



**6** Iran rejects idea of 'Trump deal'; Rouhani urges 'unity'



**8** Putin picks tax chief for PM after gov't's shock resignation



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Supplement Inside

# Philippines slaps total ban on new workers bound to Kuwait

## Vacationing skilled workers can return, but not domestic helpers

By Ben Garcia and A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Based on the results of an autopsy conducted on the remains of Filipina maid Jeanelyn Villavende in Manila, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) together with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) decided to impose a total ban yesterday on the deployment of newly-hired workers to Kuwait, including domestic helpers and skilled and unskilled laborers.

This is due to the autopsy results indicating Villavende was not just heavily tortured in Kuwait, but also sexually abused, which is contrary to the brief autopsy report of the Kuwaiti health ministry, a POEA decision said. The autopsy also found Villavende's brain and heart were removed before sending her body to Manila.

In a press release in response to the Philippine ban decision, Kuwait's Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel said Kuwait should change its policies and allow recruitment of domestic helpers from countries such as Nepal, Ethiopia, India and Indonesia instead of only one or two countries.

Aqeel pointed out that the manpower authority is currently coordinating with relevant authorities to facilitate recruiting domestic helpers from various countries in order to avoid any shortages in the future. "There are around 750,000 domestic helpers in Kuwait; the total number of complaints they file is relatively small and are mostly resolved amicably," she stressed, noting that 2,805 complaints had been filed in 2019 and that only 704 of them were referred to court.

Philippine Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III confirmed that the POEA governing board signed a resolution for a total deployment ban to Kuwait. The ban will cover all newly-hired workers - from household workers to skilled professionals. However, returning skilled workers and professionals are exempted from the ban, but domestic helpers who are on vacation will not be allowed to return to their sponsors. Manila had implemented a partial ban on domestic helpers bound to Kuwait on Jan 3 as its immediate response to the killing of Villavende by her sponsor.

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### News in brief

#### Jabriya clinics segregated

**KUWAIT:** In a bid to facilitate healthcare services provided to Kuwaitis, Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah issued a ministerial directive assigning Mahmoud Hajji Haidar polyclinic in Jabriya for Kuwaiti patients only and allocating the Jabriya polyclinic in block 7 for non-Kuwaitis. This decision will be effective as of Jan 19. — Meshal Al-Enezi

#### Man hacked to death

**KUWAIT:** A 28-year-old Kuwaiti used a cleaver to kill his friend at a desert camp in Mina Abdullah. Security sources said the suspect then turned himself in at Mina Abdullah police station with the murder weapon in his hand and the victim's blood all over his clothes. The suspect was hysterical at the station and kept repeating that he would kill the victim over and over again if he came back to life. "The suspect was probably under the effect of drugs and further investigations are in progress to determine his motives," the sources said, adding that a police patrol immediately headed to the crime scene where the victim's body was found in a pool of blood. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

#### Municipal workers jailed, fined

**KUWAIT:** The criminal court yesterday sentenced a senior Kuwaiti municipal official and a Syrian to seven years in prison with labor and fined them KD 740 million. It also ordered them to repay KD 370 million on charges of embezzling public funds by forging licenses of private companies operating in three sites in Subbiya and Salmi. Case papers indicate the Municipality discovered these sites were illegally used by private companies to extract sand, in addition to setting up illegal warehouses in the north and south of Kuwait, resulting in huge gains. Investigations led to the Kuwaiti official and his Syrian assistant who had given fake licenses to the companies and were taking money from them. — A Saleh



KUWAIT: Qatar's air sport committee performs during the Kuwait Aviation Show yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Kuwait Aviation Show opens with flypasts

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The four-day Kuwait Aviation Show opened yesterday at Kuwait International Airport. During the opening ceremony, President of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah said the show represents an opportunity to showcase the latest in the world of aviation.

"This event received wide participation this year by specialized international companies, making the venue an attractive platform for everything related to the aviation industry and airport require-

ments. This show, in its second edition, coincides with the completion of major state projects to develop the air transport sector and development of Kuwait airport, amid significant investments that aim to raise the efficiency of operations and improve aviation services," Sheikh Salman said.

The latest military and commercial aircraft, private jets for businesspeople, air ambulances and helicopters are displayed, in addition to equipment related to aviation, engines, navigation and the requirements of civil and military air-

ports. "On the sidelines of the exhibition, several workshops will be held on the latest technologies in the world of aviation," he added.

Sheikh Salman praised the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for this important event, which confirms the interest of the Amir in the development of the civil and military aviation industry in the region in particular and in the world in general. He appreciated governmental efforts over the past 10 months in preparing for this event,

including the ministries of interior, defense, finance, information and health, in addition to the Municipality, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate, General Administration of Customs, Kuwaiti Direct Investment Promotion Authority and Kuwait Oil Company.

The launch of the aviation show witnessed a performance by military and civil aircraft that was admired by the audience. Around 37 countries, 200 companies and more than 70 commercial and military aircraft are participating

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## HRW details 'rights abuses' in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Human Rights Watch charged Kuwaiti authorities of using legislations to restrict free speech and stifle political dissent, while also failing to provide adequate protection to migrant workers despite recent reforms. On the other hand, the report praised Kuwait for allowing Human Rights Watch access to the country "unlike many of its Gulf neighbors", noting that Kuwait engaged in dialogue with the organization on a range of human rights issues during a 2019 visit by the rights watchdog.

In its World Report 2020 published recently and detailing events recorded in 2019, Human Rights Watch shed light on the plight of stateless people or 'bedoons', saying that they "continue to remain in legal limbo while the government addresses this longstanding issue largely through abuse and coercion."

"In July, Kuwait's State Security agency arrested at least 14 activists from the bedoons community after they organized a peaceful sit-in at Al-Hurriya Square in Jahra in response to the death of Ayed Hamad Moudath," the report points out. "Moudath, 20, died by suicide on July 7 after the government reportedly denied him civil documentation. More than a dozen jailed activists began a hunger strike on August 22 to protest violations against themselves and the bedoons community."

One of last year's key events highlighted in the report happened on Oct 23 when "authorities arrested Fahd Al-Khannah, a former lawmaker, after he returned to Kuwait from Turkey".

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## UAE tourist visa scam traps Indians in abusive jobs

**MUMBAI:** Exploitative employers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are increasingly using tourist visas to hire Indians in a scam that leaves migrants open to labor abuse, police and activists said. Indian migrants on visit visas - quicker and cheaper to obtain than work permits - are wary of reporting exploitation on the job for fear of revealing their illegal status, they say. The scale of the

## Lebanon banks vandalized in 'savage' protests

**BEIRUT:** Public anger against cash-strapped banks has boiled over in crisis-hit Lebanon, where demonstrators armed with metal rods, fire extinguishers and rocks attacked branches overnight in protest at controls that have trapped the savings of ordinary depositors. The Red Cross said yesterday that at least 37 people were injured in a night-time showdown as protesters smashed bank windows and scuffled with security forces in the capital's commercial district of Hamra.

Police said 59 people were detained, in one of the largest waves of arrests since Lebanon's

Continued on Page 24

problem is unknown as visit visas do not appear in Indian or UAE migration or employment records.

But workers, police and lawyers said the practice is on the rise in a nation with more than 3 million Indian migrants, often hired at short notice to work on major construction projects. "Employers and recruiters have colluded and invented this visit visa route," said Bheem Reddy, president of the Emigrants Welfare Forum in the southern Indian state of Telangana. Reddy's charity estimates at least 10,000 migrants from the state - just one of 29 in India - have found work in the UAE having entered the country on visit visas since July last year.

A demand for short-term workers ahead of big events such as Dubai's Expo 2020 world fair in October

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BEIRUT: Lebanese anti-government protesters try to break the window of a bank in the capital late Tuesday. — AFP

# Leonardo expertise to put Kuwait air force's Typhoons at frontline of fighter technology

Kuwait to receive four Eurofighter Typhoons in 2020; the remaining 24 by 2023



KUWAIT: Participants visit the Kuwait aviation show in Kuwait yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



A man snaps a photo of a military helicopter displayed at the Kuwait aviation show.

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Aviation Show 2020 opened yesterday near the Kuwait International Airport, featuring a long list of participants including 200 companies and more than 70 commercial and military aircraft from 37 countries.

During the event, Kuwait Times interviewed Alessandro Profumo, Leonardo Chief Executive Officer:

**Q. Your company is attending Kuwait Aviation Show. What do you expect from the event?**

A. After attending the Gulf Defense and Aviation exhibition last month, we are glad to participate in this aviation show, which will give us the opportunity to demonstrate to Kuwait some of our best in-class technologies, in addition to meeting our local customers and partners. Many of Leonardo's technologies in the aviation sector are successfully operated in the country by a wide range of customers. For example, we provide solutions to Kuwait airport, including data management systems, primary radar and the new baggage handling system for Terminal 4. Also, our AW169 helicopters guarantee onshore and offshore transport for Kuwait Oil Company.

During the airshow, we will have the opportunity to illustrate Leonardo's capabilities in the training of military pilots, with over 60 years of heritage in manufacturing trainer aircraft - recently boosted by the latest simulation and virtual reality technologies. Both our new M-345 basic-advanced jet trainer and the well-known M-346 advanced jet trainer - which is also available and contracted in the fighter attack configuration - see interesting opportunities in the region, where a significant fleet of latest generation fighters are taking shape.

The fruitful partnership with the Italian air force is a strategic asset for Leonardo and a matter of pride for us. For this I wish to thank the Italian air force, which is partnering our presence at the Kuwait Aviation Show with two of its flagship aircraft - the Eurofighter Typhoon, which will be engaged in a breathtaking flight display performed by the Reparto Sperimentale Volo (Italian Air Force Flight Test Wing), and the C-27J, the most advanced multi-mission airlifter, manufactured by Leonardo.

**Q. You mentioned the Eurofighter Typhoon air-**

**craft. Can you give us some information about the Kuwaiti program?**

A. Over the past three years, we have worked both with our Kuwaiti counterparts and with our Eurofighter partners, and we are proud of the level of trust and collaboration we have reached. The first Instrumented Series Production Aircraft (ISPA 6) equipped with the Kuwait air force configuration successfully completed its first flight three weeks ago and deliveries will start later this year. The Captor E-Scan radar and several new additions to the weapon system will put the Kuwait air force's Typhoons at the frontline of fighter aircraft technology. It is worth remembering that a lot of effort is also going into shaping and delivering the best tools and solutions for logistics, operational support and the training of flight crews and ground personnel: all fundamental elements in delivering the best capabilities to Kuwait.

**Q. How many planes will be delivered in 2020? And how many in 2023?**

A. At present, the final assembly of the first six aircraft is underway at Leonardo's plant in Torino-Caselle, and in 2020 four aircraft will be ready for acceptance. Then, we are planning to complete the deliveries of the remaining 24 by 2023. The schedule is very tight, but we are working hard and we are ready to meet it.

**Q. How many planes have been delivered so far?**

A. Nine customers - including of course Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar - have ordered 623 aircraft, of which more than 550 have already been delivered worldwide. Eurofighter Typhoon is the most advanced swing-role combat aircraft currently available on the market. Therefore, it can be deployed in a full spectrum of air operations including air policing and peace support.

**Q. Can you tell us about the training? How is it going so far?**

A. Training activity is fully rolling for all different types of roles. The new cadets are training at the Italian Air Force International Training Academy at the Lecce Galatina Air Base, flying on Leonardo's integrated training system which is based on the M-346 jet. Twenty-four cadets

have taken their wings so far under the leadership of the Italian air force, which is in charge of the training. The operational training for Typhoon pilots is also underway at the Grosseto Air Force Base. Finally, 60 technicians are currently training with more courses rolling on into 2020, when Leonardo will start its own training activities for pilots and technicians at Ali Al Salem Air Force Base right after the delivery of the first aircraft.

**Q. What will your company do here in terms of the infrastructure at Ali Al-Salem Air Base? And what type of support services will be available?**

A. The Ali Al Salem Air Base will be the main operating base for Typhoons in the next decades. Construction work is almost completed in order to optimize the base for the Eurofighter requirements. The layout has been designed thanks to the customer experience provided by the Italian air force. The new facilities will be handed over to the Kuwait air force later this year. Leonardo will also provide service support to the Kuwait air force covering all aspects related to Typhoon operations and maintenance, in close partnership with Kuwait air force personnel, and they will get the chance to enhance their technical knowledge and professional experience. At Leonardo, we are also looking at involving Kuwaiti personnel in other educational paths, in the frame of a partnership which goes beyond the Typhoon program.

**Q. How will this benefit the Kuwaiti air force? Or what capabilities will this provide to the Kuwaiti air force that it didn't have before?**

A. I believe that the best testimonials for the capabilities of the aircraft are the air force pilots displaying the Typhoon during this Kuwait Aviation Show. By talking to them, you will get a flavor of their operational experience, and understand how this aircraft has incredibly enhanced their air operations. What I can say, as the CEO of the company in charge of the production and delivery of this aircraft, is that with the Captor-E next generation AESA radar, which enables long-range detection and "first look, first shoot" capability, the Kuwait air force will be among the most advanced and capable air force in the world.



A visitor looks at aircraft on display during the Kuwait aviation show.



A Saudi falcon Hawk Mk 65 aircraft and Kuwaiti air force F-18 aircraft accompanied by a Kuwait Airways B777 perform during the Kuwait aviation show.



Saudi falcon Hawk Mk 65 aircraft perform during the Kuwait aviation show.



A Kuwaiti man watches as Saudi falcon Hawk Mk 65 aircraft perform during the Kuwait aviation show.



Saudi falcon Hawk Mk 65 aircraft perform during the Kuwait aviation show.



Members of Qatar's air sport committee perform during the Kuwait aviation show.



People take pictures of Saudi falcon Hawk Mk 65 aircraft performing during the Kuwait aviation show.



Members of Qatar's air sport committee perform during the Kuwait aviation show.

# Emirates to welcome thousands of visitors to its iconic A380 today

## Largest operator of the A380 with 115 in its fleet flying to 53 destinations

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The Emirates A380 is ready to draw in thousands of visitors today at this year's edition of the Kuwait Aviation Show 2020. The A380 on display today carries the distinctive Expo 2020 blue 'mobility' decal and will be open to both trade visitors and the general public, allowing them a glimpse into the largest commercial passenger aircraft in the world. The Emirates A380 on display features 14 luxurious First Class Suites, 76 flatbed seats in Business Class, and 429 generously pitched seats in Economy Class. The aircraft will also feature the newly refreshed OnBoard Lounge.

Emirates is the largest operator of the A380 with 115 in its fleet flying to 53 destinations. Over 143 million passengers have flown the Emirates A380 since it commenced operations in 2008. The A380 fleet has also flown over 163,000 round trips and has travelled over 2.2 billion km. Emirates has been operating to Kuwait since 1989 and today serves the destination with 6 daily flights.

During a media tour of the Emirates A380 at the aviation show yesterday, Adil Al-Ghaith, Senior Vice President, Gulf, Middle East and Central Asia, said this aircraft is not new for them. Emirates received the first aircraft in 2008. "We are the largest operator of this air-

craft. It's one of the largest aircrafts in the world and consists of two decks - the lower floor is the economy class, while the upper floor is the business and first class," he explained.

This A380 is a special aircraft for the Emirates. "There are 14 A380 aircraft orders remaining, which we are expected to receive during the coming years. We have new orders for the 777X and A350, which we announced previously, and others. We have a long plan for 15 years and we exactly know the expected size of the Emirates fleet and the expected models," stressed Ghaith. The company's strategy is based on market demands. "We know Airbus decided to stop manufacturing the A380, so different airlines will decide what will be the alternative model. The top management of the Emirates decided that there are some suitable models that can be part of our fleet in the future,"

he added.

"We always have new additions to our schedule. We are currently satisfied with the presently operating flights to the GCC and Middle East. During travel seasons, we add more flights to offer seats according to the high demand. This aircraft flies to airports that are equipped for it. This aircraft is highly demanded by passengers in all the destinations to which it flies. Just



**KUWAIT:** Emirates staff pose for a group picture in front of the Emirates A380 at the Kuwait aviation show in Kuwait yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

recently, we announced launching new destinations - Barcelona, Mexico City, and new cities that will be announced later," he pointed out.

"Competition is healthy, and it's one of the reasons

behind our success. Dubai airport recently announced that 89 million passengers used the airport last year, and the biggest percentage of this figure goes to Emirates," concluded Ghaith.



During Kuwait Aviation Show 2020



Adil Al-Ghaith



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## Qatar Airways CEO backs Boeing's new head

**KUWAIT:** The chief executive of Qatar Airways and a past critic of Boeing managers welcomed yesterday this month's change at the helm of the US planemaker as it deals with the grounding of its 737 MAX model following two fatal crashes. Boeing appointed David Calhoun, a former General Electric executive who has been on the Boeing board since 2009, as chief executive and president. He replaced Dennis Muilenburg.

Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al-Baker, who heads one of the Middle East's largest carriers, is a major Boeing customer but has been critical of Boeing and its rival Airbus in the past. He once said Boeing was run by "bean counters and lawyers."

"I have huge confidence in the new management of Boeing and I have huge confidence in Mr Calhoun leading the company," Baker said. "I am very glad Mr Muilenburg has gone." Boeing dropped Muilenburg as it became increasingly clear he was making little headway resolving a crisis over the 737 MAX that has cost the planemaker \$9 billion, hurt suppliers and airlines, threatening to cut the pace of US economic growth.

The 737 MAX has been grounded since March after two crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia that together killed 346 people. Boeing's development of the 777-9, a new version of its popular widebody jet, has been delayed as its attention is focused on recovering from the MAX crisis.



**KUWAIT:** Participants visit the Kuwait aviation show in Kuwait yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Baker said his airline, a launched customer for the 777-9, expected to receive its first delivery of the model by mid-2021, which he said was later than originally planned. "It is important to note that the delay is not because of any other reason other than the MAX," Baker said. "The whole concentration of Boeing is now getting the MAX into the air."

Baker said state-owned Qatar Airways would report a loss in the financial year ending on March 31, but expected to break even in the 2020/2021 financial year. The carrier hoped to be profitable in the financial year 2021/2022, he told reporters.

Baker said the Qatari carrier would continue to fly to Iran and had not lost any bookings during a spike in Middle East tensions, when a US drone strike killed a top Iranian general and Iran launched missiles at US targets in Iraq in response.

A number of flights to Tehran were cancelled last week after the crash of a Ukrainian airliner in Iran, which Tehran later admitted it had shot down by mistake in the tense hours after its retaliatory missile attacks. Many airlines use Iranian airspace, including Qatar Airways which is banned from flying over some Gulf Arab states because of a diplomatic row. —Reuters

## ALAFCO joins Kuwait Aviation Show 2020

**KUWAIT:** ALAFCO Aviation Lease and Finance Company (ALAFCO), a global aircraft leasing company headquartered in Kuwait, joined the Kuwait aviation show 2020 as a platinum sponsor. The event witnessed the presence of leading aviation professionals from across the world, for what was the second Kuwait Aviation Show held in Kuwait, under the Patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Kuwait aviation show 2020, which opened yesterday and runs through Saturday, is attended by leading industry experts, investors, regulators, and government officials to share their expertise in the aviation sector, in addition to senior representatives from

ALAFCO, participated in the exclusive, invite-only event.

Adel Al-Banwan CEO of ALAFCO, said, "Despite strong external headwinds which have impacted the pace of economic growth, the industry managed to achieve positive growth. Based on research by IATA, the overall industry revenue is forecasted to reach \$872 billion (+4.0 percent on \$838 billion in 2019)."

He added, "In the face of a volatile global economy and an increase in industry operating expenses, ALAFCO approved a cash dividend distribution of 8 fils per share, totaling KD 7.62 million, for the fiscal year ended 30 September, reporting a net profit of KD 17.7 million as at the end of the financial year. Global share of passenger aircraft operated in the Middle East has more than doubled in the last decade. Projected demand for aircraft maintenance, repair, and overhaul in the Middle East is projected to more than double from \$4.1 billion in 2016 to circa \$9.35 billion by 2025."

Banwan said, "Our ongoing sponsorship

and strategic partnership with the

Kuwait aviation show is a testament to our commitment to support and grow the aircraft leasing market in Kuwait, throughout the GCC region and internationally. As one of the leading aircraft leasing companies, we strongly believe the necessity to partner and participate in such events and exhibitions, that are in line with our strategic objective to develop the overall ecosystem for aircraft leasing and finance."

"We believe that Kuwait Aviation Show 2020 is a platform where ALAFCO can share its expertise with the list of guests and attendees, and potential partners and clients who are seeking aircraft leasing opportunity," he concluded.



Adel Al-Banwan

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Bader Al-Kharafi during the final ceremony of Al-Roudhan Football Tournament.



Bader Al-Kharafi with Zain's team during the opening of Nuqat's Regional Conference.

# Zain's sustainability highlights in 2019: Investing in youth and innovation

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, concluded the year 2019 with a plethora of sustainability programs that centered around enriching innovation, supporting education, and pushing the entrepreneurship wheel within the local market.

Throughout last year, Zain's sustainability initiatives sought to offer a valid contribution by shedding light on the community's most relevant challenges. The company's efforts sprang from its comprehensive Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy, which Zain considers an essential part of the continuous success of its operations. Zain is extremely keen on making its resources available to serve the community, especially being a leading national company in the private sector.

The year 2019 witnessed many efforts that reflected the core of Zain's Innovation and Entrepreneurship strategy, where the company launched and supported many specialized world-class programs that had positive impacts within the local entrepreneurial community. Such programs aimed at providing young entrepreneurs with the best resources and tools, as well as developing the country's youth in ways which will contribute to making them ready for the nation's future.

Many of Zain's sustainability programs were hosted by the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC), a hub for entrepreneurs and digital investments launched as a platform for the innovations of students, youth, and entrepreneurs. ZINC, located at Zain's main headquarters in Shuwaikh, encouraged young minds to think and act creatively outside of the norm in an open, supportive environment for entrepreneurs to generate new ideas and develop them into viable opportunities. In the following report, Zain showcases the most prominent initiatives and programs it supported during 2019 to achieve the goals of its Corporate Sustainability, Social Responsibility, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship strategies:

## Sharing Kuwait's national celebrations

Zain kicked-off the year 2019 by announcing the changing of the name of its network in Kuwait to SABAH ALKUWAIT for the period of celebrations marking the 13th anniversary of the ascendency of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the ruler of Kuwait. The move reflected Zain's enthusiasm in sharing the joys of this occasion with the people of Kuwait.

Zain customers found the network name updated to SABAH ALKUWAIT on their devices during the celebratory period, as the company commemorated the anniversary of a journey full of giving and benevolence. His Highness the Amir has often called for Kuwait's progress, and the adoption of a kind, loving, and the nurturing of a brotherly spirit based on equal rights for all, and company was keen on sharing such a cherished occasion with the people of Kuwait.

As it does every year, Zain launched a National production, entitled 'Al-Zain Yihlak Helo', to mark the company's celebration of Kuwait's National and Liberation days. The production's lyrics, which reflected values of national pride, were written by the great Kuwaiti poet Bader Bourisli. The TVC received overwhelming feedback from across the Kuwaiti community, and featured three different eras starting from Kuwait's rich history to its bright future. The televised commercial reached over one million views on Zain's official YouTube channel during the first few days of its launch in February.

The production's idea centered around the importance of the human element in the progress of countries in light of the huge technological advancements witnessed by the world at the present time. Zain's TVC highlighted the significant role played by Kuwait's national talents, especially that this concept coincides with the goals of the Kuwait National Development Plan (New Kuwait 2035) that stems from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's conceptualized vision of a new Kuwait by 2035, which will contribute to the further progress of the nation.



Eaman Al-Roudhan with Zain's team during the Engineering Design Exhibition.



Eaman Al-Roudhan launching 'A Green Dream' initiative.

During Kuwait's National celebrations, Zain launched its huge marketing campaign "All Zainers are Winners" to celebrate with its customers and the people of Kuwait. The campaign, which targeted all Zain's customers of prepaid and postpaid lines, witnessed crowning five lucky winners of five Range Rover Evoque 2019 mega prizes, many other valuable gifts, and three mega events held in 360 Mall, Avenues Mall, and Marina Mall.

## Enriching innovation and supporting education

During 2019, Zain was keen on enriching its efforts towards supporting innovation, creativity, and education by strengthening its relations with entities and organizations that aim at developing these areas, ultimately contributing to pushing the national economy wheel. The company hosted the orientation session for the participants of LOYAC's Thailand Program at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh. The program was organized by LOYAC, a non-profit organization that aims at developing the youth's talents and skills, and came in exclusive sponsorship by Zain.

Zain also announced its Strategic Partnership of TypeCal Symposium 2019 that aimed at developing the youth's talents and skills in typography, design, and calligraphy. The event was held at Yarmouk Cultural Centre - Dar Al Athar Al Islamiyyah. Zain also hosted a special talk on science and technology innovation featuring The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in collaboration with the Embassy of the United States of America in the State of Kuwait. The talk was held at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh, and featured Zainab "Nagin" Cox, a senior engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL).

Additionally, Zain also awarded the winning teams of the "Most Innovative Product" category for university and high school students at the INJAZ Company Program Competition as part of its strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait. Zain's participation in the competition came in line with the company's strategic partnership as an Innovation Partner with INJAZ.

As part of its keenness on developing digital innovation within the youth, Zain announced its Strategic Partnership of the CODED Fresh Grad Boot Camp, an intensive educational program that aimed at training fresh university graduates on essential programming skills to make them job ready as programmers. Zain also strategical-



Waleed Al-Khashti with Zain Great Idea entrepreneurs in San Francisco.

ly partnered with the CODED Hackathon, a 24-hour coding challenge that aimed at boosting participants' coding skills in a unique academic and social setting.

Further supporting education and youth, Zain participated in awarding the top three winners of the KON Social Entrepreneurship Program during the closing ceremony held at the American University in Kuwait (AUK). The program, brought to Kuwait in collaboration with Babson College in Boston, came as part of Zain's Strategic Partnership with LOYAC, which continued last year for over 15 consecutive years.

Zain's most notable contributions to supporting Kuwaiti education outside of the country was highlighted in the company's Official and Main sponsorship of the 55th annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United Kingdom (NUKS UK), held in Park Plaza Westminster Bridge London. The event attracted distinguished presence from students and national figures alike in the British capital London. Zain was also the Platinum sponsor of the 36th annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United States of America (NUKS USA), which was held in San Diego, USA, and witnessed the biggest ever gathering of Kuwaiti students out of the country.

## 'Zain Al-Shuhoor' Ramadan Campaign

Zain's annual social campaign for the Holy Month of Ramadan, 'Zain Al-Shuhoor', closely focused on giving back to the community and embodied the spirit of giving with various social, charitable, and humanitarian initiatives.

Zain's Ramadan campaign kicked-off before the beginning of the Holy Month, where it delivered 'Ramadan Machla' (supplies) to a number of its strategic partners of

non-profit organizations, who in turn distributed them to underprivileged families in Kuwait. Zain also launched an all-new update to its Quran App, which the company gifts to its customers during Ramadan of every year. The app offered the best Quran reading experience on iOS and Android smart devices, and last year supported Apple Watch, featuring a user-friendly interface and many great features.

