also support this segment of the business community with a team of profes-

sionals able to guide their creative ambitions into a journey to success.

"At NBK, we ensure to support advice and provide personalized banking services to entrepreneurs. We've built a close relationship that continues to grow as their ideas evolve and enrich the local business community, ultimately becoming real-life companies capable of competing locally and regionally as well as contributing to the diversification of the economy in line with the New Kuwait Vision 2035."

Al-Othman emphasized on the role of NBK that goes beyond its banking services and products, providing an operational model to SMEs through digital and advanced banking solutions as the bank completes its digital transformation. The transformation is constantly adding value and improving all services, and specifically the NBK Mobile Banking.

Al-Othman concluded: "We continuously connect with entrepreneurs and have recently launched a series of discussion sessions at Al-Shaheed Park, where our small and medium business partners can showcase their experiences and journey to success with NBK alongside them, giving us pride of the promising Kuwaiti youth talents."

NBK Business Banking is available in majority of NBK branches across Kuwait

where it provides comprehensive financial services that are not limited to banking transactions but also extend to providing smart solutions for payment services, salary transfers, banking services for employees, secure business banking services, in addition to credit facilities and financing, and giving them access to competitive investment opportunities in cooperation with the bank's investment arm, NBK Capital.

This partnership comes as part of Zain's commitment to offer the unique offerings to the Kuwaiti business sector, most notably those aimed at SMEs, which are considered an integral part of the progress of national economy. Zain's commitment also comes in line with its digital transformation strategy that aims at empowering a more efficient business sector in the Kuwaiti market.

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



KUWAIT: Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq, NBK Consumer Banking Group General Manager Mohammed Al-Othman, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, as well as the executive management teams from both companies, during the signing of the agreement.

NBK Money Markets Report

Dollar shines amid trade progress and an acquitted US president

Coronavirus spooks markets; China to halve tariffs on US imports

KUWAIT: Coronavirus and President Donald Trump's Senate impeachment trial were the two issues that markets were eyeing during last week.

In an effort to cushion the fallout from the coronavirus epidemic, and moving towards implementing the "phase one" trade deal with the Trump administration, China has announced that it will halve tariffs on some US imports.

Across the map from China in the United States, after three weeks of debate, the Republican led Senate voted to acquit Donald Trump from both articles of impeachment.

The news of China's pledge to halve tariffs along with the acquittal of Donald Trump saw both the dollar and equities rally. China's CSI 300 is up 7.14 percent from its low in the beginning of the week.



weekly rise since June. The forex markets saw the US dollar index shoot up 1.40 percent in two days closing the week at 98.72 strengthening against the sterling and euro by 2.53 percent and 1.36 percent respectively.

US service and manufacturing sectors

The global rebound in risk assets extended after data showed resilience in the US economy and fears regarding the coronavirus lessened.

More jobs than expected

The US labor market started the election year in solid shape, adding more jobs than forecast in January and

Kuwaiti Dinar at 0.30440

Rates - 09 February, 2020

Table with 8 columns: Currencies, Open, High, Low, Close, Minimum, Maximum, Forward. Rows include EUR, GBP, JPY, and CHF.

with wage growth pushing back above 3 percent. Nonfarm payrolls showed an increase of 225,000 jobs last month up from 147,000 in the month before.

A jolt in UK's services sector

The UK's private sector saw increased activity in January at the fastest rate in 16 months. The IHS Markit composite purchasing managers index rose to 53.3 up from the 49.3 clocked in December.

PMI for January came in at 53.9, its highest level in 16 months and up from the 50 figure clocked in December.

Japan's Central Bank backs economy

The Japanese central bank indicated that it stands ready to boost the economy with additional stimulus measures if the economy's recovery is disrupted.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30440

Kalyan Jewellers launches 4-level assurance plan in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Kalyan Jewellers, one of India's largest and most preferred jewelers, has announced the Middle East launch of their highly successful, 4-Level Assurance initiative.

Kalyan Jewellers understands the sentiments of their patrons, and is committed to providing Free Lifetime Maintenance of ornaments purchased at any of their 144 showrooms, globally.

Speaking on this initiative T S Kalyanaraman, Chairman & Managing Director, Kalyan Jewellers said, "The evolution

of Kalyan Jewellers from a single showroom to a global brand was on the foundation of our core value of trust and transparency.

"At Kalyan Jewellers, customer satisfaction has always been our top priority. Our aim is to safeguard consumer rights and provide a service-backed customer experience with additional services through this unique initiative.

The 4-Level Assurance Certificate is applicable across all Kalyan showrooms. Existing customers can walk into any Kalyan Jewellers showroom with their jewelry to have them re-evaluated and 4-level assurance stamped.

Singapore kicks off depleted airshow amid virus clampdown

SINGAPORE: Organizers scrambled yesterday to shore up the Singapore Airshow, which is going ahead under a cloud of health and economic concerns after dozens of exhibitors pulled out of Asia's largest aerospace gathering.

After years in which the airline industry has become used to weathering external shocks from epidemics to security threats, one of the industry's leading showcases has itself been thrust into the spotlight as the number of deaths in mainland China, where the virus first erupted, rose above 800.

"Based on our assessment of the situation today...we have decided to proceed with the trade and public days," said Tan Kong Hwee, assistant managing director of Singapore's Economic Development Board.

Organizers advised trade visitors to avoid shaking hands and to choose alternative forms of greeting such as bowing or waving hands.

Singapore on Friday raised its coronavirus alert level and reported more cases not linked to previ-



SINGAPORE: Members of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force's Bayi Aerobatic Team fly J-10 performance aircraft as they take part in an aerial display during a media preview ahead of the Singapore Airshow in Singapore yesterday. —AFP

ous infections or travel to China. It advised non-essential large-scale events should be deferred or cancelled, but said the air show would go ahead.

Five delegates privately expressed surprise the show was going ahead, but organizers insisted they had a responsibility to those who wished to attend.

ecosystem of the global aviation industry," said Leck Chet Lam, managing director of Experia Events, partly owned by ST Engineering and government agencies and which manages the show and exhibition site.

Superpower flight display

This year's depleted gathering comes against the backdrop of slowing passenger growth in Asia, down to 4.2 percent in 2019 from 7 percent in 2018 as economies cool their recent expansion.

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Table listing Asian countries and their exchange rates: Japanese Yen, Indian Rupees, Pakistani Rupees, etc.

GCC COUNTRIES

Table listing GCC countries and their exchange rates: Saudi Riyal, Qatari Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, etc.

ARAB COUNTRIES

Table listing Arab countries and their exchange rates: Egyptian Pound, Yemen Riyal, Tunisian Dinar, etc.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Table listing European and American countries and their exchange rates: US Dollar, Euro, Sterling Pound, etc.

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Table with columns: Rate for Transfer, Selling Rate, and various currencies like US Dollar, Canadian Dollar, etc.

Table listing Chinese Yuan Renminbi, Thai Bhat, Turkish Lira, and Singapore dollars with their respective exchange rates.

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

Table with columns: CURRENCY, BUY, SELL, and various currencies like British Pound, Czech Korune, etc.

Table listing Chinese Yuan, Hong Kong Dollar, Indian Rupee, Indonesian Rupiah, Japanese Yen, etc.

Arab

Table listing Bahraini Dinar, Egyptian Pound, Iranian Riyal, Iraqi Dinar, etc.

Gulf Bank records net profit of KD 63.6 million in 2019

Net profit increases 12% over 2018 • BoD recommends a cash dividend of 11 fils per share

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. ("Bank") announced its financial results for the year ending 2019.

Financial summary

Gulf Bank reported an increase of 12 percent in net profit to KD 63.6 million. Earnings per share was up 12 percent to 22 fils and the Board of Directors is recommending a cash dividend of 11 fils per share (50 percent payout ratio) for shareholders' approval at the Annual General Meeting to be held in March 2020. Customer loans reached another all-time high of KD 4.5 billion, an increase of KD 261 million or 6.2 percent vs. the end of 2018 and up 20 percent (KD 750 million) over the last three years. This growth in 2019 was well balanced as roughly half came from the Bank's Corporate segment and the other half came from the Bank's Consumer segment.

The non-performing loan ratio over the last two years has stabilized near industry norms and stood at 1.1 percent at the end of 2019. Total Credit Provisions ended 2019 at KD 296 million whereas IFRS 9 accounting requirements (i.e., ECL or expected credit losses) were KD 190 million. So, the Bank has very healthy excess provisioning levels of KD 106 million.

Gulf Bank's regulatory capital ratios remained strong as the Tier 1 ratio of 13.8 percent was 1.8 percent above the Bank's regulatory minimum of 12 percent and the Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 17.1 percent was 3.1 percent above the Bank's regulatory minimum of 14 percent.

Gulf Bank maintained its 'A' ratings from the four major credit rating agencies:

- Moody's Investors Service maintained the Long-Term Deposits Rating of "A3" with a "Positive" outlook
- S&P Global Ratings affirmed the Bank Issuer Credit Rating at "A-" with a "Stable" outlook
- Fitch Ratings affirmed the Bank Long-term Issuer Default Rating of "A+" with a "Stable" outlook



Omar Kutayba Alghanim

Capital Intelligence affirmed Gulf Bank's Long-term Foreign Currency Rating of "A+" with a "Stable" outlook.

Commenting on the results, Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Gulf Bank's Chairman said: "We are extremely happy with our Bank's performance in 2019. We delivered another great set of results as we continued to enhance the Bank's position to achieve sustainable growth for our customers, shareholders, regulators, employees, and communities."

Business highlights

Gulf Bank is well positioned to serve its Consumer and Corporate clients in Kuwait and provide them with tailored advice and solutions. In our Consumer Banking seg-

ment, Gulf Bank maintained its focus to deliver a wide range of simple and reliable banking products/experiences to differentiated customer segments supported by a network of 59 branches, over 300 ATMs, convenient mobile/online banking sites, and an advanced 24 x 7 call center. As a result, Consumer loans grew 9 percent over the most recent year and are on track to grow at nearly two times the industry growth rate for a second year in a row.

Throughout 2019, Gulf Bank's Corporate Banking segment remained committed to supporting Kuwait's National Development Plan arising from the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for "New Kuwait Vision 2035". Accordingly, the Bank continued to provide funding to various vital projects in the oil, construction, and infrastructure sectors through direct financing or syndications with other local banks. Despite the challenging market conditions during 2019, Gulf Bank grew its corporate loan book by 4.6 percent and maintained its strong presence as a key domestic player.

Sustainability

Sustainability has taken the lead in Gulf Bank's success, playing an integral role in its annual corporate social responsibility initiatives. The Bank's approach consists of three pillars: social sustainability, economic sustainability, and environmental sustainability.

During the year 2019, Gulf Bank contin-

ued to sponsor INJAZ-Kuwait, 642 Marathon and Ajyal program. During the year, Gulf Bank also extended its economic sustainability to promote financial literacy and create a culture of financial awareness. In addition, the Bank focused on the inclusion and diversity culture through employment of special needs talent, gender equality and women empowerment.

"Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program and plays a vital role in contributing to its community in ways that extend well beyond finance. By proudly spearheading sustainability initiatives that help to shape the future of the communities we serve, we are demonstrating a larger commitment to our beloved Kuwait," said Alghanim.

Recognition

Gulf Bank continued to be acknowledged by external organizations. During 2019, the Bank was recognized for its Straight-Through Processing (STP) by Deutsche Bank's "Operational Excellence Award". In addition, Gulf Bank was chosen as 2019's recipient of the "Best Nationalization Initiative in the Private Sector" award in recognition for its various Kuwaitization achievements throughout the past year, during an awards ceremony hosted by the GCC Government Human Resources Awards.

Appreciation

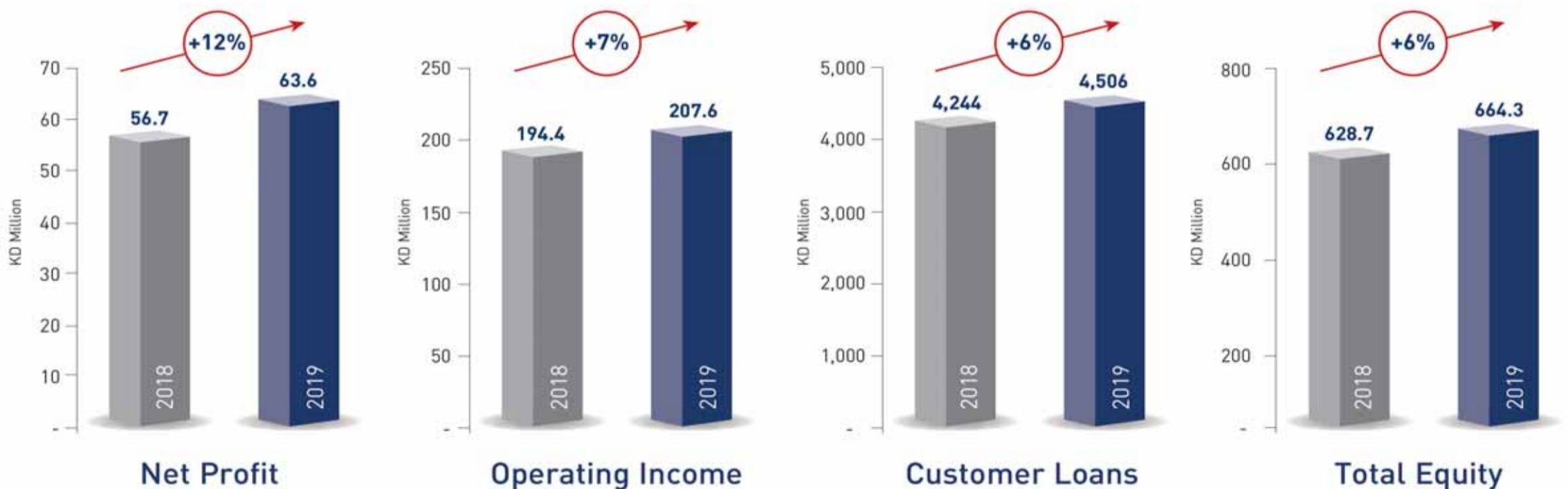
Alghanim concluded his remarks by stating: "On behalf of the Board of Directors, we express our gratitude and appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority for their dedicated efforts in supporting and promoting Kuwait's Banking sector. I would like to offer our sincere thanks to our valued customers for their continued trust in Gulf Bank as their loyalty is at the core of our success. Finally, I would like to thank the entire Gulf Bank team for their dedicated service and being part of the Gulf Bank family."

Rating Agency	Criteria	Rating
MOODY'S	Long-Term Deposits	A3
	Outlook	Positive
Fitch Ratings	Long-Term Issuer Default Rating	A+
	Outlook	Stable
S&P Global Ratings	Issuer Credit Rating	A-
	Outlook	Stable
CAPITAL intelligence	Long-Term Foreign Currency	A+
	Outlook	Stable

Key Highlights	2019	2018
Capital Adequacy Ratio	17.1%	17.5%
NPL Ratio	1.1%	1.0%
Earnings per share	22 fils	20 fils
Dividends per share*	11 fils	10 fils

*2019 recommended dividend is subject to shareholders' approval at the Annual General Meeting to be held in March 2020.

2019 Net Profit KD 63.6 Million



As of or for the year ending 31 December

MOODY'S A3 | Fitch Ratings A+ | S&P Global Ratings A-



Business

KFH pioneer in recruitment, raising bar of Kuwaiti youth

Carstens: 98% of new hires during 2019 were Kuwaitis

KUWAIT: Group Chief Human Resources Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Frederick Carstens said that KFH is one of the most prominent private sector institutions in terms of employing and qualifying national youth talents.

He added in a press release, that KFH implements a comprehensive training and development strategy for national talents and provides all the success elements and opportunities that enable them to build a successful career and assume leadership positions in the future. "In fact, they are among the most important elements in achieving sustainable development", he said.

Carstens explained in a press release that KFH's human resources strategy achieved an exceptional and notable progress, indicating 98 percent of new hires during 2019 were Kuwaitis. Total hires of Kuwaitis were 337 out of 343. Moreover, 84 percent of new hires were Kuwaitis under 30 years of age in 2019. This confirms that KFH seeks to employ the national youth skills and provides them with its long experience. He said that total Kuwaiti employees of KFH Group were 1907 out of 2674, adding that these figures confirm KFH's ongoing focus on building and developing the local talents in terms of local labor indicators and Kuwaitization ratio.



Frederick Carstens



KFH staff

Career fairs

Carstens explained that in collaboration with the relevant bodies, KFH pays high attention on fostering its role in recruiting, developing and raising their scientific and professional level in Islamic banking, as well as polishing their expertise as per international standards. He praised participating in job exhibitions on account of their importance in judging the graduate's quality and attracting the talented. He added that in 2019 KFH participated in the first enrollment exhibition of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training as well as in the Third Annual Employment and Academic Exhibition, held under patronage of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training under the motto "You're up to it."

KFH also participated in the 21st career fair organized by the Gulf University for the Sciences and Technology. The Bank had a special pavilion for its job vacancies and its qualitative training programs which attracted many employment hopefuls.

In addition, and as a platinum sponsor, KFH took part in the 36th annual conference for the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS) - USA branch that held under the slogan "A generation of builders for a giving nation". The participation reflected the Bank's commitment to boost its status as a major private sector institution striving to support and qualify Kuwaiti youth as main factors in sustainable development.

In 2019, KFH organized a drive to appoint 80 Kuwaiti youth out of 150 applicants, Carstens added. The Bank also took part in the 24th Kuwait University Career Fair, which was organized by the college of Business Administration. It was also the platinum sponsor in the exhibition "because you deserve 2" which was hosted by the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program.

Kamco Invest appoints Abdullah Al-Sharekh as MD of Markets and Investment Banking

KUWAIT: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced the appointment of Abdullah Al-Sharekh as Managing Director of Markets and Investment Banking responsible for Investment Banking, Research, and Lending amongst others.

Al-Sharekh joins Kamco Invest with extensive and diverse experience in banking and investments having worked for some of the largest international and regional financial institutions. He has experience across all core areas from treasury and corporate banking to investment banking and asset management. He holds a dual BA in Economics and Public & Private Sector Organizations



Abdullah Al-Sharekh

from Brown University, USA and a dual MBA in Finance and Entrepreneurial Management from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, USA.

Prior to joining Kamco Invest, Al-Sharekh led the Economic & Investment team of the Hareer and Boubyan Development Agency and was Managing Director at Sharq Capital where he led investment activity across asset class-

es. Prior to that, he held several executive positions with key international and regional financial institutions including Executive Director at the Securities Division of Goldman Sachs, Executive Manager of Corporate Banking at the National Bank of Kuwait, in addition to Investment Banking at NBK Capital, amongst others.

Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer, said, "We are pleased to welcome Abdullah Al-Sharekh as Managing Director of Markets and Investment Banking. His experience and track record will lead the division to progress and contribute to the implementation of the Company's growth strategy."

In his comments on the appointment, Al-Sharekh said, "It's my pleasure to join Kamco Invest during this stage which marks the second phase of the Company's growth strategy. I look forward to working with these talented teams to capitalize on and grow our role as a key player in local and cross border investment banking mandates."

It is worth noting that Kamco Invest has a strong track record with investment banking credentials exceeding \$22.3 billion since inception. It managed / co-managed around \$9.1 billion in equity finance, arranged around \$8.1 billion in conventional & Islamic debt and advised on M&A mandates worth \$5.2 billion.

Al-Tijari announces winner of Al-Najma weekly account

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly draw on Al-Najma Account. The draw was conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Dalal Al-Mutairi.

The winner was Adel Essa Al-Yousifi - the prize of KD 5,000.

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.

China offers \$43bn boost to firms fighting virus

BEIJING: China's central bank said yesterday it will offer a 300 billion yuan (\$43 billion) boost next week to help businesses involved in fighting the virus epidemic which has swept China and infected thousands. The outbreak, which started in the central city of Wuhan, has brought large swathes of the country to a halt and threatens to dampen the country's already slowing economy.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) said it will offer the first tranche of special re-lending funds today, which it said will support financial institutions to give loans to key enter-

prises involved in the prevention and control of the epidemic. PBOC deputy governor Liu Guoqiang said that nine major national banks, as well as local banks in 10 provinces and cities, qualify for the special funding, according to a speech posted on the bank's website yesterday. These 10 areas include Hubei province-the epicentre of the virus outbreak-as well as Zhejiang, Guangdong, the capital city of Beijing and financial hub Shanghai.

The financial boost is aimed at helping companies at both national and local level, Liu said. — AFP

Scholarship program

Allocating 15 scholarship programs, 10 MBA and 5 BA, KFH also adopts several professional standards to estimate and study accurately training and business needs in line with new administrative decisions, products or systems that the bank launches for its customers. It adopts advanced modern human resources systems through which the employee can request his training needs with ease. Meanwhile, Carstens said that KFH is keen on the ongoing efforts to raise the productivity and efficiency of employees, providing them with advanced training programs that keep pace with the latest developments in the banking industry.

Training programs for executive management

"In collaboration with world-class and well-known training and academic institutions, development of our Successors and High Potential Employees across the Group has been high on our agenda for this year where we have successfully concluded a series of intensive courses with Harvard Business Publishing, INSEAD, and IMD to build their capabilities as KFH Group Future Leaders," Carstens said. KFH offered 13 training programs for Executive Management including, for example but not limited to: INSEAD Digital Transformation Leadership Program, Leading Strategy Execution in Financial Service, Senior Executive Leadership and Leading Product Innovation programs (Harvard Business School), IMD Network Leadership, Leading the Business, Managing Self & Teams and Leading the Business programs (Harvard Business Publishing).

Community service

Carstens emphasized that "As an ongoing policy, KFH

hand down to youths and society its great experiences by providing training programs for public sector, workshops at universities, school students and workshops for children of VIP customers." He added that KFH offered special training programs including KPC Special program for KPC staff, Summer Internship for VIP client's children, Summer internship for 34 Kuwaitis from different local universities and PAM Special program for PAM employees. In 2019, KFH established strategic partnership with Kuwait University, College of Business Administration (CBA) and Center of Excellence in Preparation Program for IELTS tests to train and qualify 300 Kuwaiti students to pass the IELTS tests.

Wellness year and engagement

Carstens pointed out that KFH has launched several initiatives that have already started earlier in the year focusing on employee health and wellbeing, and on the view that Better Health Leads to a Better Life, and a healthier organization.

He added that KFH signed strategic partnerships with various health care providers as part of its wellbeing strategy for KFH Staff and in efforts to create a more dynamic, effective and efficient working environment. "Employee health and wellbeing is now a business value of strategic importance and is fast becoming a source of competitive advantage. Here at KFH we believe there is a clear and direct relationship between our employees' wellbeing and our organizational performance", said Carstens.

He explained that the KFH Group has achieved progress in the level of employees' engagement at the group level as strong positive results has shown in the survey conducted recently by "KFH" for the Group's employees in Kuwait, Turkey, Bahrain, Malaysia and Germany.

Burgan Bank announces winner of Al-Thuraya salary account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, announced yesterday Jeeniya Jacob as the lucky winner of the draw prize of Al-Thuraya Salary Accounts monthly draw. The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan Bank by offering them a chance to win KD 10,000 every month. Each account holder has one chance to enter the draw.

The Al-Thuraya account holders have the option to hold money in Kuwaiti Dinar and other major currencies and can access account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards, and benefit from the discounts and offers throughout the year.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. "People come first" is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi 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. Hanan Mohammad Salman Ahmad
2. Ahmad Sarhan Safiq Mohammed
3. Zainah Ghassan Sarhan
4. Mohammed Saeed Aldawaisan
5. Manal Bejad Salem Al-Dhafeeri

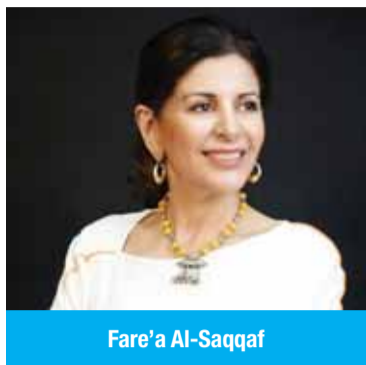
In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain 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

LOYAC launches Al-Jawhar programme



Fare'a Al-Saqqaf

In collaboration with LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA) and Al-Jarida newspaper, LOYAC recently launched its 'Al-Jawhar' programme to train youth on the skills of media talk by a group of the most prominent Arab media figures and enable them interview leading Kuwaiti figures. In this regard, LOYAC's chairperson, Fare'a Al-Saqqaf said that the program is LOYAC's gift in 2020. "Al-Jawhar is our most valu-

able gift to the new generation as well as a token of appreciation and love to the pioneers and founders of modern Kuwait", she stressed noting that the programme would be a bridge between generations and one meant to highlight the significance of the founders' rare experiences. "The programme has major national developmental goal and that is why we were keen to select trainers to include leading Arab

media figures such as Jezail Khouri, Raniya Barghout, Recharado Karam, Barakat Al-Weqyyan, Ammar Taqi and Manayer Al-Qallaf", Al-Saqqaf explained expressing gratitude to Kuwait local daily, Al-Jarida for its support. On his part, LOYAC's general manager, Al-Razi Al-Bedaiwi said that, on the one hand, the program aims at appreciating pioneers' experiences and to introduce those experiences to new generations, on

the other, through training youth to conduct talk shows. Al-Bedaiwi added that the program would be open for citizens aging 16+ and that 24 participants would be chosen and divided into four groups to undergo a ten-month training course and a four-day monthly workshop followed by an interview with one of the leading Kuwaiti figures by trainees. "The talk shows will be posted on social media", he concluded.



Al-Razi Al-Bedaiwi

Best of Bangladesh inaugurated at Grand Costo Store.



Best of Bangladesh Festival was inaugurated at Grand Costo Stores by Counsellor at the Bangladesh Embassy MD Anisuzzaman in the presence of embassy delegates.

Grand Hyper Kuwait Region Management team Rahil Basim COO, Thehasir Ali GM, Sanin BDM, Sameer Babu Area Manager Grand Costo and representatives, staffs and other well wishers were there to grace this occasion.

TIES Center

The TIES Center cordially invites you to another session on the Stories of Prophets this Thursday, February 13 at 7 pm. This will be the first session on the life and times of Jesus (PBUH) based primarily on verses from the Noble Quran and Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) narrations. We will answer the following questions:

1. Why is a chapter in the Noble Quran titled after Mary, and why is Jesus mentioned in the Quran more than Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)?
2. Why did Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) say that he was the closest of people to Jesus, son of Mary, and what are the implications?
3. Why is Jesus considered a distinguished prophet, what are his specialties, and why does disbelief in him as a messenger remove one from the fold of Islam?
4. How did Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) receive a delegation of Christians from Najran, and how did their discussion about Jesus end?

Come and learn more about the life and times of Prophet Jesus (PBUH) in a serene and relaxed environment at the TIES Center.

For more information or to register, please call 25231015/6 or 94079777 or 97310826 or e-mail: info@tiescenter.net

SMCA says 'Shukran Kuwait'



Chief guest Sheikh Duaj Khalifah Al-Sabah cutting the cake.



SMYM and Baladeepthi leading a rally "Shukran Kuwait"

Syro Malabar Cultural Association Kuwait (SMCA) says 'SHUKRAN KUWAIT' with a world record breaking attempt, as part of its silver jubilee celebrations organized an event titled "Thanks to Kuwait".

Sheikh Duaj Khalifah Al-Sabah (Counsellor-Ministry of Foreign Affairs) was the chief guest of the function. A colourful march past carrying the national colours and symbols of Kuwait displayed the banner

Thanks to Kuwait. Approximately 500 children participated in the rally. Sheikh Duaj Khalifa Al-Sabah received the love and gratitude expressed by the members. A cake was cut by him to mark the Hala February celebrations. Many Kuwait nationals joined the function and expressed their love towards India and acknowledged the service rendered by the members of the community in Kuwait.

Earlier a world record breaking attempt was

done by the SMCA members in the category of largest Margam Kali ensemble. Margam Kali is the traditional folk performance of the Malabar Nasrani community. The total number of participants exceeded 870 and the performance lasted for 25 minutes. The first secretary of Indian Embassy P P Narayanan along with Ajith Kumar - Principal of United Indian School, Iyyer- Principal of Bhavan's Smart Indian School and Dr. PM Chacko served as

the official witness of the attempt.

Thomas Kuruvila, the president of SMCA, Biju P Anto, the general secretary, Wilson Vadakkedath the treasurer spoke during the occasion. Bijoy Palakunnel the general convener of jubilee celebrations co-ordinated the events. Members of jubilee committee, central managing committee and the four area committees put the remarkable effort behind the success of the event.



Record breaking attempt of Margamkali.

Last woolly mammoths plagued by genetic defects: The bitter end

WASHINGTON: The world's last woolly mammoths, sequestered on an Arctic Ocean island outpost, suffered from serious genetic defects caused by generations of inbreeding that may have hampered traits such as sense of smell and male fertility in the doomed population.

Scientists said on Friday that the genome of one of the last mammoths from Wrangel Island off Siberia's coast showed that the population was riddled with deleterious mutations. They resurrected genes from this mammoth in the laboratory to find clues about the demise of this illustrious Ice Age species. Most woolly mammoths went extinct roughly 10,000 years ago amid a warming climate and widespread human hunting. But isolated populations survived for thousands of years after that on St Paul Island in the Bering Sea and Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean. The Wrangel Island population was the last, disappearing roughly 4,000 years ago.

The researchers compared the Wrangel Island mammoth's DNA to that of two older mammoths as well as three Asian elephants, a close relative. They pinpointed a collection of genetic mutations in the Wrangel Island mammoth and synthesized these genes in the laboratory to test their functionality. They found problems with genes responsible for sperm production, smell, neurological development and a function involving the hormone insulin that is responsible for permitting glucose in the blood to enter cells to give them energy.

"We can activate those genes in the lab using cell culture and test whether they are functional or not. In

this case not," said evolutionary biologist Vincent Lynch of the University at Buffalo in New York, who led the study published in the journal *Genome Biology and Evolution*.

"Mutations happen all the time. But the population that lived on Wrangel was very small and inbred, which leads to an accumulation of mutations that are normally purged by evolution," Lynch added. The sperm production-related mutations may have reduced fertility in an already shrinking population. The olfactory mutations may have harmed the ability to forage and to even smell the flowers that made up an important part of their diet. "Mammoths ate a lot of flowers," Lynch said.

The woolly mammoth, about the size of today's elephants but possessing long brown fur and immense tusks, first appeared about 700,000 years ago in Siberia, expanding through northern Eurasia and North America. The Wrangel Island mammoth genome was previously mapped using well-preserved DNA from a 4,300-year-old molar. The new study built on previous research pointing to harmful mutations in the Wrangel Island mammoth.

With a population of just a few hundred, generations of mating between related individuals - inbreeding - triggered harmful mutations. "It is indeed a sad thing," Lynch said. "Mammoths were literally huge and globally distributed, and this massive range was reduced to a tiny island in the Arctic Ocean before their extinction. It should be a warning about the consequences of climate change." — Reuters



A visitor looks at a complete mammoth skeleton that is displayed before its auction by Aguttes auction house in Lyon, France, in this file photo. — Reuters

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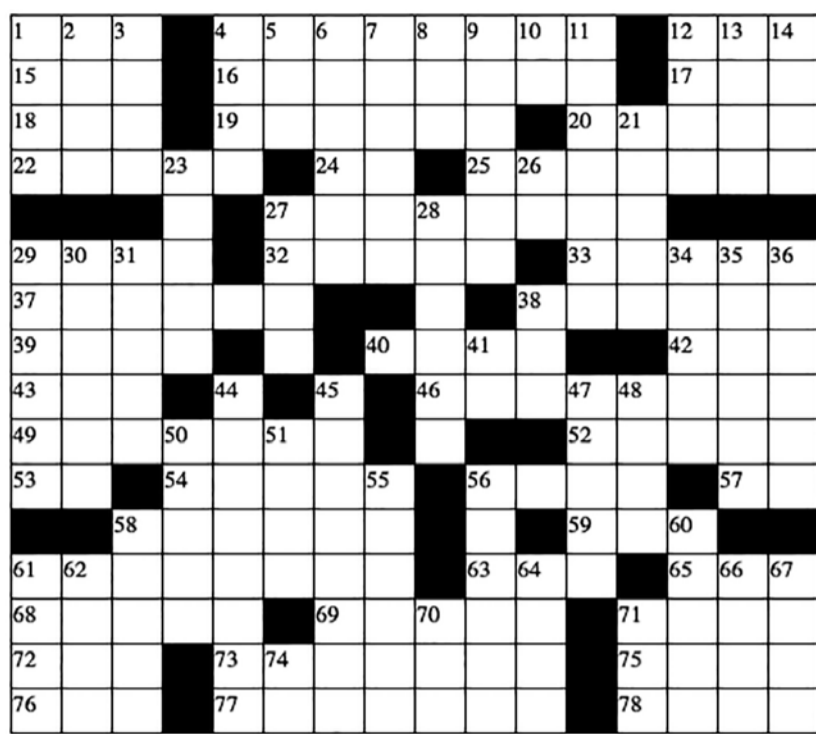
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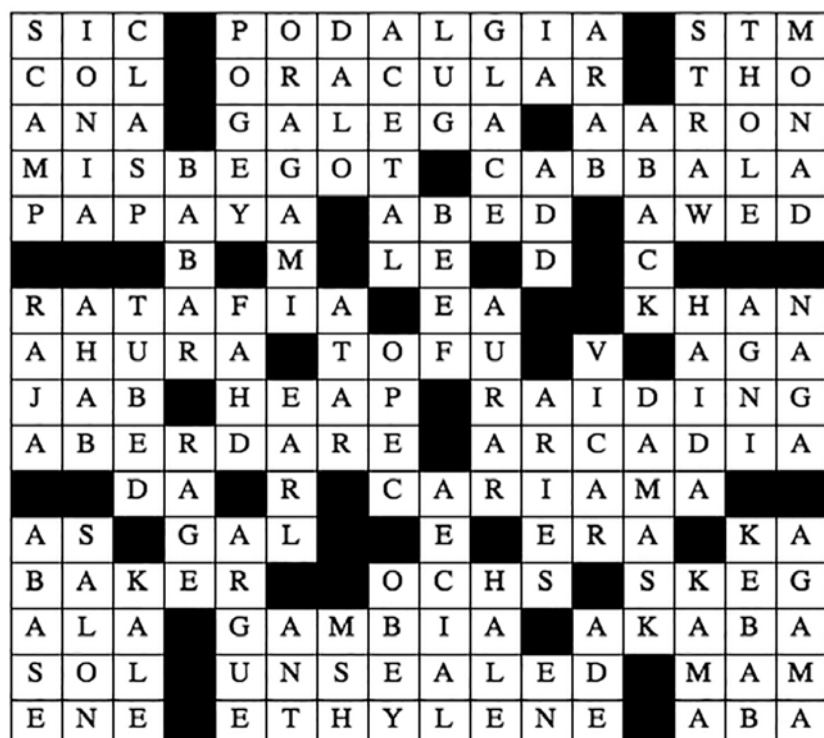
1. The United Nations agency concerned with the international organization of food and agriculture.
4. Of or relating to an economy, the system of production and management of material wealth.
12. Having leadership guidance.
15. Fleishy folds of tissue as those surrounding the mouth.
16. Giant tree-like plant having edible nuts and leaf stalks that yield a refreshing drink of clear watery sap.
17. A lyric poem with complex stanza forms.
18. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
19. Someone concerned with the science or art or business of cultivating the soil.
20. United States tennis player who in 1938 was the first to win the Australian and French and English and United States singles championship in the same year (1915-2000).
22. Any of various small chiefly tropical and usually nocturnal insectivorous terrestrial lizards typically with immovable eyelids.
24. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
25. (of skin) Having a tan color from exposure to the sun.
29. (Scotland) A slope or hillside.
32. Native to Egypt but cultivated widely for its aromatic seeds and the oil from them used medicinally and as a flavoring in cookery.
33. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
37. English courtier (a favorite of Elizabeth I) who tried to colonize Virginia.
39. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
40. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
42. Any high mountain.
43. Hormone produced early in pregnancy by the placenta.
46. Term used in some classifications as nearly equivalent to the order Coraciiformes.
49. (British) A car that is even smaller than a subcompact car.
52. A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
53. A public promotion of some product or service.
54. A roll of tobacco for smoking.
57. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
59. Nocturnal mouse-like mammal with forelimbs modified to form membranous wings and anatomical adaptations for echolocation by which they navigate.
61. Surgical removal of a body part or tissue.
63. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
65. A belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by some group or school.
68. United States physicist (born in Austria) who proposed the exclusion principle (thus providing a theoretical basis for the periodic table) (1900-1958).
69. A member of the lowest or worker Hindu caste.
72. The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.