As it does every year, Zain launched the iftar Halls initiative, which is a main pillar of the company's Ramadan campaign. Through this initiative, Zain provided fasting individuals with daily iftar meals under the supervision of its volunteering team. The banquets were spread in two main halls in Jleeb and Jahra as part of a strategy to cover the most populated areas of Kuwait in order to assure the maximum number of individuals' iftar needs were covered. Last year, Zain offered nearly 35,000 daily iftar meals in total during the holy month.

In 2019, Zain also launched "Zain Al-Khair", an online donation portal that allowed Zain customers - both prepaid and postpaid - to donate to any of the listed charitable organizations. Customers were simply able to select the preferred organization, pick one of the available projects to donate to, then specify the donation amount. The donated amount was then automatically added to the customer's monthly phone bill or prepaid balance with ease.

Last Ramadan, Zain also launched the third edition of its charitable initiative "Ya Baghi Al-Khair Aqbel" in collaboration with Direct Aid. As part of the initiative, Zain donated 500 Fils (half a KD) each time a customer paid their bill anytime during the Holy Month of Ramadan through one of Zain's electronic or direct channels. The collected donations were used to support Direct Aid's Medical Sciences College

project at Kenya, where 6 classrooms will be built for the Environmental Health section in the college. Zain also collaborated with Direct Aid to support the "2000 Projects" campaign, which was held throughout an entire day and succeeded in collecting over 3 million Kuwaiti Dinars in less than 12 hours.

Zain was the Strategic Partner of the 40th edition of Al-Roudhan Ramadan Football Tournament for the fourth consecutive year, which came under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. On Ramadan of every year, the Kuwaiti audiences, especially young ones, eagerly look forward with great passion to Al-Roudhan Tournament, given the fact that it witnesses high levels of professionalism and excitement through both the competing local teams as well as the international football stars hosted.

Every Ramadan, Zain is keen to reach out to the many segments of the community, including orphaned children, the elderly, and people with special needs, by visiting the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's Care Centers to share the joyful blessings of the Holy Month with them. Zain believes in the importance of embracing the beautiful values of the Islamic religion as well as the noble traditions of the Kuwaiti heritage all year round and especially in the Holy Month of Ramadan. Zain also shared the joys of the Holy Month with children and patients in a number of the biggest hospitals in Kuwait. The company's team always visits the hospitals during this blessed time of year to distribute gifts and girgians to children and their families and celebrate the occasion in a family atmosphere full of joy and happiness.

Zain also shared the joys of girgian with special needs children in collaboration with Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center, where the company's volunteers visited the children and their families to distribute girgians and gifts while also organizing many other fun activities.

## ZGI 5 and supporting entrepreneurship

In 2019, Zain launched the fifth edition of its Zain Great Idea (ZGI) tech startup accelerator program, through which the company offered Kuwaiti's entrepreneurial community the chance to take their startups to entire new levels.

The first phase of the program, the ZGI bootcamp, lasted for 4 weeks at the company's main headquarters, where the participants learned about the tech startup culture and workings from leading mentors from Stanford University, IE Business school, entrepreneurs and regional and international venture capital firms. During the second phase, nearly 100 ambitious entrepreneurs pitched their projects and ideas to the judging panel, who in return selected 10 finalists that took part in the third phase; the international accelerator program in collaboration with Brilliant Lab and Mind the Bridge.

During the third phase of ZGI, Zain's entrepreneurs gained invaluable experiences to develop and accelerate their tech startups by visiting the headquarters of the world's biggest technology leaders. The trips featured visits to the main headquarters of Google, Microsoft, Pinterest, and venture capital firm 500 Startups in Silicon Valley. ZGI 5's finalists also took part in a seminar presented by Tesla cofounder Marc Tarpenning, which took place at Stanford University, the world's first-ranked university in entrepreneurship.



One of Zain's iftar halls during Ramadan.

Local

# MPs blast budget, warn Prime Minister against charges

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Lawmakers yesterday blasted the government over the new budget for 2020/2021 announced on Tuesday and threatened to grill the prime minister if the government imposes any charges on citizens.

MPs Abdulkarim Al-Kandari and Thamer Al-Suwait vowed that if the government introduces any measures that could create any financial burden on citizens "it would be faced immediately with grilling the prime minister."

Finance Minister Mariam Al-Aqeel said on Tuesday that the government plans to push the national assembly to approve legislation to impose selective taxes as required by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). She also said the government will press for the approval of the public debt law to allow the government to borrow to meet rising budget deficit.

Kandari warned that any decision taken by the government leading to imposing any financial fees on citizens as a result of the legacy left by previous governments will be confronted with a grilling to the prime minister. He

said that the dismal financial situation of the budget which is projecting a deficit exceeding KD 9 billion is the result of mismanagement by the previous governments, adding that the people will not bear the results of your mistakes.

Suwait said that the budget deficit exposes the government and its humble capabilities, adding that all hopes for reforms have been dashed. He insisted that this shows that the government is the root cause of all problems. MP Khaled Al-Otaibi said the budget deficit is the outcome of mismanagement, adding that citizens will not bear the result of the government's mismanagement and failures. He warned against imposing any charges on the people.

MP Abdullah Al-Kandari warned that the "pocket of citizens" is a red line and should not be crossed, saying that the bad situation is the result of government's mismanagement. He urged the prime minister to stop what he called "fake" spending in the government departments and also to block suspicious contracts.

Head of the assembly's budgets



**KUWAIT:** The National Assembly's building.

committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad criticized the government for approving the budget without discussing it with the committee as it did in the previous years. He said that the committee had asked the government to include the armament budget, which has been done

separately, into the state budget so as to reflect the actual public spending. Abdulsamad said that the budget announced does not reflect the actual picture of spending and that the committee will discuss this issue with the government soon.

## Kuwait, Britain reaffirm need of de-escalation

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait and Britain yesterday reaffirmed need of de-escalation in the region and to exercise restraint in order to boost regional security and stability. This came in a phone call between Kuwait Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah discussed with British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, the foreign ministry said in a statement. The two senior officials also discussed the developments in the region and called for dealing with them "in a spirit of wisdom and restraint," added the statement.

Meanwhile, Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad met yesterday the Ambassador of the Republic of Malta to Kuwait, Patrick Cole, on the occasion on ending his work as the envoy to the country. During the meeting, Sheikh Ahmad praised efforts of the ambassador during his work in the country and his contributions to supporting and strengthening the close bilateral relations between the two friendly countries. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Foreign Minister's Office Affairs, Ambassador Saleh Salem Al-Loughani. — KUNA

## Contractors must remove construction debris

By Meshal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality announced launching a new safety campaign at the Capital municipality, said Capital municipal safety manager Tareq Al-Adwani, noting that a special plan has been set to inspect licenses and make sure construction contractors remove construction debris. Adwani added that the campaign resulted in mandating contractors to remove 40 truckloads of debris from Sabah medical zone sites.

Separately, Kuwait Municipality assistant director for services and the head of

the general cleaning committee Khalaf Masoud Al-Mutairi stressed that owners of hotels, residential, commercial and investment complexes, co-ops, department stores, tire repair and lubrication stores, factories, food stores and commercial warehouses should use commercial garbage containers for waste resulting from their activities and regularly move them to sites set by the municipality. Mutairi added that several complaints had been filed concerning these facilities' wastes, whose removal is not included in cleaning contracts.

## Court upholds bedoon activist's jail sentence

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The court of appeal upheld a sentence to imprison bedoon activist Mohammad Khodhair Al-Enezi for three years with labor over state security charges of taking part in an illegal rally and instigating the murder of employees of the central apparatus for illegal residents' affairs.

### Fatal crash

An American man was killed and an Egyptian national was injured when their vehicles collided along Kabd highway, said security sources, noting that both drivers were rushed to hospital where the American died on arrival. The Egyptian's injury is relatively mild and he is receiving treatment.

### Smuggling foiled

Nuwaiseb custom inspectors foiled an attempt to smuggle 1,400 cigarette cartons out of Kuwait using two vehicles, one owned by a citizen and another by a Saudi. Inspectors found the cigarettes hidden everywhere in both vehicles and retrieving and counting them took more than four hours. The cigarettes were confiscated and both vehicles were impounded.

### Employees' sit-in

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Ghadeer Aseeri stressed full understanding and appreciation of the role played by the employees of the public authority for the disabled's affairs. Speaking after a sit-in organized by a number of vocational rehabilitation employees in protest of suspending their shift allowance, Aseeri stressed that the authority will exert all needed efforts to pay the dues, and that it is keen on providing the best services for the disabled through full support to the employees proving those services.

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Russia govt in shock resignation after Putin calls for reforms

## Farming family faces bleak future after deadly bushfires



A handout picture provided by the Iranian Presidency yesterday shows President Hassan Rouhani signing a book carrying the names of the victims of the Ukraine Flight 752 downing, following a cabinet meeting in Tehran. Rouhani appealed for "unity" and flagged the need for radical changes to the way Iran is run, after a wave of angry protests over the accidental downing of a Ukrainian airliner.

# Iran rejects idea of a new 'Trump deal'

## Rouhani urges 'unity' after plane protests

**DUBAI:** Iranian President Hassan Rouhani dismissed yesterday a proposal for a new "Trump deal" aimed at resolving a nuclear row, saying it was a "strange" offer and criticizing US President Donald Trump for always breaking promises.

Rouhani appealed for "unity" and flagged the need for radical changes to the way Iran is run, after a wave of angry protests over the accidental downing of a Ukrainian airliner.

The Kiev-bound Boeing 737 was shot down in a catastrophic error shortly after takeoff from Tehran, killing all 176 people aboard.

One week on from the disaster, Rouhani called for "national unity" in remarks broadcast live on state television. "If there was a delay" by the armed forces to release information about what happened, "let them apologise," he said. Rouhani also sought a full explanation after it took Iran days to admit the airliner had been mistakenly shot down.

The blunder sparked four consecutive nights of protests in Tehran calling for those responsible to resign or be prosecuted, leading to at least 30 arrests.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who has praised Trump as a great dealmaker, called on Tuesday for the president to replace Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with major powers with his own new pact to ensure Tehran does not get an atomic weapon. Trump said he agreed with

Johnson that a "Trump deal" should replace the Iran nuclear deal. In a televised speech, Rouhani told Washington to return to the nuclear pact, which Washington abandoned in 2018, under which Tehran curbed its nuclear work in return for the lifting of international sanctions on Iran.

Since quitting the agreement, Washington has reimposed sanctions to throttle Iran's oil exports as part of a "maximum pressure" policy. The United States says its aim is force Tehran to agree a broader deal that puts stricter limits on its nuclear work, curbs its ballistic missile program and ends its regional proxy wars. Iran says it will not negotiate as long as sanctions remain in place.

Tehran has gradually taken steps to reduce its compliance with the deal, which prompted Britain, France and Germany to formally accuse it on Tuesday of violating the terms. "This Mr. Prime Minister in London, I don't know how he thinks. He says let's put aside the nuclear deal and put the Trump plan in action," Rouhani said.

"If you take the wrong step, it will be to your detriment. Pick the right path. The right path is to return to the nuclear deal." Iran denies any intent to acquire nuclear weapons and says its breaches of the deal would be reversed if Washington lifts sanctions. "All of our activities are under the

supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," said Rouhani.

### "Not dead"

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told Reuters that the deal was still alive: "No, it's not dead. It's not dead." Zarif said on the sidelines of a conference in New Delhi. But he told the conference Trump's withdrawal from the earlier deal made new negotiations with Washington pointless: "I had a US deal and the US broke it. If I have a Trump deal, how long will it last?"

In its biggest step away from the agreement yet, Iran announced on Jan. 5 it would abandon all limitations on enriching uranium set down in the pact. Britain, France and Germany reacted by activating a dispute mechanism in the deal on Tuesday, which eventually could lead to the reimposing of UN sanctions. Iran called this step a "strategic mistake".

France's foreign minister said yesterday that the Iran nuclear deal was in danger after repeated violations by Tehran, but added that a dispute mechanism triggered by France, Britain and Germany aimed to resolve the problems diplomatically. "Iran has been progressively emptying the accord of its substance. It is in danger and Iran must respect its commitments as we have done," Jean-Yves Le Drian told a parliamentary hearing after the three European

powers launched a process to formally rebuke Iran's violations of the 2015 accord on Tuesday.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Washington now expects the UN sanctions to "snap back into place" as a result of the European move. The European countries have said that is not their goal. Rouhani upbraided European powers for not standing up to Trump. Iran says the Europeans have reneged on promises to find ways to circumvent the US sanctions.

The flare-up in nuclear diplomacy comes as military confrontation between Washington and Tehran has also reached a new peak. The United States killed an Iranian general in a drone strike in Baghdad on Jan. 3. Tehran responded a week ago by launching missiles at US targets in Iraq. No Americans were hurt, but hours later Iran shot down a Ukrainian airliner in what its authorities have acknowledged as a tragic mistake, prompting anti-government protests at home.

Rouhani repeated Iran's longstanding position that peace can come to the Middle East only when the United States withdraws. "American soldiers today are not secure in the region ... We don't want there to be insecurity in the world. We want you to go from here, but not with war. We want you to leave the region intelligently and it's to your benefit," Rouhani said. —Agencies

## 1,000 Hondurans preparing new US-bound caravan

**SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras:** Close to 1,000 people have gathered in Honduras' second city forming a migrant caravan that will soon head for the United States, a human rights activist told AFP.

Thousands of Central American migrants have been braving the risk of extortion, kidnap and even murder as they flee poverty and gang violence in their homelands in a bid to reach the American dream, much to the annoyance of US President Donald Trump. "Right now we're close to 1,000 people but there are buses arriving from different parts of the country," Bartolo Fuentes, a journalist, human rights defender and former lawmaker told AFP on Tuesday night.

The government accused him of organizing the first such caravan in October 2018, a charge he denies.

Under a light drizzle, men women and children congregated in parks and the central metro station in the city of San Pedro Sula, around 180 kilometers (110 miles) north of the capital Tegucigalpa. Would be migrants, "mostly from rural areas," according to Fuentes, were alerted to the caravan through social media, which was then picked up by television channels. "Here there's no work for anyone. I was studying ... but for nothing because there are many graduates with the diploma under their arm but without finding work," Yoly Sabillon, 28, told AFP. Before joining the caravan she left her three children aged three, seven and 13 with her mother.

More than 2,000 Hondurans took part in the original caravan which headed north through Guatemala and then Mexico. At least three more caravans formed during the first few months of 2019, leading Trump to threaten punitive measures against Central American governments if they did not stem the tide. Trump sent 6,000 troops to the southern border with Mexico and warned of an "invasion" of "gang members" and "criminals." Around 30,000 Honduran migrants remain in Mexico waiting for a response to their US asylum requests. —AFP

## Displaced, scared: Yemenis still in limbo after five years of war

**KHAMIR, Yemen:** Widow Samirah Nasser and her eight children tried to return to their Yemeni village but were forced by relentless air strikes to return to the relative safety of a refugee camp.

Shivering through yet another camp winter, she is one of 3.6 million Yemenis - around 12 percent of the population - displaced during a nearly five-year war that has spawned what the United Nations says is the world's most urgent humanitarian crisis. "When we returned (to our village), planes were in the sky. They hit the market full of kids," Nasser said. "I banned the children from going to school, fearing the warplanes."

The air strikes have deterred Nasser over the past three years from attempting another return to her native region of Saada, heartland of the Iran-aligned Houthi movement that has been battling a Saudi-led military coalition since March 2015. "The war there does not stop. Our houses are destroyed, we don't have anywhere to stay, nothing," said

Houriya Muhammad, a 40-year-old mother-of-three also unable to return to Saada, where she used to sell pots. Both women now live in a refugee camp in Khamir, some 2.5 hours by road from the capital Sanaa. Life is very hard in the camps, where facilities are rudimentary.

"We are dying of the cold," said Muhammad. "My kids and I sleep wedged together with three or four blankets on us." Children, with runny noses, warm themselves near open fires. Water leaks through holes in the makeshift tents. The war in Yemen pits the Saudi-led coalition, backed by the West, against the Iran-aligned Houthis, who still control Sanaa and other major urban centres.

More than 100,000 people have been killed in the conflict, which has crippled basic services and infrastructure and ravaged the economy. More than 11 million people struggle to find enough food, and 240,000 people are living in famine-like conditions, according to The World Food Programme (WFP).

### Improvements

Nor are the refugee camps as safe as aid organizations would want. "Fighting is taking place less than 10 kilometers (six miles) from some of the main camps," said Sultana Begum of the Norwegian Refugee Council. People trying to reach safety can be hampered either by Yemen's mountainous terrain or a lack of money and identification papers, Begum said.

Yemenis continue to be displaced from fresh conflict areas, with almost 400,000 people driven from their homes in 2019. But it is not all bad news. Food security has improved over the past year and the WFP now feeds 12 million people a month.



ADEN: Members of Yemen's separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC) recite a prayer at the start of a meeting of the council in the southwestern coastal city of Aden, on Monday. —AFP

Diplomatic initiatives have led to a decrease in air strikes in recent months and a semblance of normality has returned to some larger cities. "We can sleep and our children can go to school without fear," said Abd Rahman Shouei, 28, a resident of the major port city of Hodeidah who ekes out a living by washing cars. "True, there is no work, roads are closed and we have no electricity, but the situation in Hodeidah is better now because there is no fighting or bombing." —Reuters

## International

# Turkey: 'Too early' to say Libya ceasefire collapsed

## Diplomatic chief warns EU sidelined in spiraling Libya conflict

**ANKARA:** Turkey said yesterday it was still confident the ceasefire in Libya would hold despite strongman Khalifa Haftar's refusal to sign a permanent truce. Haftar walked away from talks in Moscow aimed at finalizing a ceasefire orchestrated by Russia and Turkey, which came into force Sunday. The joint Turkish and Russian initiative is the latest international effort to broker end to fighting between Haftar's forces based in the east of the country and the UN-recognized government in Tripoli.

"It is still too early to say that the ceasefire has fallen apart," Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said during a briefing in Ankara. "The work related to this continues." With an international conference on the Libyan conflict due in Berlin on Sunday, Akar said Turkey supported "a ceasefire, peace, a political solution." Germany has invited both sides of the conflict to talks with 11 countries and several international organizations. Turkey supports the UN-recognized Government of National Accord based in Tripoli, which has been under attack by Haftar's forces since April. Turkey has deployed soldiers to Libya but Ankara insists they are providing training and advice, and will not be taking part in active combat.

Akar did not say how many Turkish soldiers were in Libya but said the numbers changed according to Tripoli's needs. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu later yesterday said Haftar "doesn't want peace" despite international efforts.

Speaking at a think tank event in Ankara, the minister told the audience: "He wants a military solution rather than a political process."

### Sidelined

The EU's diplomatic chief has admitted the bloc is struggling to influence the Libyan conflict and has left

Russia and Turkey free to step in and dominate the Mediterranean. Josep Borrell told the European Parliament the EU had hamstrung itself by its dogmatic attachment to the idea there could be "no military solution" to the Libyan conflict.

And he warned there was no guarantee of success for a German-led summit called for Sunday between the two main warring Libyan parties along with 11 countries and several international organizations. The EU is seeking to boost its influence on the geopolitical stage, but it is held back by internal divisions and a lack of tools other than diplomacy.

It has no military force under its command and agreeing and then imposing economic sanctions is a lengthy process. "We Europeans, since we don't want to participate in a military solution, we barricade ourselves in the belief there is no military solution," Borrell said late on Tuesday.

"In Syria it has been a military solution, brought by the Turks and the Russians, and this has changed the equilibrium on the eastern part of the Mediterranean."

### Sahel fears

Ankara has sent troops to support Libya's UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) led by Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj, while Moscow is backing rival strongman Khalifa Haftar. Borrell warned there could be a repeat of the Syria outcome in Libya. "This is something that should be of very much worry to all of us, because I'm sure nobody will be very happy if on the Libyan coast there is a ring of military bases from the Russian and Turkish navy in front of the Italian coast," he said.

Such an outcome would mean that Turkey and Russia would in effect control both the major routes used by irregular migrants into Europe-through the



TRIPOLI: A woman walks in Libya's capital Tripoli, controlled by the Government of National Accord (GNA). — AFP

eastern and central Mediterranean, he added.

Haftar and his allies were in Moscow on Monday for discussions with the GNA but he left without signing a permanent truce — Russia, however, claimed that he had agreed to maintain the current ceasefire. The Moscow meeting and Sunday's gathering in Berlin

raised hopes of an end to the latest fighting to wrack Libya since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising killed dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Borrell warned that Libya was becoming "a kind of cancer that is metastasizing to the Sahel" with arms and fighters from Libya spreading south. — AFP

## IS replaces Al-Qaeda as enemy no 1 in Sahel

**BAMAKO, Mali:** Brutal attacks that have killed nearly 300 people in less than two months have propelled the Islamic State to the status of the Sahel's most-feared jihadist group, eclipsing Al-Qaeda, experts say. The vast fragile region on the southern rim of the Sahara has been battling an escalating insurgency by violent Islamists, beginning in Mali in 2012 and then spreading to Niger and Burkina Faso.

Until recently, groups under the banner of Al-Qaeda were in the forefront of the bloodshed. But their position has now been overtaken by an Islamic State (IS) affiliate, providing the group with an image of resurgence in West Africa after its decline in Syria and Iraq. "The priority is the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)," French President Emmanuel Macron declared on Monday at a summit gathering France and its five Sahel allies—Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

The ISGS "has emerged as our main enemy, against whom we should focus our struggle," Burkina President Roch Marc Christian Kabore said on Facebook. "Everyone has probably underestimated the ISGS," said Mahamoudou Savadogo, a Burkina researcher at a Senegal-based think tank, CERADD. "There has been a major rise in (its) power."

### Rise of ISGS

The ISGS leapt to world prominence after an ambush near the village of Tongo Tongo in Niger in 2017 that claimed the lives of four US special forces and four Nigerien troops. Its leader is Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahraoui, whose nom de guerre derives from his birthplace in the Western Sahara.

His history of militancy dates back to fighting in the Polisario Front, which aims to end Moroccan control over the Western Sahara. He became a leader of the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), which then merged with a group led by one-eyed Algerian jihadist Mokhtar Belmokhtar, forming Al-Mourabitoun. He then broke with Belmokhtar to declare allegiance to IS, which the group recognized in 2016. Savadogo said that from then until 2018, the ISGS prepared the groundwork, recruiting followers and raising funds—and putting down roots in a region where the borders of Burkina, Mali and Niger meet. "In 2019, they were ready," he said. That time spent in training has led to the bloodiest attacks in the history of the insurgency in the Sahel, all of which have been carried out in a range of 200 kilometers (120 miles).

### Mounting toll

In November, two clashes in Mali, at Tabankort and Indelimane, claimed the lives of 92 soldiers. In December, 42 people — 35 of them civilian—were killed in Arbinda in Burkina, and 71 in Inates, Niger. And on January 16, 89 troops were killed in Chingodiar, Niger.

According to UN figures, jihadist attacks in the three countries last year left 4,000 dead.

Defense experts say that spectacular ISGS strikes use the same tactics. The target is typically a remote military base, which is attacked by dozens of jihadists arriving on swarms of motorbikes.

They cut off the camp's communications, pound the site with mortars, kill as many soldiers as possible and then disappear before the army can fully respond. "The latest attacks seem to show that the group has acquired skills in command, control and coordination that it didn't have before, with group leaders able to carry out major operations," a French military source said with concern. — AFP

## Turkey: Egyptian security forces raid news agency in Cairo

**CAIRO/ANKARA:** Turkey summoned a senior Egyptian diplomat yesterday to protest what it said was a raid by Egyptian security forces on the Cairo office of Turkey's state-run news agency, in which four people were detained. The Anadolu news agency said the four employees, including one Turkish national, had been taken to an undisclosed location after the raid.

Turkey's Foreign Ministry strongly condemned the move, which it described as "an act of violence" against Anadolu. It later said that it also summoned the Egyptian charge d'affaires over the matter.

"This act of violence against Anadolu not only shows the Egyptian leadership's hostile stance towards the freedom of the press, but also once again shows its grave conditions on democracy and transparency," the ministry said. It called on Egyptian authorities to immediately release the detained Anadolu personnel. Ankara's ties with Cairo have been poor since the Egyptian army ousted Muslim Brotherhood president Mohammed Morsi, an ally of Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, in 2013. The two countries have also been at odds over maritime jurisdiction and offshore resources in the eastern Mediterranean. A spokesman for Egypt's interior ministry was not immediately available for comment. — Reuters

## CONDOLENCES

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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

## International

# Russia govt in shock resignation after Putin calls for reforms

## President wants a nationwide vote on a package of constitutional reforms

**MOSCOW:** Russia's government resigned in a shock announcement yesterday after President Vladimir Putin proposed a shake-up of the constitution. The announcement by Putin's longtime ally Dmitry Medvedev came after the president used his annual state of the nation address to call for a nationwide vote on a package of constitutional reforms.

The resignation raises deep questions about the long-term shape of Russia's political system and the future of Putin, who is due to step down at the end of his fourth Kremlin term in 2024. A few hours after the Russian leader's address, Medvedev and Putin appeared alongside each other on national television to say the government was stepping down.

Medvedev said the constitutional proposals would make significant changes to the country's balance of power and so "the government in its current form has resigned".

"We should provide the president of our country with the possibility to take all the necessary measures" to carry out the changes, Medvedev said. "All further decisions will be taken by the president." Putin thanked Medvedev—who also served as Russian president for four years from 2008 — expressing "satisfaction with the results that have been achieved."

The changes Putin proposed yesterday would transfer more authority to parliament, including the power to choose the prime minister and senior cabinet members, instead of the president as under the current system. Other changes would see the role of regional governors enhanced and residency requirements tightened for presidential candidates.

"Today in our society there is a clear demand for change," Putin said in his address. "People want

development, they are striving to move forward in their careers, in their education, in becoming prosperous." The package of reforms would be put to a national vote, he said, without specifying when. "We will be able to build a strong prosperous Russia only on the basis of respect for public opinion," the 67-year-old leader said.

### 'Leader for life'

Speculation has swirled about changes to Russia's political system that would allow Putin to stay on after 2024. Some have suggested he could remain as a prime minister with increased powers or in a powerful behind-the-scenes role.

It was unclear how, if at all, the constitutional changes could affect Putin's future role. But leading Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny said he expected any referendum to be "fraudulent crap" and that Putin's goal remained to be "sole leader for life". Russia last conducted a referendum in 1993 when it adopted the constitution under Putin's predecessor Boris Yeltsin.

Putin has held a firm grip on the country since coming to power with Yeltsin's resignation in 1999, staying on as prime minister when Medvedev took the presidency.

Re-elected to a six-year term in 2018, Putin has seen his approval ratings fall to some of their lowest levels, though still far above those of most Western leaders.

Recent polls put Putin's rating at 68-70 percent, up a few points from a year ago but down from a high of more than 80 percent at the time of his last election. Hit by Western sanctions over the 2014 annexation of Crimea, Russia's economy has stagnated and most Russians have seen their disposable income fall.



**MOSCOW:** Russian President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev meet with members of the government in Moscow yesterday. —AFP

Frustration boiled over last summer, with thousands taking to the streets of Moscow to protest the exclusion of opposition candidates from local elections, leading to wide-scale arrests and long jail terms for a number of demonstrators.

The state of the nation address—delivered in the Manezh exhibition hall next to the Kremlin—is one of three big annual Putin events, along with a marathon press conference and live phone-in where he takes questions from the Russian public. —AFP

## Impeachment articles heading for the Senate

**WASHINGTON:** The House of Representatives is expected to transmit articles of impeachment against Donald Trump to the Senate, setting the stage for a trial next week that will decide whether the 45th US president is forced from office. After a weeks-long standoff over rules and witnesses, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced Tuesday that what will be only the third presidential impeachment trial was now ready to move forward.

Pelosi is expected to sign the articles of impeachment at around 5:00 pm (2200 GMT) before they are then ceremoniously transferred from the House and travel through the US capitol's main hallways before being delivered to the Secretary of the Senate.

That ceremony will follow an announcement by Pelosi on which Democratic lawmakers will lead the prosecution case against Trump in the Senate, expected to begin next Tuesday.

Trump was impeached in December by the Democrat-controlled House on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. But his conviction in the Senate is highly unlikely as the president's Republican Party has a 53-47 majority. A two-thirds majority to approve his guilt is needed if he is to be removed from office at the end of a trial expected to last two weeks. Although the trial itself is unlikely to start until next week, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts could be sworn in to preside over the process on either Thursday or Friday.

Trump has consistently painted the charges against him as part of a witch-hunt and again took to Twitter on Tuesday evening to decry his impeachment in the House as "the most lopsided & unfair basement hearing in the history of Congress!" "While we're creating jobs and killing terrorists, Democrats in Congress are wasting America's time with demented hoaxes and crazy witch hunts," he told supporters at a rally in Wisconsin. At times, he has called the whole process to be stopped in its tracks while on other occasions he has apparently relished the prospect of turning the tables against his tormentors in a chamber where his supporters are in the majority.

McConnell pushed back on Tuesday against any suggestions that he would try and prevent the trial from going ahead. "There's little or no sentiment for a motion to dismiss. We have an obligation to listen to the arguments," he added.

Pelosi meanwhile called for a fair trial and demanded the Senate subpoena witnesses and documents from the White House that will be crucial in the trial. "The American people deserve the truth, and the Constitution demands a trial ... The president and the senators will be held accountable," she added. Pelosi attacked suggestions by Trump and some of his supporters that the Senate, as soon as the trial opens, vote to dismiss the charges. That would only require a majority vote.

"A dismissal is a cover-up," she charged. Trump was impeached on December 18 when the House voted to formally charge him with abusing his power by illicitly seeking help from Ukraine for his reelection campaign. He is accused of holding up aid to Ukraine to pressure Kiev to investigate former vice president Joe Biden, the frontrunner in the race for the Democratic party's 2020 presidential nomination. Trump is also charged with obstruction for holding back witnesses and documents from the House impeachment investigation in defiance of Congressional subpoenas. —AFP

## US Dems lock horns over war, gender in Iowa

**DES MOINES, United States:** Leftist Bernie Sanders attacked frontrunner Joe Biden on foreign policy Tuesday but found himself fighting accusations of sexism in the final presidential debate before Democrats begin choosing who challenges incumbent Donald Trump in November's election.

With no candidate yet to carve out a clear lead less than three weeks to go before the first votes in the nominations battle, the stakes were high for the six presidential hopefuls on stage in Iowa.

The largely civilized showdown defied earlier expectations of fireworks, with tensions largely held in check during the two-hour debate. But a rift between Sanders and fellow Senator Elizabeth Warren appeared to widen afterwards when Warren declined to shake hands with her long-time friend and fellow progressive. The candidates tangled over everything from troop deployments and foreign policy to health care, international trade, climate change and a woman's chance of winning the White House. Sanders, 78, assailed former vice president Biden, 77, over his vote in support

of the 2003 Iraq war as the modern-day tensions in the Middle East dominated the opening exchanges. With Washington's conflict with Iran as the backdrop, non-interventionist Sanders drew a sharp contrast, saying that while he opposed an Iraq war that was "based on lies," former vice president Biden trumpeted the effort.

"I thought they were lying," Sanders said of the Bush administration's justifications for war in 2002. "I didn't believe them for a moment. Joe saw it differently." Biden said he had long acknowledged the war was "a mistake" but refrained from sparring with Sanders over Iraq. Instead, Biden appealed for unity in preventing Trump from winning a second term.

"The American character is on the ballot," Biden said. "Not what Donald Trump is spewing out—the hate, the xenophobia, the racism. That's not what we are as a nation."

Each candidate is desperate for a breakout moment that could give them the vital momentum heading into the Iowa caucuses on February 3 which begins the presidential primary season.

The four candidates in the top tier—Biden, Sanders, Warren and former South Bend, Indiana mayor Pete Buttigieg—are bunched together in polling. Senator Amy Klobuchar and billionaire activist Tom Steyer rounded out the debate participants in Iowa's capital

## Delta jet dumps fuel on California school playground

**LOS ANGELES:** A Delta airliner experiencing mechanical trouble on Tuesday dumped jet fuel onto a school playground in the Los Angeles area, leaving 20 students and several adults with minor injuries. Delta Flight 89 took off from Los Angeles en route to Shanghai and was forced to turn back due to engine trouble, a Delta spokesperson said. The plane landed safely around noon after dumping its fuel, which fell onto a wide area,

including Park Avenue Elementary School, located about 16 miles (25 kilometers) east of the airport. Fire officials said about 20 children and 11 adults complaining of skin irritation or minor respiratory problems at the elementary school were treated on the spot and did not require hospitalization. In a statement to AFP, a Delta spokesperson said the fuel was released to allow the plane to land safely. "Shortly after takeoff, Flight 89 from LAX to Shanghai experienced an engine issue requiring the aircraft to return quickly to LAX," Adrian Gee said in the statement.

"The aircraft landed safely after a release of fuel, which was required as part of normal procedure to reach a safe landing weight," he added. "We are in touch with Los Angeles World Airports and the LA County Fire Department and share concerns regarding reported minor injuries to adults and children at a school in the area." The fuel also landed on other

schools in south Los Angeles but there were no injuries among students or staff, authorities said. In a statement, the Los Angeles Unified School District said students and staff were on the playground of the elementary school when the incident happened. They "may have been sprayed by fuel or inhaled fumes," it said, adding that school officials "immediately called paramedics, who are on the scene and are treating anyone who is complaining of skin irritation or breathing problems." The Federal Aviation Administration said it was investigating the incident and said there are special fuel-dumping procedures for aircraft operating into and out of major US airports. "These procedures call for fuel to be dumped over designated unpopulated areas, typically at higher altitudes so the fuel atomizes and disperses before it reaches the ground," the agency said in a statement. —AFP

## Encryption battle reignited as US at loggerheads with Apple

**WASHINGTON:** Apple and the US government are at loggerheads for the second time in four years over unlocking iPhones connected to a mass shooting, reviving debate over law enforcement access to encrypted devices. Attorney General Bill Barr said Monday that Apple failed to provide "substantive assistance" in unlocking two iPhones in the investigation into the December 2015 mass shooting in San Bernardino, California, when the iPhone maker rejected a request to develop software to break into the shooter's iPhone.

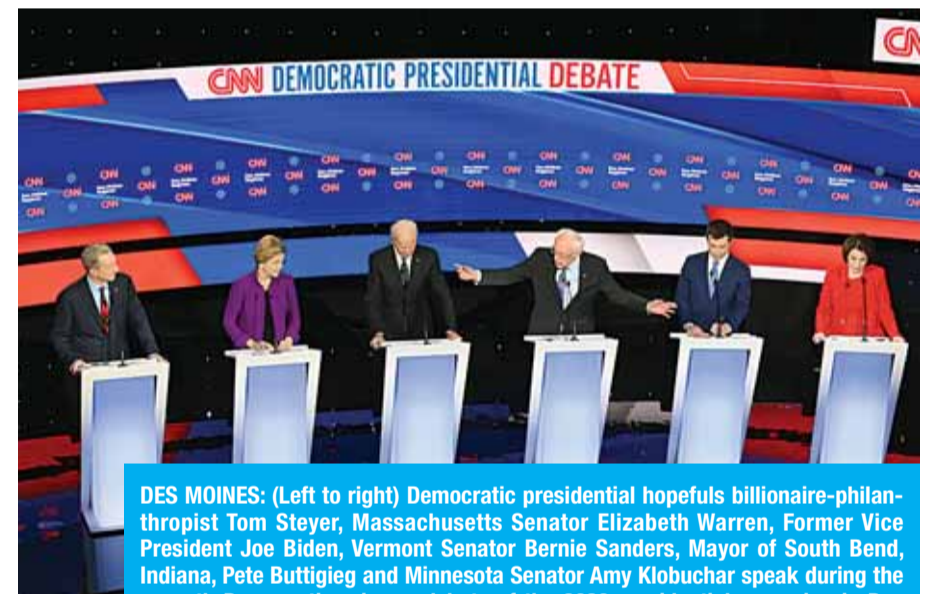
That fight ended in 2016 when the government paid an outside party a reported \$1 million for a tool that circumvented Apple's iPhone encryption. Barr last year called on Facebook to allow authorities to circumvent encryption to fight extremism, child pornography and other crimes. The

social network has said it would move ahead with strong encryption for its messaging applications.

### Opening wrong doors?

Digital rights activists argue that any privileged access for law enforcement would weaken security and make it easier for hackers and authoritarian governments to intercept messages. "We have always maintained there is no such thing as a backdoor just for the good guys," Apple's statement said. "Backdoors can also be exploited by those who threaten our national security and the data security of our customers." Apple and others argue that digital "breadcrumbs" make it increasingly easy to track people, even without breaking into personal devices.

The government's latest demand "is dangerous and unconstitutional, and would weaken the security of millions of iPhones," Jennifer Granick of the American Civil Liberties Union said in a statement. "Strong encryption enables religious minorities facing genocide, like the Uighurs in China, and journalists investigating powerful drug cartels in Mexico, to communicate safely," Granick added that



**DES MOINES:** (Left to right) Democratic presidential hopefuls billionaire-philanthropist Tom Steyer, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, Former Vice President Joe Biden, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, Pete Buttigieg and Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar speak during the seventh Democratic primary debate of the 2020 presidential campaign in Des Moines, Iowa on Tuesday. —AFP

Des Moines. For months, Sanders and Warren have battled peacefully for the right to wave the campaign's progressive flag. But their non-aggression pact unravelled in recent days, with Warren endorsing a report that Sanders privately told her he believed a woman could not defeat Trump. "I didn't say it," Sanders insisted at the debate, stressing it was absurd for anyone to think a woman could not win the White House.

Warren said he did, before insisting

that she was "not here to try to fight with Bernie."

She then proceeded to highlight the electability of women, noting that the men on stage collectively lost 10 elections, prompting laughter from the audience.

But when the debate concluded, signs of lingering animosity remained: viral video shows Warren refusing to shake Sanders's outstretched hand and instead speaking briefly to the senator. —AFP



## International

## Iran's Zarif accuses Europe of violating nuclear deal

## Russia urges Gulf nations to consider joint security mechanism

**NEW DELHI:** European powers have violated a 2015 international nuclear deal, Iran's foreign minister told a conference in India yesterday, a day after Britain, France and Germany launched a complaint against Tehran for non-compliance. The European states initiated a so-called dispute mechanism process, saying Iran had progressively scaled back its commitments under the agreement.

The move, which came at a time of red-hot tensions between Iran and the United States, sparked anger in Tehran and yesterday Iran's foreign minister Javad Zarif said Europe was being "bullied" by Washington.

"They are not buying oil from us, all of their companies have withdrawn from Iran. So Europe is in violation," Zarif told a conference in New Delhi, saying the future of the deal now "depends on Europe".

He added that the European Union "is the largest global economy. So why do you allow the United States to bully you around?" The accord, which makes it significantly more difficult for Iran to develop nuclear weapons undetected, was struck in Vienna by Iran, the three European nations, the United States, China and Russia.

The agreement allows a party to claim significant non-compliance by another party before a joint commission. If the issue is not resolved by the commission, it then goes to an advisory board and eventually to the UN Security Council, which could reimpose sanctions that were lifted under the accord. President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the deal in 2018. Since then Iran has walked back on its commitments including on processing uranium, which can be used in nuclear weapons.

Tehran's latest step in January to forgo the limit on the number of machines used to make uranium more potent prompted the Europeans to trigger the mechanism. But the three powers said they "once again express our commitment" to the deal and expressed "determination to work with all participants to preserve it."

Iran's foreign ministry said in response on Tuesday

that "if the Europeans... seek to abuse (this process), they must also be prepared to accept the consequences".

## 'Thoughtless'

Russia condemned the "thoughtless" European move, warning it risked causing a "new escalation". A US State Department spokesperson said Washington fully supported the three countries, adding "further diplomatic and economic pressure is warranted". Zarif also said that the US killing on January 3 of top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in Iraq had served only to strengthen the Islamic State group.

"I think the war against Daesh (ISIS) just suffered a major setback, and Daesh just won a major victory," he said. He also implied that the crisis sparked by the killing of Soleimani had contributed to Iran's accidental shooting down of a Ukrainian airliner on January 8, killing all 176 people on board.

"Why did it happen? Because there was a crisis. People make mistakes, unforgivable mistakes, but it happened in the time of the crisis," Zarif said.

Meanwhile, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said yesterday Moscow has been urging Gulf countries to consider a common security mechanism for the region and it was time the world got rid of unilateral measures such as sanctions. "We have been suggesting to the Gulf countries to think about collective security mechanisms ... starting with confidence building measures and inviting each other to military exercises," Lavrov told a security conference in Delhi. Tensions in the Gulf have risen following the US killing of Iranian military commander General Qasem Soleimani and a retaliatory missile attack by Iran on US forces in Iraq.

"Since I mentioned about Persian Gulf, we are very much concerned about what is going in there," Lavrov said. Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is also attending the conference in Delhi that comes just a day after Britain, France and Germany formally accused Iran of violating the terms of its 2015 agreement to curb its nuclear program, which eventually could lead to the



**NEW DELHI:** Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (center) shakes hands with an official as he arrives at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi on Tuesday. —AFP

reimposing of UN sanctions.

"So the 21st century is the time when we must get rid of any methods of dealing in international relations which smack of colonial and neo-colonial times. And sanctions, unilaterally imposed sanctions, they are not going to work."

After pulling out of the Iran deal, the United States slapped sanctions back on Iran and has gradually

increased its "maximum pressure" campaign targeting the Islamic Republic's revenues from oil, mining and other industries. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson called on Tuesday for US President Donald Trump to replace the Iranian nuclear deal with his own new pact to ensure the Islamic Republic does not get an atomic weapon. Trump said in a tweet he agreed with Johnson for a "Trump deal". —Agencies

## Farming family faces bleak future after deadly bushfires

**WANDELLA, Australia:** There is little that Australia's deadly bushfires didn't take from dairy and cattle farmers Tim and Warren Salway. For nearly two days over New Year the brothers battled fierce blazes that tore through the family's farms, the flames igniting on multiple fronts and wiping out almost everything in their path. The pair's father, Robert, and brother, Patrick, died trying to defend their properties. All the family farms were burned to ashes and debris, and hundreds of cattle killed.

"I keep saying to myself that it's not that bad, but it is that bad. It's fucking terrible," said Tim Salway, 42, shaking his head in disbelief as he looked at his burnt out dairy farm near the town of Cobargo in New South Wales state. Warren Salway fought back tears as he described his anguish at discovering his brother and father had died, and how other farmers donated their hay to keep his farm going.

"People have just turned up, they all want to help," he said.

The scale of the recovery facing the two fifth-generation farmers is huge.

Destroyed machinery, felled trees and blackened farmland were surrounded by miles of damaged fencing on Tim Salway's farm. Metal tanks were melted and hay and cattle sheds worth tens of thousands of dollars were flattened.

Salway lost 170 cows, including one that was so badly burned that it had to be shot. "They're the only heifers I've got left," he said, pointing to 30 cows gathering curiously, the sky behind them blanketed by haze from fires still burning on the other side of the valley.

"I've got no heifers for the next three years, they all got wiped in the fire. Just in cattle, if I look to replace them you're looking at A\$300,000 (\$207,000)." Monster bushfires have razed bushland equivalent to the size of Bulgaria since the start of October, killing 28 people, destroying more than 2,500 homes and killing millions of animals. "The noise of it was like jumbo jets ... It snapped trees in half," Tim Salway said of the fires that destroyed much of the Cobargo farms. "I watched the flames get sucked down the hill, there was a boom, an almighty thump. It was my dad and my brother. It's like a bomb's gone off."

## 'Annihilated'

Warren Salway's wife Helen, who has cancer, took refuge in a nearby town while he raced through smoke-filled lanes to get back to his cattle farm, twice running his truck off the road.

The bushfires crisis deals a further blow to farmers already struggling fol-



**A burnt car is seen among the charred trees in Lithgow, in Australia's New South Wales. —AFP**

lowing a three-year drought, which has been credited with fuelling the fires. "It's just annihilated us," said Warren Salway. "It's just numbness."

Salway spent more than a day using a bulldozer and excavator to bury 145 cows and 80 sheep. Many of the cows he found alive had to be shot due to their burns. "Years and years of breeding and you see them laying in a heap just dead," he said. "That's what you live for, your animals." Tony Allen, a former local mayor or whose own farm had a lucky escape, said the crisis was a wake-up call for

policy makers to support an industry already doing it tough.

"The decision is do you want to keep an industry going, do you want to feed Australians with Australian food, or do you want to let the industry just evaporate and live off imported product?" he said. Tim Salway said quitting was not on his mind, but he doubted the family business would survive into a sixth generation. "I've got four kids and unless it improves, none of them will be taking this over," he said. "Why do you want to do that to them?" —Reuters

## Grey pineapples: Volcano shatters Philippines farm

**TAGAYTAY, Philippines:** Farmer Jack Imperial woke to a picture of devastation after ash spewed from a volcano in the Philippines - his verdant green pineapple field had been transformed to a dirty dark grey. Imperial said his chances of salvaging produce from his 1-hectare (2.5-acre) farm were small and, in any case, there was no one to sell them to with tourists avoiding the Tagaytay area on the archipelago's biggest island Luzon, 32 km (20 miles) from the Taal volcano.

"We just have to accept that we will incur a loss," said Imperial, 49, who had never seen such a sight in 17 years of farming. "Even if we are able to harvest

some pineapples, if customers are scared to come because of the eruption, the pineapples would just end up rotting."

The impact of the volcano on the \$330 billion national economy has been a blip, despite cancelled flights and a day of work lost because of a heavy ashfall in the capital Manila, 70 km (45 miles) away, on Sunday. But for some of the farmers growing pineapples, bananas and coffee nearby it has been a disaster. Brushing ash from a fruit, Imperial said he feared that the hot ash had harmed his crop and made it inedible. He used to sell his pineapples, in slices, chunks and juice, at a small stall frequented by tourists beside his house.

But the tourists have disappeared and tens of thousands of people have been evacuated from a danger zone around Taal. The alert level for the volcano stood at 4 on a 5-point scale on Wednesday, indicating that an "explosive eruption" remained imminent. —Reuters



**MANILA:** Residents living along Taal lake catch fish as Taal volcano erupts in Tanauan town, Batangas province south of Manila on Tuesday. —AFP

## Rights group slams Japan envoy for bad remarks on Rohingya

**TOKYO:** Tokyo-based human rights activists yesterday decried recent remarks by Japan's ambassador to Yangon, who told local media he did not

think the Myanmar military committed genocide on the Rohingya Muslim minority in the country. More than 730,000 Rohingya fled the Southeast Asian nation to Bangladesh in 2017 after a military-led crackdown. The United Nations has said the campaign was executed with "genocidal intent" and included mass killings and rape.

The military offensive has sparked a series of ongoing legal cases filed in recent months at courts across the globe, including the International Criminal

Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), both based in the Hague. Zaw Min Htut, vice president of an advocacy group, Burmese Rohingya Association in Japan, said the ambassador's remarks were "disturbing".

"I am very disappointed and appealing again to the Japanese government. Please try to help Rohingya people and don't side with criminals," Zaw Min Htut told foreign correspondents in Tokyo. "Today the Japanese government do not even cooperate, not supporting UN

actions on Myanmar," he said. His group supports about 250 Rohingya based in Japan.

Ichiro Maruyama, the Japanese ambassador to Myanmar, told local news website the Irrawaddy in December that he did not think the Myanmar military "committed genocide or (had the) intent of genocide". He was previously quoted by the same outlet as saying that potential trade sanctions on Myanmar over the Rohingya crisis would be "utter nonsense". —Reuters

## Japan minister becomes first to announce paternity leave

**TOKYO:** Japan's environment minister said yesterday he would take two weeks of paternity leave, the first time a cabinet minister has publicly committed to such a move in the country.

Shinjiro Koizumi, a media-savvy 38-year-old married to a former television anchorwoman, told a ministry meeting it had been a difficult decision to balance his duties as minister and his desire to be with his newborn. "I want to take a total of two weeks off flexibly, making exceptions for important public duties," he said, adding he hoped his decision would help change perceptions and encourage other fathers to follow suit.

He will not take the weeks off consecutively and said he expected to work remotely or have shortened days during the leave period-which will be spread over three months from his child's birth.

The government's top spokesman backed the move, saying it was "important to create a conducive work-place atmosphere and social acceptance and support for men to ask for and take parental leave."

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters that he hoped Koizumi's decision would have a positive impact on attitudes to male parenting. There are no official records on whether cabinet ministers have previously taken parental leave, but Koizumi is the first to publicly announce he is doing so.

## 'Paternity harassment' cases

The son of a former Prime Minister, Koizumi was named environment minister in a cabinet reshuffle in September, becoming the third-youngest Japanese minister since the end of World War II.

He has been closely scrutinized as a potential rising star in the government, with his comments and behavior subject to intense media dissection. By law, Japan offers comparatively generous parental leave to employed workers.

Both parents can take up to a year off, with additional renewable six-month periods if a nursery place is unavailable. But only six percent of fathers take parental leave, compared to more than 80 percent of mothers who use their allowance beyond the mandatory eight weeks after birth.

And of those men who take any leave, more than 70 percent are away for less than a fortnight.

Activists say that is the result of pressure from employers and a society that prizes long work hours. A handful of men have sued their employers alleging they were subject to what is known in Japan as "pata-hara", short for paternity harassment, after taking parental leave. The issue is a particular concern given Japan's birthrate, which in 2018 was one of the world's lowest-and far below the rate the country needs to maintain its population. There are diverse causes for the problem, some of which the government has sought to address by increasing nursery spaces and encouraging women to return to work after having children. —AFP

## Analysis

Kuwait Times  
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Email: info@kuwaittimes.com  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netClimate activism  
faces 'crunch year'

As London's police try to manage a rise in non-violent street protests aimed at spurring action to tackle climate change, they face a quandary, human rights experts said. With violent protests, "if someone tries to punch you as an officer, you get the horses in and kettle them and the public will absolutely support you," said Tobias Garnett, a legal strategist for the Extinction Rebellion climate action movement. But while last year's mass protests by the grassroots group in London were disruptive, they were peaceful.

Neither were members deterred by large-scale arrests or an October ban on gatherings that was later overturned in court. "Extinction Rebellion is an unprecedented challenge for the police," said Garnett, noting the large number of people "dedicated to an issue, prepared to be arrested and, crucially, totally non-violent in the process."

That consternation may be one reason the group this month showed up in a guide produced by British counter-terrorism police on how to spot followers of extremist ideologies. The document put Extinction Rebellion alongside organizations ranging from Islamic State to neo-Nazis. Rob Cooper, a retired police chief superintendent in Devon and Cornwall who is now involved in Extinction Rebellion, called the classification "just totally over the top."

"Extinction Rebellion is not a risk to the public. But the government's inaction on climate change is very much a risk to the public," he said. "If they took the time to reflect on why Extinction Rebellion are protesting, what this climate emergency is all about, they would see that what we're trying to do is entirely appropriate and proportionate," he said.

London police officials and others, such as the anti-racism Prevent program's former head, quickly disavowed the group's inclusion in the guide as a mistake. Sara Khan, who leads the government's Commission for Countering Extremism, said in a statement the guidance should and would be recalled. But Britain's Home Secretary Priti Patel insisted it was important for the government to assess "a range of security risks."

Despite the U-turn, that suggests "the policing mentality remains one of trying to find ways to prevent, suppress and punish anyone who takes on climate change by means of serious public protest," said Philip Alston, chair of the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at New York University. The incident also raises questions about the kind of pushback climate change protest groups - including the school strikers inspired by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg - will face as they ramp up demands for urgent action.

Alston said 2020 would be "a crunch year" for the movement. Runaway fires in Australia and other evidence of surging climate threats mean there is a "deeply growing realization it's now or never" for efforts to persuade world leaders to effectively curb climate change. But with key emitting countries like the United States and Australia clearly demonstrating they are not willing to respond, "the only option that seems to remain on the table is public protest", which is likely to expand this year, Alston said.

## Tighter laws

In response, governments - unnerved by the size of protests or under pressure to curb disruption - are looking for ways to limit or manage protests, human rights experts said. The Australian state of Queensland last October approved a new law to expand police powers to search activists, something unions called a "slippery slope" that could lead to the restrictions being deployed against a range of strikers. Parliamentarians discussed, but rejected, amendments to require prison sentences for repeat protest offenders and to ban gatherings intended to block traffic flow. And a number of US states have passed laws making protests opposing fossil fuel pipelines criminal offenses, Alston said. In Britain, police pressed charges against more than 95 percent of the 1,100 Extinction Rebellion activists arrested during April protests, an unusually high rate, said the group's lawyer Garnett.

During the October demonstrations that followed, police issued a blanket protest ban, which was later overturned by London High Court judges. The police service noted the activists had caused widespread disruption in London and pulled officers away from other duties. Extinction Rebellion is calling for Britain to cut its carbon emissions to "net zero" by 2025. It accuses the government of investing vast sums in fossil fuel projects that are inconsistent with its stated environmental aims.

Garnett said London protesters were "extremely lucky to be living in a country where, when rights are infringed, there are independent courts able to remedy that". "For many people trying to do something about the climate, to stand up to power and change the system that got us here ... there's very little protection. Those people are extremely courageous," the lawyer said.

But he said he worried less about potential restrictions on protests than about the rapidly closing window for effective climate action itself. "It's essential there isn't an authoritarian (shift) to crack down on rights," so citizens can ensure that narrowing opportunity is not wasted, Garnett added. "The window that's really shrinking is our moment to change the course of history and our future. That's the one I'm really nervous about," he said. —Reuters

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Former president of Jawaharlal Nehru University students' union Kanhaiya Kumar talks to the media at a demonstration against India's new citizenship law and against an attack on the students and teachers at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus in New Delhi in Jan 9, 2020. —AFP

## Firebrand's anti-Modi mantra resonates at protests

Standing on a stage in the center of one of India's most prestigious universities, the firebrand politician looked out at the cheering supporters before him and issued a sharp challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The idea of India is under threat," said Kanhaiya Kumar, a leftist politician from the northeastern state of Bihar, his voice rising in the cold evening air. "We will not stop. Let the government use force. Let them bring the police." He paused. "We will rise to prove them wrong. Listen, Modi!"