73. The cardinal number that is the product of 10 and 100.
75. Using speech rather than writing.
76. Hormone secreted by the posterior pituitary gland (trade name Pitressin) and also by nerve endings in the hypothalamus.
77. Superclass of eel-shaped chordates lacking jaws and pelvic fins.
78. A small cake leavened with yeast.

DOWN

1. Emblem usually consisting of a rectangular piece of cloth of distinctive design.
2. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
3. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
4. (used as a sentential connector) Therefore or consequently.
5. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
6. Trade name for an oral contraceptive containing estradiol and norethindrone.
7. Himalayish language spoken in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal.
8. Used of a single unit or thing.
9. A hard crystalline metamorphic rock that takes a high polish.
10. Being nine more than forty.
11. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
12. A large city of central Poland.
13. At or constituting a border or edge.
14. A notable achievement.
21. Remove a bar from (a door, for example).
23. Supporting yourself on your knees.
26. A state in New England.
27. King of Saudi Arabia since 1982 (born in 1922).
28. The act of escaping physically.
30. Used of decomposing oils or fats.
31. Place in a line or arrange so as to be parallel.
34. An assertion of a right (as to money or property).
35. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
36. Earnest or urgent request.
38. (computer science) A coding system that incorporates extra parity bits in order to detect errors.
41. Being one more than one.
44. Neuralgia along the sciatic nerve.
45. Antihypertensive drug (trade name Minipress).
47. Jordan's port.
48. Avatar of Vishnu.
50. Of or relating to a seizure or convulsion.
51. God of fire.
55. A cyst on the underside of the tongue.
56. Formerly a contemptuous term of address to an inferior man or boy.
58. Partially melted snow v.l.
60. A crown-like jewelled headdress worn by women on formal occasions.
62. A lyric poet.
64. A quantity of no importance.
66. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
67. The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
70. The shorter of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
71. A numbered compartment in a post office where mail is put to be called for.
74. A heavy silvery toxic univalent and bivalent metallic element.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Some revealing conversations with friends or relatives could bring up old traumatic memories from the past that you may have been repressing. This could shed light on a lot of obstacles you've been encountering lately. Aries, and thus enable you to release these emotions and do away with the obstacles. Once that happens, the sky's the limit! Your personal power and self-confidence should be stronger than ever. Go for the gold!



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today you can expect some noticeable changes in your neighborhood, Taurus. Some new neighbors who might become your friends could be moving in. This could alter your life ever so subtly, turning it in a more positive direction. You could click immediately with these new people, realizing that they share a lot of your interests. Don't overanalyze this situation, but don't write it off as coincidence either. Just make the most of it!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Efforts to advance your career that have led to past successes might actually put you in the public eye today. You could find yourself the center of attention, Gemini, perhaps sharing your methods with others or leading a discussion group. An opportunity to write or lecture about your experiences could also be in the offing. Expect compliments from a lot of people, which could boost not only your ego but also your enthusiasm.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

An opportunity to travel could come your way today, Cancer, perhaps in the company of friends or colleagues. This might involve education in some way. What you learn on this trip is likely to alter your life somehow, as it could open new doors for you. New friends and valuable contacts could also come on the scene. Don't hesitate; go for it! Another opportunity like this might not come around for a while.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A number of new people could come your way, Leo, perhaps through projects of some kind with which you're involved. Some of them may appear to be trustworthy and some may not. Today, however, your instincts are highly attuned and you'll be better than usual at sizing up people you don't really know. Make the most of this ability, and don't let logic get in its way. Follow your heart!



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

The opportunity to attend one or more huge social gatherings, such as balls or banquets, might come your way today, Virgo. You might want to attend in the company of a small group of friends. This could be business related or involve a group with which you're affiliated. Nonetheless, it shows the promise of developing into an enlightening experience in one way or another. Accept the invitation and start making your plans!



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Expect a strong boost to your ego and self-confidence today, Libra. Your physical and mental energies are very high, and you're apt to feel that you're capable of moving mountains. Take advantage of this new motivation while you can, since today you could make definite progress on any goal toward which you may be striving. The support and encouragement of friends and colleagues should prove invaluable. Go for the gold!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today you should feel more energetic, enthusiastic, and motivated than you have in a long time, Scorpio. You feel very optimistic about your future, thanks to recent successes and support from those closest to you. As a result, your intellectual and creative faculties are more than inspired enough to move forward. The only downside is that there could be so many ideas coming to you that you might not be able to choose among them. Think about each one carefully before going ahead.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 18)

An increased level of physical and mental energy could have you feeling especially determined and highly motivated to move ahead with whatever means the most to you at this time, Sagittarius. Matters involving home and family might need some attention right now, though in a very positive way. You'll notice that your inner power is much higher than usual today, as if you could move mountains. Go for it!



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

New opportunities, perhaps involving modern technology in some way, might present themselves to you in such a way as to transform your working life, Capricorn. You could find yourself making a lot of phone calls in this regard, which could keep you busy for much of the day. Your level of excitement is likely to be very high, which makes it important that you remember to take breaks, catch your breath, and definitely get a little exercise.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Changes in your working environment could result in a rise in your income, Aquarius. You've been working very hard in order to advance yourself in this regard, and you're likely to continue to do so indefinitely. Your natural communication skills continue to serve you well, and your physical energy is likely to be stronger than it has been for a long time. The only downside is having very little time to yourself! Hang in there!



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Today you're likely to complete a creative project of some kind that you've been working on for some time, Pisces. You might want to consult with friends or colleagues, get their feedback on what you're doing, and listen to their advice. They may point out both strong and weak points of which you were previously unaware, and this should definitely prove valuable to you. The results you achieve could surprise even you. Go for it!

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movie Actors 1

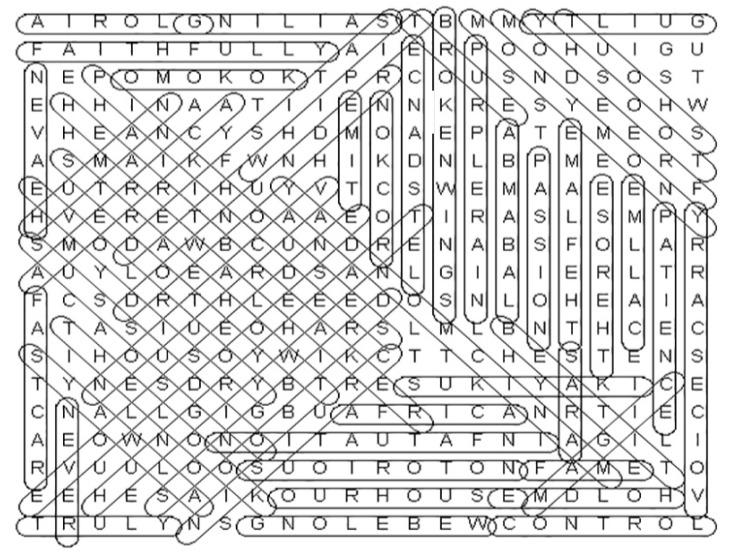
Find and circle all of the Movie Actors that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which Jeremy Irons won an Oscar.



- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| BACON, Kevin | DUNCAN, Michael Clarke | MCKELLEN, Ian |
| BARDEM, Javier | FORD, Harrison | NEESON, Liam |
| BLACK, Jack | FOX, Jamie | PESCI, Joe |
| BRIDGES, Jeff | GIBSON, Mel | PHOENIX, Joaquin |
| CAINE, Michael | GOLDBLUM, Jeff | REEVES, Keanu |
| CARREY, Jim | GRANT, Hugh | RUSH, Geoffrey |
| CHAN, Jackie | GYLLENHAAL, Jake | RUSSELL, Kurt |
| CLOONEY, George | HACKMAN, Gene | SPACEY, Kevin |
| COSTNER, Kevin | HARTNETT, Josh | STATHAM, Jason |
| CUSACK, John | IRONS, Jeremy | TRAVOLTA, John |
| DAMON, Matt | JACKMAN, Hugh | VOIGHT, Jon |
| DANIELS, Jeff | JONES, James Earl | WAHLBERG, Mark |
| DEPP, Johnny | LAW, Jude | WEAVING, Hugo |
| DICAPRIO, Leonardo | MCCONAUHUEY, Matthew | WOOD, Elijah |
| DOUGLAS, Michael | | |

Yesterday's Solution

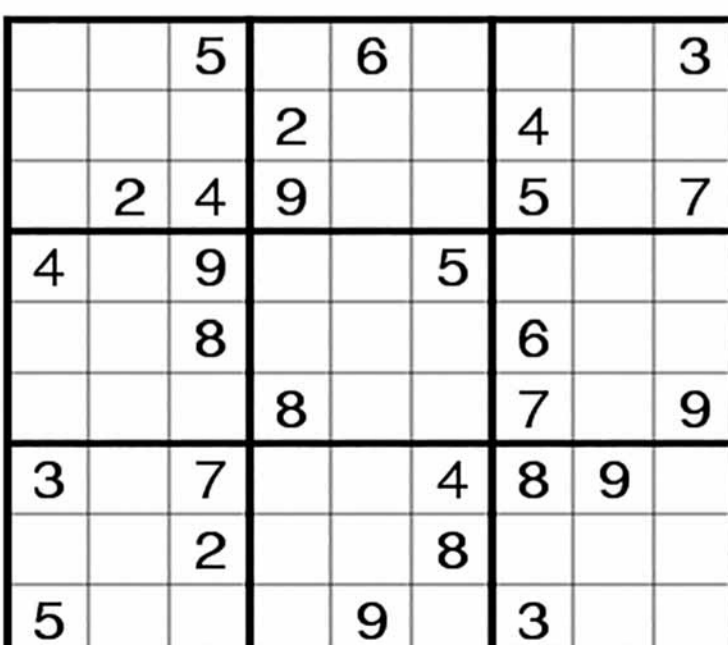
More 80's Songs



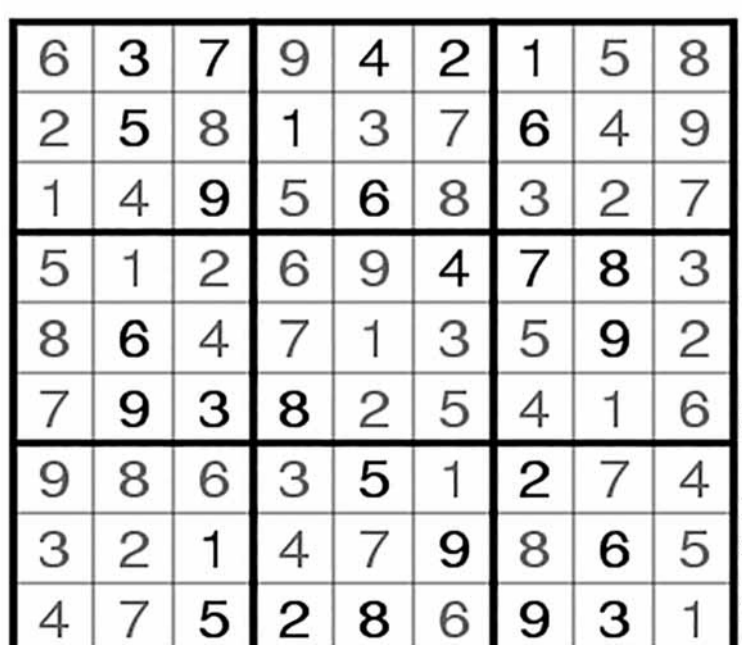
- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| AFRICA | GLORIA | NEVER | SUSSUDIO |
| ALWAYS | GUILTY | NOTORIOUS | THE FLAME |
| AMERICA | HEARTBREAKER | OUR HOUSE | THE LOOK |
| BEAT IT | HEAVEN | PASSION | THE ROSE |
| BROKEN WINGS | HOLD ME | PATIENCE | TIME |
| CALL ME | HUMAN | PINK HOUSES | TOO SHY |
| CONTROL | HUNGRY HEART | PURPLE RAIN | TRUE |
| CRUISIN' | INFATUATION | ROCK ON | TRULY |
| DOWN UNDER | KOKOMO | SAILING | TWO HEARTS |
| ENDLESS LOVE | LA BAMBA | SARA | VACATION |
| FATHFULLY | LET'S DANCE | SATISFIED | VOICES CARRY |
| FAME | MAGIC | SHOUT | WE BELONG |
| FAST CAR | MANIC MONDAY | SONGBIRD | WHIP IT |
| FREEDOM | MONY MONY | SUKIYAKI | YOUR LOVE |

The hidden song is: I GUESS THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT THE BLUES

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2020



Artists performs during the opening day of the Venice Carnival on the Cannaregio Canal on February 8, 2020, in Venice. The carnival in Venice takes place until February 25, 2020. — AFP

US museum targets gender gap by acquiring only works by women

An American museum has come up with a bold way to boost women's participation in the arts: this year it will only acquire works by females. The Baltimore Museum of Art, in the state of Maryland, is best known for housing the largest public collection of Matisse works anywhere in the world. Late last year it attracted major press attention with word that in 2020 it would only purchase works by women, drawing both praise and skepticism.

"I think it's a radical and timely decision in 2020, to take the bull by the horns and do this," the museum's director Christopher Bedford told AFP. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the US constitution, which gave women the right to vote. It also gave the museum pause to do some soul-searching: of its 95,000 works, only four percent are by women artists, says Bedford.

"We're an institution largely built by women leaders," he said. The museum's first director was a woman. And it is largely thanks to two women-

the Cone sisters-and their friendship with Henri Matisse that the museum boasts such a rich collection of works by the French artist.

Centuries of discrimination

So the museum will spend \$2.5 million this year on works by women. It will also reorganize several of its rooms to showcase the work of women and offer 20-odd exhibits of works by female artists. It will, however, continue to accept donations of art done by men. The BMA is hardly alone in having such a disproportionate amount of art by men. The fame of artists such as Elisabeth Vigee Le Brun, Frida Kahlo and Louise Bourgeois is an exception to the rule.

A study published last year by the scientific journal Plos-One found that in 18 major American museums, 87 percent of the artists whose works were on exhibit were men. And from 2008 to 2018, of 260,470 works acquired by 26 big museums, only 11 percent were by women, according to a study by the company Artnet and the podcast "In

Other Words." This is the fruit of centuries-old discrimination that can be either intentional or not, said Bedford. "And unless you call out that habit and consciously find a way to work against it, then you will never have a properly equitable museum," he said.

'A tiny step'

While the museum's initiative has been welcomed by many as a good first step, not everyone is sold on it. Teri Henderson, a curator based in Baltimore, said she questions the museum's use of the word "radical" to describe its decision to acquire only art by women for a year. "I have observed that organizations and institutions use the word 'radical' as a sort of buzzword without actually implementing any programming or effort that is truly radical," Henderson said.

"I do know that one year of collecting attached to this interesting choice of word cannot truly rectify the imbalance in the art world and in museums," she added. "I do think this year of collecting art by only women could possibly be

the first step, but it is a tiny step." Bedford agreed that this plan is just a start. "And I'm also hoping that our decision has a reverberating effect across the museum field," he said.

"And that's a consciousness-raising act as well. It's supposed to precipitate an endless action in that direction," he added, promising also to publish the results of this female-only program in a year. But Henderson insisted that "many gigantic steps" are needed to rectify the male-female imbalance in the art world. She said that, for instance, museums need to invest in living artists that reside and work in the surrounding areas if they really want to reflect the richness and diversity of today's art.