"Freedom!" the crowd chanted after each line Kumar barked from the stage, jabbing his hand in the air for emphasis and occasionally fingering the red scarf slung around his neck. The 33-year-old Bihar politician has emerged in recent weeks as a major irritant and political challenge to Modi, a Hindu nationalist who has faced escalating protests over a citizenship law he introduced in December. Critics say the law, the Citizenship Amendment Act, marginalises India's Muslim minority and undermines the country's secular ethos.

There is no single leader in the protests, which are sweeping university campuses and which some students say are inspired by the leaderless anti-government protests in Hong Kong. But a recording of Kumar's "Freedom" anthem is played at almost all of them, with the crowds joining in for the chorus. Modi has won back-to-back national elections with strong majorities, and the Communist Party of India faction that Kumar leads has little clout nationally. But a senior aide to the prime minister says the government is worried that his prominence and messaging could undermine Modi's policies and weaken him politically.

Kumar's message has largely focused on accusations that Modi has failed to address rising unemployment and create jobs for millions of young Indians, and that his hardline pro-Hindu policies are undermining the country's secular identity and making life difficult for minorities like Muslims. When asked about his policies in a telephone interview with Reuters, Kumar declined to make "political promises" beyond pledging to uphold the constitution, saying his main aim was to hold the government to account. "Let us not forget Modi has used religion to accentuate the fault lines, and he has failed to create jobs. I don't want anyone to forget this," said Kumar.

## Opposition support

While analysts say that Kumar's rise does not immediately threaten Modi, it could provide a basis for a

resurgence of the opposition parties that were trounced by the prime minister's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the national elections in May. Several political parties, including the main opposition Congress party, have tried to enlist Kumar to their camps, but he has so far been non-committal.

"His presence widens the scope for the fragmented opposition to unite in the near term to dent Modi's governing style," said Sanjay Kumar, director of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, an independent research institute in Delhi. Kanhaiya Kumar's speech at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), which has been rocked repeatedly by clashes between opponents and proponents of the new law, attracted hundreds of supporters on Jan 7.

But his words have resonated far beyond the gates of JNU's leafy campus. Kumar's speeches are watched avidly by his supporters - he has about 2 million YouTube subscribers and a million Twitter followers - and his anti-Modi slogans are chanted at protests across the country. While he has been a well-known critic of the Modi government for several years, the recent protests have put him at centre stage in the fragmented and weakened political opposition. "Kumar is unique and forces everyone to think and question. He has been able to fill the gap created by absence of opposition," said Sanjay Kumar of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies.

## Common roots

While they are separated in age by almost four decades, Kumar has much in common with Modi, who is 69. Both come from humble backgrounds, are skillful orators and are firmly committed to their political ideologies. Modi is the son of a roadside tea seller; Kumar's father was a farmer and his mother works for a rural childcare centre in Bihar, one of the most populous but also poorest states in India. Kumar did well at school, and was able to attend university in Patna, the state capital, where he studied geography and got involved in student politics.

He was later admitted to JNU, which has a reputation for leftist politics, and earned a doctorate in African studies and became president of the student council. It was also at JNU that Kumar first shot to national prominence. In 2016, he was arrested at an on-campus rally and charged with sedition for allegedly shouting anti-India slogans.

In an interview with Reuters, Kumar denied the

charges and said Modi government's was trying to muzzle dissent. The courts have yet to begin hearing in the case. "My critical thinking and ability to question Modi's hard-line Hindu policies have scared the government since 2016," Kumar said. "Now, I am not alone. More and more people are joining our movement against Modi."

Kumar ran for a parliamentary seat from Bihar in the national elections in 2019, but was defeated by a candidate from the BJP, which is allied with the socialist party that dominates the politics of the state. Since then, he has been travelling across India to spread his political views and mobilize grassroots followers.

Kumar's appeal to young and first-time voters has worried Modi, the aide to the prime minister said on condition of anonymity. "We watch him closely," he said. The government was also closely tracking Kumar's personal life and his funding, the aide said, without elaborating. The prime minister's office and the Home Ministry did not respond to repeated requests from Reuters for comment on Kumar.

## Supporting secularism

Protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act have raged across India since December. At least 25 people have died and thousands of protesters have been arrested. The new law eases the path for people from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan to gain Indian citizenship, but only non-Muslims. Critics fear the new law will be used to discriminate against Muslims in India, one of many measures issued by Modi's Hindu nationalist government that they fear is chipping away at India's secular constitution. Modi's government maintains that the new law is necessary to help minorities facing persecution in Muslim-majority nations, and it has called the pan-India protests politically motivated. But Kumar said the protests were just one part of a larger drive to protect India's secular identity, which is guaranteed by the constitution. Modi's critics say they are growing increasingly uneasy with his Hindu agenda, which appears to have gained emphasis since he was re-elected in May.

In November, a Supreme Court decision handed Hindu groups control of a contested site where a 16th-century mosque was razed by Hindu zealots in 1992. In August, the government stripped the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir of its special status and split it into two federally administered regions. "The essence of India is at stake like never before," said Kumar. —Reuters

## Africa struggles to stem deadly flood of fake medicine

After he was struck down by malaria and typhoid, Togolese tailor Ayawo Hievi thought he was set to recover when he started taking drugs prescribed by his doctor. But far from curing him, the medication he was given at the neighbourhood clinic made him far worse - eventually costing him one of his kidneys. The drugs were fake. "After four days of care, there was no improvement, but I started to feel pain in my belly," Hievi, 52, told AFP.

After two weeks of suffering he became unable to walk and was rushed into the university hospital in the West African nation's capital Lome. "The doctors told me that my kidneys had been damaged... the quinine and the antibiotics used to treat me in the medical office were fake drugs." Now, over four years later, he remains crippled by chronic kidney failure and has to go to hospital for dialysis regularly. Hievi's horror story is far from unique in a continent awash with counterfeit medicines. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that every year some 100,000 people across Africa die from taking "falsified or substandard" medication. The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene estimated in 2015 that 122,000 children under five died due to taking poor quality anti-malaria drugs in sub-Saharan Africa.

Weak legislation, poor healthcare systems and widespread poverty have encouraged the growth of this parallel - and deadly - market. Since 2013, Africa has made up 42 percent of the fake medicine seized worldwide. The two drugs most likely to be out-of-date or poor, ineffective copies are antibiotics and anti-malarials, say experts. And bogus drugs not

only pose a risk to the patient - they also play a worrying part in building resistance to vital frontline medications.

## 'Difficult to trace'

In a bid to tackle the scourge, presidents from seven countries - the Republic of Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Uganda - meet Friday in Lome to sign an agreement for criminalizing trafficking in fake drugs. The goal is to bolster cooperation between governments and encourage other African nations to join the initiative. But even if leaders put pen to paper, the task of stamping out the flows of counterfeit medication is huge.

Medicines spread out on plastic sheets or offered at ramshackle stalls are for sale at markets across West Africa. Those hawked on the streets are often a fraction of the price of what's available in more reputable pharmacies where controls are stricter and supplies often have to come through official channels. "It is very difficult to trace where the fake medicines come from," said Dr Innocent Koude Kpeto, the president of Togo's pharmacist association. "The countries which are mentioned on the boxes are often not the countries of origin or manufacture of these drugs. The manufacturers cover their tracks so as not to be identified."

It is estimated that between 30 and 60 percent of medicine sold in Africa is fake and Kpeto said most of it comes from China or India. Efforts to staunch the deadly torrents of counterfeits have made some headway. Some trafficking hubs have been dismantled, such as Adjegounke market in Cotonou that served as a key gateway for fakes heading to giant neighbour Nigeria. In mid-November, the police in Ivory Coast made a record seizure of 200 tons in Abidjan and arrested four suspects including a Chinese national. Togo is one of the pioneer countries trying to stop the flow. It changed the law in 2015 and now traffickers can face 20



Drugs are displayed for sale along the road in Lagos, on Jan 11, 2020. —AFP

years in jail and a fine of some \$85,000. In a show of force in July the authorities burnt over 67 tonnes of counterfeit pharmaceuticals discovered between But even given these recent successes, those in the industry like Dr Kpeto insist that the threat is still grave and involves "highly organized criminal networks". "The phenomenon remains major," he said. Traffickers can turn an investment of just \$1,000 (900 euros) into a profit of \$500,000, he claimed. The fake medicines are smuggled in the same way as guns or narcotics and often bring higher returns.

## 'Die for nothing'

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country with a market of 200 million people, is the number one destination on the continent for fake drugs and a showcase of difficulties being

faced. In September 2016 the World Customs Organization seized tens of millions of fake pills and medicines at 16 ports around Africa: 35 percent were intended for Nigeria. Across the vast nation there are tens of thousands of vendors selling the counterfeits.

Competition between traffickers is fierce and the official agency meant to combat the problem is overwhelmed. In a bid to improve the situation, Vivian Nwakah founded in 2017 start-up Medsaf and raised \$1.4 million to help Nigerians track their medication from producer to user. "The country doesn't have a reliable and centralized distribution network," she said. "A hospital sometimes has to deal with 30 or 40 distributors for all the medications it needs. How can you have quality control with so many suppliers?" —AFP

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## Business

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DUBAI: The Dubai Financial Market in the Gulf emirate. The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company has raised more than \$19 billion over the past three years from overseas investors. —AFP

## Abu Dhabi's ADNOC whips up \$19bn

As Aramco hails IPO, Abu Dhabi oil firm courts foreign funds

DUBAI: The talk's all been about Saudi Aramco, and the suspense of its historic drive to whip up international cash. But, more quietly, its Gulf oil peer ADNOC has also been courting foreign funds - and its efforts compare favorably.

Like Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi's economy was hit by a dramatic fall in oil prices in mid-2014, triggering a drive to reduce its dependence on crude. A central part of that has been to reform and modernize state champion ADNOC and attract foreign investment. Unlike Aramco's push for a giant stock market listing, which has been highly publicized and closely watched, ADNOC has gone for a more staggered approach with its fundraising efforts, and there has been little overview of their scope by industry experts.

However the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, to give its full name, has raised more than \$19 billion over the past three years from overseas investors, according to Reuters calculations based on publicly released size of investments, signing fees and share sales. That's equivalent to two-thirds of the \$29.4 billion that Saudi Aramco raised in the biggest initial public offering (IPO) in histo-

ry. Despite the record-breaking December listing, the bulk of the shares were sold to domestic investors after foreign institutions balked at the valuation.

ADNOC, which supplies nearly 3 percent of global oil demand, has for example struck deals with the world's largest fund manager BlackRock and with US investment firm KKR, a rare foray for both into national oil companies in the Middle East. It has also sold stakes in its pipeline infrastructure and refining businesses. See FACTBOX on key deals:

While both Gulf state-controlled firms are aiming to replicate the model of oil majors by expanding in downstream, trading and petrochemicals, their funding strategies diverge, said Dmitry Marinchenko, analyst with Fitch rating agency. "Aramco is raising funds mainly by conventional borrowing while ADNOC is using more sophisticated forms of funding, including selling minority stakes in subsidiaries," he said. "ADNOC is more open to cooperation with international partners."

It remains to be seen which approach to attracting investment will prove more fruitful in coming years. But at stake could be the companies' ability to successfully

diversify from crude production and, more broadly, for the domestic economies that rely on them to weather oil price shocks. "The biggest challenge is the uncertainty in the outlook for oil and the growing international scrutiny that all energy companies are facing because of climate change," said Helima Croft, managing director of RBC Capital Markets.

**Prince pushes for change**

The reforms have been driven by Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, de-facto ruler of the wider United Arab Emirates. Their roots can be traced back to 2016, when oil prices fell to \$30 a barrel, hitting state revenues and exposing how sensitive Abu Dhabi finances were to volatile prices.

The crown prince, known as MbZ, appointed ally Sultan Al-Jaber as CEO of ADNOC with a plan to restructure the company to make it more efficient and function more like a major than a state monopoly. Al-Jaber swiftly embarked on plans to reshuffle ADNOC's leadership and slashed 5,000 jobs, mainly foreigners, out of its 60,000 employees.

It is no easy task to change the course of an organization viewed as one of the most conservative in the region, however. ADNOC's production depended on decades-old concessions with Western oil majors, some of which have been operating in the UAE since the 1930s, and new deals and foreign investment were uncommon. In April 2016, two months after installing Al-Jaber, MbZ made a rare visit to ADNOC's headquarters to deliver a wake-up call to managers and staff. His message, demanding a sharp change in a culture of entitlement, was unexpected in a nation where most citizens expect guaranteed state jobs with long-term security.

He told ADNOC employees they should feel no sense of entitlement, and that the UAE cannot be chained to oil price fluctuations anymore, whether at \$30 or \$100 a barrel, said Haif Zamzam, vice president of transformation and business supply at ADNOC who was present during the crown prince's visit. "He said 'You show me your CV and you show me your experience, you show me what you are able to actually do, and you have great opportunities,'" said Zamzam, who had worked with Al-Jaber at state investor Mubadala. — Reuters

## Bezos promises \$1bn in bid to see off India's anti-trust probe

NEW DELHI: Amazon tycoon Jeff Bezos promised yesterday a new billion-dollar investment in India, just two days after authorities launched an anti-trust investigation into the e-commerce giant. A three-day visit by Bezos, whose worth has been estimated at more than \$110 billion, sparked protests in New Delhi and other cities by traders who accuse Amazon and its main US-owned rival Flipkart of killing off India's army of street traders.

Bezos, who has spent heavily to make his company an e-commerce titan in the world's second most-populous nation, sought to head off critics by promising one billion dollars to digitize small and medium-sized Indian businesses.

"We will use our global footprint to export \$10 billion worth of 'Make in India' products across the world by 2025," he said, referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaign to boost national production.

Bezos highlighted India's growing importance, saying "the 21st century will be the Indian century" and that the US-



AHMEDABAD: Mobile dealers and members of Ahmedabad Mobile Dealer's Association hold placards as they protest against online shopping platform Amazon outside their closed mobile shops in Ahmedabad yesterday. — AFP

India alliance will be the most important. Amazon and Flipkart-founded in India but taken over by Walmart in 2018 for \$16 billion-face increasing scrutiny and resentment despite their popularity among customers. The Competition Commission of India announced Monday that it was investigating both companies over accusations they undermine traditional traders by favoring "preferred sellers" on their platforms.

**'Unfair subsidies'**

Media reports said Bezos has sought

a meeting with Modi, but neither the government nor Amazon would confirm if talks would be held. Amazon has said it will cooperate with the investigation and was "confident" it was operating legally. The commission, which last year fined Google \$21 million for abusing its dominant position, said it will report in 60 days, but its inquiries normally take a lot longer. "We are not against e-commerce," said Sumit Agarwal, national secretary of the Confederation of All India Traders, which says it represents 70 million small businesses. —AFP

## Bursa Kuwait, CMA highlight investment opportunities

KUWAIT: Further building on their global investor relations, Bursa Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) met with institutional investors from Africa, Central, and Eastern Europe, Greece, Middle East and Russia as part of their participation in the annual CEEMEA Opportunities Conference, organized by JP Morgan and held at the company's headquarters from 14-16 January 2020 in London.

During a series of one-on-one meetings with investors, Bursa Kuwait and the CMA highlighted current and future investment opportunities in the Kuwaiti capital market and shed light on the various initiatives being rolled out as part of the third phase of market developments with the objective of creating an attractive investment destination for issuers and investors. The organizations also gained exclusive insights into the needs and expectations of institutional investors, as well as their investment experience in the country.

They also discussed the latest developments in the national capital market including Kuwait's recent reclassification from to 'Emerging Market' status by MSCI Inc. The official status upgrade by the leading benchmark provider in

December 2019 paves the way for the country's inclusion in the prestigious MSCI emerging market index in May of 2020. This move follows Kuwait's inclusion in S&P Dow Jones Indices' Global Equity Indices, with Emerging Markets classification, as well as in the FTSE Russell Emerging Markets Index in the past two years.

Commenting on the meetings, Bursa Kuwait CEO Mohammed Al-Osaimi said, "Driven by its rapid growth and major accomplishments over the past few years, the Kuwaiti capital market has bolstered its position on the global investment map. With the Emerging Markets status upgrade by MSCI alone, the country has opened up a new world of opportunities for foreign institutional investors. At Bursa Kuwait, we aim to raise awareness of the promising prospects the market holds with our participation in the CEEMEA Opportunities Conference and our meetings with potential investors. We remain committed to exploring new avenues to contribute to the Kuwaiti capital market's further success and its transformation into an unparalleled investment destination.

Bursa Kuwait also took the opportunity to highlight the completion of its privatization last month, when it became the only stock exchange in the Middle East that is 94 percent owned by the private sector. On 8 December 2019, Bursa Kuwait marked the conclusion of the public offering of the Capital Markets Authority's 50 percent stake in the company to Kuwaiti citizens with more than 8.5 times oversubscription. Earlier, in February 2019, a consortium of institutional investors bought a 44 percent stake in the company, while the remaining 6 percent is owned by the state-run pension fund, the Public Institute for Social Security.

Business

# Curtain falls on Germany's 'golden decade' of growth

## Data to ignite fresh debate on use of surpluses to boost GDP

FRANKFURT: German economic growth plummeted in 2019, official data showed yesterday, providing fresh ammunition for debate about how to use fiscal surpluses to boost gross domestic product. Europe's powerhouse expanded just 0.6 percent last year, compared with 1.5 percent in 2018, federal statistics authority Destatis said in preliminary figures. "Growth momentum ebbed significantly" last year, Destatis expert Albert Braakmann told reporters at a Berlin press conference.

But the office also noted that 10 successive years of growth had made for the longest expansion since German reunification in 1990.

Looking ahead, "the golden decade Germany has seen for growth is gradually coming to an end," said Holger Schmieding of Berenberg bank. Trade conflicts, political upsets such as Brexit, slowing global growth and a near-unprecedented rate of change in the car industry have all weighed on Germany's manufacturing

backbone in recent years.

"The difficult foreign trade environment meant permanent stress for German industry," said Fritz Koehler-Geib, chief economist at KfW public investment bank.

With unemployment low and service industries more resilient, "solid domestic demand alone saved the economy from recession last year," she added. As 2020 begins, a "phase one" US-China trade deal is set to be signed, while the next Brexit steps are clear after Boris Johnson's resounding British election victory last month.

Both could provide much-needed relief to export-oriented German manufacturers. But ratings agency Moody's warned Tuesday of a "deteriorating global environment" that "will weigh on growth in (eurozone) member states' open economies in 2020". The Bundesbank central bank sees growth this year marking time at around the 2019 level, while think tanks and some bank analysts expect a mini rebound, to around

one percent. Destatis said GDP "grew slightly" in the fourth quarter of 2019, without providing figures—"a moderately positive starting base for 2020," tweeted analyst Oliver Rakau of Oxford Economics.

### How to spend it

Persistently anemic growth and a multitude of structural challenges—from an ageing population to crumbling infrastructure and the car industry's transition to electric power—have prompted calls at home and abroad for Berlin to spend more. Critics say Chancellor Angela Merkel's successive governments have stuck too dogmatically to a no-new-debts policy known as "black zero".

In recent years, billions of euros in government budget surpluses have not been deployed to maximum growth-boosting effect. "Germany is stuck in a reform traffic jam," said economist Uwe Burkert of LBBW bank. Destatis yesterday said the total surplus across

all levels of government—local, regional and federal—amounted to 49.8 billion euros (\$55.4 billion), or 1.5 percent of GDP.

A fresh tug of war is already beginning between Merkel's conservative CDU party and their SPD centre-left junior coalition partners over how to spend the bonanza. Where the SPD favours more investment and higher social spending, many CDU politicians want tax cuts for individuals and businesses.

"Short-term stimulus is still not really needed" in Germany, ING economist Carsten Brzeski said. "Instead, the surplus should be used to step up investment efforts in the well-known sectors: digitalization, infrastructure and education," he added. Possibly in response to such arguments, the government said Tuesday it had agreed to pump 62 billion euros into modernizing its rail network system, as part of a wider plan to incite commuters to opt for greener public transport options.—AFP

## Amer Salman Mijbel wins KD 1.5m in CBK's Al-Najma draw

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait recently conducted its Al-Najma Account draw "You Become a Millionaire and a Half" for the second year in a row to choose the Grand Prize winner.

CEO Elham Yousry Mahfouz, Deputy CEO Sahar Al-Rumaih, Acting General Manager for Retail Banking Hanadi Al-Musallam, and Deputy General Manager for Corporate Communications Amani Al-Awara announced the name of the lucky winner Amer Salman Sahib Mijbel who won KD 1.5 million, the largest ever prize money worldwide.

The draw was conducted at Murooj Complex and was broadcast live on Kuwait FM 88, and posted on the social media in the presence of Customer Protection Supervisor Ahmad Al-Abdeljader and Abdelaziz Ashkanani representing Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



## CBK announces winner of Al-Najma weekly draw

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 Shaikhah Dakheel Saad.

The result of the draw was as follows:  
1- Abdullah Hameed Shehab Theyab - 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.

### EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.200
Euro	340.250
Sterling Pound	397.890
Canadian dollar	233.730
Turkish lira	52.450
Swiss Franc	316.220
US Dollar Buying	296.850

#### Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.850
Canadian Dollar	233.395
Sterling Pound	396.310
Euro	339.950
Swiss Frank	297.640
Bahrain Dinar	808.050
UAE Dirhams	83.130
Qatari Riyals	84.365
Saudi Riyals	81.920
Jordanian Dinar	429.845
Egyptian Pound	19.117
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.676
Indian Rupees	4.287
Pakistani Rupees	1.960
Bangladesh Taka	3.549
Philippines Peso	6.017
Cyprus pound	18.080
Japanese Yen	3.760
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.685
Malaysian Ringgit	75.745

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.480
Thai Bhat	11.035
Turkish Lira	52.110
Singapore dollars	224.778

#### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.388961	0.402861
Czech Korune	0.005425	0.014725
Danish Krone	0.041216	0.046216
Euro	0.330917	0.344617
Georgian Lari	0.105017	0.105017
Hungarian	0.000926	0.001116
Norwegian Krone	0.030192	0.035392
Romanian Leu	0.053828	0.070678
Russian Ruble	0.004938	0.004938
Slovakia	0.009090	0.019090
Swedish Krona	0.028055	0.033055
Swiss Franc	0.307744	0.318744
Australian Dollar	0.201385	0.213385
New Zealand Dollar	0.194705	0.204205
Canadian Dollar	0.227451	0.236451
US Dollars	0.300100	0.304650
US Dollars Mint	0.300600	0.304650
Bangladesh Taka	0.002914	0.003715

Chinese Yuan	0.042807	0.046307
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037029	0.039779
Indian Rupee	0.003657	0.004429
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002681	0.002861
Korean Won	0.000252	0.000267
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070892	0.076892
Nepalese Rupee	0.002623	0.002963
Pakistan Rupee	0.001293	0.002063
Philippine Peso	0.005900	0.006200
Singapore Dollar	0.220240	0.230240
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001317	0.001897
Taiwan	0.010037	0.010217
Thai Baht	0.009707	0.010257
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013

#### Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.800751	0.808797
Egyptian Pound	0.019078	0.021819
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000199	0.000259
Jordanian Dinar	0.424149	0.433149
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000101	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020989	0.044989
Omani Riyal	0.785003	0.792893
Qatar Riyal	0.082900	0.083734
Saudi Riyal	0.080033	0.081333
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.103977	0.119777
Turkish Lira	0.045193	0.055038
UAE Dirhams	0.082190	0.083016
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069

Business

# Dare to leap for the young; realme launched in UAE

Usher the era of Quad-Camera with 5G and AIoT on the horizon with X2 Pro, 5 Pro and C2 debut



DUBAI: (From Left to Right) Zejiang Wu, CEO realme GCC, Josef Wang, President, realme, Middle East and Africa and Melvil Lucky, Product Manager, realme GCC.



DUBAI: Realme, the fastest growing smartphone brand, announces its official entry into UAE with three premium products: realme X2 Pro - 64MP Quad Camera Full-Speed Flagship, realme 5 Pro - 48MP Quad Camera SpeedMaster, and realme C2 - Entry-Level King with mega display and mega battery. With realme X2 Pro and 5 Pro, the brand will bring Leap-to-Quad-Camera experience.

Inspired by Dare-to-Leap spirit, realme has made it to the TOP 7 in 18 months and has already achieved 25 million users since its founding in May 2018. UAE has significant influence over the world, also is one of the most tech-advanced markets, especially in the 5G network era. Realme sees great opportunities here for a tech company, and all ready to disrupt UAE.

Realme comes to UAE with a strong strategy of three products for the different price range. Each one with the aim to appeal its own target: realme 5 Pro, the SpeedMaster, realme X2 Pro, the first truly affordable flagship in the market and realme C2, the entry-level quality king. Realme 5 Pro is a SpeedMaster priced at AED 699 onwards. It combines outstanding performance and beautiful design to make a powerful mark in the mid-range. It features 48 MP Quad Camera, Snapdragon 712 AIE Mobile Platform - that improves comprehensive performance by 10 percent- and 20W VOOC Flash Charge 3.0., becoming the best choice for the young. It also features a 6.3-inch FHD screen (2340x1080) which offers a wider and clearer vision with the elegant "dewdrop design".

Realme X2 Pro, the brand's Full Speed Flagship arrives with the aim of becoming realme's truly flagship model. It combines speed, power and performance, with a very attractive design. With Snapdragon 855+ mobile platform -that ensures a powerful perform-

ance- its 50W SuperVOOC Flash Charge -that can be fully charged in 35 minutes- and a 90hz refresh rate screen -that will give users a totally fast and immersive experience. Realme X2 Pro will become one of the most competitive flagships in the market. It also features 64MP Quad Camera with -for the first time in UAE- a 20X hybrid zoom with a 115° wide-angle, a telephoto lens and a portrait lens. It is available with 12G+128G, starting from AED 1,799.

Realme C2, the entry-level king, is of 4000mAh battery and 6.1" HD+ display. With 19.5:9 display, the screen body ratio, reach up to 89.35 percent. With the mega display, you could more enjoy the fun of gaming and video. The realme C2 is priced at AED 399 onwards.

Josef Wang, President of realme Middle East and Africa, said on the event: "We are very happy to be launching this whole portfolio of products in UAE. Following our motto, Dare to leap we arrive in UAE -and GCC- hoping to provide young consumers with more surprising products within at each price range, and exceed their expectations, whether in design, performance, or quality. We want to offer a full range of dare-to-leap experiences in terms of performance, design, quality and service realme is committed to leap for the future with UAE together, bringing Quad-Camera experience for everyone. Also, we will soon introduce 5G and AIoT (AI + IoT) products to be a tech popularizer." To be a tech popularizer, realme will continue to encourage the young in UAE to pursue their dreams, just like it did in many markets. Believing changing the world doesn't need seniority, realme launched "Proud to Be Young: realme Design Contest" and "Shot on realme Global Contest", aiming to help the young show their talents and inspiration all over the world.

As tech-trendy, realme dare to leap for everyone



As a Tech-Trendy Brand, realme always make all endeavors to build products based on the real needs of the young. It focuses on performance, design and quality. All efforts are made by realme to bring cutting-edge technology into each price segment. It is the first to bring the combination of 64MP Quad Camera + 50W SuperVOOC + 90Hz Ultra Smooth Screen into Emirates. It keeps quality as its lifeline, successfully maintaining our repair rate at an extremely low level. realme will also provide 360 degree after-sales for all consumers with 9 service centers in 6 cities. Never compromising on stylish taste, realme cooperate with the world's leading experts favored by the young, like Eddie Opara, the partner and chief designer of Pentagram, and a TOP design master Naoto Fukasawa. In January, it launched a series of lifestyle accessories with Classic Blue, the Pantone Color of 2020.

UAE is one of the most promising markets in the world and for realme. Realme will invest more to cooperate with local operators and partners to bring consumer here the technology of the future that integrates intelligence, strong performance and stylish design.



## Gulf Air reveals Nice as leisure boutique destination for summer 2020



KUWAIT: Gulf Air - the Kingdom of Bahrain's national carrier - in line with its boutique strategy to add boutique leisure destinations to its network, has revealed a new addition to its 2020 network with a popular premium leisure destination: Nice on the Cote d'azur in France commencing from July 2020 with two weekly flights and operated by an Airbus 321neo aircraft. The announcement was made during the Kuwait Aviation Show 2020 in which Gulf Air participated.

On this expansion and route announcement, Minister of



Industry, Commerce and Tourism, and Chairman of Gulf Air's Board of Directors, Zayed R Al-Zayani said: "It is very exciting for our national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain to reach further places and connect multiple cities in the East and the West to its hub, Bahrain." He also added: "On the western side of our network map, and coinciding with our expansion in Europe in summer 2020, we will launch flights to Nice on the Cote d'azur as a boutique destination catering to our premium leisure travelers. As we welcome our new Airbus 321neo next year, we will

serve our European routes with a brand new aircraft featuring flat-beds and superior in-flight entertainment system for more enjoyable journeys with Gulf Air".

The airline's network is expanding tactically to strengthen the current destinations' map with feeder cities balanced from the east and west of the Kingdom. Recently the airline announced plans to operate flights to Milan as a year-round destination as well as Mykonos and Munich as seasonal destinations - all starting from summer 2020.

## UK annual inflation hits 1.3%

LONDON: British annual inflation slid to the lowest level in more than three years in December, increasing the chances of an interest-rate cut by the Bank of England before Brexit. The Consumer Prices Index 12-month rate dropped to 1.3 percent last month from 1.5 percent in November on falls in the prices of hotel rooms and women's clothing, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

At 1.3 percent, it was the lowest level since November 2016, while analysts' consensus forecast had been for no change. "This gives the Bank of England all the excuse it needs to cut later this month," said Neil Wilson, chief market analyst for Markets.com.

The weak inflation update, that weighed on the pound, comes after official data on Monday showed

British economic growth has stalled, as Brexit and political uncertainty slashed manufacturing output at the end of last year. Britain will leave the European Union on January 31 after Prime Minister Boris Johnson's convincing general election victory in December finally broke the Brexit deadlock.

With the inflation data "coming off the back of ... weaker GDP and industrial production numbers, it does not look as though the economy was firing on all cylinders at the tail end of last year", Wilson said. "While there may well be a 'Boris Bounce' in the offing, I rather think the die is cast in favour of a rate cut" this month.

The Bank of England, whose main rate stands at 0.75 percent, will give its latest decision on British borrowing costs on January 30. It will follow the final BoE rate-setting meeting for governor Mark Carney, who is standing down to become UN special envoy on climate action and finance. After serving six years in the top seat, Carney will be replaced in mid-March by Andrew Bailey, head of Britain's Financial Conduct Authority watchdog. —AFP

## London heads European investment in tech sector

LONDON: Investment in tech across Europe reached a record level in 2019, according to a study published yesterday, with London maintaining the number one spot despite Brexit uncertainties.

About a quarter of the \$39.8 billion (£31 billion, 36 billion euros) that was pumped into fledgling firms was in the British capital. The \$9.7 billion London attracted in 2019 was more than twice the amount in Berlin (\$4.5 billion) and nearly three times more than Paris (\$3.3 billion).

The study, for London & Partners which promotes the city, said the top three cities were now competing for investment with places such as New York, Beijing and the San Francisco region. Financial sector start-ups were seen as driving the growth in investment as well as those in artificial energy and clean energy. —AFP

## Britain strikes last-minute deal to keep Flybe flying

LONDON: The UK government announced a last-minute rescue deal Tuesday for the troubled no-frills airline Flybe aimed at keeping Europe's largest regional carrier flying and preserving around 2,000 jobs. Neither the government nor the British company disclosed financial details of the agreement.

But both sides signalled that the package would include a review of air passenger duties paid by Flybe's clients and additional investments by its shareholders. The Treasury will "be reviewing (the) air passenger duty to ensure regional connectivity is strengthened," it said in a statement.

"In light of these discussions, Flybe have confirmed they will continue to operate as normal, preserving flights to airports such as Southampton, Belfast and Birmingham." A decision to lower the duties paid by the carrier's passengers threatens to anger UK environmental lobbies that want the government to reduce air travel dependence. The British government is currently considering a major new commitment in high-speed rail for the country's under-developed north.

But the Airlines UK trade organization argued on Tuesday that the best way to improve regional connectivity was by either cutting or eliminating the flat £26 (30-euro, \$34) tax passengers pay for roundtrip domestic tickets. Flybe's average one-way fare of £52 means the tax makes up about a quarter of its total ticket price. Larger carriers only offer limited service to smaller cities covered by Flybe. This model "is not sustainable when so many other costs on airlines are increasing," Airlines UK chief Tim Alder Slade said. The Treasury statement said its duty review would be conducted within the framework of Britain's legally-binding commitment to reduce carbon emissions to a net level of zero by 2050. But the main opposition Labor party said the government was making a mistake.

"Slashing airport passenger duty across the board would make a mockery of the government's supposed commitment to climate emissions," Labor's transport spokesman Andy McDonald said.

And Greenpeace UK called the air ticket tax cut a "poorly thought-out policy that should be grounded". "Cutting the cost of domestic flights while allowing train fares to rise is the exact opposite of what we need," the environmental campaign group said. —AFP

## Business

# UPTIS, puncture-proof tire developed by Michelin Tyres, wins major awards

## An innovative technology that eliminates any risk of punctures

**KUWAIT:** This year, no less than three awards, among the most prestigious in the automotive industry, were given to recognize UPTIS, the puncture-proof tire developed by Michelin Tyres.

Golden Steering Wheel Award 2019 in Germany, Coyote Automobile Award 2020 in France, AVT ACES Award 2020 in the USA, no less than three prestigious awards, are in a row to recognize UPTIS this year, the prototype puncture-proof tire developed by Michelin Tyres. These prizes awarded respectively by the German press group Auto Bild, the European community Coyote and the American magazine Autonomous Vehicle Technology, are among the most prestigious in the automotive industry today. They rewarded Michelin UPTIS in the innovation and tire of the year categories, highlighting its exceptional technological advances.

### Innovative technology

Unveiled by Michelin Tyres last June at the "Movin' On 2019" summit dedicated to

sustainable mobility, Michelin UPTIS, the airless tire, represents a major innovation both in terms of safety and respect for the environment.

This prototype, with its innovative and revolutionary technology that eliminates any risk of punctures, offers considerable advantages helping car drivers feel more at ease; fleet owners and professional vehicle drivers optimize their business productivity; and everyone to considerably reduce the use of raw materials, which in turn reduces waste and promotes sustainable mobility.

### Nearly 10 years of research recognized

These awards are the recognition of nearly ten years of research by Michelin teams. The UPTIS prototype has already been the subject of more than 50 patents related to the design of its structure and its high-tech materials. It fully illustrates Michelin's capacity for innovation to promote safer, more efficient, more accessible and environmentally friendly mobility.

These three prestigious awards are a



great source of pride for Michelin's men and women, they reward a major breakthrough innovation in the tire industry and demonstrate the relevance of Michelin's efforts in terms of innovation and sustain-

able mobility, said Florent Menegaux, President of the Michelin Group

**Michelin research and development**  
Michelin invests more than Euro600 mil-

lion a year in R&D and employs 6,000 people to help develop new technologies and materials for safer, more efficient, more accessible and more environmentally-friendly mobility.

## Gulf Bank to announce Al-Danah millionaire today!

**KUWAIT:** A year after the announcement of Gulf Bank's Al-Danah millionaire for the year 2018, it is finally time to reveal the name of the lucky winner who will receive this year's KD 1 million prize. Gulf Bank's annual Al-Danah draw event, which kicked off on Sunday, will culminate in the announcement of the Al-Danah millionaire in a live draw on stage tonight at 7 pm. The draw event, titled "Al-Danah Is Here," is taking place at The Avenues near the Cheesecake Factory. Throughout the week and in the hours leading up to the draw, attendees can also take part in a variety of activities for the chance to win cash prizes and more.

Throughout the week, Gulf Bank's stage area is hosting a variety of entertainment activities, giving participants the chance to win a multitude of prizes. Everyone is welcome to participate, and choose from activities that include a Pin & Win map, a Luster Wall, an arcade claw game, vending machine, and more. At the Pin & Win activity, participants are able to pin their location on an enlarged map of Kuwait, highlighting the part of town they are coming from. Participants also have the chance to try their luck at the arcade claw game and the vending machine to win cash prizes. At the Luster Wall, attendees have the option to take a selfie or picture to post on their social media channels. Upon posting, their images will appear as part of a larger mosaic that will spell out a hidden message whose meaning will be unveiled tonight. At the end of the night, attendees will also be treated to a live musical performance by Abdulaziz Al-Dhuwaidi.

Commenting on the event, Hamad Al-Wazzan, Senior Officer of External Communications at Gulf Bank, said: "The day that we've been waiting for is finally here! Tonight, we will be revealing who among our customers is this year's lucky Al-Danah millionaire. At Gulf Bank, we are proud to offer our clients multiple chances throughout the year to win valuable prizes, including: weekly raffles in which five winners receive KD 1,000 each; quarterly withdrawals in which the prize amount is KD 150,000 in the first quarter, KD 250,000 in the second quarter, KD 500,000 in the third quarter, and KD 1 million in the final quarter of the year. We invite everyone to visit our event at The Avenues to participate in one of the many activities we have lined up - from competitive games to a live musical performance. Tonight, our visitors will also be treated to the unveiling of yet another big surprise at the event, making this year's ceremony our biggest celebration ever!"

Tonight, with the countdown to the Al-Danah millionaire announcement in full swing, attendees will be able to celebrate as Gulf Bank names the Al-Danah millionaire in a live draw at 7 pm. The draw will take place live on stage in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce, and presented by Ossama Fouda, an anchor at Kuwait Pulse FM 88.8, and Ahmad Al-Matari, an employee at Gulf Bank. Ossama Fouda will also be hosting exciting activities on stage on Thursday, leading participants through a variety of games with a competitive twist. Participants can try their luck against others at the safe combination game, in which they must find the correct safe combination in the fastest amount of time. Participants will also get a chance to play the darts money collector, in which they will be able to collect cash prizes depending on the locations their darts hit - the closer to the bullseye, the more valuable the prize! Finally, participants will also get to try their hands at a variety of digital gaming competitions, competing with others for the chance to take home cash prizes.

## Boubyan issues and activates credit cards via Boubyan App

**KUWAIT:** To continue with its efforts towards providing its customers with new and outstanding services, Boubyan Bank has announced the launch of its new credit cards issuance and activation service, for the first time in Kuwait, through the upcoming Boubyan App update, which will enable Boubyan customers to issue and activate their credit cards without having to visit a Boubyan branch or even call its Contact Center. This reiterates the bank's leadership in providing customers with digital services and products.

In this context, Boubyan Bank's Deputy CEO, Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri, stated: "Boubyan Bank has always confirmed its leadership in introducing many services and products

'for the first time in Kuwait' through diversity, excellence and constant keenness on providing creative and innovative digital products and services for its customers in a constant quest for convenience and simplicity to cater for customers' daily needs."

Al-Tuwaijri added: "Creativity in our services and products is based on a realistic approach towards customers' needs, giving due attention to their expectations and maintaining a transparent relationship with customers based on trust, confidence and mutual respect as we aspire to distinction and uniqueness through leadership in innovation of simple solutions which are more convenient to customers." "Issuing a new credit card has become much easier with Boubyan Bank as customers wishing to issue credit cards can simply apply now through Boubyan App using simple steps. As soon as the application is accepted, a customer can obtain his/her new credit card from cards' issuance devices linked to Boubyan ATMs or Boubyan Direct devices 24/7 without having to visit a branch or even calling Boubyan Bank's Contact Center", Al-Tuwaijri added.

He went on to add: "Customers can now activate new credit cards, choose their PINs, and use them immediately in shopping in a secure, easy and comfortable way."

Moreover, Al-Tuwaijri stressed that: "Issuing such cards comes as a part of our constant understanding of our customers' wishes and their expectations to find easily accessible banking services that meet their daily needs as well as our ongoing keenness on reaching service levels way beyond our customers' expectations."

Boubyan App is one of the most prominent Apps, whether in terms of ease of use or growth in the number of users, their feedback and rating of the App, which places it in the lead bearing in mind that customers' needs are focused on core services such as opening accounts, performing various banking transactions like transfers and payment of invoices, and having access to financing in addition to credit cards, and customers may now have quick and easy access to these services through Boubyan App.



Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri

## Mohammad Akram Yaqob wins KD 4000 in Burgan Bank's Value Account draw

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank yesterday announced Mohammad Akram Mohammad Yaqob as the winner of the Value Account KD 4000 draw. The winner expressed his excitement of winning the cash prize of KD 4,000.

Dedicated to offer the best in-class services, Burgan Bank's Value Account presents customers with exceptional features which were specifically designed to suit the needs of expatriates living in Kuwait. Account holders will be able to enjoy matchless benefits that include receiving a free credit card for one year, application for a loan, in addition to a chance to enter the quarterly draw to win KD 4000 as well as other discounts from selected merchant stores.

Burgan Bank will continue presenting exclusive services and draws with an aim of exceeding customers' expectations while offering them chances to win valuable cash prizes all year round.

Opening a Value account is simple, interested individuals with salaries starting from KD 150 and above are eligible to open a Value Account.



## Ooredoo Kuwait partners with Scene Murouj

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait, the first to launch innovated digital services in Kuwait is proudly partnering with Murouj bring to you their newest "Scene" market, a new market concept created for local entrepreneurs and international businesses to showcase their diverse products and services. The market, which is held at Murouj Complex Phase I, includes an Ooredoo dedicated booth, artisanal food products and crafts, with a 'street food' section aimed at highlighting the culinary diversity of Kuwait's local food community. The market also offers an arrangement of live entertainment and a section dedicated for children's activities. The market will take place today, (January 16) from 4 pm to 11 pm and will continue tomorrow and Saturday 10 am to 10 pm.

Commenting on this sponsorship, Ooredoo Kuwait Senior Director of Corporate Communications Mijbil Alayoub said: "We're happy to be supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs through this engaging project. This sponsorship comes in tandem with our social responsibility strategy, which in turn is based on our core values of caring, connecting and challenging. We look forward to meeting those young enthusiastic small business owners as well as our valued customers at the market".



Mijbil Alayoub

## Volkswagen hit with big Polish fine over Dieseldgate

**WARSAW:** Poland's consumer protection office (UOKiK) yesterday announced a 120 million zloty (28.5 million euros, \$31.8 million) fine for Volkswagen's Polish subsidiary over the Dieseldgate emissions scandal. "The fine for Volkswagen Group Polska is more than 120 million zlotys... the largest fine ever handed out by UOKiK for a consumer rights violation," the watchdog stated.

"Volkswagen manipulated gas emissions indicators and misled consumers in maintaining its vehicles respected the environment," read a statement from the regulator. Volkswagen Group Polska responded by rejecting responsibility in the affair which severely dented the German group's reputation and cost it billions in fines after it admitted in 2015 to fitting cars with software designed to cheat emissions tests. The group placed so-called "defeat devices" into engine control software, designed to make them appear less polluting in the lab than in real driving conditions.

"This behavior continued for eight years (2008 to 2016). During the investigation the group never came up with proposals for an amicable solution," UOKiK president Marek Niechcial said in a statement posted to the consumer body's website.

## Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 14th January 2020 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 5 - 9 January 2020. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

### The winners this week are:

Nidal Fahmi Alhatem, Hani Mousa Mohammad Al-Mousa, Wafaa Ali Naser Al-Ghoshn, Amani Esam Mahmoud Theeb Mahmoud, Fatima Abdulkareem Mohammed Al-Saqer

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Furthermore, loyal Al-Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year, which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al-Danah customers in 2018, have been added to their 2019 chances, and the same process will take place in 2020, and so on. Terms and conditions apply.



Volkswagen Polska stated for its part it saw "no legal foundation for the sanction handed down by UOKiK. "In our view, the president of UOKiK embarked on a procedure targeting the wrong entity - Volkswagen Group Polska being merely an importer of vehicles with no knowledge of the problem of nitrogen oxide emissions in EA189 engines," the subsidiary stated.

Volkswagen admitted to emissions cheating affecting 11 million vehicles worldwide in a scandal which has to date cost the group more than 30 billion euros in legal costs, fines, buybacks and compensation payouts, the bulk in the United States. —AFP

## What's On

# KIB promotes financial literacy amongst students with disabilities

As part of its leading financial literacy program aimed at students and youth, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently hosted a group of students with disabilities for a visit at the Bank's head office, in cooperation with the Public Authority for the Disabled (PADA) in Jahra Governorate.

The visit provided students with an opportunity to tour the head office, where they were introduced to the nature of the banking world and diverse tasks performed by employees. Additionally, a team from the bank gave an educational lecture to students on the value of saving and the importance of budgeting at an early age.

On this occasion, KIB noted that it has always sought to organize diverse initiatives which aim at engaging with different segments of the community, including students, and especially those with disabilities. Through these visits, the bank strives to enrich their financial and economic knowledge, as well as provide them with hands-on experience to develop their abilities, enable them to manage their personal banking needs, and encourage them to work in the banking sector in the future.

Moreover, KIB believes that educating children and youth on the basic concepts of saving and good money management will in turn cultivate a financially-savvy generation that is able to build a bright and sustainable



future for the nation. Accordingly, the bank has adopted its own financial literacy program to spread financial and economic awareness amongst various segments of the community, from students to talented youth looking to enter the banking sector.

KIB dedicates special attention to people with disabilities in the local community, as it provides innovative banking solutions to meet the needs of diverse cus-

tomers. The bank has also redesigned several of its branches to become disability-friendly as they are all equipped with ramps and lowered ATMs. To serve customers who are visually impaired or deaf, the terms and conditions for KIB's products and services have all been recorded as audio and printed in braille. The bank also added the 'Read Speaker' feature on its website, which converts written content into audio, to meet the

needs of customers with visual impairments.

KIB was awarded 'Best CSR Initiative - Arab Banking' from the World Union of Arab Bankers (WUAB) as a result of its leading financial literacy program. The award served as a testament to the leadership of the program and its success in achieving its objectives towards the local community.

## NBK Academy welcomes 23rd batch of fresh graduates



National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) recently welcomed to its annual "NBK Academy" program the 23rd batch and the first in 2020 of fresh Kuwaiti graduates who have successfully met the acceptance criteria specifically designed for this intensive program.

The NBK Academy Program, launched 12 years ago, has been supporting NBK's strategy to employ, train and develop the professional skills of newly graduated Kuwaiti talents, in addition to attracting them to work in the financial services industry.

The fresh group of trainees was welcomed by Emad Al-Ablani, Head of Human Resources and Mohamed

Al-Othman, Head, Consumer Banking Group, in addition to several officials from talent management and training and development divisions.

The program that will be delivered to 20 participants, extends over a period of 4 months and covers various aspects of banking operations including: banking principles, risk management, financial accounting, marketing, negotiation, consumer and commercial lending.

It is worth noting that the program's content is subject to constant revision and update in order to keep pace with the latest research and studies in the global banking sector. New and innovative elements were recently added to the program, including design think-

ing and banking simulation as well as creativity and innovation in the banking environment.

NBK Academy reflects NBK's vision to support sustainable human capital development as one of its top strategic priorities and a shared responsibility between the various governmental institutions and the private sector.

NBK Academy was inaugurated in 2008 with the aim to pave the way for newly Kuwaiti graduates to join the banking sector. The academy provides graduates with the best training programs developed in cooperation with leading international institutions and universities to meet the demands of the labor market.

## Dar Al-Teeb joins Horeca 2020 as Golden Sponsors

Horeca Kuwait 2020 keeps attracting more sponsors, which reflects the exhibition's uniqueness as a one of its kind event in Kuwait and phenomenal regional hospitality activity.

In this regard, and because perfuming is an essence of hospitality, The famous Kuwaiti Dar Al-Teeb announced joining Horeca Kuwait 2020 as a golden sponsor in the current cycle due to be held at Mishref International Fair Grounds in the period of January 20-22, 2020.

Speaking on the occasion, Horeca Kuwait 2020 organizer; Leaders Group expressed its delight with this sponsorship noting that this first participation of Dar Al-Teeb marks launching the inclusion of the perfumes and incense sector in the exhibition along with other food industry and services, hotel equipment and restaurants. Leaders Group added that the exhibition is also a wonderful opportunity for exhibitors to meet with thousands of the exhibition visitors.

On his part, Dar Al-Teeb CEO, Sari Al-Hajj said that: "Sponsoring the famous Horeca Kuwait for the first time stems from our vision that perfuming guests is an essential and integral part of hospitality in our societies. Our participation is a chance to strengthen our bonds with the exhibition visitors and introduce our latest products of perfume, incense, Oud bakhoor mixtures that fit various occasions such as receptions, weddings and parties".

Al-Hajj added that Dar Al-Teeb had occupied a leading position in Kuwait and GCC perfume markets thanks to its outstanding perfumes that suit various tastes as well as introducing a new collection each season including oriental, western and French perfumes. "Dar Al-Teeb has achieved rapid success in and outside Kuwait thanks to its commitment to winning customers' trust", he added noting that it now has over 30 branches in Kuwait, a number of GCC states and in London.

"It is our customers' trust which motivates us, this trust stems from introducing new concepts for oriental and Arab perfumes and creating and innovating new mixtures all the time using purely and carefully selected natural materials. We also use the finest perfume essential oils that match the French International Fragrance Association (IFRA)", Al-Hajj explained adding that Dar Al-Teeb pays great attention to manufacturing and artistic packaging. "Our brand combines both genuinely and modernity of content, output and impact", he underlined. Finally, Al-Hajj explained that Dar Al-Teeb's section at Horeca Kuwait exhibition would be in hall number 8 where a huge variety of its finest products and incense would be displayed and that Dar Al-Teeb has over 90 different items of which many had been leading the sales of its category and contributed to making Dar Al-Teeb the fastest growing amongst its peers.



Ahmedi Governor, Sheikh Fawwaz Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah recently received at his office the chairman of Kuwait Association for Needy Families (KANF), Bader Al-Mubarak, his deputy Dr Ahmed Al-Kandary, Secretary General, Dr Ahmed Al-Houli, PR manager, Maha Al-Qallaf and a number of KANF members. Both sides discussed KANF activities and bilateral cooperation.

## Palestine envoy meets Palestine teachers



Within the annual meetings held with old and new teachers, The Ambassador of Palestine to Kuwait, Rami Tahboub recently received the Palestinian teachers working in Kuwait. Tahboub

welcomed the new recruits wishing them as much success as the two previous batches of Palestinian teachers. He also advised them to focus on pure education and respect Kuwaiti laws.

## KIBS celebrate graduating new batch of trainees

Under auspices of Kuwait Central Bank Governor and the Chairman of Kuwait Institute for Banking Studies (KIBS), Dr Mohammed Al-Hashel, KIBS recently celebrated graduating a new batch of trainees on a special ceremony held at Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The ceremony was attended by KIBS Director, Ya'qoub al-Sayyed Al-Refa'e, local banking officials, a number of human resources and training managers in local banks and other officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Al-Refa'e stressed that KIBS achieved a major role by having its programs and degrees accredited by regional and international organizations adding that it became a center for training and preparing for international tests.



# Mystery China virus patients could have infected family members: Officials

BEIJING: A new virus from the same family as the deadly SARS pathogen could have been spread between family members in the Chinese city of Wuhan, local authorities said yesterday. The outbreak, which has killed one person, has caused alarm because of the link with SARS (Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome), which killed 349 people in mainland China and another 299 in Hong Kong in 2002-2003.

One of the 41 patients reported in the city could have been infected by her husband, Wuhan's health commission said in a statement yesterday. The announcement follows news that a Chinese woman had been diagnosed with the novel coronavirus in Thailand after travelling there from Wuhan. No human-to-human transmission of the virus behind the Wuhan outbreak has been confirmed so far, but the health commission said the possibility "cannot be excluded."

The commission said that one man who had been diagnosed worked at Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, which has been identified as the center of the outbreak, but his wife had

been diagnosed with the illness despite reporting "no history of exposure" at the market.

At a press conference yesterday following a fact-finding trip to Wuhan, Hong Kong health officials also said that the possibility of human-to-human transmission could not be ruled out despite no "definitive evidence."

Dr Chuang Shuk-kwan, from Hong Kong's Centre for Health Protection, said there were two family group cases among the recorded cases in Wuhan, including the husband and wife and a separate case of a father, son and nephew living together.

However, he said mainland doctors believed the three men were most likely to have been exposed to the same virus in the market. The market has been closed since January 1. The woman diagnosed in Thailand, who is currently in a stable condition, had not reported visiting the seafood market, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday.

WHO doctor Maria Van Kerkhove said Tuesday that they "wouldn't be

surprised if there was some limited human-to-human transmission, especially among families who have close contact with one another." The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a Level 1 "Watch" alert for travellers to Wuhan after the patient was diagnosed in Thailand, saying they should practice normal precautions and avoid contact with animals and sick people. Wuhan's health commission said yesterday that most of the patients diagnosed with the virus were male, and many were middle-aged or elderly.

In Hong Kong, hospitals have raised their alert level to "serious" and stepped up detection measures including temperature checkpoints for inbound travellers. Hong Kong authorities said on Tuesday that the number of people hospitalized with fever or respiratory symptoms in recent days after travelling to Wuhan had grown to 71, including seven new cases since Friday. Sixty of that total, however, have already been discharged. None have yet been diagnosed with the new coronavirus. — AFP

## Sex delays menopause

PARIS: Women approaching menopause who have frequent sex are less likely to cross that threshold than women of the same age who are not as active sexually, researchers said yesterday. On average, intimate relations at least once a week reduced the chances of entering menopause by 28 percent compared to women who had sex less than once a month, they reported in the journal Royal Society Open Science.

The difference, the study suggests, reflects the body's response to evolutionary pressures. "If a woman is having little or infrequent sex when approaching midlife, then the body will not be receiving the physical cues of a possible pregnancy," Megan Arnot and Ruth Mace, scientists at University College London, wrote. Rather than continuing to ovulate, according to this theory, "it would be better — from a fitness-maximizing perspective — for the woman to cease fertility and invest energy into any existing kin she has."