She gave museums this advice: "Stop buying art that isn't good just because it's made by well-known white artists. Start taking risks and investing in black and brown living artists." Donna Drew Sawyer, chief executive officer of the Baltimore Office of Promotion and The Arts, said she had several questions about the initiative, including the fact that it drew so much attention. "Why



did a male's call to action seem to resonate so loudly in this instance when women are the subject and have been calling for the same action forever?" Sawyer wrote in the magazine BmoreArt. — AFP

A person looks at the painting Dancers on stage made around 1889 and 1894 by Edgar Degas, during the exhibition Degas at the Opera at the Museum of Orsay, Paris. — AFP

Man charged as two stolen Banksy works found in Paris

A man was charged Friday after two stolen Banksy artworks were recovered in Paris. An image of a masked rat wielding a box cutter—the alter ego the elusive British artist often uses—disappeared from outside the Pompidou Centre in September, a year after Banksy "blitzed" the French capital with murals. The museum, which houses Europe's biggest collection of modern art but does not have a Banksy, had filed a police complaint for destruction of property. The man charged with "stealing a cultural asset" is one of three men arrested in and around Paris earlier this week.



An image shows a masked rat wielding a box cutter.— Daily Mail

Two works by Banksy were recovered in follow-up searches by the police but the stencilled work on the back of a sign for the Pompidou's car park is still missing. Thieves used a saw to cut it out of the sign. The Pompidou theft came seven months after another Banksy work paying homage to the victims of the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris was stolen from outside the Bataclan, the concert venue where Islamic State gunmen massacred 90 people.

Another anti-capitalist mural attributed to the secretive street art star disappeared shortly after Banksy's whirlwind trip, which the highly political artist said was to mark the 50th anniversary of the Paris student uprising of 1968. It featured a businessman in a suit offering a dog a bone having sawed the animal's leg off.

Niqab Napoleon

A source close to the investigation told AFP that they were trying to establish if the recovered artworks were original Banksys or copies. The two other suspects arrested on Tuesday were later released. Banksy appeared to authenticate eight of the Paris works on his Instagram account shortly after his trip.

The most dramatic was a pastiche of Jacques-Louis David's "Napoleon Crossing the Alps", with Bonaparte wrapped in a red niqab, which appeared on a wall in an ethnically-mixed district of northern Paris. Banksy had earlier hailed the French capital as "the birthplace of modern stencil art". He took on the rat as his avatar—a symbol of the vilified and downtrodden—in homage to the Paris street artist Blek le Rat, who started out in 1968 when a general strike by students and workers brought France to a halt. The artist's work has sold for more than \$1 million at auction and fans had covered some of his Paris works with Plexiglass to protect them. But one of a migrant girl was defaced with blue spray paint shortly after news of its discovery spread on social media. — AFP

'Land of Fire': Azerbaijan's history and culture

Azerbaijan yesterday held snap parliamentary elections denounced by opposition parties as a feint aimed at further strengthening authoritarian President Ilham Aliyev's tight grip on power. Here are key facts about the Caspian Sea nation.

The Land of Fire

Owing to abundant natural flames coming from the country's huge underground gas deposits, Azerbaijanis often call their homeland "The Land of Fire." The expression is rooted in Zoroastrianism, a fire-worshipping religion that dominated the territory of modern-day Azerbaijan before it adopted Shia Islam. The castle-like Baku Temple of Fire, built in the 17th century, had an altar with constantly burning flames fed by underground gas coming to surface.



Azerbaijan's state emblem features red flames at its centre.

Dynastic rule

The Azerbaijani constitution holds the country to be a democratic republic, but in fact it has been ruled with an iron fist for more than three decades by the Aliyev family, accused by critics of crushing the opposition and using its power to amass wealth and fund a lavish lifestyle. Heydar Aliyev, the former Communist leader of the ex-Soviet republic became its first president after the breakup of the USSR. Following his death in 2003, his son Ilham Aliyev took over. Cementing his family's grip on power, he appointed his wife Mehriban Aliyeva as first vice president in 2017 — after awarding her the country's highest honour, the Order of Heydar Aliyev.

Azokh Cave

One of the country's most important landmarks, the imposing Azix Magarasi six-cave complex, is located on the territory of Nagorny Karabakh which has been under Armenian control since it was seized during a bloody conflict in the early 1990s after the breakup of the Soviet Union. The labyrinthine limestone caves adorned with stalactites and stalagmites are considered by archaeologists to be one of the oldest living sites of prehistoric humans in Eurasia, dating back 1.5 million years.

Mugham music

Mugham is an ancient style of music unique to Azerbaijan, blending traditional musical improvisation and classical poetry. The complex art form reflects influences on Azerbaijan's culture from contacts with other Turkic peoples as well as Persians, Armenians and Georgians. Cultivated by members of Sufi orders and by performers of religious dramas, the genre features a male or female singer accompanied by musicians playing traditional instruments such as a long-neck lute, a four-string spike fiddle and a large tambourine.

Karabakh horse

Azerbaijan's national animal is the Karabakh horse, a racing and riding breed noted for its speed, intelligence and red-gold color. The Karabakh's agility makes them ideal for Azerbaijan's national sport, chovgan, a horse-riding game similar to polo played on a flat, grassy field by two competing teams. One of the world's oldest, the breed currently numbers below 1,000 and is threatened with extinction. — AFP

Lifestyle | Awards



(From left) Peter Saraf, Daniele Tate Melia, Lulu Wang, Andrew Miano, a guest, and Anita Gou, winners of Best Feature for "The Farewell" pose in the press room during the 2020 Film Independent Spirit Awards on Saturday in Santa Monica, California.



Host Aubrey Plaza (right) watches (from left) Lulu Wang, Peter Saraf, Daniele Tate Melia, and Andrew Miano accept the Best Feature award for 'The Farewell' onstage.—AFP photos

'FAREWELL' REBUKES OSCARS WITH SPIRIT AWARD WIN



Director of "Booksmart" Olivia Wilde poses with the award for Best First Feature.



Renee Zellweger poses in the press room with the Best Female Lead award for "Judy".

Chinese-American film "The Farewell" delivered a rebuke to its Oscars snub at the Spirit Awards Saturday, as South Korea's "Parasite" added a final burst of momentum to its much-hyped Academy Award challenge. The awards, held on a beach outside Los Angeles a day before the Oscars, honor films with smaller budgets, and are often held up as an antidote to the Academy's more mainstream—and less diverse—tastes. "The Farewell," about a family which reunites to visit a grandmother in China who doesn't know she's dying, won best picture, having missed out on any Oscars nominations.

Lulu Wang, the film's director, told AFP that "so many people said nobody is going to want to see the film (because) it's not Chinese enough, it's not American enough." "For people to just see it as a family story, as a universal story, that's really meaningful." Wang was one of several acclaimed female directors who failed to win Oscars recognition, but said she was not surprised by her omission. "When you win an award it is given to you by a group of your peers. When I look at the Academy, and the makeup of the voting body of the Academy, they are not my peers," she said.

"That is the biggest problem. If my peers were represented in the Academy voting body then they would be voting for films that represent their lives and their stories. "That's always how it is. So I'm not surprised by any of it." Academy membership is 84 percent white and 68 percent male. In the Spirit Awards's biggest shock, Jennifer Lopez missed out on best supporting actress for her turn as a wily stripper in "Hustlers" to Zhao Shuzhen, who plays the grandmother in "The Farewell." Zhao was unable to travel from China due to the novel coronavirus outbreak gripping the country.

Meanwhile "Parasite," a rare crossover foreign language success that could become the first non-English film to win best picture at the Oscars in Hollywood on Sunday, won best international film. Director Bong Joon-ho said subtitles were no barrier for his dark comedy because its message about widening class inequality would resonate with "people living on Mars." "I didn't create this film to make a grand contribution to international cinema," said Bong. "The



(From left) Chelsea Barnard, Jessica Elbaum, Katie Silberman, Olivia Wilde, Kaitlyn Dever, Beanie Feldstein and Billie Lourd pose in the press room with the Best First Feature award for the film "Booksmart".

deeper you delve into what surrounds you, what is near you, the more universal and broader the story can become," he told journalists backstage.

'Douchebags'

Brothers Josh and Benny Safdie won best director for their frenetic, anxiety-ridden thriller "Uncut Gems," about a compulsive New York jeweler whose gambling addiction lands him in ever-deepening trouble. The film's star and audience favorite Adam Sandler won best actor, poking fun at his "quote unquote snub" at the Oscars, saying: "Let all those feather-haired douchebag... (actors) get their Oscars tomorrow night." Olivia Wilde, whose female-focused teen come-

dy "Booksmart" won best first feature, said she hoped the win could "inspire more ladies to get out there and direct."

"The Film Independent Spirit Awards is so much cooler than the Oscars—it's the daytime, we're on the beach, we recognize female directors," joked host Aubrey Plaza as the show opened in Santa Monica. Noah Baumbach won best screenplay for divorce tearjerker "Marriage Story," which is also in the race for best picture at the Oscars—as is his partner Greta Gerwig's "Little Women." "Even though she made a movie too expensive for the Spirit Awards, she's no less independent than anyone here," Baumbach said. Renee Zellweger further cemented her Oscar

frontrunner status by winning best actress for "Judy."

Best documentary went to "American Factory," the first film from Barack and Michelle Obama's production company, about a US rust belt factory reopened by a Chinese billionaire. "Even though it's sort of sponsored by the Obamas, a lot of Republicans and people living in rural areas are watching it in the privacy of their homes," director Julia Reichert told AFP, citing Netflix data. "They might not tell their friends. But it's really happening. So that's really cool. We've got to get to those people because we're in an election year."—AFP



Lulu Wang accepts the Best Supporting Female award for 'The Farewell' on behalf of winner Zhao Shuzhen onstage.



Adam Sandler accepts the Best Male Lead award for 'Uncut Gems' onstage.



Willem Dafoe accepts the Best Supporting Male award for 'The Lighthouse' onstage.



(From left) Joshua Safdie and Benjamin Safdie accept the Best Director award for 'Uncut Gems' onstage.

Lifestyle Awards



(From left) Lauren 'Lolo' Spencer, Alice Austen, Kirill Mikhonovsky, Sergei Stern, Val Abel, Michael Manasseri, Walter S. Hall and Chris Galust pose in the press room with the John Cassavetes Award for 'Give Me Liberty'.



Jarin Blaschke poses in the press room with the Best Cinematography award for the film "The Lighthouse".



US directors Julia Reichert (center) and Jeff Reichert (second right) pose with producers after winning Best Documentary for "American Factory".



(From left) Francine Maisler, Noah Baumbach, Scarlett Johansson, and Azhy Robertson accept the Robert Altman Award for 'Marriage Story' onstage.



Director Nadia Shihab, winner of Truer Than Fiction Award poses in the press room.



Bong Joon-ho accepts the Best International Film award for 'Parasite' onstage.



Writer Fredrica Bailey and director Stefon Bristol pose with the award for Best First Screenplay for "See You Yesterday".

Full list of winners

- Best Feature**
THE FAREWELL
- Best Director**
Benny Safdie, Josh Safdie - UNCUT GEMS
- Best First Feature**
BOOKSMART
- Best Female Lead**
Renee Zellweger - JUDY
- Best Male Lead**
Adam Sandler - UNCUT GEMS
- Best Supporting Female**
Zhao Shuzhen - THE FAREWELL
- Best Supporting Male**
Willem Dafoe - THE LIGHTHOUSE
- Best Screenplay**
Noah Baumbach - MARRIAGE STORY
- Best First Screenplay**
Fredrica Bailey, Stefon Bristol - SEE YOU YESTERDAY
- Best Cinematography**
Jarin Blaschke - THE LIGHTHOUSE
- Best Editing**
Ronald Bronstein, Benny Safdie - UNCUT GEMS
- John Cassavetes Award**
GIVE ME LIBERTY
- Robert Altman Award**
"Marriage Story"
- Best Documentary**
AMERICAN FACTORY
- Best International Film**
PARASITE, South Korea
- Piaget Producers Award**
Mollye Asher
- Someone to Watch Award**
Rashaad Ernesto Green - PREMATURE
- Truer Than Fiction Award**
Nadia Shihab - JADDOLAND
Annual Bonnie Award
Kelly Reichardt

Best picture Oscar winners of past 20 years

The following is a list of the best picture Oscar winners from the last 20 years, ahead of Sunday's 92nd Academy Awards in Hollywood. This year, nine films are in contention for the top prize: "Ford v Ferrari," "The Irishman," "Jojo Rabbit," "Joker," "Little Women," "Marriage Story," "1917," "Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood" and "Parasite."



Preparations are underway on the red carpet before the 92nd Oscars ceremony at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP

- 2019 - "Green Book"
- 2018 - "The Shape of Water"
- 2017 - "Moonlight"
- 2016 - "Spotlight"
- 2015 - "Birdman"
- 2014 - "12 Years A Slave"
- 2013 - "Argo"
- 2012 - "The Artist"
- 2011 - "The King's Speech"
- 2010 - "The Hurt Locker"
- 2009 - "Slumdog Millionaire"

- 2008 - "No Country for Old Men"
- 2007 - "The Departed"
- 2006 - "Crash"
- 2005 - "Million Dollar Baby"
- 2004 - "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King"
- 2003 - "Chicago"
- 2002 - "A Beautiful Mind"
- 2001 - "Gladiator"
- 2000 - "American Beauty" — AFP

'Cats' gets creamed at the Razzies

It's the one award no Hollywood star wants to win. The Razzies unveiled their annual list of the year's most dreadful movies Saturday, with the critically slated musical "Cats" at the top-or arguably rock bottom-of the charts. Among its nine unwanted nominations, "Cats" landed acting nods for Judi Dench, James Corden, and Rebel Wilson. The film—an adaptation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical—used computer-generated effects to morph its all-star cast into deeply unnerving half-human, half-cat hybrids.

It received stunningly bad reviews. The Guardian called it a "dreadful hairball of woe,"

while for the Wall Street Journal it was "a confusing litter box of intentions". "Cats" received a further two nominations in the worst screen combo category—for "any two half-feline/half-human hairballs," and "Jason Derulo & his CGI-neutered bulge." Also racking up the nominations were Sylvester Stallone's disastrous latest "Rambo" sequel, and "The Fanatic," a not-so-thrilling thriller starring John Travolta and directed by former Limp Bizkit frontman Fred Durst.

Formally known as the Golden Raspberry Awards, the Razzies are usually handed out

the day before the Oscars, serving to mock the following night's self-congratulatory Tinseltown pageantry. This year, with the Oscars unusually early and the entire award season curtailed, organizers settled for announcing the nominees instead. The Razzies were first awarded in 1981 in a Los Angeles living room, the brainchild of UCLA film graduates and industry veterans who chose the raspberry—a symbol of derision—to "honor" the worst in Hollywood movies. — AFP



'The Wild Wild West' star Robert Conrad dead at 84



In this file photo taken on June 13, 2013 US actor Robert Conrad poses during the closing ceremony of the 53rd Monte-Carlo Television Festival in Monaco. — AFP

Robert Conrad, an American actor known for starring in the 1960s sci-fi western TV series "The Wild Wild West," died aged 84, US media reported Saturday. "He lived a wonderfully long life and while the family is saddened by his passing, he will live forever in their hearts," Jeff Ballard, a spokesman for Conrad's family, told People magazine. After working as a milkman and attempting to hit it big as a nightclub singer, Conrad's career took off in 1959 when he joined the cast of the TV show "Hawaiian Eye" after moving to Los Angeles, People reported.

Between 1965 and 1969, he was cast as Secret Service agent James T. West on "The Wild Wild West," in which he, along with his partner Artemus Gordon, explored the western United States during the presidency of Ulysses S. Grant. The series served as the basis for the 1999 film adaptation "Wild Wild West", a critical flop among the most expensive movies ever made, in which Will Smith stars as West and Kevin Kline as both Gordon and Grant.

Conrad reportedly labeled the remake "pathetic" when he unexpected-

ly appeared at the 2000 Razzies—an annual celebration of Hollywood's worst productions—to accept the Worst Picture award, according to The Hollywood Reporter (THR). In the seventies, he went on to star in "Baa Baa Black Sheep", a World War Two drama, as real-life pilot Major Greg "Pappy" Boyington. He was nominated for a Golden Globe for his performance in 1978.

He was renowned for performing his own stunts, on one occasion falling 14 feet onto a cement floor while filming

"The Wild Wild West". Scared executives—fearful of losing their star actor—attempted unsuccessfully to ban him from performing his own stunts, THR said. But in 2006 he explained to the Archive of American Television that performing stunts helped him get first roles in the industry. "When there was a speaking role and a stunt associated with that speaking role, they'd hire me, because you got two for the price of one," he said.

Conrad appeared in other TV shows in his career, many of them short-lived,

along with several movies, including "More Wild Wild West," a spinoff from the television series. He made his last film appearance in 2002. "There are three cycles in showbiz," Conrad told People in a 1988 interview. "They don't know you, then they love you, and then you've been around so long they hate you. Now I'm starting all over again." Conrad is survived by his eight children and 18 grandchildren, People reported. — AFP

Lifestyle | Feature



Group photo of participants. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Photo shows representatives of the participating hotels and travel agencies.

The Leading Hotels of the World expanding in Gulf region

By Nawara Fattahova

As part of its marketing activities, The Leading Hotels of the World held its annual roadshow in the region last week in Kuwait. Around 40 of its hotels participated in this event to showcase their facilities and services and meet representatives of local travel agencies.

Chris Walker, SVP Global Sales, Hatem Chatter, Senior Director, Middle East and Africa, and Majed Al-Qasem, Director Sales, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, along with 38 representatives of some of the company's hotels from various countries including Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey, Morocco, Indonesia, Japan, Vietnam and the United States, participated in this event.

Members of the delegation met the representatives of popular local travel agencies and airline agents to discuss cooperation and improving touristic services for Kuwaiti and other travelers. The roadshow started in Jeddah, followed by Riyadh, Khobar, Bahrain, Amman, Beirut, Doha, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi, and concluded in Dubai.

Walker provided some information to Kuwait Times on The Leading Hotels of the World:

Kuwait Times: How important is the GCC market to Leading Hotels of the World, what does it represent in terms of the portfolio?

- GCC is greatly important both from a portfolio and customer perspective
- LHW is the largest collection of independent luxury hotels
 - 430+ members in more than 80 countries
 - GCC represents approximately 2 percent of portfolio and growing
- Portfolio creation is a strong focus of the new executive team
 - Focus on independent luxury



A winner receiving her travel ticket from Lufthansa.



Photo shows a winner at the raffle draw.

- properties
 - Nearly 90 percent family-owned; more than 90 percent independently managed
 - Hotels whose individuality and personalized service create distinct experiences for guests; LHW's sweet spot because our hoteliers' sophisticated expertise in their destinations have been cultivated across generation
 - LHW will look for the right GCC portfolio additions in markets where there is growth potential, such as in Saudi Arabia and Oman
- 2019: LHW welcomed nearly 30 new member hotels and had 20+ worldwide openings
- 2020: LHW anticipates consistent growth with quality additions to the portfolio in key markets; specifically

focused on North America and Asia

Kuwait Times: How many properties do they represent in this region?

- **Nine and expanding:** The Chedi Muscat (Muscat, Oman); La Cigale Hotel (Doha, Qatar); The Torch Doha (Doha, Qatar); Le Gray (Beirut, Lebanon); Le Royal Hotel Beirut (Beirut, Lebanon); Al Faisaliah Hotel (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia); Al Bait Sharjah (UAE); One & Only The Palm (Dubai, UAE); Residence & Spa at One & Only Royal Mirage Dubai (Dubai, UAE)
- Most recent addition was Al Bait Sharjah that opened in 2019 and was admitted to the LHW collection in 2017 (Al Qassimi Family owners - Sharjah royal ruling family)

Kuwait Times: In terms of outbound

travel, how much does the GCC represent in terms of value to the LHW portfolio?

- GCC is LHW's 4th largest market in terms of hotel revenue; it has been the 4th largest for two consecutive years
- We have witnessed GCC travelers becoming more intrepid travelers; gone are the days where they only visit Paris, London, Rome etc., now their trips may start in Paris, but brand out to smaller towns throughout the country
- Booking patterns for GCC travelers are very specific
 - Length of time, spend and room category are high
 - Customers return for our personalized and premium service that we offer
 - It is not unusual to see a week booking around €1 million from the market

Kuwait Times: Which is the largest of the six markets, and which one spends the most per night?

- Largest outbound travel market: North America
- Including North America RSO, Dubai RSO makes up ~4% of our total hotel revenue; however, if you exclude North America from our number, they make up ~8% of the total revenue
- **Portfolio:** approximately - 270 Europe (64 percent); 9 Middle East (2 percent); 90 Americas (21 percent); 34 APAC (8 percent); 26 Africa (6 percent)

Kuwait Times: Are there plans to grow the portfolio in the GCC, and if so, which is the market with the most potential and why?

- GCC offers growth potential for our portfolio, however we are aware that much of the hotel development in the region aligns with chain brand offerings
- LHW is for a specific type of asset and we

are positioned as the best alternative to chain brands for owners who wish to stay independent

- LHW is focused on finding the right independent asset, the right hotel and hoteliers to be part of the community and the right markets in which to expand. LHW is not a unit-growth organization and our intention is not to scale for growth's sake. When considering a new member addition, we evaluate the following:
 - The hotel is 5-star, luxury, scores well on LQA, and has a remarkably uncommon story to share; these are table stakes
 - There are collaborative, independent hoteliers at the property who want to contribute and benefit from LHW; we seek hoteliers who value the community aspect and have the ability to deliver remarkably uncommon experiences to guests
 - Markets/destinations where there is demand for LHW properties; destinations with none or a low concentration of LHW properties
 - An example of recent addition is Al Bait Sharjah; a family-owned independent property
 - We see potential for portfolio growth in markets such as Saudi Arabia and Oman

The meeting was followed by a raffle draw for the representatives of the travel agencies for valuable prizes including airline tickets and hotel stays. The Leading Hotels of the World appreciated the attendance of participants and thanked its partners who made this event successful.



Majed Al-Qasem, Director Sales, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.



Hatem Chatter, Senior Director, Middle East and Africa



Chris Walker, SVP Global Sales



Part of the roadshow



Soad Abdullah from Barakat Travel Agency.



Majed Al-Qasem and Mshari Al-Rzeihan.

Classifieds

Monday, February 10, 2020

Kuwait Times
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 Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

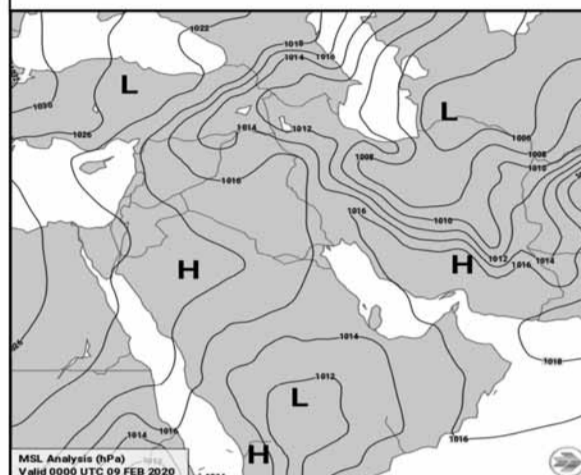
BY DAY: Hazy and A significant decrease in temperature with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Very cold with light to moderate freshening at times over costal areas north westerly wind to northerly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h with a chance for frost forming in agriculture and desert areas.

WEATHER WARNING No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	20 °C	15 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20 °C	14 °C
ABDALY	19 °C	09 °C
BUBYAN	18 °C	09 °C
JAHRA	21 °C	14 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	18 °C	14 °C
SALMIYAH	18 °C	16 °C
AHMADI	19 °C	17 °C
NUWAISIB	20 °C	11 °C
WAFRA	22 °C	09 °C
SALMY	18 °C	10 °C

SFC. CHART 09/02/2020 0000 UTC



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	02/10	Cold and some high clouds will appear with a chance for frost forming in agriculture and desert	14 °C	04 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Tuesday	02/11	Cold and Partly cloudy with a chance for rising dust over open areas with a chance for frost	11 °C	02 °C	NW	20 - 50 km/h
Wednesday	02/12	Cold with a chance for frost forming in agriculture and desert areas	10 °C	01 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Thursday	02/13	Cold and some high clouds will appear	15 °C	04 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:12
Sunrise	06:33
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:10
Sunset	17:33
Isha	18:51

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	28 °C
MIN. Temp.	11 °C
MAX. RH	86 %
MIN. RH	15 %
MAX. Wind	N 46 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
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

CHANGE OF NAME

Name: Sayed Nazir Ahmed Sayed Ibrahim, Surname: Kadri, Civil ID No: 260120702964. (C 5632)

Old name: Surname: Challa Jahnavi, given name: Abhjina, new name: Surname: Challa, given name: Jahnavi Abhjina, Passport No: N0434930, Civil ID No: 308030502272. (C 5633) 9-2-2020

I, formally known and addressed as Akalezi John Kalechi, now wish to be known, called and addressed as Akalezi Stephen. The wrong date of birth is 27/12/1983 and the right date of birth is 27/12/1986. All former documents remain valid. The general public, banks and concerned authorities should please take note.

I, Javed Ahmed Abdul Hamid holder of Indian Passport No. M4640773 having permanent address House No. 76-106-A11-A5, Guru Raghavendra Nagar, near Bellary Chowasta, Kallur, Kurmool, Andhra Pradesh, India, Pin Code No. 518003. Residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: Given name Shaik Javed Ahmed S/o Shaik Abdul Hamid and surname Shaik. (C 5628)

I, Abdul Jabbar father of Aasiyah Zareen holder of Indian Passport No: S9728352 issued in Kuwait on 16/8/2018. Do hereby declare that my daughter's given name is Aasiyah Zareen and Surname is Abdul Jabbar. (C 5635) 6-2-2020

I, SHAHID ABDUL KADIR ANSARI (Indian Passport No. Z5183824 issued in Kuwait) hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given

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

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 10/2/2020				Departure Flights on Monday 10/2/2020			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
PIA	239	Sialkot	00:05	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	215	Jeddah	00:05
AIC	989	Mumbai	00:10	MSC	412	Asyut	00:15
JZR	716	Sohag	00:35	QTR	1093	Doha	00:25
JZR	254	Amman	00:45	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	PIA	240	Sialkot	01:05
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	AIC	990	Mumbai	01:10
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
KAC	102	London	00:55	JZR	111	Doha	01:55
KAC	504	Beirut	01:05	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:00
DLH	625	Dammam	01:30	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:40	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:00
IGO	1759	Delhi	01:55	KAC	677	Dubai	02:10
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	THY	773	Istanbul	02:20
UAE	853	Dubai	02:15	JZR	119	Dubai	02:25
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	417	Manila	02:30
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:30
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	IGO	1765	Delhi	02:55
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	QTR	1087	Doha	04:00
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	KAC	621	Doha	04:20
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:30	KKK	1269	Istanbul	04:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	04:40	JZR	707	Luxor	04:40
JZR	540	KTM	04:45	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
JZR	702	Asyut	04:50	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:30
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	101	Bahrain	05:50
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	JZR	121	Dubai	06:35
KAC	358	Kochi	05:10	JZR	113	Doha	06:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:20	RJA	643	Amman	06:55
KAC	382	Delhi	05:20	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
JZR	654	OSS	05:25	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
JZR	502	Lahore	05:35	UAE	733	Cairo	07:15
JZR	112	Doha	05:35	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:35	KAC	342	Paris	07:35
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:45	RBG	214	Sohag	07:50
UAE	873	Dubai	05:50	JPJ	3731	TQD	08:00
JZR	216	Jeddah	05:50	IGO	1767	Mumbai	08:10
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	KAC	173	Munich	08:20
KAC	344	Chennai	06:10	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	544	Cairo	07:00	JZR	001	LGW	08:40
BAW	157	London	07:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:00
KAC	678	Dubai	07:05	KAC	501	Beirut	09:00
RBG	213	Sohag	07:10	JZR	731	Cairo	09:10
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	BAW	156	London	09:10
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	KAC	545	Cairo	09:30
JZR	120	Dubai	07:35	QTR	1085	Doha	09:30
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	671	Dubai	09:35
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC	101	London	09:45
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:25	KAC	561	Amman	09:45
KAC	622	Doha	08:30	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	JZR	151	Mashhad	09:55
JZR	102	Bahrain	08:55	KAC	751	ElQ	10:00
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	KAC	117	New York	10:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
KAC	304	Mumbai	09:30	KAC	613	Bahrain	10:05
KAC	384	Delhi	09:30	JZR	171	Istanbul	10:05
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:15
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	KAC	617	Doha	10:35
JZR	114	Doha	10:20	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	JZR	211	Jeddah	10:40
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:50	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
JZR	708	Luxor	10:55	QTR	1071	Doha	11:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	JZR	305	Istanbul	11:10
JZR	122	Dubai	11:15	KAC	741	Dammam	11:20
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
KAC	352	Kochi	11:35	AXB	396	Kozhikode	11:50
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:00
JPJ	3732	TQD	12:00	JZR	221	Riyadh	12:00
MSR	610	Cairo	12:25	KAC	515	Tehran	12:10
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:10
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:50	JZR	115	Doha	13:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05				
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10				

African leaders reject Trump's Mideast peace plan at 'silence the guns' summit

ADDIS ABABA: African leaders yesterday condemned US President Donald Trump's Mideast peace plan as illegitimate, taking advantage of an African Union summit to voice solidarity with "the Palestinian cause". AU Commission Chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat told assembled heads of state that the plan unveiled in late January represented the "umpteenth violation of multiple United Nations and African Union resolutions".

He said that it was prepared without international consultation and that it "trampled on the rights of the Palestinian people", a line that drew applause in the main hall at AU headquarters. Trump's long-delayed peace proposals were immediately rejected by the Palestinians, who have boycotted his administration over its pro-Israel stance. The proposals include giving Israel the green light to annex settlements in the occupied West Bank, the largest part of the territories the Palestinians see as their future state.

The outgoing AU chair, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, said in his remarks yesterday that "the Palestinian cause will always be in the hearts and minds of the people of Africa". His successor, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, compared Trump's proposals to regulations in place during his country's apartheid period. "As I listened to it and as I read everything that's written about it, it brought to mind the horrible history that we in South Africa have gone through," he said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who regularly attends AU summits, did not travel to Ethiopia this year. Palestinian officials said last week that Abbas was heading to the UN to push for a Security Council resolution condemning Trump's peace proposals. The resolution will almost certainly be vetoed by the US. Abbas was represented yesterday by Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, who reiterated Palestinian leaders' position that the Trump plan "has no legitimacy whatsoever".

The annual African Union summit had opened with leaders vowing that the AU would play a more prominent role in resolving conflicts proliferating across the continent. The theme of the two-day summit is "Silencing the Guns". The focus on conflicts marks a departure from multiple years of debate centered on

reforming the AU -including its funding structure - and the implementation of a continent-wide free trade area.

In his opening remarks to assembled heads of state yesterday, Faki painted a bleak picture of the continent's security situation, citing "terrorism, intercommunal conflict and pre- and post-election crises". He also noted that while some progress has been made recently in Central African Republic and Sudan, long-running conflicts in places such as Libya and South Sudan have been joined by new crises from Cameroon to Mozambique.

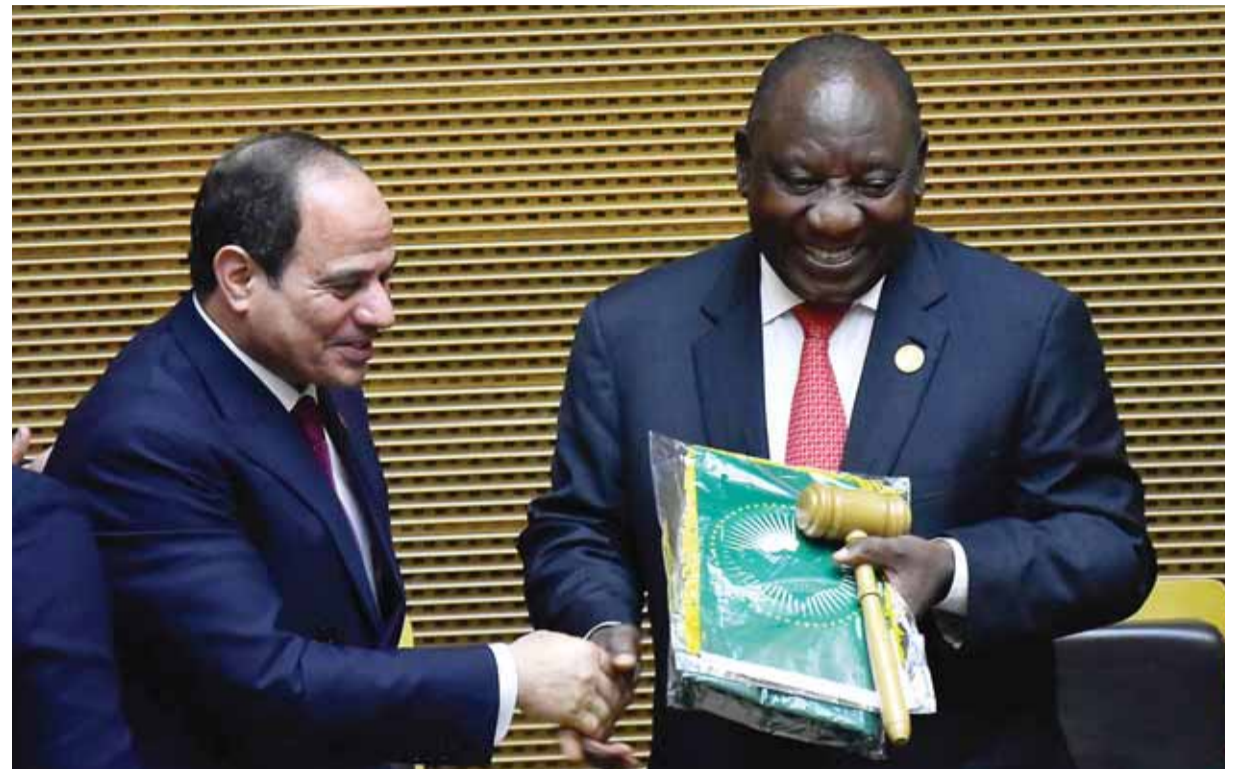
Faki stressed that it would take more than military action to address the "root causes" of African conflicts, namely poverty and social exclusion. He reiterated the AU's determination to find "African solutions to African problems". Yet his remarks came as multiple African leaders were acknowledging the AU's failure to achieve the goal adopted in 2013 of ending "all wars in Africa by 2020".