Post-menopausal killer whales — the only animals besides humans and pilot whales to go

through menopause — are known to care for grandchildren, a behavior sometimes called the "grandmother effect" that is thought to serve an evolutionary purpose. Earlier research seeking to explain why married women reach menopause later than never-married or divorced women points to the influence of male pheromones, natural chemicals in the animal kingdom that attract the opposite sex.

To find out whether either theory held water, Arnot and Mace examined data on nearly 3,000 women in the United States recruited in 1996 and 1997 to take part in a multi-decade health study. Known as SWAN, the project was designed to collect data and track changes — both biological and psychological — that occur alongside menopause.

The average age of the women going into the study was 46. None had entered menopause, but just under half were "peri-menopausal", with minor symptoms beginning to appear. During the following decade, 45 percent of the women experienced a natural menopause, at an average age of 52. Going into the study, nearly 78 percent of the women were married or in a relationship with a man, and 68 percent lived with their partner. — AFP

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

مستشفى دار الشفاء  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
Tele:1802 555

daralshifa  
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

**DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM**  
Consultant Pediatrician

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

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

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- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
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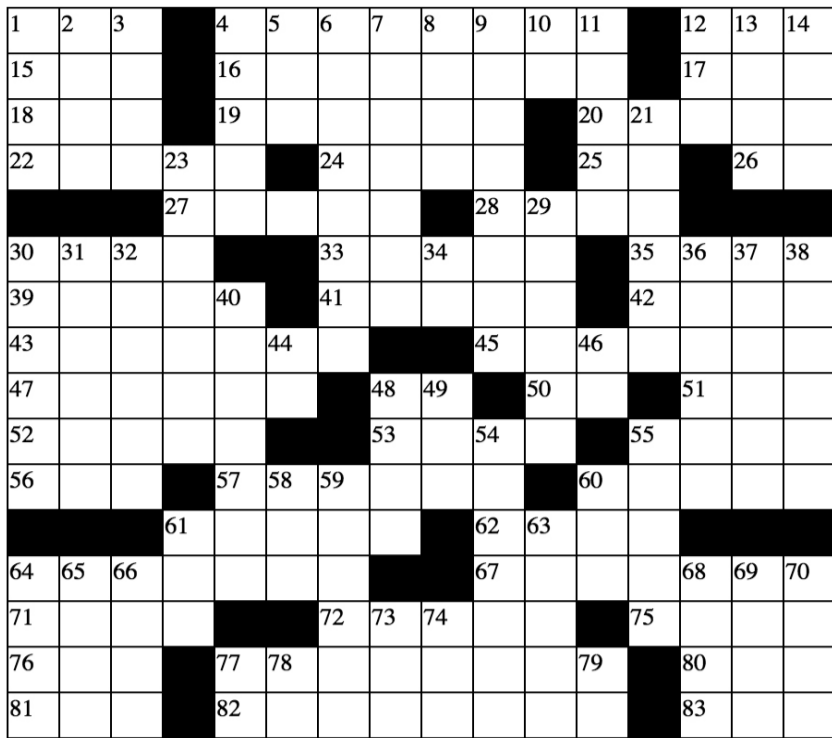
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2411



ACROSS

DOWN

- 1. A light touch or stroke.
4. Elder brother of Krishna.
12. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
15. The month following March and preceding May.
16. Semi-parasitic herb with purple or white or pink flowers.
17. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
18. The cry made by sheep.
19. An acutely pointed Gothic arch, like a lance.
20. A shade of brown with a tinge of red.
22. An ancient city in southeastern Greece.
24. A strong wind moving 45-90 knots.
25. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
26. A public promotion of some product or service.
27. The capital and largest city of Liechtenstein.
28. Capital and largest city and economic center of Peru.
30. A feeling of intense anger.
33. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
35. Not widely known.
39. A hard gray-black mineral consisting of corundum and either hematite or magnetite.
41. A drawing illustrating the relations between certain quantities plotted with reference to a set of axes.
42. A relative position or degree of value in a graded group.
43. An arrangement of flowers that is usually given as a present.
45. With eagerness.
47. Indian nun and missionary (born in Albania) dedicated to helping the poor in India (1910-1997).
50. 16 ounces.
51. The force of workers available.
52. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
53. The highest level or degree attainable.
56. The network in the reticular formation that serves an alerting or arousal function.
57. A mountain in the Himalayas in Nepal (27,790 feet high).
62. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
64. Of or relating to or characteristic of Monaco or its people.
67. An order of Eutheria.
71. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
72. Slanderous defamation.
75. The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
76. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
80. Perennial herb of East India to Polynesia and Australia cultivated for its large edible root yielding Otaheite arrowroot starch.
81. Mythical bird of prey having enormous size and strength.
82. An early Christian church designed like a Roman basilica.
83. A doctor's degree in education.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A goal that you've been working toward for a long time and in which you've placed a lot of hope and confidence, may suddenly seem in doubt today, Aries. This doesn't mean it's dead in the water by any means. It only means that for now you just need to work a little harder and rebuild your faith in it.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

A partner or colleague might be going through some changes right now, causing you to wonder if you have a future with this person. It might appear that you're moving ahead while this person is lagging behind.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

At this time you might be in the space where you tend to doubt concepts and attitudes that you've accepted all your life. You generally tend to be a service-oriented person, Gemini, and today you might want to help out someone close to you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Dreams and visions might give rise to the desire to be especially artistic and creative today, Cancer. Ideas for new artistic projects could be popping in and out of your head all day, and you might go into a panic doubting that you'll ever have the time to make any of your ideas a reality.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Successes over the past several weeks, along with an increase in money, might give rise to the desire to improve your living situation, Leo. You might have doubts, however, as to how best to go about doing it.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Stress from whatever work pressures you've been experiencing might cause you to feel a bit under the weather. Yet you're probably unwilling to take some time off because you're too concerned about finishing what you're doing in a timely manner.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Although almost everything in your life seems to be going well, Scorpio, today you just might find yourself in a bit of a panic. You might have a temporary fit of fear that your luck won't last.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Although almost everything in your life seems to be going well, Scorpio, today you just might find yourself in a bit of a panic. You might have a temporary fit of fear that your luck won't last.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today you might find yourself at a loss as to how to proceed with a particular task or project in which you're involved, Sagittarius. There might be a number of options open to you, all workable, and this could prove confusing.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Something may be troubling a family member, Capricorn, and this person doesn't seem inclined to talk about it. Your intuition seems to be temporarily blocked, so you can't figure it out for yourself.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Today you might feel as if you're living in a fog, Aquarius. Some interesting but puzzling news may come your way today. It might be information of such a bizarre nature that you find it difficult to accept, yet your source could be more than reliable.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Unexpected premonitions and gut feelings might prove too strong for comfort, Pisces, especially if they sense upcoming events that aren't all that pleasant. These feelings are sent to you not to worry you or cause upset but to give clues as to how to deal with the possibilities.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Types of Music 2

Find and circle all of the different types of music that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 15 letters spell an additional type of music.

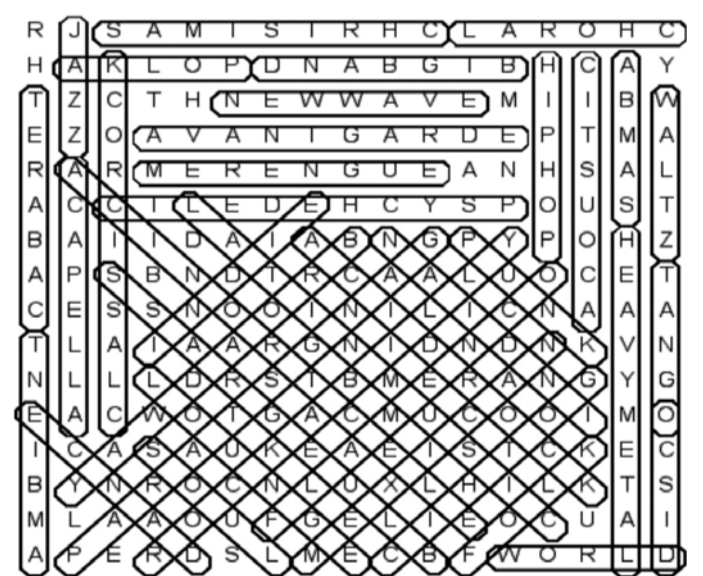


- ACID JAZZ, AFRICAN ALTERNATIVE, BEBOP, BLUES, BOLLYWOOD, BOSSA NOVA, BRAZILIAN, CELTIC, CHAMBER, CLASSICAL COUNTRY, DOO WOP, ELEVATOR, EUROPOP, EXPERIMENTAL, FOLK ROCK, FUNK, GOSPEL, GRUNGE, GYPSY, IRISH, MAMBO, MARIACHI, MIDDLE EASTERN, NEW AGE, NEW ORLEANS, OPERA, POP MUSIC, PROGRESSIVE, REGGAE, ROCK AND ROLL, SALSA, SURF, SWING, TECHNO, TRIP HOP, TROPICAL, URBAN, ZYDECO.

Yesterday's Solution

Types of Music 1

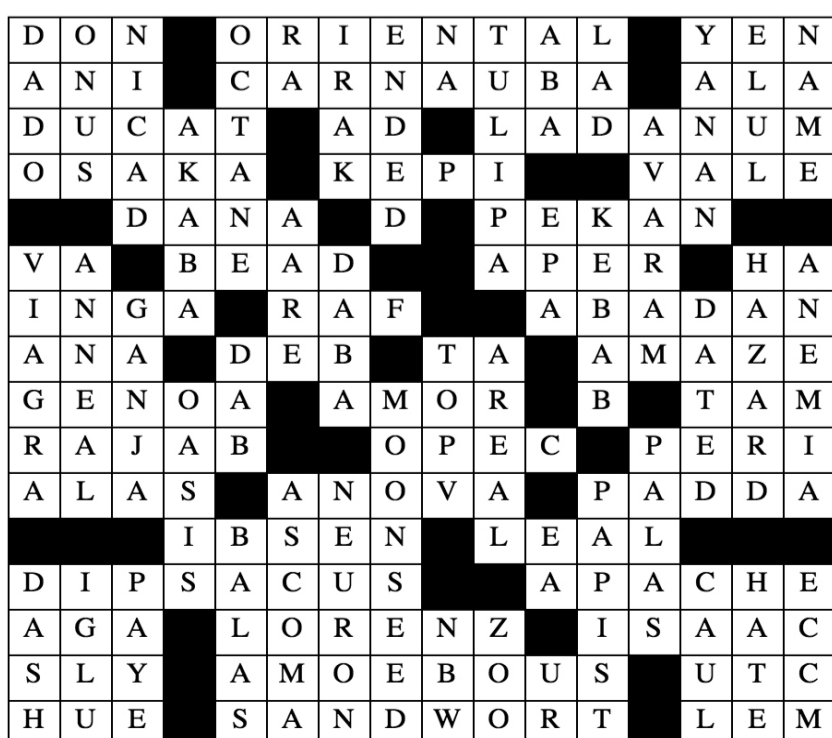
This is the solution to the puzzle located here.



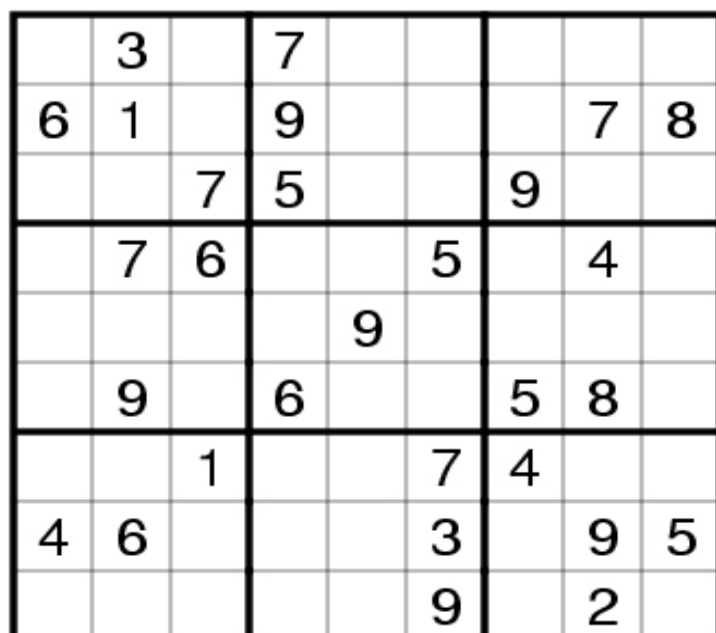
- ACAPPELLA, ACID ROCK, ACOUSTIC, AMBIENT, AVANT-GARDE, BIG BAND, BLUEGRASS, BROADWAY, CABARET, CHORAL, CHRISTMAS CLASSIC ROCK, DANCE, DISCO, ELECTRONICA, FLAMENCO, FOLK, GANGSTA RAP, GOTHIC, HEAVY METAL, HIP HOP, INDIAN, INDIE, JAZZ, LATIN MUSIC, LOUNGE, MERENGUE, MEXICAN, NEW WAVE, POLKA, PSYCHEDELIC, PUNK, ROCKABILLY, SAMBA, SOUL, TANGO, WALTZ, WORLD.

The hidden message is: RHYTHM AND BLUES

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



very hard

Yesterday's Solution



medium

# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2020



A woman walks past an apartment building with its wall covered with the graffiti by Russia's graffiti group Influx crew in a Moscow suburb on Tuesday. — AFP

## Silenced by sexual trauma, singer rediscovers her voice

Just as her career as a vocalist began taking off in 2013, singer Lucy Dhegrae found herself silenced, physically unable to produce the notes she once delivered with ease. Diagnosed with paresis of the vocal folds, a form of paralysis, the artist traced the condition threatening her future as a performer to a traumatic night a decade earlier, when she says she was drugged and raped as a first-year student at the University of Michigan.

"The moment of discovering that I couldn't sing - it felt like a death," Dhegrae told AFP in an interview at her apartment in Manhattan's Greenwich Village neighborhood. "It was just like my body saying, 'Okay, now you really have to deal with this. We're going to take away the one thing that you need, and that you use to make money, that you use to survive,'" she said. "It forced me to look at [the trauma], and honestly, I'm not sure I would have."

Dhegrae, who had kept her assault private, poured herself into research of her mysterious condition that doctors were unable to explain. She found articles that referred to sexual assault survivors who eventually lost their voices altogether after keeping silent for a period of time. She became an active volunteer with the US anti-sexual violence organization RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) and, through her research, learned survivors regained their ability to speak by starting to discuss their trauma.

"I knew at that time, because I had lost my singing voice and not my speaking voice, that I would need to sing about it," she said. She employed a range of healing techniques including meditation, breath work, massage, self-defense training and holistic alternative therapies. Dhegrae also developed "The Processing Series" of experimental voice concerts - already under way at Brooklyn's National Sawdust arts institution - that explore music's ability to help the body and mind deal with the impact of trauma.

"To heal trauma, we have to go beyond understanding it. It's beyond logic," she said. "Your brain can't make sense that all of a sudden, something horrible can happen to you at any time. You have to find a way to unravel that and to make your body whole, because your brain learns... to section off that memory."



Lucy Dhegrae rehearses on stage her "The Processing Series" at National Sawdust on Jan 11, 2020 in New York. — AFP

### 'Deep shame'

Advisors instructed Dhegrae to keep her vocal condition under wraps, saying it could "blacklist" her from getting hired, she said. "Discovering that I had paresis really echoed the experience of being assaulted," the 35-year-old said, saying she plunged into depression. "I wasn't supposed to tell anyone. That's a lot like rape... you don't know who to talk to about this deep shame." After years of therapy, Dhegrae hoped performing in her "Processing Series" concerts based on her own healing journey could help other survivors feel less alone.

"I had these really powerful experiences of physical recovery, of physical cohesiveness - feeling like you're separate and coming together again - that was something I wanted to share," she said. "I wanted to create a show that I would have wanted to see, that would have helped me in that moment, because in 2013 when I found out that I had paresis, I had no one to talk to," she continued. "If I had had one person to talk to... that would have made that period of my life just infinitely easier. I wanted to be that for other people."

### 'Raw' self

Dhegrae began working on "Processing"

years before the #MeToo movement that has ended the careers of a range of powerful men, including the disgraced Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein, whose Manhattan trial has begun. But the national conversation on sexual violence has fostered a larger community of people interested in art based on the theme, she said.

Dhegrae commissioned several composers to contribute pieces for her four-installment series of shows - experimental works written for voice that also feature instrumentals including saxophone, piano and violin as well as visual projections. At one point, the tall, lithe Dhegrae sings with square shoulders and a bold voice opposite a male vocalist, appearing to confront her trauma head-on.

One emotional piece entitled "She Gets to Decide" draws on the 1938 Ballhus painting "Therese Dreaming," which shows a girl sitting with her leg up on a chair, causing her skirt to slide above her thighs, revealing her underwear. In the work premiered in January, the artist sings a reference to the trial of Larry Nassar, a former doctor for the United States gymnastic team convicted of sexually assaulting minors.

"Leave your pain here," and go out and do your magnificent things". — AFP

## Meghan could face father in court over leaked letter

Prince Harry's wife Meghan could face her father in court over the publication of a letter she wrote to him, British media said yesterday, as she made a public appearance in Canada. Meghan launched legal action against The Mail on Sunday's publishers in October after the tabloid printed a handwritten letter it had been shown by Thomas Markle. The middle-market weekly newspaper has now issued its defense, leading to the possibility that Meghan and her father could be called to testify against each other.

Harry and Meghan are in the eye of a storm after sensationally quitting as full-time royals last week -before they had discussed their plans with Queen Elizabeth II. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, as they are also known, are now in talks with senior royals about how their wished-for new roles could work. Final details are due in the coming days. The prospect of a high court showdown only adds to the pressure on the couple.

Harry, sixth in line to the throne, married US former television actress Meghan at Windsor Castle in May 2018 following a whirlwind romance. Her father, an award-winning former lighting director now living in Mexico, did not attend the wedding after staging paparazzi photographs and being hospitalized with chest pains in the build-up.

The letter was written in Aug 2018 and published in Feb 2019 shortly after the US magazine People ran a story citing Meghan's friends talking about the letter, which shed light on her troubled relationship with her estranged father. Meghan launched her claim in

October last year towards the end of a well-received tour of southern Africa, overshadowing the couple's trip. She filed a claim against publishers Associated Newspapers over "the misuse of private information, infringement of copyright and breach of the Data Protection Act 2018".

Her lawyers said at the time that the publication was "part of a campaign by this media group to publish false and deliberately derogatory stories about her, as well as her husband." Should Meghan win, any damages will be donated to an anti-bullying charity. Harry said in an accompanying statement: "The contents of a private letter were published unlawfully in an intentionally destructive manner to manipulate you, the reader, and further the divisive agenda of the media group in question. They purposely misled you by strategically omitting select paragraphs, specific sentences, and even singular words to mask the lies they had perpetuated for over a year."

Newly revealed legal documents outlining The Mail on Sunday's defense show they will rely on evidence from Markle, including that he "had a weighty right to tell his version of what had happened". The paper's sister publication the Daily Mail said on its front page yesterday that Markle would be prepared to give evidence against his daughter. The Mail on Sunday also argues that publication of the letter was in response to the "one-sided" article in People - meaning the letter's existence was already in the public domain. — AFP

# Peace talks bring fragile truce in Nigeria 'bandit' conflict



A sick woman sits with her child at the Anka General Hospital where Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) is providing medical assistance to children and women in Anka, near Gusau, on Dec 4, 2019. — AFP photos



Members of the Yansakai vigilante group lay their weapons on the floor as they surrendered more than 500 guns to Zamfara State Governor Bello Matawalle as part of efforts to accept the peace process of the state government in Gusau on Dec 3, 2019.

Haruna Hasaman knew she only had moments to get away when the roar of motorbikes ruptured the quiet of her village in Zamfara state, northwest Nigeria. She scrambled for her five children and fled just as the gunmen screeched in and opened fire. "They killed many of the men," including her brothers and nephews, she said. Now more than eight months later, Hasaman and her children are among several thousand displaced people living in tents in the town of Anka.

The attack on her village was just one in a broader conflict that has seen gangs of Kalashnikov-wielding "bandits" terrorize remote communities for years in this impoverished region. "Even as we were running they were shooting. We will never go back," she said. Authorities say more than a thousand people lost their lives over the last year. In September, the UN said 40,000 people had fled to neighboring Niger.

Nigeria's central government tried responding with force, launching a string of military operations that involved airstrikes on bandit hideouts. But this failed to quell the violence - and when a new regional governor took office last year, there came a shift to negotiations. In September, Zamfara's government brokered a controversial peace deal to halt the spiral of violence between bandits and armed vigilante groups opposing them. For now, a fragile truce appears to be holding and the attacks have ebbed. "We had to do something," Zamfara state security advisor Abubakar Daura told AFP.

## Amnesty and arms

Unpicking the deep grievances, economic hardships and a proliferation of weapons that have fuelled the conflict is complex. The violence in Zamfara - where most of the four-million population live in remote villages - began as armed robbery and cattle rustling more than a decade ago, then spiralled as clashes over land and resources intensified between ethnic Fulani herders and local farmers. Eventually, it emerged into an insurgency of heavily

armed and mainly Fulani assailants, dubbed "bandits".

Exploiting a security vacuum, they launched attacks from forest hideouts, raiding, killing and kidnapping for ransom. The delicate peace is bringing some change. In his office, Zamfara advisor Daura showed off dozens of Kalashnikov rifles he said were among 2,000 guns handed in under an amnesty since the deal was struck. There are few details on what the bandits and vigilantes have been offered. Some fear the latest accord could unravel like previous agreements.

Some in neighboring regions already complain of an increase in violence, claiming the problem has simply been pushed elsewhere. Daura insists Zamfara's authorities were "not paying any bandit" but were instead looking to offer job opportunities in a region where unemployment is rife. Yet bandits and vigilantes told AFP that promises of both money and jobs have been made to them - and both sides admit they still retain weapons.

## 'Former bandits'

Until a few months ago 44-year-old Hassan Dantawaye was a wanted man. Camped in dense forests, for eight years he led a force of over 1,000 armed bandits. Now he is back home. "Before the peace agreement, you would never see me here," Dantawaye told AFP. "Since the government's intervention, we thank God, we can move freely," he said. "We can stop the killing. We are former bandits now, for peace."

Dantawaye described a campaign of attacks but insisted he only took up arms after hundreds of his Fulani kinsmen were killed. "What should we do, wait for them to keep attacking us?" he asked. Initially, to resource their fight they traded livestock for weapons with gun-runners in Niger.

## 'Many more weapons'

On the other side of the conflict are the Yansakai, local vigilantes who say they emerged to beat back the Fulani.



A sick child is weighed on a makeshift scale machine at the MSF clinic.

Previous authorities used to pay them to fight the "bandits" but the group has also been accused of widespread abuses. At a ceremony last month before regional governor Bello Matawalle, hundreds of the fighters unloaded sacks of Kalashnikovs and locally made hunting rifles as part of their promise to disarm. "We have given over 500 weapons," Sani Muhammed, a Yansakai leader, told AFP. "If there is peace, why would we have arms?"

The new regional government stopped the monthly payments worth some \$40, but fighters say they were promised cash handouts, jobs and an amnesty for petty crimes during negotiations. And for now they are still keeping hold of some guns. "We have many, many more weapons," Muhammed said. "If the bandits give their weapons, and keep their promise to end the killings, we will give the government our weapons too."

## 'Terrorizing us'

Zamfara's authorities say the state has returned to peace. Yet for thousands, still living in camps like in Anka,



A young boy dips his hand into a wooden object in search of food outside a makeshift tent at an internally displaced persons' camp in Anka on Dec 4, 2019.

the situation remains bleak. A clinic run by Doctors Without Borders (MSF) treats those in the camp and staff say the violence has exacerbated poverty and malnutrition in the region. "What people are experiencing is really like being thrown from the frying pan into the fire," Philip Aruna, Nigeria country director at MSF, told AFP.

Few in the camp expect peace to last. Sheltering from the sun, dozens of the displaced revealed pictures from their phones, sent from the towns they fled. They said they showed that armed bandits remain a constant presence, roving villages, demanding cattle and food and committing sexual abuses. "They are still in the bush," said Rahima Garba, 26. "In our villages, terrorizing us." — AFP



A member of the Yansakai vigilante group poses for a portrait with a gun inside the auditorium at the Zamfara State Government house.



A child stands next to drawings of helicopters on a wall outside the MSF clinic.



People stand between tents at the internally displaced persons' camp in Anka.

## Volunteer-run grocery revives rural French village

Like so many villages tucked in the folds of the French countryside, the centre of Sauxillanges faced a near-certain death. Surrounded by rolling hills in the rural Auvergne region known for its cheeses, the 1,250-strong community had one grocery store in the heart of the village. In 2016, the shop closed down, as had the pharmacy and the florist in its place before. As often can happen, the owner envisioned upscaling to a medium-sized supermarket located on the village's outskirts instead.

But a dozen inhabitants had other ideas. They decided to buy the shop, and in Sept 2017, a small cooperative called l'Alternateur (The Alternator) opened, run by volunteers - today, including a nurse, several teachers and pensioners - selling mostly organic and local products. The project received the blessing and support of mayor Vincent Challet, who is hoping to be re-elected March in local polls across France, which will be a major test for President Emmanuel Macron and his ruling party as they plan for a 2022 presidential vote expected to be a showdown with the far-right.

"The future of shops in rural areas is a

worry shared by many council members, because people don't want to live in the centre and would rather live on the outskirts," the 54-year-old said. "L'Alternateur is part of these alternative, eco-friendly experiences, which offer something different and local. It's a change of society... It's there that our future lies," he said, pointing out the artisan soap maker and the organic bakery, which recently opened.

Maxime Escot, 39, is a regular customer. He lives in the closest town, 13 km away, Issoire, and is willing to make the journey because he's looking for "organic products, a lack of intermediaries, a different economy" he would like to see more of elsewhere. "It works very well," he said. "The idea is to encourage village life."

## 'A lot of organization'

Pumpkins, marrows and nuts cohabit in the front window with tinsel and other festive decorations still in place in early January. Inside, Agathe Sartre, 75, dressed in an orange jumper and a beige apron, welcomes customers with laughing eyes behind her glasses and a warm smile. A tourist guide abroad for many years, she has been

living in Sauxillanges for the past seven years, and now transforms into a grocer several hours a week.

"We're all volunteers. Every month we sign up on the rota. The grocery shop needs four people a day, it's a lot of organisation," Sartre said. A large board hangs in front of her, with 60 volunteers' names slotted in under the days, which are divided into two shifts. Such a system allows the shop to open every day of the week. Inside, fruits and vegetables line up next to batches of refrigerated products.

On the shelves, sugar, flour, oil, cleaning products, tinned food and honey are all stacked. In total, there are more than 500 different items. L'Alternateur has set itself a golden rule: Not to compete with the other shops in the centre, namely a butcher's, three bakeries and a bookshop. "We try to sell a maximum of local and bulk products," said Sartre. Labels indicate how far the products have travelled: 10, 50 or more than 50 km.