Libya and South Sudan

Ramaphosa, who is taking over from Sisi as AU chair, announced that he planned to host two summits in May - one focused on conflict resolution and the other on implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. "We will focus our efforts on conflict resolution across the African continent, especially those experiencing protracted conflict," he said. Ramaphosa has identified South Sudan and Libya as two conflicts he wants to prioritize.

On Saturday night, in an effort to jumpstart mediation efforts to form a power-sharing government in South Sudan, Ramaphosa met separately with South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar. The two men face a Feb 22 deadline to form a government, but they have already missed two previous deadlines to settle their differences. South Sudan's civil war began in 2013 and has left 380,000 people dead and millions more in dire poverty.

On Libya, the AU has consistently complained about being sidelined during peace processes led primarily by the UN. At a summit in Congo-Brazzaville in late January, African leaders vowed to hold a reconciliation forum for Libya's warring parties. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres endorsed this initiative at a press con-



ADDIS ABABA: Outgoing chair of the African Union and the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (left) hands over the chairmanship to the incoming chair of the African Union and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa at the 33rd ordinary session of the assembly of the African heads of states at the African Union headquarters yesterday. — AFP

ference at the AU on Saturday, saying he understood the AU's "frustration" at having "been put aside" when it comes to Libya. In a speech yesterday, Guterres said "a new framework of cooperation" between the AU and the UN had been established for Libya.

Financing

The AU will have to overcome internal disputes and insufficient financing for peacekeeping missions if it wants to become a major player in conflict resolution. In a report published Friday, the International Crisis Group think-tank said the AU should prioritize finaliza-

tion of an agreement that would see the UN finance 75 percent of peacekeeping missions backed by the UN Security Council.

Guterres mentioned the agreement during his speech yesterday, saying African peacekeeping missions must have adequate and predictable financing. Ramaphosa said the AU's goal of "silencing the guns" underpinned his other ambitions for economic development and combating gender-based violence. Also yesterday, the AU announced that the Democratic Republic of Congo would replace South Africa as AU chair in 2021. — Agencies



RABAT: Moroccans wave the Palestinian flag during a demonstration against the US Middle East peace plan in the capital yesterday. — AFP

Thousands rally in Morocco, Tunisia against Trump plan

RABAT: Thousands of demonstrators flooded the streets of the Moroccan capital yesterday to protest against a new US Middle East peace plan which the Palestinians says favors Israel. Carrying Palestinian flags, the demonstrators, including local politicians, Islamist sympathizers and trade unionists, marched in Rabat chanting "Long Live Palestine". They called for a boycott of American products, denouncing the United States as "enemies of peace" and chanted "Palestine is not for sale".

Some of the demonstrators, who wore red-black-green-white scarves in the colors of the Palestinian standard, torched an Israeli flag and spoke against any attempt by Morocco "to normalize" ties with the Jewish state. Morocco has warming but quiet relations with Israel, although they do not enjoy formal diplomatic ties. Israel and Morocco opened "liaison" offices in each other's countries in the mid-1990s but Rabat closed them after an escalation of Palestinian-Israeli violence in 2000.

Elsewhere in North Africa, hundreds of Tunisians also protested yesterday against the US peace plan, in the eastern city of Sfax, an AFP journalist reported. Tunisia's powerful UGTT labor union, which organized the march, called the proposal an "accord of shame".

Last month US President Donald Trump unveiled a Middle East plan for peace between Israel and the Palestinians which the Palestinians have rejected saying it is biased in favor of the Jewish state. Under the plan, Israel would retain control of the disputed city of Jerusalem as its "undivided capital", and annex settlements on Palestinian lands. Palestinians however want all of east Jerusalem to be the capital of any future state.

The plan has also been rejected by the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation - two bodies in which Morocco is a prominent member. After Trump unveiled the plan, the foreign minister of Morocco, a key US ally, said Rabat "appreciates the constructive efforts for peace deployed by the US administration for a durable solution in the

Middle East". Nasser Bourita went on to reiterate that Morocco's position is to support the creation of an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital.

Meanwhile, a reworked Palestinian resolution has dropped its initial condemnation of Trump's Mideast peace plan, opting for less confrontational language ahead of a UN Security Council vote, a copy obtained by AFP shows. The latest draft also no longer mentions the United States by name as the plan's author, and couches its criticism in milder language than in the original. The changes come as diplomatic pressure mounts ahead of tomorrow's Security Council vote, which Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is expected to be on hand for.

In one sign of the pressure, Tunisia earlier in the week abruptly fired its ambassador to the United Nations, Moncef Baati, citing his failure to consult with his foreign ministry on matters said to include the peace plan. Diplomatic sources said Tunisia's President Kais Saied was worried that Baati's expressions of support for the Palestinians would damage Tunis' relations with the United States.

Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and adviser, briefed the Security Council on the US plan on Thursday. The initial draft of the Palestinian resolution, which was presented by Tunisia and Indonesia last Tuesday, charged that the US plan "breaches international law and the internationally-endorsed terms of reference for the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

The latest version says the US initiative "departs from the internationally-endorsed terms of reference and parameters for the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to this conflict, as enshrined in the relevant United Nations resolutions". The draft no longer calls for an international conference on the Middle East "at the earliest possible date," instead replacing that language with a reminder that such a call was made in a 2008 UN resolution. It also adds a line "condemning all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction."

Despite the softer tone, however, it was unclear if the latest version would be enough to avoid a US veto when it comes to a vote tomorrow. It still condemns Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, and reaffirms the need to preserve the boundary lines from 1967. — AFP

Presidency gains more power with Trump acquittal

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's impeachment acquittal has delivered the White House a fresh coat of power, sparking worries over the rise of an "imperial presidency". His victory in the Senate trial on Wednesday accelerated a decades-long shift in the US government in which Congress has steadily ceded authority to the Oval Office. The presidency hit a low in the 1970s, after Congress wrested authority away following Richard Nixon's Watergate abuses.

Since then, each successive US leader has sought to further dominate the legislature. Trump, though, has sparked anxiety: He flaunts his power, and has an attorney general who favors a strong presidency and a Republican Party unwilling to restrain him. One of his impeachment lawyers claimed Trump is free to do whatever he wants - even cheat in elections - if he believes it is in the national interest. Trump himself says, citing the US Constitution: "I have the right to do whatever I want as president."

"It is now arguable... that Donald Trump may well have become the most powerful president in American history," historian Jon Meacham said after Trump's trial closed. "President Trump is functionally a monarch at this point. If the king does it, it's okay." After suffering under the British king, the architects of the US system of government crafted a constitution in 1789 that gave the legislature strong checks on the powers of the new nation's chief executive.

Lawmakers held the upper hand mostly through the early 20th century, until, faced by existential emergencies - the Great Depression and then World War II - president Franklin Roosevelt rode roughshod over Congress to take action. Since then, "we have seen a steady increase over time in the independent powers of the presidency," said Mark Rozell, dean of the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. "Presidents are encouraged, I think, to grab as much power and make as much of a difference during their one or two terms as they can. This is not just a Republican thing. It's presidents of both parties," said Rozell.

Iranian satellite fails to reach...

Continued from Page 1

Its latest generation has a range of 300 km. Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Major General Hossein Salami unveiled the missile and engines alongside IRGC aerospace chief Brigadier General Amirali Hajjizadeh. "The complicated achievements on the bleeding edge of global technology that were unveiled today are our key to entering space," Salami said. Salami noted the movable nozzle on the new engine allowed "maneuverability beyond the atmosphere" and amounted to a "leap in modern missile technology". The new technologies that made the missiles "cheaper, lighter, faster and more precise" could be applied to all of Iran's missile classes, he added.

In Jan 2019, Tehran announced that its Payam - "Message" in Farsi - satellite had failed to reach orbit, after authorities said they launched it to collect data on the environment in Iran. The United States said the launch of the carrier rocket was a violation of a 2015 UN Security Council resolution endorsing the international accord on curbing Tehran's nuclear program. Resolution 2231 called on Iran to refrain from any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

Executive power got a considerable boost with the Sept 11, 2001 terror attacks. Republican George W Bush went far beyond his statutory authorities to order actions like secret surveillance of Americans and abduction and torture of foreign fighters, claiming he had the right to do so to protect the country. Congress did require him to obtain approval to make war on Al-Qaeda and Iraq. But they gave him broad authority, allowing the "War on Terror" to extend to Syria, Yemen and Africa under Bush and his successors. Nearly two decades later, Congress worries that Trump could use the same powers to go to war with Iran. But the lawmakers are too at odds to do anything about it.

Barack Obama entered the White House in 2009 pledging not to abuse his powers like Bush and to respect Congress's equal authority. But within a couple years, faced by Congressional Republicans determined to stymie anything Obama wanted, he declared his "We Can't Wait" initiative and began leading by executive order. Obama used his executive powers for environmental rules, protection for undocumented immigrants, gun control and a higher minimum wage.

Having criticized Bush for abusing his war powers, Obama personally signed off on scores of secret drone attacks on terror targets, until even he admitted that there was need for a formal review process. He created a number of administrative bodies led by powerful "czars" that could institute regulations without going through Congress, and made top-level appointments when Congress was in recess to avoid a contentious approval process. When in 2014 the Republican House leader threatened a court challenge, Obama quipped: "So sue me."

Trump branded Obama's use of executive orders as "power grabs". But he now taps that authority far more brahly. He skips Congress to appoint senior officials by designating them "acting"; he declared a "national emergency" to divert billions of dollars of Pentagon money to build a border wall; and he cited national security to effectively ban Muslims from entering the country.

He has lost numerous court challenges but has also prevailed - most notably in defying subpoenas from Congress during his impeachment. Experts say that success shows the legislature forfeiting one of its key powers to check the executive. If Trump's claims of near-unlimited authority go unaddressed, it "will permanently and dangerously alter the balance of power" in the government, said Democrat Adam Schiff, who led the impeachment probe. — AFP

Tehran confirmed in September that an explosion occurred at one of its satellite launch pads due to a technical fault, and slammed Trump for "gleefully" tweeting about it at the time. Trump said the US had nothing to do with what he called a "catastrophic accident" at Semnan Space Centre in a tweet alongside a high-resolution picture pointing to apparent damage at the site.

The Zafar's launch came days before the 41th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution and crucial parliamentary elections in Iran. It also comes at a time of heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington, after a January 3 US drone strike killed top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad. Iran retaliated days later by firing a wave of missiles at American troops stationed in Iraq. Its defense forces had been braced for US retaliation when they accidentally shot down a Ukraine International Airlines flight a few minutes after take-off from Tehran on Jan 8.

Iran says its Internet services have faced cyber attacks for the past two days, without elaborating on the source of the attack or the likely motives. Replying to a citizen's tweet that asked what if the Zafar rocket fails like its predecessor, Jahromi said "we will try again". Iran's on-off space program unsettles some Western nations as the technology used in space-bound rockets can also be used in ballistic missiles. The Islamic republic fired its first satellite into orbit in Feb 2009, and it went on to successfully launch satellites in June 2011, Feb 2012 and Feb 2015. It has also sent monkeys, a turtle, mouse and worms into space. — Agencies

Sports

Kuwait Stars defeat Al-Theebs to win Kuwait Open Ice Hockey Championship

Volvo, sponsors of Kuwait Open Championship for Arab Ice Hockey Clubs



Group picture of the champions Kuwait Stars

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Stars defeated Al-Theebs of UAE with the score of 6-4, which declared them champions of the Kuwait Open Championship for Arab Ice Hockey Clubs which was sponsored by Volvo. Al-Theebs was satisfied with the second place.

Kuwait Stars were surprised by the strong start of their opponents who scored two quick goals, and the score remained as such until just before the end of the first period, when the Stars scored a goal.

The second period saw both teams perform at the same level and were able to score one goal each, ending the period with the score of 3-2 in favor of Al-Theebs.

The third period started with an obvious determination by Kuwait Stars, and gave their best performance in the championship and scored four times while Al-Theebs scored one with Kuwait Stars being declared champions with the score of 6-4. Meanwhile, Lebanon's Cedar Club defeated Egypt's Pharaohs 5-4 to take third

place, as the Pharaohs ended in fourth. Bahrain's Bahrain Club was fifth with its one against Saudi Arabia's Jeddah 6-1, leaving the Saudis without a win.

Public Authority for Sports (PAS) Director General Dr Humoud Fulaiteh Al-Shimmari said the championship was held to coincide with the opening of the new hall of the Kuwait Winter Games Club in Bayan area. He said the championship was successful because it was technically, organizationally and fans attendance. Fulaiteh congratulated the three top teams, who were involved in very strong matches all during the championship.

Meanwhile, head of the Kuwait Winter Games Club Fuhaid Al-Ajmi was very happy along with all club members with this win which came after a joint effort by players, administrative and technical departments. He also pointed to the performance of local players as well as their professional mates who won five consecutive matches. He said the presence of the new facility will have a positive effect on the development of all club's games. He thanked all committees who worked for the championship.



Kuwait Stars and Al-Theebs players fight for the puck.



Dr Humoud Fulaiteh hands the trophy to the winning captain.



Kuwait Stars celebrate



Players in action

Kuwait Motor Town, incredible facility for sports, entertainment

KUWAIT: With seven racing tracks and stretching over 2.6 million square meters, Kuwait Motor Town was built in line with international standards as a tremendous venue for Kuwaiti youth to engage in their motorsports hobby. A year has already passed since the first motorsports season was launched in the town, located in the southern area of Arifjan, which saw eight international tournaments with the participation of 300 motorists.

The season kicked off on 28 January, 2019, with an event organized by Porsche international factory for vehicle tryouts until 7 February, with the participation of over 500 people. The second expansion stage of the town will create an eye-catching family atmosphere, where visiting families are offered all relevant needs involving accommodation, malls, restaurants, cafes and parking lots.

The fresh stage mainly aims at making the town an integrated facility in view of sports and family services which enable people to practice their motorsports hobby and have entertainment in a totally healthy atmosphere. In a statement to KUNA, Head of the Amiri Diwan's Financial and Administrative Affairs Abdulaziz Ishaq said the town follows direct orders of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to boost the skills of Kuwaiti youth in motorsports.

The town also aims to provide a space for engaging in motorsports with safe measures, and encourages competition among lovers of this sport, he noted. The Amiri Diwan placed the bid to develop the town's second phase on



January 6 last year, which will include department stores, water games lakes, residential villas, restaurants, exhibitions, garages, a hotel and a mall, said Ishaq.

The Amiri Diwan's official added that a local company had won the town bid at a value of KD 50 million (around USD 164 million). The facility also encompasses a 4,250-sqm motorcycle racing track for local competitions and a track for international events, as well as one for four-wheel vehicles, he pointed out. Since it was launched, the town has generated a total KD 1.5 million (about USD 4.93 million). During last year's season which lasted until 4th May, the town organized 28 events that were attended by 350,000 audience.

The events included national and international tournaments, with one tournament being for women. Moreover, there were driving tryouts for luxury cars and a parade for Ferrari with the participation of 100 cars. The second season kicked off on October 4, with expectations to exceed KD 1.2 million in profits and the participation of 200,000 audience. During that season, the town inaugurated its seventh track "karting", while the six other tracks are drag

strip, main circuit, off road 4x4, motocross, rallycross and drift arena. Furthermore, the facility's administration is making contacts and arranging visits to organize international motorsports events in an effort to prove that Kuwait is well-placed on the global map of motorsports.

The town, considered one of the biggest motorsport cities in the world, was built in a record time of 14 months. It can fit over 8,000 audience, has VIP halls, 32 car workshops and 3,300 parking spaces. Having inaugurated the Kuwait Motor Town on March 28, 2018, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah highly commended this great and distinguished sports edifice, which is one of the world's major motorsports towns. With its wide-ranging facilities, the town was constructed in line with internationally recognized state-of-the-art safety and security criteria and specifications.

Addressing the launching ceremony, His Highness the Amir hoped that the town would draw regional and international sports championships where young people could manifest their sports capabilities and skills. — KUNA



Sports

Naseem breaks hat trick record as Bangladesh face defeat

Youngest player to record a Test hat trick

RAWALPINDI: Teenage paceman Naseem Shah became the youngest player to record a Test hat trick as Pakistan closed in on victory against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi yesterday. Just when Bangladesh seemed to have fought their way back into the match at 124-2 minutes before the close on the third day, Naseem destroyed them with three wickets off successive deliveries. Aged 16 years and 359 days, he becomes the youngest player to record a Test hat trick, besting Bangladeshi Alok Kapali who achieved the feat aged 19 in 2003. Naseem trapped Najmul Hossain Shanto leg before off the fourth ball of his seventh over for 38, then followed up with dismissals of Taijul Islam (lbw) and Mahmudullah (caught) with the next two deliveries.

Naseem had figures of 4-26 before he left the field with a shoulder injury. Shanto and Mominul Haque, unbeaten on 37 at the close, had added 71 for the third wicket after they lost Saif Hassan on 16 and Tamim Iqbal on 34.

At the close, Bangladesh were 126-6 and needing another 86 runs to avoid an innings defeat with two days to play. Naseem, who burst onto the scene on Pakistan's Australia tour last year, is also the youngest fast bowler and second bowler overall to take five wickets in a Test innings.

He achieved that feat at 16 years and 307 days against Sri Lanka in Karachi last year. Pakistan were bowled out for 445 in their first innings with Babar Azam scoring 143 and Haris Sohail 75.

Saif, playing his first Test, was on a pair after his second-half duck in the first innings but he started confidently to reach 16 with four boundaries before he was bowled by Naseem. Iqbal, fresh from scoring the highest first-class score on Bangladeshi soil of 334 not out last week, was trapped leg-before by Yasir.