"In 'Alternateur', there is 'terre' (earth in French) and 'alternative'," said the pensioner, with a warm smile. On delivery day, the volunteers - Mady, Line, Louis and Agathe - take the boxes from the street into a cold-storage room, which they acquired thanks to the first profits they made. Since opening, the enterprise has proven successful. "Sales are growing and we would like to find larger premises," said Mady Romero, a 75-year-old volunteer. — AFP



Volunteers work at the "Alternateur", the last grocery store of Sauxillanges village in the Puy de Dome region, central France, on Jan 2, 2020. — AFP photos



Models present creations by Off-White during the men's Fall/Winter 2020/2021 collection fashion show in Paris yesterday. — AFP photos

# Fashionistas grit their teeth and take the bus in strike-hit Paris

Paris men's fashion week began Tuesday with the French capital in a grip of a 41-day transport strike that has already led to the cancellation of one show. The men's collections dovetail into the elite haute couture shows next week, with the French label Christophe Josse so hit by the chaos that it was forced to bow out. "We found ourselves unable to present our collection," the label said, because of the delays which strikes caused with their suppliers.

As the elaborate haute couture creations are all made laboriously by hand in small workshops in and around Paris, the brand said it had no choice but to pull its show. The US label RR 331 had earlier given up its highly-coveted haute couture slot, although they denied that the French strikes had anything to do with their decision, saying "we will be back in Paris in July".

With many models and fashionistas crisscrossing Paris several times a day by taxi or metro in normal circumstances, the French fashion federation has doubled the number of buses it is laying on between shows. Even so, with up to 12 shows a day in the official line-up and many more outside it, the gridlock on the city's streets is likely to be highly disruptive.

### 'It's a nightmare'

A top stylist, who declined to be named, told AFP that the strikes were causing havoc in an industry where last-minute changes mean teams sometimes work around the clock to have clothes ready for the runway. "Getting around has become a nightmare. It all adds to what is even in the best of times an extremely stressful situation," she added.

Some of the temporary staff she hired for fashion weeks - often from Italy, Spain and Belgium - were reluctant to travel to the French capital to work given the rail disruption, she added. There were signs, however, Tuesday that the record-breaking strike over pension reforms may finally be easing. Despite the industrial action, Paris still dominates the

fashion landscape, with the 53 official men's runway shows dwarfing Brexit-hit London, Milan and New York.

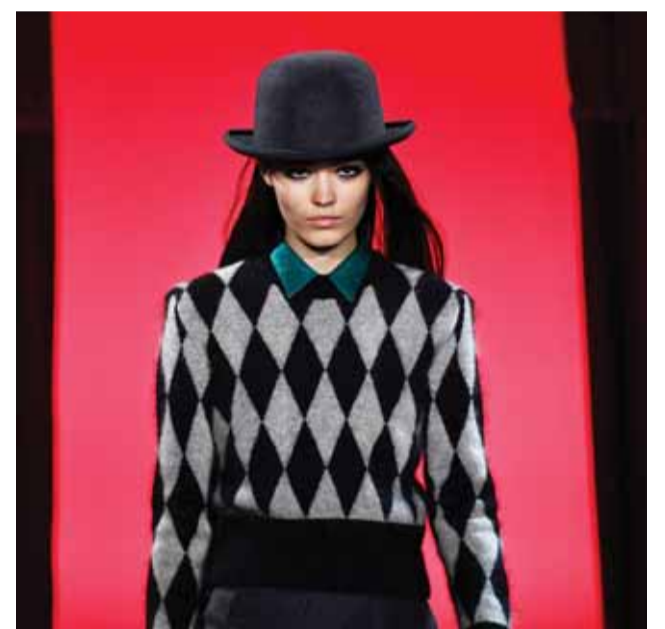
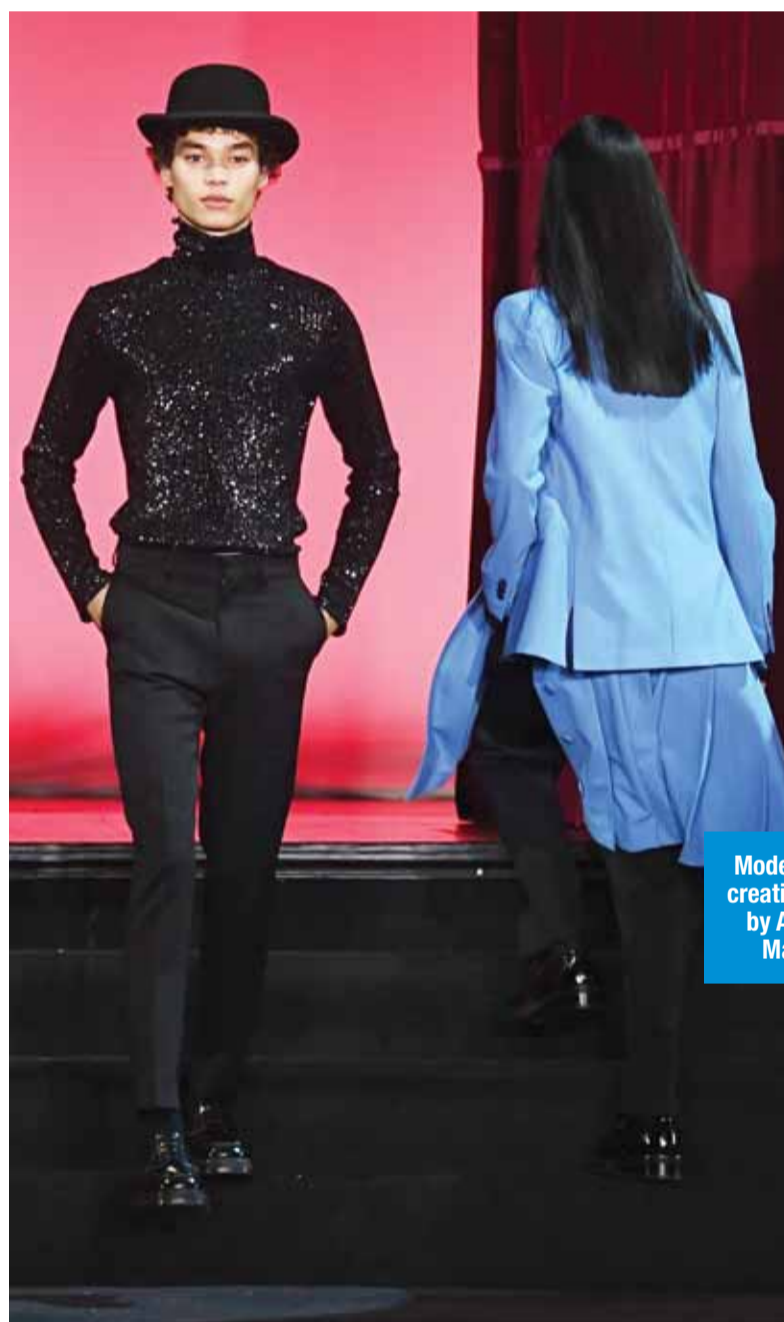
### Bowler hats

Men's fashion week kicked off Tuesday evening with the edgy Chinese label Sankuanz's heavily punk-inspired show thick with "Kill the wall" slogans. American West Coast rappers were later out in force for the Paris debut of Rhude, the label founded by Philippines-born designer Rhuigi Villaseñor. And Alexandre Mattiussi's Ami show brought the bowler hat back to the catwalk after a long absence in a co-ed show in a Paris theatre that was as romantic as the live accordion that accompanied it. The show began with taiko Japanese drumming, with Los Angeles-based Villaseñor telling AFP that he was out to create clothes that are practical and "timeless that will live through ages and trends".

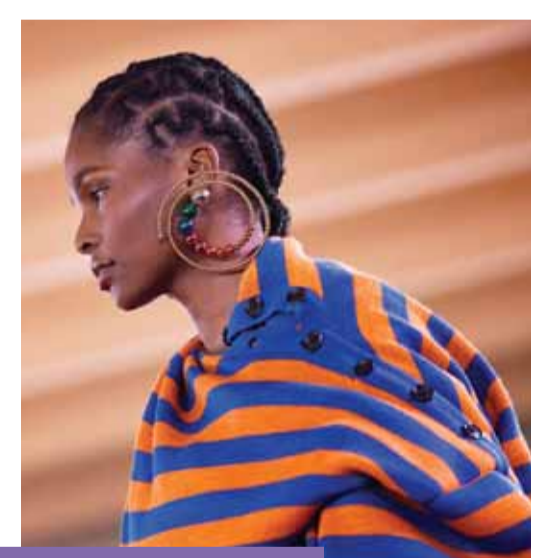
### Vuitton backwards clock

But the frenzied merry-go-round of shows and presentations began in earnest yesterday with big-hitters like JW Anderson, Raf Simons, Valentino and the hyperactive American Virgil Abloh. He staged his own Off-White show 24 hours before he unveils his collection for Louis Vuitton, which he also designs. With his millions of followers, Abloh has already won the week's social media war by sharing images of a Louis Vuitton clock that ticks backward in a countdown to his show which he has sent out as an invitation to the event.

He described it as a "literal piece of time" and fashionistas are already calling it a collector's item. "The clock is rewired to spin backwards," he said. "There's a metaphor in that, but also, as they say, 'A broke clock is right twice a day'." As well as his two fashion shows, the architect-turned-artist-turned-designer is also opening his latest art/furniture show at the Kreo gallery in the French capital. — AFP



Models present creations by Ami by Alexandre Mattiussi.



Models present creations by Y/PROJECT.



Models present creations by Rhude.



## Lifestyle | Cocktail

## Whitney Houston, Biggie among Rock Hall of Fame inductees

Pop icon Whitney Houston and rapper The Notorious B.I.G. are among this year's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees, the institution announced yesterday. The late legends are joined by the synth-pop act Depeche Mode and the industrial experimental group Nine Inch Nails, along with the 1970s rockers The Doobie Brothers and English glam rock band T-Rex. The 2020 class is marked by legendary artists who died young.

The Notorious B.I.G. - a pride of New York, widely considered one of the greatest rappers of all time - was inducted in his first year of eligibility, which comes 25 years after the release of an act's first commercial recording. The artist born Christopher Wallace and colloquially known as Biggie was murdered in 1997 in Los Angeles at age 24, in a still-murky shooting that some speculated was part of a feud between East Coast and West Coast rappers.

Houston, the most awarded female artist of all time, died at 48 years old in 2012 after a public struggle with drugs, following a decade that saw her go from America's sweetheart to tabloid drama queen. The induction of Houston and Biggie mark a continuation of the institution's broadening acceptance of genres into its ranks. Recent classes have included the rapper Tupac Shakur, Radiohead and Janet Jackson.

The organization founded in the early 1980s has faced criticism over the years, however, for its lack of diversity and limited recognition of women. During last year's gala, Jackson brought up the issue in her acceptance speech, saying "2020 - please induct more women". But just three women



Whitney Houston - The Notorious B.I.G.

were among the short-list of potentials this year: Houston, who made the cut, along with Pat Benatar and Rufus, featuring Chaka Khan.

The new class of inductees will be celebrated with the annual star-powered ceremony set for May 2 in the Hall of Fame's home city of Cleveland, Ohio. Inductees are chosen following a survey of more than 1,000 musicians, historians and industry members, who consider an act's career work, innovation, skill and influence in voting in new members. — AFP

## Italy street art batters faces of famous women

The battered faces of Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton and Angela Merkel stare out of posters in Milan created by Italian artist Alessandro Palombo to raise awareness of violence against women. The street art campaign is called "Just Because I am a Woman", and also feature US Democratic Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi and Sonia Gandhi, the head of India's main opposition party.

Palombo intends "to illustrate the drama that affects millions of women throughout the world... with the aim of denouncing, raising awareness and obtaining a real response from institutions and politics," his press office in a statement. "Violence against women is a global problem that affects everyone regardless of race, class or religion," the posters say.

The women, with bruised faces or bearing strangulation marks, testify: "I am

a victim of domestic violence, I am paid less, I have undergone genital mutilation, I don't have the right to dress as I want, I can't choose who I'm going to marry. I've been raped". The contemporary pop artist and activist, 45, is renowned for colorful, reflective and irreverent works and uses satirical art to raise awareness of social and cultural issues.

Among his most important works are "Disabled Disney Princesses" and "The Simpsons Go To Auschwitz". He launched the #BriefMessage campaign to mark International Women's Day, calling on women to denounce violence by writing a message on their underwear and sharing the photograph on social media. This latest campaign echoes one Palombo ran in 2015, which featured doctored photos of US celebrities such as actors Kirsten Stewart and Angelina Jolie and pop star Madonna. — AFP



People walk past "Just Because I am a Woman", a new series of works by Italian pop artist and activist Alessandro Palombo, depicting some of the women protagonists of world politics as victims of gender violence yesterday in downtown Milan: (Clockwise from top left) Burmese politician Aung San Suu Kyi, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, member of the US House of Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the wife of the French president Brigitte Macron, former US First Lady Michelle Obama, former US First Lady and former US secretary of state Hillary Clinton and president of the Indian National Congress Sonia Gandhi. — AFP

## Brazil gaming channel Loud tops YouTube 2019 newbies list

Eyes fixed on her smartphone screen, world champion gamer Barbara "Babi" Passos sits in a Sao Paulo mansion engaged in a fight to the death in the blockbuster Free Fire video game. Babi is among a dozen professional gamers playing in the Hunger Games-style contest for Brazil's video game channel Loud, which YouTube ranked as the most popular new channel in 2019 after it attracted 3.4 million subscribers in 10 months. Loud, launched by Bruno Oliveira Bittencourt last February, treats Babi and her teammates like elite athletes.

Players spend their days training for the battle royale game Free Fire and recording videos for Loud's channel as well as their own, which are also hugely popular on YouTube. Psychologists and performance coaches are regular visitors to the Loud house, where several players live, along with specialists in audiovisual production or social media. While the players appear to spend much of their time goofing around, the money generated by mobile games is no joke.

Mobile games were expected to pull in more than \$68 billion in revenue worldwide last year, Newszoo research group said in a mid-year report - 45 percent of the total video game market. Earnings are expected to top \$95 billion in 2022. Mindful of his players' potential earning power, Bittencourt picks his



Brazilian brothers Guilherme (left), 14, and Arthur, 11, play the mobile game Free Fire while watching professional players from the Loud YouTube channel at their house in Rio de Janeiro on Jan 3, 2019. — AFP

gamers for their on-camera charisma as well as their playing talent. "They were selected not only for their quality as players but also their ability to tell stories," Bittencourt told AFP.

Brazil a big player

Loud's gamers, aged in their twenties, travel around the world taking part in Free Fire competitions where individual prize money reaches tens of thousands of dollars. Free Fire, which has more than 450 million registered users, is a game where players fight for survival in a shrinking battlefield. Fans can watch the Loud team playing Free Fire or performing pranks on

each other in their spacious residence on their YouTube channels.

Two of the channels - including Babi's - were ranked in YouTube's top 10 most popular new channels last year. Bittencourt, better known by his gaming name Playhard, is a star in the mobile game market. His personal YouTube channel has more than 10 million subscribers with his 1,700 videos drawing more than one billion views. "When I created my channel in 2014, I realized that the videos with advice and analysis on mobile games were the most successful," Bittencourt, 25, said. — AFP

## Molang the chubby rabbit woos world on wave of niceness

A giggly white rabbit called Molang who loves nothing more than cuddles and helping his friends has become a global children's megastar. The ever-smiling character began as an emoji in South Korea before the French animation studio Millimages gave him new life as the star of his own quirky kids series four years ago. It has since become a global sensation not just for pre-school children at which it was first aimed, but also among teenagers and adults who have been swept up in its fluffball of cuteness.

"Molang" now shows in 190 countries including China and has been picked up by both Disney and Netflix. "Molang is a big round rabbit, who is extremely positive, imaginative and enthusiastic," said Marie-Caroline Villand, who developed the animated character from the emoji created by Yoon Hye-Ji. Molang and his best friend, a chick called Piu-Piu, are kindergarten Laurel and Hardys, forever getting themselves into a tizz in bite-sized five-minute adventures that always end with a smile.

Piu-Piu is "smaller, a little more nervous and shy," Villand told AFP at the Millimages Paris studio near the picturesque Canal Saint Martin,



A screen grab taken from an AFP video shows an editor working on an animation of the white rabbit called Molang at the French animation studio Millimages in Paris on Jan 13, 2020. — AFP

where some 100 animators work on the series. She also helped come up with the very particular language that the characters speak, which although utter nonsense is actually quite easy to understand. Molangese is a mix of French, Italian and Russian with a smattering of gibberish, which means anyone anywhere can understand it without need for dubbing. "The words are very clearly said and they come back all the time," said Villand, meaning fans quickly get the drift. — AFP

## Jeopardy! star Jennings crowned game show's greatest of all time



The three highest-earning Jeopardy! contestants of all time - Ken Jennings (left), Brad Rutter (right) and James Holzhauer attend ABC's Winter TCA 2020 Press Tour in Pasadena, California, on Jan 8, 2020. — AFP

A 45-year-old has been crowned the all-time greatest winner of US network ABC's long-running game show Jeopardy! Ken Jennings won his third victory in four matches on Tuesday to claim the special edition tournament title - and a \$1 million prize - over his two rivals, James Holzhauer and Brad Rutter. "I vow to be the People's Champ," Jennings tweeted after the show, before going on to credit the talents of his fellow competitors. "If we ran this tournament back a dozen times, you'd probably see a differ-

ent winner each time. Brad and James are just that good."

The new all-time-greatest winner from Washington state, also alluded to the uncertainty surrounding the future of the show's long-time host, Alex Trebek, wishing him to continue in the role "for a thousand years." Trebek, 79, was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer in March last year but has since received treatment and told the Television Critics Association that he has no plans to retire "in the near future." — AFP

## Explore Taiwan as a hiker's paradise

Taiwan is an island with a great network of hiking trails. Spanning across coastal views and dense forests, up in the high mountains or down in the valleys, Taiwan's hiking trails will allow you to see the best the country has to offer. Ready to get fit and healthy this year?

Yushan National Park: Mount Yushan, also known as Mount Jade, is the tallest peak in Taiwan and in Northeast Asia. From the trailhead, you can reach the summit in two days. Spend the night at Paiyun Lodge before starting on this trail which is bucket-listed by most people to see the picturesque panoramic views.

Taroko Gorge National Park: Taroko Gorge is one of the amazing natural wonders of Asia offering plenty of opportunities for adventure seekers. Whether you're hiking along a turquoise river at the bottom of the thousand-foot-high marble walls or along a tiny path clinging to a steep mountainside, you will come back with stunning pictures and great stories. Quingshui Cliff is the place in Taroko National Park where you can witness the three distinct color tones that make up the Pacific Ocean.

Hehuanshan National Forest Recreation



Area: Driving on the Central Cross-Island Highway up to Wuling Pass, you will find yourself in the 'saddle' between two of Mount Hehuan's most picturesque peaks: East Peak and Main Peak with access to their trailheads. Another accessible and popular leisure hiking trail in the forest recreation area leads up to Mount Shimen, which requires just 30 minutes to an hour to hike and features exceptional views of the Liwu and Hehuan Rivers.

Alishan National Forest Recreation Area: To the west of Yushan National Park is the Alishan National Forest Recreation Area: Located in the middle between Taichung and Tainan, Alishan's sunrise is different during the four seasons. Lush green forests that go far beyond, mysterious changing clouds, rushing waterfalls, hillside tea farms and indigenous villages

are enough to amaze the tourists. Alishan can be explored through three main themes. 'Alishan Highway' 'Northwestern Corridor' and 'Tsou villages. Early risers will want to book the early morning train to Zhushan to witness the sunrise over Alishan's famous sea of clouds. A very popular destination, it offers easy to moderate hiking trails as well as plenty of opportunities for leisure and relaxation.

Jianning Lake National Trail: One of Taiwan's other iconic lakes is located at the edge of Yushan National Park. Officially called Jianning Lake, this glacier-carved lake is also known as "Angel's Tear which you need to plan as a three-day hike. This trail is for experienced backpackers only, so you'll have to plan accordingly with passing over the cliffs.



# Classifieds

Thursday, January 16, 2020



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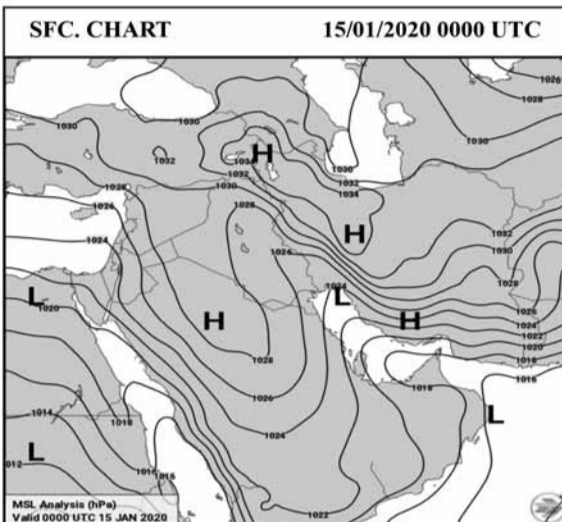
### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

**BY NIGHT:** Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING		No Current Warnings	
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STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	20 °C	11 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20 °C	07 °C
ABDALY	20 °C	05 °C
BUBYAN	20 °C	08 °C
JAHRA	19 °C	08 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	19 °C	11 °C
AHMADI	19 °C	09 °C
NUWASIB	21 °C	07 °C
WAFRA	20 °C	07 °C
SALMY	19 °C	02 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	01/16	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear	20 °C	07 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Friday	01/17	Fair and Partly cloudy	22 °C	13 °C	SE	12 - 45 km/h
Saturday	01/18	Fair and Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for light rain at times	22 °C	11 °C	SE-NW	12 - 40 km/h
Sunday	01/19	Fair	21 °C	09 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:20
Sunrise	06:44
Zuhr	11:57
Asr	14:52
Sunset	17:11
Isha	18:33

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT		
MAX. Temp.		17 °C
MIN. Temp.		07 °C
MAX. RH		72 %
MIN. RH		41 %
MAX. Wind	N	60 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.		0 mm

### Hospitals

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

### Clinics

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

### CHANGE OF NAME

**Request** for name correction on my passport Syed Mohammad Ehtesham Haider S/o S. M. Jamal Hyder change to S. M. Ehtsham Hyder, Indian national, Passport number R5452372. (C 5612)

**Add Naigaon** Christian Wadi Vasdi (W) Dist Palghat 401207 and I hereby declare that henceforth I will be called known and distinguished by my new name L.C. Austin Fullaji Baretto (Gazette No. X-26640) place vasat. (C 5611)

**I have** change my name from Shaikh Aslam Shaika Farid to Shaikh Aslam Shaikh Farid. (C 5613) 16-1-2020

**I, Sreedharan** Aniyann Kumbalaparambil, holder of Indian Passport No. M9886020 issued at Embassy of India, Kerala, India, and presently residing in Kuwait hereby declare my given name is Aniyann and surname is Kumbalaparambil Sreedharan. (C 5609)

**I, Mohammad** Samsad Alam holder of Indian Passport No. M8779222 & Civil ID No. 286010153306 has changed my name from Mohammad Samsad Alam to Mohammad Shamsad (Given name) Alam (Surname) hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Mohammad Shamsad Alam. (C 5610) 14-1-2020

**I Arackal** Vared Beena, holder of Indian Passport No. K7038262 issued at Kuwait on 12/07/2012, permanent address, Arackal House, no. 582, Kakkullisseri, PO. Thrissur, Kerala and presently residing at Kuwait do here by change my name as Given name: Beena Vareded, Surname: Arackal.

**I Padamadan** Antony Jose, Father of Kevin Jose Padamadan holder of Indian Passport No. 59919434 issued at Kuwait on 21/10/2018, Permanent address of Padamadan House, Pallikunnu, Varandarappilly PO, Thrissur District, Kerala - 680303,

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India. Presently residing at Kuwait do here by changes as follows: Given name: Kevin Jose, Surname: Padamadan.

**I Padamadan** Antony Jose, holder of Indian Passport No. P7115988 issued at Kuwait on 02/01/2017, Permanent address of Padamadan House, Pallikunnu, Varandarappilly PO, Thrissur District, Kerala - 680303, India. Presently residing at Kuwait do here by changes as follows: Given name: Jose Antony, Surname: Padamadan. (C 5605)

**I Abdullah** S/o Abdullah Tanwar holder of Indian Passport No. M1802552 & Civil ID No. 293011803513 has changed my name from Abdullah to Abdullah (given name) Tanwar (surname) hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Abdullah Tanwar. (C 5606)

**I Ceeyantagath** Mannangadiyan Ashraf, F/o Alameen Ceeyantagath Mannangadiyan Ashraf. Residing at Ceeyam New House, Ayikara, Poovalap, Cannanore 17, Kerala, holder of Passport No: R2316678 issued at Kuwait on 26.03.17 have changed my minor son's name as Alameen Ashraf Ceeyantagath Mannangadiyan.