Earlier, Pakistan lost seven wickets either side of

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on day three of the first Test between Pakistan and Bangladesh at Rawalpindi stadium yesterday:

Bangladesh 1st innings 233 (Mohammad Mithun 63, Najmul Hossain Shanto 44; Shaheen Shah Afridi 4-53)	25.5-3-113-3 (Inb, 1w), Islam 41-6-139-2, Mahmudullah 2-0-6-0
Pakistan 1st innings (overnight 342-3)	
Shan Masood b Islam	100
Abid Ali c Das b Jayed	0
Azhar Ali c Shanto b Jayed	34
Babar Azam c Mithun b Jayed	143
Asad Shafiq c Das b Ebadat	65
Haris Sohail c b Islam	75
Mohammad Rizwan c Mahmudullah b Rubel	10
Yasir Shah lbw b Rubel	5
Shaheen Shah Afridi lbw b Rubel	3
Mohammad Abbas not out	1
Naseem Shah run out	2
Extras: (b 1, lb 3, nb 2, w1)	7
Total: (all out: 122.5 overs)	445
Fall of wickets: 1-2 (Abid), 2-93 (Azhar), 3-205 (Masood), 4-342 (Azam), 5-353 (Shafiq), 6-374 (Rizwan), 7-415 (Yasir), 8-422 (Shaheen), 9-442 (Sohail)	
Bowling: Ebadat 25-6-97-1, Jayed 29-4-86-3 (Inb), Rubel	
Bangladesh 2nd innings	
Tamim Iqbal lbw b Yasir	34
Saif Hassan b Naseem	16
Najmul Hossain Shanto lbw b Naseem	38
Mominul Haque not out	37
Taijul Islam lbw b Naseem	0
Mahmudullah c Sohail b Naseem	0
Mohammad Mithun b Yasir	0
Liton Das not out	0
Extras: (w 1)	1
Total: (for six wkst: 45 overs)	126
Still to bat: Rubel Hossain, Abu Jayed, Ebadat Hossain	
Fall of wickets: 1-39 (Saif Hassan, 8.6 ov), 2-53 (Tamim Iqbal, 15.5 ov), 3-124 (Shanto), 4-124 (Islam), 5-124 (Mahmudullah), 6-126 (Mithun)	
Bowling: Shaheen 11-2-35-0 (1w), Abbas 11.4-5-20-0, Naseem 8.2-2-26-4, Yasir 11-2-33-2, Shafiq 3-0-12-0.	

lunch with Sohail holding the innings together. He struck seven fours and two sixes for his third Test half-century before holing out off spinner Taijul Islam to deep mid-wicket.

Last man Naseem was run out to end Pakistan's first innings. A healthy 10,000-strong holiday crowd had come in anticipation of popular batsman Babar Azam scoring a double hundred. But resuming at 342-3, Pakistan lost Azam to the first ball of the day.

Azam seemed caught in two minds whether to play

or leave a length delivery from pace bowler Abu Jayed and edged to Mohammad Mithun at first slip. Azam's 143 was his fifth Test hundred and a masterclass of attractive batting, which included a six and 18 fours.

Asad Shafiq, who put on 137 for the fourth wicket with Azam, added just five to his overnight score before he was caught behind off fast bowler Ebadat Hossain for a 65 that included nine boundaries. Jayed was the pick of the bowlers with 3-86 while Islam finished with 2-139. —AFP



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's Naseem Shah (R) delivers the ball during the third day of the first cricket Test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi yesterday. Teenage paceman Naseem Shah became the youngest player to record a Test hat trick as Pakistan closed in on victory against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi yesterday. — AFP

Nepal's Malla youngest to hit ODI 50

KATHMANDU: Nepal teenager Kushal Malla has become the youngest batsman to score a one-day international half-century in men's cricket. The left-handed Malla made 50 off 51 balls on his ODI debut in a World Cup League 2 match against the US near Kathmandu on Saturday aged 15 years and 340 days.

He broke the record held by his compatriot Rohit Kumar Paudel, who was only 16 years and 146 days old when he scored 55 in an ODI against the UAE last year. Malla, who has played three Twenty20 matches for Nepal, came in to bat when his team was struggling at 49 for five. He guided them to 190 and a 35-run win.

India's cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar was 16 years and 214 days when he made a half-century in a Test against Pakistan in Faisalabad in 1989. Nepal gained ODI status at the 2018 World Cup qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe, despite the suspension of their national governing body in 2016 over political interference. The International Cricket Council lifted the ban in October last year. — AFP

England survive late collapse, square series

JOHANNESBURG: England survived a late collapse to square the series when they beat South Africa by two wickets in the third and final one-day international at the Wanderers Stadium yesterday.

England were cruising to victory at 232 for four after leg-spinner Adil Rashid and his fellow slow bowlers restricted South Africa to 256 for seven after they were sent in to bat. But fast bowler Lungi Ngidi, who had endured a horror start to the innings, struck three times in quick succession as England lost four wickets for 20 runs before Moeen Ali got the winning runs.

"We bowled really well today," said England captain Eoin Morgan. "We probably had the best of the conditions. It was our best performance in the field and with the ball." Morgan said he would have liked to finish with a "commanding" win. "It was disappointing to limp over the line like that," he said. South African captain Quinton de Kock praised the energy his inexperienced team had shown in the two completed matches, which were shared 1-1. "We had a bit of a sniff but it was still a loss," he said of Sunday's game. "But it was pretty cool to make it tough for the English side."

Man of the match Rashid, playing in his 100th one-day international but in his only appearance in the series, took three for 51, including the key wickets of Temba Bavuma and De Kock, who made 69.

After being under covers throughout Saturday because of heavy rain, the pitch helped the bowlers in South Africa's innings.

There was movement through the air and off the surface for the new-ball bowlers, while offering turn for the spinners. "It was a nice wicket with a bit of turn and bounce," said Rashid. Twenty-seven overs were bowled by England's spinners including 17 in tandem by Rashid and off-spinner Ali. —AFP

Gulf volleyball concludes today

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The 37th Gulf Volleyball Champion Clubs Championship will come to a conclusion with its fifth and final round to be played today, when Qatar's Police meet Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal at 3 pm, while Oman's Al-Seeb will face UAE's Al-Ain, and the final match of the tournament will be at 7 pm between Kuwait and Bahrain's Dar Kulaib. The fourth round which was played Saturday saw Kuwait Club come close to the podium, by winning against Al-Hilal 3-0 (25-20, 25-20, 26-24). Meanwhile, Qatar's Police continued its march to winning the title by defeating Al-Seeb 3-1 (25-18, 21-25, 25-21, 25-18). Current champions Dar Kulaib defeated Al-Ain 3-0 (25-19, 25-21, 25-20).

These results brings Qatar's Police closer to winning the title as it collected 12 points from four matches without a loss, followed by current champions with 9 points, Kuwait third with 8 points, and the match between them will be decisive to decide second and third place, while Al-Hilal dropped to fourth place with six points' Al-Seeb fifth with one point and Al-Ain in Sixth with 0 points.

STRONG PERFORMANCE

Kuwait team gave good performance as its coach Khalid Baleid was able to read the game well and took advantage of Al-Hilal's low moral when its star player Ahmad Bakheet was injured during their match with Dar Kulaib. Kuwait was better all along the match with strong attack and smashes from the sides especially by Abdallah Jasem and Cuban Roland. Kuwait's defence was also outstanding by rolling the ball and forming blocking walls, enabling it to win comfortably.

Bruins down Coyotes for 6th straight win

BOSTON: Charlie Coyle scored twice, and Patrice Bergeron had a goal and two assists as the Boston Bruins continued their dominance of the visiting Arizona Coyotes with a 4-2 win Saturday. Jake DeBrusk also scored, and David Pastrnak had two assists as the Bruins extended their winning streak to six. Tuukka Rask stopped 29 shots for Boston and improved to 12-0-6 at home. Phil Kessel and Jakob Chytrun scored for the Coyotes, who have lost 10 of their last 12 games (2-7-3). Adin Hill, a late replacement for originally scheduled starter Antti Raanta, had 29 saves for Arizona. The Bruins have now won 16 consecutive games against the Coyotes dating back to October 2010. Boston completed a season sweep, having beaten Arizona on the road in the second game of the season.

Flyers 7, Capitals 2

Sean Couturier scored two goals, Claude Giroux added one goal and two assists, and Philadelphia scored three goals in under two minutes in the second period to defeat host Washington. Alex Ovechkin came into the game needing two goals for 700 in his career, but the Washington captain did not score. The Flyers took control with the second-period outburst. They scored three times in 1 minute, 45 seconds — the first two coming only 14 seconds apart — and took a 4-1 lead. Goalie Brian Elliott, pulled from the Flyers' last game, turned in a strong effort with 25 saves.

Lightning 3, Islanders 1

Brayden Point broke a scoreless tie in the opening seconds of the second period for red-hot Tampa Bay, which never trailed against New York. Carter Verhaeghe and Steven Stamkos also scored for the Lightning, who have won six straight and are 18-2-1 since the roll began Dec. 23. Tampa Bay hasn't trailed in any of its last five victories.



AL-NISF: IMPORTANT WIN

Deputy Chairman of the Higher Organizing Committee, head of volleyball at Kuwait Club Mohammad Al-Nisf said Kuwait had an important win against Al-Hilal and is now very close to being among the top three. He said "players level is continually improving from one match to the other, yet we still did not reach the level we want. There are some mistakes that must be corrected quickly." Al-Nisf said the final match with Dar Kulaib is very important and we will do our best to win it, and we have great confidence in the

players, and wish them luck.

CLOSE TO WINNING

Kuwait coach Khalid Baleid said the match with Dar Kulaib has special calculations and we will exert all efforts to win second place. Kuwait's player Yacoub bin Eid said he is happy following the win against Al-Hilal. He said the team avoided previous mistakes, it made in front of Al-Seeb. He said Kuwait team must have the same performance it had with Al-Hilal in front of Dar Kulaib in order to at least get second place.

Goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy made 17 saves as the Lightning earned a point in his 17th consecutive start, extending his own team record.

his first win since Jan. 31 as the Penguins avoided what would have been consecutive losses for the first time since Nov. 29-30. Since then, the Penguins are 20-6-1.

Stars 3, Blues 2 (OT)

Roope Hintz scored two goals, including the overtime game-winner, as Dallas won at St. Louis. Jamie Benn also scored, and Anton Khudobin made 23 saves for the Stars, who rallied from a 2-0 deficit. Colton Parayko scored twice for the Blues, who are 2-6-1 in their last nine games. Jordan Binnington stopped 31 of 34 shots for St. Louis.

Avalanche 2, Blue Jackets 1

Nazem Kadri and Nathan MacKinnon scored third-period goals, Philipp Grubauer had 31 saves and Colorado rallied to win at Columbus. Gabriel Landeskog and Cale Makar had an assist each to help the Avalanche improve to 3-1 on their five-game road trip. Colorado has won six of its last seven. Seth Jones had a goal, and Elvis Merzlikins stopped 20 shots but fell short of his third straight shutout for Columbus. The Blue Jackets had won three straight and nine of 10.

Devils 3, Kings 0

MacKenzie Blackwood made 37 saves for his second consecutive shutout as New Jersey scored three times in the second period and beat Los Angeles in Newark, N.J. Blackwood followed up a 46-save performance by posting his third shutout of the season and fifth of his career. He made 13 saves in the first period, 10 in the second and 14 in the third. Nikita Gusev scored New Jersey's first goal, Blake Coleman tallied on the power play and Kyle Palmieri capped the flurry in the second. The Kings were shut out for the fifth time and dropped to 1-8-1 in their last 10 games and 4-14-2 in their last 20.

Penguins 3, Panthers 2

Kris Letang scored a goal and added an assist to lead Pittsburgh over host Florida Panthers at Sunrise, Fla. The Penguins also got goals from Sidney Crosby, the game-winner, and Teddy Blueger. Tristan Jarry made 33 saves to earn

Jets 5, Senators 2

Patrik Laine recorded a power-play hat trick, and Kyle Connor recorded four points as Winnipeg earned a victory over visiting Ottawa. The Jets improved to 3-0-1 over their last four games as the club tries to fight its way back into the playoff race following a 1-7-0 slide to conclude January. The loss extended Ottawa's winless drought to five games (0-3-2). Laine's eighth career hat trick gives him 23 goals for the season. The notoriously streaky winger is on a hot streak, scoring eight times over his last eight games. Connor and Neal Pionk (one goal, two assists) both matched personal bests for points in an NHL game.

Canadiens 2, Maple Leafs 1 (OT)

Ilya Kovalchuk scored on a rebound at 1:43 of overtime, and host Montreal beat Toronto. Canadiens goalie Carey Price stopped Tyson Barrie, and the puck bounced to Nick Suzuki on a breakaway. His shot was denied, but Kovalchuk swooped in to send the puck into the net for the victory. Montreal's Marco Scandella had tied the score late in the third period. Toronto's John Tavares scored in his 800th game, and Alexander Kerfoot and Zach Hyman had assists. Goalie Jack Campbell, acquired from Los Angeles to back up injured Frederik Andersen (neck), made his second start in two nights after beating the Anaheim Ducks on Friday, making 28 saves. —Reuters

Sports

Bale returns as Madrid come from behind to beat Osasuna

Real Madrid pull six points clear of Barcelona

MADRID: Gareth Bale came back into the team and Real Madrid came back to beat Osasuna yesterday as a 4-1 victory in Pamplona strengthened their hold on top spot in La Liga. Bale had been left out completely for Madrid's previous four matches but the Welshman returned to the squad and the starting line-up at El Sadar, in a surprise show of faith from coach Zinedine Zidane.

A fortuitous deflection meant Bale assisted Isco's equaliser too before Sergio Ramos put Madrid in front after Unai Garcia had given Osasuna an early lead. Substitutes Lucas Vazquez and Luka Jovic then scored from late breaks as Madrid pulled six points clear of Barcelona, who play away at Real Betis later.

Barca's win in the Copa del Rey overshadowed Madrid's own shock defeat at home to Real Sociedad in the quarter-finals, a loss that brought a dramatic end to their 21-match unbeaten run. But Zidane will be relieved to see his team swiftly back on track with a performance full of the kind of resilience that Madrid's rivals have so lacked in recent weeks.

Bale also keeps coming back under Zidane and the 30-year-old had chances to add a goal to a spirited display before going off to a decent reception

from the away support in the second half.

This was only his third appearance since the turn of the year. Osasuna were the better side in the early stages and took a deserved lead when Unai put his head in front of Casemiro's dangling foot and steered the ball into the corner.

But Madrid improved as the half wore on and Isco volleyed in an equaliser after Bale attempted to divert Ferland Mendy's cross, with the ball deflecting kindly into the Spaniard's path. Ramos was lucky to escape a red card after sliding in on Ruben Garcia with a high foot and Madrid's captain took full advantage of his reprieve as he nodded in Casemiro's looping header to the back post.

Luka Modric had a strong claim for a penalty after he nipped the ball away from Pervis Estupinan in the area before Osasuna enjoyed their most threatening spell. Inigo Perez's shot whistled just over and Ruben dragged wide from Nacho Vidal's pull-back after making space with a neat dummy past Ramos. Bale went off to applause from the small number of away fans, and Vazquez came on to add a third. Osasuna's defence were occupied by a Karim Benzema burst and he fed right for Vazquez to drive in. Jovic smashed in a fourth in injury-time. — AFP



PAMPLONA: Osasuna's Spanish goalkeeper Sergio Herrera (L) saves the ball as Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale (R) vies with Osasuna's Ecuadorian defender Pervis Estupinan during the Spanish league football match between CA Osasuna and Real Madrid CF at El Sadar stadium in Pamplona yesterday. —AFP

New-look Wolves stomp Clippers

MINNESOTA: The new-look Minnesota Timberwolves were a puzzle too difficult to solve Saturday, getting 24 points from Jordan McLaughlin and 23 from Malik Beasley to earn a resounding 142-115 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers and end a 13-game losing streak. Three players were making their debut for a Timberwolves team that was busy in advance of Thursday's NBA trade deadline. One player who did not suit up was D'Angelo Russell, who was one of the biggest acquisitions on the final trading day. Karl-Anthony Towns scored 22 points with 13 rebounds and nine assists. Beasley made a career-best seven 3-pointers in his Wolves debut. McLaughlin's point total was a career high. James Johnson added 15 points, also in his Minnesota debut. McLaughlin had 11 assists, and Beasley had 10 rebounds. The Timberwolves set a franchise record with 26 3-pointers and shot 59.1 percent from long distance. Kawhi Leonard scored 29 points and Paul George added 21 for the Clippers, who looked slow to react to Minnesota's long-shooting strategy and did not have enough firepower to compete with it.

MILWAUKEE BUCKS 111 - ORLANDO MAGIC 95

Brook Lopez highlighted a 23-point performance with five 3-pointers as visiting Milwaukee completed a four-game season sweep of Orlando. Giannis Antetokounmpo collected 18 points, 18 rebounds and nine assists for the Bucks, who have won 13 of their last 14 games overall and seven of their last eight versus Orlando. Khris Middleton recorded 21 points and 13 rebounds, and Eric Bledsoe (18) and Wesley Matthews (12) also scored in double digits for Milwaukee. Nikola Vucevic collected 21 points and 14 rebounds for his team-leading 26th double-double for the Magic, who have lost three in a row and eight of their last nine games.

LOS ANGELES LAKERS 125 - GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS 120

Anthony Davis capped a big night at the foul line

with three late free throws, helping the visiting Los Angeles hold new-look Golden State. Davis shot nine of 13 at the line en route to a team-high 27 points to complement 10 rebounds. Avery Bradley sank five 3-pointers to account for a majority of his 21 points, and LeBron James chipped in with 22 points, eight rebounds and a team-high 11 assists for the Lakers, who won for the ninth time in their last 11 road games. Andrew Wiggins, one of four players making their debut with the Warriors, had 24 points. Marquese Chriss went for a season-high 26 for the Warriors, who lost at home for the eighth time in their last nine games.

TORONTO RAPTORS 119 - BROOKLYN NETS 118

Fred VanVleet scored 29 points — 10 in the fourth quarter — and Toronto held on to defeat visiting Brooklyn to extend its franchise-best winning streak to 14 games. Pascal Siakam made the winning free throw with 22.9 seconds to play and finished with 20 points for the Raptors, who have won 18 of their past 19 games against the Nets, including 10 straight at home. Toronto has won the first three meetings between the teams this season.

DENVER NUGGETS 117 - PHOENIX SUNS 108

Jamal Murray scored 36 points, Nikola Jokic added 23 and visiting Denver completed a season sweep of Phoenix. Murray shot a blistering 14 of 17 from the floor, including 6 of 8 from 3-point range. He added five rebounds and five assists, while Jokic chipped in nine rebounds and six assists for the Nuggets. Deandre Ayton had 28 points and 19 rebounds for the Suns. Kelly Oubre Jr. cooled off from a season-high 39 points on Friday to score 20.

DALLAS MAVERICKS 116 - CHARLOTTE HORNETS 100

Seth Curry returned to his hometown and poured in 26 points as Dallas ripped host Charlotte, which lost its fifth straight. Curry came off the bench and shot 10-for-14 from the field, making 6 of 8 3-point attempts. Willie Cauley-Stein added 15 points and 10 rebounds, Tim Hardaway Jr. had 14 points, and Dorian Finney-Smith and Jalen Brunson both had 13 points for the Mavericks. Boban Marjanovic provided 11 points. Devonte' Graham's 26 points led the Hornets, while Miles Bridges

had 20 points, Malik Monk pumped in 19 points and Terry Rozier had 15.

NEW ORLEANS PELICANS 124 - INDIANA PACERS 117

Jrue Holiday scored 17 of his game-high 31 points in the fourth quarter as visiting New Orleans defeated Indiana. Holiday, who missed most of the second quarter while getting five stitches to close a cut above his right eye, added 10 assists to get his first double-double since Dec. 13. JJ Redick scored 23 points, Derrick Favors had 15 points and 11 rebounds and Lonzo Ball scored 15. Jeremy Lamb scored 26 points, T.J. Warren, returning from a three-game absence due to a concussion, added 22 points. Malcolm Brogdon scored 17. Domantas Sabonis had 16 and Myles Turner 10 to lead the Pacers, who lost their fifth consecutive game and fourth straight at home.

SACRAMENTO KINGS 122 - SAN ANTONIO SPURS 102

Buddy Hield hit nine of 10 from 3-point range while scoring 31 points off the bench as Sacramento notched a victory over visiting San Antonio. Harrison Barnes recorded 25 points and seven rebounds as the Kings won for the sixth time in the past eight games. Kent Bazemore and Nemanja Bjelica added 15 points apiece. De'Aaron Fox scored 13 points, and Harry Giles III collected a career-best 12 rebounds. DeMar DeRozan scored 14 points in 30 minutes before being ejected midway through the fourth quarter, as the Spurs dropped to 0-4 on their eight-game, "Rodeo Road Trip."

NEW YORK KNICKS 95 - DETROIT PISTONS 92

Julius Randle and Wayne Ellington had 17 points apiece, and visiting New York extended its season-best winning streak to four games. Taj Gibson and Bobby Portis scored 11 points apiece, and Elfrid Payton had 10 points, nine rebounds and six assists for the Knicks. New York outrebounded Detroit 47-28, including a 16-3 advantage in offensive rebounds. Reggie Jackson led the Pistons with 20 points and nine assists. Christian Wood had 17 points and 11 rebounds, while Tony Snell and John Henson contributed 12 points apiece. Henson was making his Detroit debut after being acquired from Cleveland on Thursday. — Reuters

Bailey denies Dortmund late as Leverkusen win seven-goal thriller

BERLIN: Leon Bailey scored one late goal and made another on Saturday as Bayer Leverkusen earned a stunning 4-3 win over Borussia Dortmund to deny the visitors the chance to move level on points with Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich.

Jamaica winger Bailey came on for the final 20 minutes with his side 3-2 down and after slotting home the equaliser with nine minutes left, the Jamaican winger's audacious backheel seconds later led to Lars Bender heading in Leverkusen's dramatic winner.

The defeat for Dortmund, which leaves them third on 39 points, was also the first time teenager prodigy Erling Braut Haaland failed to score after hitting eight goals in his first four games for his new club.

Leverkusen are now fifth, two points off the Champions League places. Dortmund could finish the weekend six points behind Bayern Munich if the defending champions beat second-placed RB Leipzig at home on Sunday, after conceding for the 32nd time this season.

"We have problems, we're conceding too many goals," fumed Dortmund's Swiss coach Lucien Favre. "We have to control the situations better and play smarter." The goals flew at the BayArena with three disallowed efforts on top of the two Kevin Volland also scored for Leverkusen.

Volland put Leverkusen ahead on 20 minutes by firing home with his second touch, but Hummels equalised almost immediately by heading home a corner. Emre Can put Dortmund 2-1 up with a rifled finish in the 33rd minute before German Volland levelled just before the break. Dortmund took the lead again in the 65th minute when Achraf Hakimi started a move which released left-back Raphael Guerreiro, who drove his shot home. The scene was set for Bailey, who had a goal disallowed soon after coming on, but was not to be denied.—AFP

Judo champion Riner loses after nine years

PARIS: One of sport's longest winning runs came to an end yesterday when two-time Olympic and serial judo world champion Teddy Riner was beaten for the first time in over nine years.

After 154 successive wins, the 30-year-old Frenchman, who competes in the 100-kilogramme heavyweight category, was beaten by ippon by the Japanese Kokoro Kageura in the third round of the Paris Grand Slam.

Riner's last defeat was back in September 2010 when he was controversially beaten by another Japanese Daiki Kamikawa in the openweight final at the world championships in Tokyo.

The defeat comes five months before the Tokyo Olympics when Riner will hope to emulate the lightweight judoka Tadahiro Nomura in winning gold at three successive Olympics.

Ten-time world champion Riner's record ranks alongside some of the greats of the sporting world.

American hurdler Ed Moses won 122 consecutive races over a 10-year period from 1977 to 1987, and Pakistani squash legend Jahangir Khan won 555 successive matches from 1981 to 1986.

Boxing has also thrown up at least two remarkable winning streaks. Heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano never lost a fight in his professional career, winning 49 in a row between 1947 and 1955 while the Mexican Julio Cesar Chavez, a world champion at three different weights, won 87 consecutive fights before drawing with Pernell Whitaker in 1993. —AFP



PARIS: France's Teddy Riner (R) fights against Japan's Kokoro Kageura during the over 100 kg category men's third round fight at the Judo Paris Grand Slam 2020, in Paris, France. — AFP

Ronaldo sets scoring record but Juventus fall in Verona

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo on Saturday became the first Juventus player to score in 10 successive Serie A games but the champions fell 2-1 at Hellas Verona to leave an opening to their title rivals. Ronaldo — who turned 35 this week — broke through after 65 minutes, to hit his 15th goal in 10 games and take his league tally to 20.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner is closing in on the all-time Serie A record of scoring in 11 consecutive games held by Gabriel Batistuta and Fabio Quagliarella. But Juventus paid for defensive errors with Fabio Borini pulling Verona level with quarter of an hour to go, before veteran striker Giampaolo Pazzini won the match for the promoted side from the penalty spot four minutes from time following a Leonardo Bonucci handball.

Juventus are three points ahead of Inter Milan, who have a chance to pull level when they take on Zlatan Ibrahimovic's AC Milan in derby clash at the San Siro. Lazio are four points behind the leaders in third before they travel to Parma.

The defeat was the third this season for Maurizio Sarri's side but second in three games after losing 2-1 at Napoli just two weeks ago. "We have to understand that winning is not a foregone conclusion," blasted Sarri.

"We need to get it into our heads that we can't have lapses in concentration as happened this evening. "We dropped points through carelessness." Verona meanwhile are up to sixth after extending their unbeaten run to eight games days after earning a creditable goalless draw at Lazio, who can pull to within a point of Juve with a win at Parma on Sunday.

"We've created a group of hungry kids," said Verona coach Ivan Juric. "Heart played a big role, the lads were tired but they gave it everything." Earlier Atalanta consolidated fourth place with a

2-1 win at Fiorentina that ended the Bergamo side's 27-year away winless run against the Tuscan club.

Federico Chiesa's scorcher just after half an hour gave mid-table Fiorentina hope of another win over Atalanta, whom they eliminated from the Italian Cup at their Stadio Artemio Franchi last month.

But Duvan Zapata tapped in four minutes after the break to level the scores before Ruslan Malinovsky came off the bench to seal victory with 18 minutes left, giving Atalanta their first win away at the 'Viola' since 1993.

Gian Piero Gasperini's side pull three points clear of fifth-placed Roma in the race for the Champions League following the capital club's 3-2 home defeat to Bologna on Friday, but are still eight points behind Lazio.

"These are three very important, key points. We haven't won here for 27 years, and we were up against an in-form team," said Gasperini. Atalanta host Roma next weekend before they play at home against Valencia in the Champions League last-16, having qualified for the competition for the first time this season.

"We have to exploit Roma's difficulties and our home advantage in the next match," added Zapata. "If we do well against the 'Giallorossi' it will set us up for the Champions League match against Valencia."

Moreno Longo started his reign as Torino coach with a 3-1 home defeat to Sampdoria, with the struggling Genoa club's goals coming in a nine-minute second-half spell. Torino, in 12th, have now lost four games in a row, conceding 16 goals, and could fall further off the Europa League pace by the end of the weekend. Claudio Ranieri's Sampdoria are now 16th, seven points clear of the relegation zone. — AFP

25 Kuwait Stars defeat Al-Theeb to win ice hockey championship



25 Kuwait Motor Town, incredible facility for sports, entertainment



27 Judo champion Riner loses after nine years



Akbar steers Bangladesh to U-19 W Cup triumph



POTCHEFSTROOM: The Bangladesh cricket team pose for a group photograph after winning the ICC Under-19 World Cup cricket finals between India and Bangladesh at the Senwes Park, in Potchefstroom, yesterday. — AFP

POTCHEFSTROOM: Bangladesh captain Akbar Ali kept his calm to lead his team to a stunning three-wicket win over India in Potchefstroom to win the Under-19 World Cup for the first time. Chasing 178 to win, Bangladesh were struggling at 102 for six but Akbar, who finished 43 not out, dragged them towards the line.

A brief flurry of rain saw the players leave the field with Bangladesh on 163 for seven. When they returned the target had been adjusted under DLS to 170 from 46 overs. Bangladesh needed seven from 30 balls and Akbar and Rakibul Hasan duly knocked off the runs to claim Bangladesh's first World Cup at any level. "It's an unbelievable experience," said Rakibul who hit the winning run.

"We came here with plans and it worked out really

well. Whichever team executes their plans better on the day wins, and that happened for us today." The day started well for Bangladesh when Akbar called correctly at the toss and put India in to bat.

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal was again the stand-out batsman for defending champions India as he carved 88 from 121 balls. The 18-year-old left-hander from Uttar Pradesh already had three fifties and a century under his belt at this competition - the only time he failed to make a half-century was in the group match against Japan when India needed just 42 to win.

Jaiswal, who has just landed a contract with Indian Premier League side Rajasthan Royals, hit eight fours and a six before miscuing a short-arm pull off Shoriful Islam. He ended the competition as top run-scorer with

400 at an average of 133.33 and was named Player of the Tournament. Avishkek Das was the most successful bowler with three for 40 and there were two each for Shoriful and Tanzim Hasan Sakib. Tilak Varma made a watchful 38 from 65 balls and Dhruv Jurel 22 from 38 as the Indians struggled to attack the Bangladeshi bowling. Jaiswal apart, the other Indian batsmen managed just four boundaries between them.

Bishnoi battle

Bangladesh began confidently through Parvez Hossain Emon and Tanzid Hasan who brought up the 50 partnership with a six off Ravi Bishnoi. Three balls later he fell for the Bishnoi googly and holed out to Kartik Tyagi at midwicket.

Another googly accounted for Mahmudul Hasan Joy, who had scored a century in the semi-final win over New Zealand, but as he departed so did Emon who retired hurt on 25 suffering from cramp.

Bishnoi, who finished with four for 30, then removed Towhid Hridoy and Shahadat Hossain in quick succession to have Bangladesh reeling at 65 for four. At 102 for six the game looked over but Emon returned to join pugnacious captain Akbar Ali.

Together they added 41 and when Emon fell to the leg-spin of Jaiswal for 47, it was left to Akbar to see his side home. "It's a dream come true," said Akbar.

"We've had a very good experience, and this is just the beginning for us. Hopefully, this will be the starting stone for us." — AFP

Suter wins super-G in Garmisch

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN: Swiss Corinne Suter won the women's super-G World Cup race in Garmisch-Partenkirchen yesterday as both Viktoria Rebensburg and Sofia Goggia suffered heavy falls on the difficult, icy course. Suter, who finished fifth in Saturday's downhill won by Rebensburg, clocked 1min 19.46sec down the testing Kandahar course. Austria's Nicole Schmidhofer was second at 0.43sec back with Swiss Wendy Holdener third at 0.70.

"I'm very happy with the performance, but it wasn't free of mistakes. It was very icy and difficult on the course," said Suter. The pre-race favourite, the super-G standings leader Federica Brignone of Italy, finished fifth at 0.90sec back. Overall World Cup leader Mikaela Shiffrin was absent in Garmisch following the death of her father last week. After finishing second in Saturday's downhill, Brignone, who is second in the overall rankings, has now trimmed Shiffrin's lead to 145 points.

This was Suter's second World Cup win of the season after winning the downhill in Altenmarkt, Austria, last month. Despite racing under clear-blue skies, the course was demanding having iced up overnight following mild day-time conditions in the Bavarian Alps.

Ester Ledecka, the Czech Republic's reigning 2018 Olympic super-G champion, could only manage 17th, 2.06sec behind Suter. The Kandahar course proved too much for local favourite Rebensburg and Olympic downhill champion Goggia.

After claiming the first downhill win of her career 24 hours before, giant slalom specialist Rebensburg suffered a heavy fall on the tricky mid-section nicknamed 'Hell'. The



GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN: Switzerland's Corinne Suter laughs during the winners' ceremony of the Super-G event at the FIS Alpine Women Skiing World Cup in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, southern Germany, yesterday. — AFP

30-year-old lost control of her outside ski on a turn and crashed into the safety netting, but was able to ski down.

Italy's Goggia also suffered a heavy fall in the mid-section and had to be untangled from the safety nettings. The 27-year-old skied down but was in visible distress, nursing her left arm, after her upper body took the brunt of a crash into one of the plastic gates on the piste. — AFP

Wilder aiming for something special as Blades climb to fifth

SHEFFIELD: Sheffield United manager Chris Wilder believes the Blades can achieve something special this season after climbing to fifth in the Premier League table by coming from behind to beat Bournemouth 2-1 at Bramall Lane.

In their first top-flight campaign for 13 years, Wilder's men are looking down on the likes of Tottenham, Manchester United and Arsenal and are within two points of fourth-placed Chelsea in the hunt for the Champions League. "We have 39 points which is fabulous. We want to achieve something this season," said Wilder.

"We won't take our foot off the gas. Our performance was one of belief and drive. There was a real drive about the players after going a goal down." At the other end of the table, defeat leaves Bournemouth still just two points above the bottom three, having played a game more than most of their rivals to avoid relegation.

"When we get the lead in these types of games we need to defend better," said Bournemouth boss Eddie Howe after seeing his side take a deserved first half lead through Callum Wilson. "It takes all the polish off. There were a lot of good bits but not enough to get a result today and we needed it away from home."

The only game in the Premier League yesterday went ahead after a pitch inspection as the effects of storm Ciara, which saw Manchester City's clash with West Ham postponed, were not enough to convince

referee Jon Moss to abandon the match.

Both sides now have two weeks off due to the winter break introduced to the Premier League for the first time this season, but Wilder would prefer to keep building on his side's momentum. "I'm a bit controversial in that I'd want to carry on," added Wilder. "I'd like it if we had a game next week, but we'll come back refreshed for the next part of the season." Early on it was the hosts who were blown off course as the Cherries looked to build on back-to-back wins that had hauled them out of the bottom three. Wilson struck his second goal in three games with an emphatic finish on the rebound after Harry Wilson's initial effort was blocked. United responded just in time to go in level at the break when captain Billy Sharp was quickest to react as the ball flashed across the Bournemouth goal after the visitors failed to clear a corner.

A day after Jordan Pickford's blunder nearly cost Everton all three points Dean Henderson did no harm to his chances in his challenge to be England's number one at Euro 2020. Henderson produced a brilliant save from Ryan Fraser to prevent Bournemouth retaking the lead 20 minutes from time. That save proved crucial when six minutes from time Lys Mousset's cross was controlled and finished by substitute John Lundstram on a trademark run into the box to keep United's dreams of European football next season very much alive. — AFP