### SHARING ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation for Filipino ONLY Farwaniya block 4, near Big Jamia, available on December 25, Contact 55571873. 10-1-2020

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page ([www.kuwait-airport.com.kw](http://www.kuwait-airport.com.kw))

### DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION



### Flight Schedule

Airlines	Arrival Flights on Thursday 16/1/2020	Time	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	FDB	071	Dubai	23:40	IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00
IGO	1757 Kocbi	00:10	KAC	742	Dammam	14:35	KAC	564	Amman	23:55	SYR	342	Damascus	13:00
AIC	989 Mumbai	00:10	FDB	8065	Bahrain	14:40	KAC	351	Kocbi	00:01	MSR	611	Doha	13:00
JZR	254 Amman	00:45	KAC	774	Riyadh	14:40	KAC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05	SAW	702	Cairo	13:25
THY	772 Istanbul	00:50	KAC	672	Dubai	14:40	AIC	503	Jeddah	00:05	KAC	781	Damascus	13:30
JZR	734 Cairo	00:50	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45	JZR	215	Jeddah	00:05	KAC	123	Jeddah	13:30
PGT	858 Istanbul	00:55	PGT	7289	Istanbul	14:45	JZR	215	Jeddah	00:05	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
KAC	102 London	00:55	KAC	118	New York	14:50	MSC	406	Sohag	00:15	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KAC	504 Beirut	01:05	KAC	204	Lahore	14:55	QTR	1093	Doha	00:25	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15
DLH	625 Dammam	01:30	KAC	618	Doha	15:00	FDB	072	Doha	00:35	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
RJA	642 Amman	01:40	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:10	JZR	409	Delhi	00:50	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
THY	764 Istanbul	01:50	JZR	602	Baku	15:10	AIC	990	Mumbai	01:10	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	15:00
IGO	1759 Delhi	01:55	KAC	792	Madinah	15:10	IGO	1758	Kocbi	01:10	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
JZR	722 Alexandria	01:55	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	PGT	111	Doha	01:55	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
UAE	853 Dubai	02:15	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:25	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:00	FDB	8066	Dubai	15:40
ETH	620 Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR	222	Riyadh	15:30	KAC	677	Dubai	02:10	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:45
GFA	211 Bahrain	02:30	JZR	232	Dammam	15:30	JZR	773	Istanbul	02:20	PGT	7290	Istanbul	15:45
KLM	446 Bahrain	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	JZR	119	Dubai	02:25	KAC	673	Dubai	15:50
QTR	1086 Doha	02:40	JZR	612	Tbilisi	15:40	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:30	SVA	501	Jeddah	16:00
OMA	643 Muscat	02:55	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:40	KAC	417	Manila	02:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
KKK	1268 Istanbul	03:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	IGO	1765	Abu Dhabi	02:55	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
PGT	860 Istanbul	03:05	JZR	732	Cairo	15:50	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:20
ETD	305 Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	562	Amman	15:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40	KAC	283	Dhaka	16:25
MSR	612 Cairo	03:15	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:30
ETH	211 Bahrain	04:00	JZR	152	Cairo	16:00	QTR	1087	Istanbul	04:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
QTR	1076 Doha	04:00	IRA	607	Masjjhad	16:25	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:35
IGO	1751 Chennai	04:10	JZR	212	Jeddah	16:25	QTR	1087	Doha	04:00	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:45
KAC	418 Manila	04:25	FEG	241	Alexandria	16:35	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00	JZR	103	Bahrain	16:50
OHY	352 Istanbul	04:30	QTR	1072	Doha	16:35	KAC	621	Doha	04:05	JZR	735	Cairo	16:50
KAC	796 Madinah	04:40	JZR	116	Doha	16:40	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	KAC	503	Beirut	17:05
KAC	302 Mumbai	04:40	FDB	051	Dubai	16:45	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:25	IRA	666	Esfahan	17:25
JZR	540 KTM	04:45	KAC	546	Cairo	16:45	JZR	713	Sohag	04:30	KAC	619	Doha	17:35
JZR	406 Kocbi	04:45	SAW	705	Damascus	17:00	KKK	1269	Istanbul	04:35	KAC	357	Kochi	17:35
KAC	310 Cairo	04:50	KAC	164	MXP	17:25	LMU	511	Cairo	04:40	FEG	242	Alexandria	17:40
FDB	069 Dubai	05:00	FEG	341	Sohag	17:20	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10	JZR	405	Kochi	17:40
DHX	170 Bahrain	05:10	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	358 Kocbi	05:10	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:30	FDB	052	Dubai	17:45
JZR	404 Hyderabad	05:10	KNE	531	Jeddah	17:40	KAC	203	Lahore	05:45	JZR	539	KTM	17:50
KAC	784 Jeddah	05:20	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:45	JZR	101	Bahrain	05:50	KAC	563	Amman	17:55
KAC	382 Delhi	05:20	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	THY	771	Istanbul	06:25	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
THY	770 Istanbul	05:25	JZR	302	Istanbul	18:15	JZR	121	Dubai	06:35	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
KAC	284 Dhaka	05:35	FDB	063	Dubai	18:15	JZR	251	Amman	06:40	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
JZR	112 Doha	05:35	JZR	124	Dubai	18:20	LMU	511	Cairo	06:40	KAC	503	Kocbi	18:10
JZR	216 Jeddah	05:50	KAC	158	Istanbul	18:25	RJA	643	Amman	06:55	NIA	625	Asyut	18:10
KAC	106 London	06:00	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
KAC	332 Trivandrum	06:05	QTR	1080	Doha	18:30	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15	FEG	342	Sohag	18:20
JZR	402 Mumbai	06:05	JZR	306	Istanbul	18:55	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:30	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:20
KAC	344 Chennai	06:10	RJA	640	Amman	19:10	KAC	167	Paris	07:35	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	362 Colombo	06:30	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:20	IGO	1767	Mumbai	08:10	KNE	532	Jeddah	18:30
KAC	544 Cairo	07:00	RBG	555	Alexandria	19:25	KAC	173	Munich	08:20	KAC	300	Mumbai	18:35
BAW	157 London	07:05	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25	JZR	113	Dubai	08:30	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	878 Dubai	07:05	NIA	611	Cairo	19:30	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
IGO	1766 Mumbai	07:10	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	JZR	001	Doha	08:35	KAC	387	Delhi	18:45
KAC	206 Islamabad	07:10	QTR	1090	Doha	19:35	KAC	163	MXP	09:00	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:55
JZR	120 Dubai	07:35	KAC	744	Dammam	19:35	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:00	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
FDB	053 Dubai	07:50	KAC	782	Jeddah	19:50	BAW	156	London	09:10	JZR	253	Amman	19:20
ABY	129 Sharjah	07:50	JZR	104	Bahrain	19:55	JZR	731	Cairo	09:10	KAC	691	Muscat	19:30
QTR	8511 Doha	08:00	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	20:00	QTR	1085	Doha	09:30	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	354 Bengaluru	08:10	KNE	381	Dubai	20:00	KAC	545	Cairo	09:30	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	622 Doha	08:30	OMS	225	Muscat	20:05	JZR	601	Istanbul	09:30	JZR	725	Alexandria	19:40
UAE	855 Dubai	08:35	KAC	776	Riyadh	20:05	KAC	671	Dubai	09:35	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
ETD	301 Abu Dhabi	08:55	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05
JZR	102 Bahrain	08:55	QTR	1088	Doha	20:30	KAC	101	London	09:45	RJA	641	Amman	20:10
IRA	667 Esfahan	09:00	KAC	616	Bahrain									

# As Iranian missiles battered Iraq base, US lost eyes in sky

**IRAQ:** Moments after volleys of Iranian missiles began to batter Iraq's Ain al-Asad airbase, US soldiers at the desert facility lost contact with their ultra-powerful - and expensive - eyes in the sky. At the time the attack was launched at 1:35 am on Jan 8, the US army was flying seven unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) over Iraq to monitor bases where US-led coalition forces are deployed. They included MQ-1C Gray Eagles, advanced surveillance drones that can fly for as long as 27 hours and carry a payload of up to four Hellfire missiles.

"We thought it may lead to a ground assault, so we kept the aircraft up," said one of the pilots, 26-year-old Staff Sergeant Costin Herwig. Herwig was flying a Gray Eagle when the first Iranian missile struck the base, retaliation for the Jan 3 killing of top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in a US drone strike in Baghdad. Most of the other 1,500 US soldiers had been tucked away in bunkers for two hours, after advance warning from superiors.

But 14 pilots had stayed in dark containers-turned-cockpits to remotely fly the "birds" and monitor essential feeds from their high-powered cameras. The first missile blasted dust into their shelter but the pilots stayed put, Herwig told AFP during a press tour of the base organized by the coalition. The next rounds came closer and closer, and the light-haired soldier recalled that he had "accepted fate". "We thought we were basically done," he said.

## There was no control

But the real crisis was yet to come. The volleys of missiles, which soldiers said lasted about three hours, slammed into sleeping quarters directly adjacent to the pilots' operations rooms. "No more than a minute after

the last round hit, I was heading over to the bunkers on the far back side and saw the fire was burning all through our fibre lines," said First Sergeant Wesley Kilpatrick. Those lines link the virtual cockpits to antennas then satellites that send signals to the Gray Eagles and pull the cameras' feeds back onto the screens at Ain al-Asad. "With the fibre lines burnt, there was no control," said Kilpatrick.

The soldiers could no longer locate the drones and were left blind to events in the air - and on the ground. If a drone had been shot down, for example, the besieged teams at Ain al-Asad could not have known. "It's a pretty big deal, because it's so expensive and there's a lot of stuff on them that we don't want other people to have or the enemy to get," said Herwig. A single Gray Eagle costs around \$7 million, according to 2019 army budget estimates. They have been used in Iraq since at least 2017 by the coalition to help fight the Islamic State group.

The coalition is required to get a green light from the Iraqi government to fly drones and planes, but those permissions had expired several days before the Iran attacks. The US army had kept the drones in the air anyway, a senior American defense official told reporters, after months of rocket attacks on Iraqi bases where their forces are based.

## Beat the clock

As the bombs crashed closer on Jan 8 and with the drones unaccounted for, the pilots finally clambered into bunkers. But as soon as the blasts stopped, they rushed back out, now facing a race against time to get their signals up and running so they could find - and land - the Gray Eagles. As dawn started to break, soldiers scrambled to replace 500 m of melted fibre

ardizes the stability of the entire region," he said.

"What's more, it risks massive disruptions of the entire global economy including markets, but threatens a resurgence of terrorism across the world." The alarm was among a raft of other warnings by King Abdullah, a pro-Western leader whose country is a haven of relative stability in a Middle East roiled by proxy conflicts, sectarian violence and competition between powers inside and outside the region.

Urging greater leadership and "patience" to address the tensions, Abdullah expressed concern about developments in Syria and Iraq. "What if Syria remains hostage to global rivalries and spirals back into civil conflict? What if we see a reemergence of ISIS and Syria becomes a staging ground for attacks against the rest of the world?" he asked. Turmoil in Iraq, he said, risked tipping that country into a cycle of "recovery and relapse - or, worse yet, conflict".

## US-Iran war would bring 'untold chaos', warns Jordan's king

**STRASBOURG, France:** A war between the US and Iran would wreak "untold chaos" on the world, Jordan's King Abdullah II warned yesterday, in a speech to European lawmakers on the tensions boiling across the Middle East. Although Washington and Tehran are currently in a standoff after tit-for-tat military actions over the past two weeks, the king told the European Parliament that the danger has not passed. "What if next time neither side steps back from the brink, dragging us all towards untold chaos? An all-out war jeopardizes the stability of the entire region," he said.

## Lebanon banks vandalized in...

Continued from Page 1

anti-government protests began on October 17 demanding sweeping reforms. Demonstrators have turned their anger at the banks, most of which have imposed informal capital controls to stave off a liquidity crunch amid Lebanon's worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war.

Yesterday morning in Hamra, most branches were left with smashed windows, destroyed ATMs and graffiti-daubed walls, after what the Association of Banks condemned as a "savagely" onslaught. Banks opened despite the wreckage, as cleaners scrubbed paint off walls and workers replaced smashed windows. "There is a lot of anger," Alia, a passerby, told AFP in front of a damaged branch. "You have to go to the bank twice to withdraw just \$200."

Yesterday evening, demonstrators gathered in front of the central bank and a police station where the detainees are held, demanding the release of arrested relatives and comrades. A few were released but more than 50 were still detained, activists said. Protesters also lit fires and blocked a key flyover in central Beirut, an AFP photographer said.

Since September, banks have limited the amount of dollars customers can withdraw or transfer abroad, in a country where the greenback and the Lebanese are used interchangeably. Although no formal policy is in place, most lenders have limited withdrawals to around \$1,000 a month, while others have imposed tighter curbs. Prompted by a grinding liquidity crisis, the controls are increasingly forcing

## HRW details 'rights abuses'...

Continued from Page 1

Khannah was among 16 people convicted by the court of cassation in July 2018 and sentenced to two to three-and-a-half years in prison with labor over storming the parliament and calling for the country's prime minister to resign during a 2011 protest. On Nov 5, Khannah was released from detention with an Amiri pardon.

In its review of the situation of migrant workers in Kuwait, the report points out the Philippines' temporary ban on Filipinos seeking to migrate to Kuwait for work issued in January 2018 in the aftermath of reported deaths of domestic workers in the country. The ban was lifted in May 2018 after both countries agreed on additional legal protections for Filipino workers in Kuwait.

## Kuwait Aviation Show opens with...

Continued from Page 1

in the show that will continue till Jan 18, with more than 60,000 visitors expected to attend.



AIN AL-ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq: A picture taken on Jan 13, 2020 during a press tour shows US army drones at this air-base in the western Iraqi province of Anbar. — AFP

cables and reprogram satellites so they could reconnect to the UAVs.

Last step? Land the "birds". The Iranian ballistic missiles had punched holes across Ain al-Asad's airfield and the control tower was empty. "The airfield was shut down so we had to land without talking to anybody. We didn't know where any (other) aircraft was. That part was pretty stressful," said Herwig. The priority was one Grey Eagle that had been scheduled to land just as the

missile attack began, and which stayed flying through-out until it was worryingly low on fuel.

The pilots worked for hours to land each drone one by one, their adrenaline pumping even as other soldiers were recovering, showering and assessing the damage. At around 9:00 am, the final drone was brought down to earth. "We landed all our own birds back on site," said Kilpatrick, smiling in relief and pride. "It was quite a feat." — AFP

He also homed in on Libya, one of the biggest foreign policy issues facing the EU along with Iran. "What if Libya collapses into an all-out war, and ultimately a failed state? What if Libya is the new Syria, just much closer to the continent you all call home?" he asked, saying such scenarios needed to be addressed now to prevent them becoming reality.

The Jordanian monarch, who carries the hereditary title of "custodian" of holy Muslim and Christian sites in Jerusalem, also stressed to MEPs that Israel was trying to "impose an unthinkable solution" over Palestinians as hopes fade for a two-state solution backed by the international community. He said Israel's construction of settlements in occupied Palestinian territory and "disregard of international law" could be summed up as "one state turning its back on its neighborhood, perpetuating divisions among peoples and faiths worldwide". — AFP

## Philippines slaps total ban on...

Continued from Page 1

An officer at the Philippine Embassy told Kuwait Times on the condition of anonymity that the final decision hasn't arrived yet at her office, but the directive has been circulated publicly. "Vacationing skilled and professional workers will be allowed to come back, as they are exempted from the ban, but no new recruitment will be allowed. Our advice to vacationing domestic helpers is to look for alternative country to work," she said.

Part of the decision signed by the POEA governing board reads: "Based on the autopsy report of the National Bureau of Investigation on the death of Villavende, the OFW was sexually abused and brutally murdered, which is contrary to the inadequate autopsy report of the Kuwait ministry of health. Upon proper determination, the ban to be imposed should be total on the deployment of newly-hired domestic helpers or household service workers, semi-skilled workers, skilled workers and professionals, except for skilled

## UAE tourist visa scam traps Indians...

Continued from Page 1

has further fuelled the scam, a United Nations official said on condition of anonymity. Indian migration into the Gulf has been steady for decades but using tourist visas to abuse workers is new, activists say. Anuradha Vobbilisetty - who works on migrant labor cases in Dubai courts - said she had supported about 270 workers on tourist visas since 2018 who had not been fully paid.

Whereas work permits are issued by embassies and leave a paper trail, visit visas are sold by hotels and airlines, giving workers no rights and freeing employers from all responsibility. "Their passports were taken by agents at the airport itself, they didn't get paid for months," Vobbilisetty said. "But they continued working without salaries as they feared complaining about working illegally," she said, adding that 227 of the workers ended up being paid after the police stepped in.

The number of complaints made by Indian migrant workers against recruiters relating to jobs overseas tripled to more than 600 between 2016 and 2019, according to government data. Many Indian workers in the Gulf - from cleaners to builders - say they have spoken to the government and charities about abuses from withholding wages and debt bondage to torture.

More than a third of the UAE's registered 8 million migrant workers were Indian as of 2017, the latest UN data shows. Yet the number of Indians going to the UAE, at least officially, has dropped due to an economic crunch and the rising use of visit visas, India's external affairs ministry has said. India's consul general in Dubai

workers and professionals who are categorized as 'balik manggagawa' (returning workers) and those exempted by the DOLE Secretary.

"Thus the DOLE Secretary directed the POEA to impose a total ban on the deployment of the above-mentioned workers bound to Kuwait. The new decision to impose a total ban has already been communicated with President Rodrigo Duterte. The president is solely relying on the recommendation made by the ministry of labor."

In Feb 2018, the Philippine government had announced a total ban on all Filipino workers bound to Kuwait after the body of Joanna Demafelis, a 29-year-old Filipino maid, was found in the freezer of her employers' house in Hawally. The ban was only lifted after the two countries agreed to sign bilateral agreements on domestic help concerns.

The killing of Villavende is the latest in a series of abuses faced by Filipino workers in the Middle East, the main destination for about 3,000 Filipinos who leave the country daily on temporary foreign work permits. Women tend to work as domestic workers while men are mostly employed in construction and other sectors. Around 10 million Filipinos are migrant workers overseas and their remittances account for more than 10 percent of the country's GDP.

- the UAE's most populous city - said workers using the official channel are protected as details of the employer and the recruitment agent are recorded.

UAE embassy officials in India said they had no record of migrants working in the country after entering on visit visas. Some smaller employers cut corners and save costs with the visit visas, said Suresh Kumar Madhusudan of the Federation of Overseas Recruitment Associations of India, an umbrella group. Many employers also use visit visas to hire workers quickly then convert them to work permits, according to activists.

Mohammad Pasha lodged a police complaint in Telangana last November against a job agent who arranged a supermarket job for him in Dubai on a visit visa. When asked by police at Mumbai airport if he was going for work, Pasha lied and said he was sightseeing as the recruiter said he risked jail if the authorities discovered the truth. Pasha said he worked 16 hours days without overtime and was paid 800 dirhams (\$218) monthly, not the 1,000 promised - but his employer warned him to keep quiet.

"They said I would be behind bars if I spoke up," he said by phone from Telangana. "I wanted to approach the labor court but I was scared as I was working illegally on a visit visa." After three months in Dubai, Pasha gathered enough money to fly home. Telangana police said they had arrested the agent and his accomplice - who had got Pasha the job and his visa - for fraud and launched awareness raising campaigns in villages. "We are telling them (would-be migrants) that these (visit) visas are different from job visas," said officer Upender Reddy.

Bheem Reddy, of the Emigrants Welfare Forum, questioned whether Indian authorities were being vigilant enough when examining migrants leaving the country to work abroad. "It is visible whether they are real tourists or going for employment," he said. "A visibly poor laborer going in slippers for tourism ... how is this being allowed?" — Reuters



STRASBOURG, France: Jordanian King Abdullah II delivers a speech at the European Parliament yesterday. — AFP



Sports

# Penguins hammer Wild in Crosby's return from injury

## Draisaitl, Archibald lead Oilers past Predators

**PITTSBURGH:** Pittsburgh captain Sidney Crosby had a goal and three assists in his return from injury, and Evgeni Malkin added two goals and an assist Tuesday as the Penguins trounced the visiting Minnesota Wild 7-3. Crosby, who had sports hernia surgery, missed the previous 28 games. Jared McCann, Bryan Rust and Dominik Simon each added a goal and an assist, and Alex Galchenyuk also scored for Pittsburgh, which won its fourth straight. Penguins goaltender Tristan Jarry made 26 saves. Zach Parise scored twice and Marcus Foligno once for the Wild, who lost their fourth straight. Devan Dubnyk made 22 saves in defeat.

### OILERS 4, PREDATORS 2

Josh Archibald's goal midway through the second period broke the deadlock and held up as the game-winner as host Edmonton beat Nashville. Leon Draisaitl netted two goals and one assist while Connor McDavid collected three assists and goaltender Mike Smith made 30 saves for the Oilers, who sport a 5-1-1 mark in their past seven games. McDavid (74 points) and Draisaitl (73) sit first and second in the league's scoring race. Filip Forsberg scored a lacrosse-style goal for the Predators, and Colin Blackwell also found the net for the visitors. Pekka Rinne stopped 28 shots.

### JETS 4, CANUCKS 0

Kyle Connor had two goals and an assist, and Connor Hellebuyck made 41 saves for his club-record 18th career shutout as Winnipeg snapped a six-game home skid with its 10th straight win over Vancouver. Jack Roslovic and Blake Wheeler also scored for the Jets, who snapped an 0-5-1 home slide. Hellebuyck, who posted his fourth shutout and 21st win this season, was solid all night while thwarting Vancouver, which had totaled 10 goals while winning its previous two games. Jacob Markstrom made 21 saves for the Canucks, who had won nine of 11 entering this contest but haven't defeated Winnipeg since a 4-1 home victory on Dec. 20, 2016. Vancouver, trying for a third straight road victory, has also lost nine in a row at Winnipeg since last winning there in March 2014.

### ISLANDERS 8, RED WINGS 2

Brock Nelson scored twice, and host New York racked up a season-high goal total while cruising over hapless Detroit. Jordan Eberle reached the 500-career-point mark with a goal and an assist as the Islanders snapped a two-game losing streak. The eight goals were the most in a game for the Islanders in nearly four years, since an 8-1 victory over Edmonton on Feb. 7, 2016. Detroit's starting goaltender, Jimmy Howard, was pulled after giving up three

goals in the first eight minutes. Givani Smith posted his first NHL goal, and Filip Hronek also scored for the Red Wings, who lost for the 10th time in 13 games.

### COYOTES 6, SHARKS 3

Phil Kessel and Taylor Hall each had two goals and an assist, and Arizona took sole possession of first place in the Pacific Division with a win over San Jose in Glendale, Ariz. Arizona goaltender Adin Hill, making his fourth start in the past five games, stopped 25 shots. The Coyotes ended a three-game losing streak (0-2-1) while improving to 4-0-1 in their past five home games. Conor Garland had an empty-net goal and two assists, and Lawson Crouse scored a goal and added an assist for Arizona. Derek Stepan posted three assists. Kevin Labanc and Evander Kane posted a goal and an assist apiece for the Sharks, and Timo Meier had the other goal. Aaron Dell stopped 34 shots.

### BLUE JACKETS 3, BRUINS 0

Rookie Elvis Merzlikins made 34 saves to record his second shutout in as many games as host Columbus handed Boston its first blanking of the season. Alexander Wennberg scored his second goal in as many contests, and Kevin Stenlund and Riley Nash also tallied for the Blue Jackets, who improved to 12-2-4 in their past 18 games. Jaroslav Halak made 24 saves in relief of an injured Tuukka Rask for the Bruins, who fell to 3-2-3 in their past eight games. Rask was injured 1:12 into the game after he was hit in the head by the left glove of Emil Bemstrom, who was being pushed from behind by Boston defenseman Brandon Carlo.

### STARS 3, AVALANCHE 2 (OT)

Esa Lindell scored at 1:54 of overtime, and Dallas rallied to beat Colorado in Denver. Denis Gurianov and Jason Dickinson had goals while Ben Bishop stopped 41 shots for the Stars, who swept the four games against Colorado this season. Nikita Zadorov and Gabriel Landeskog scored, Nathan MacKinnon had two assists, and Philipp Grubauer made 27 saves for the Avalanche. Colorado has lost four straight, the last two in overtime.

### SABRES 4, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2

Jack Eichel scored the game-winning goal in the third period and had an assist to extend his point streak to eight games, leading Buffalo to a victory over visiting Vegas. Sam Reinhart had a goal and two assists, and Kyle Okposo and Curtis Lazar also scored goals for the Sabres, who improved to 14-6-3 at home. Linus Ullmark finished with 24 saves. Reilly Smith and Tomas Nosek scored goals for the Golden Knights, who lost their fourth straight game. Marc-Andre Fleury had 22 saves while taking his third consecu-



DENVER: Jason Dickinson #18 of the Dallas Stars advances the puck against Valeri Nichushkin #13 of the Colorado Avalanche in the third period at the Pepsi Center in Denver, Colorado. —AFP

utive loss. Shea Theodore notched two assists.

### MAPLE LEAFS 7, DEVILS 4

Auston Matthews recorded his second career hat trick, John Tavares had a goal and two assists, and Toronto ended a three-game losing streak by defeating visiting New Jersey. William Nylander and Zach Hyman each added a goal and an assist for the Maple Leafs, and Frederik Gauthier scored a goal. Mitchell Marner and Rasmus Sandin each added two assists. Blake Coleman had three goals for his first career hat trick for the Devils, and P.K. Subban also scored. Will Butcher had two assists.

### LIGHTNING 4, KINGS 3 (SO)

Steven Stamkos scored in regulation and added the deciding goal in a shootout to carry Tampa Bay to a win over visiting Los Angeles. Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov knotted the game at 3 with 1:15 remaining when his high shot found the net with the Lightning goalie pulled and an extra skater on. Alex Killorn had a goal, Anthony Cirelli

assisted on two goals, and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 38 saves for the Lightning, who have won seven straight over Los Angeles. Kyle Clifford and Jeff Carter each recorded a goal and an assist for the Kings. Dustin Brown scored, and Jonathan Quick stopped 35 shots.

### BLACKHAWKS 3, SENATORS 2 (OT)

Jonathan Toews scored 42 seconds into overtime, and Chicago rallied to beat host Ottawa for the sixth straight time. Dominik Kubalik added two goals for the Blackhawks, continuing a torrid stretch in which he has scored in five consecutive games. Toews and Patrick Kane each recorded two assists for the Blackhawks. Robin Lehner made 20 saves to earn the victory.

Connor Brown had a goal and an assist, and Chris Tierney also scored for Ottawa, whose winless streak reached eight games (0-4-4). Each of the Senators' past three losses have come in overtime or a shootout round. Marcus Hogberg turned aside 27 shots but fell to 1-2-5 on the season. —Reuters

## Amir's 9th International Shooting Grand Prix officially opened, Serbia tops medal table



KUWAIT: (From right to left) PAS Director General Dr Humoud Fulaiteh, KOC President Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, ASC President Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Jahra Governor Nasser Al-Hajraf, Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations President Duaij Al-Otaibi and ASC Honorary President Sheikh Ali bin Abdallah Al Khalifa.

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir 9th International Shooting Grand Prix was officially opened on Tuesday night at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex.

The higher organizing committee, headed by President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Duaij Al-Otaibi held a ceremony attended by Jahra Governor Nasser Al-Hajraf, who represented HHH the Amir, President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, President of Asian Shooting Confederation Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Honorary President of ASC Sheikh Ali bin Abdallah Al-Khalifa, Director General of Public Authority for Sports Dr Humoud Fulaiteh along with several ambassadors of countries participating in the tournament, heads of delegations and invitees.

Governor Nasser Al-Hajraf said "he was honored to represent His Highness the Amir in this tournament which enjoyed a large participation by friendly and brotherly teams." He

said the participation of nearly 400 shooters from the prominent world teams reflects the major status the Grand Prix enjoys as well as Kuwait shooting. He also lauded the organization of the tournament.

Meanwhile, President of Asian Shooting Confederation Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said HHH the Amir's patronization of the tournament comes as a confirmation of his continued support of Kuwait sport, adding that this Grand Prix is considered the most important international event on the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) agenda.

Sheikh Salman thanked the Kuwait Olympic Committee, and Public Authority for Sports for their support of the tournament and the Kuwait shooting sport.

President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi thanked HHH the Amir for designating an annual international Grand Prix in his name in which the best world shooters participate. He said the contributions of HHH the Amir to the sport of shooting are many, as he gave it a unique

complex carrying his name that is now holding many major events and most important training courses. He said Kuwait enjoys continued developments and advancements as it keeps winning many major tournaments at all levels.

The opening ceremony was postponed from Saturday because of the death of Sultan Qaboos bin Said, Sultan of Oman, as actual competition began two days ago.

On the other hand Serbia now tops the medals table of HHH the Amir Shooting Grand Prix as it added one gold medal, meanwhile Greece one gold medal on the fifth day of the competition:

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Serbia	2	1	1
Italy	1	2	1
Kuwait	1	1	1
UAE	1	0	1
Czech	1	0	0
Kazakhstan	0	1	2
Bulgaria	0	1	0
Pakistan	0	1	0
Armenia	0	0	1
Lithuania	0	0	1



KUWAIT: Former goal keeper of Kuwait Handball National team Yousuf Al-Fadhly invited the treasurer of Kuwait Sports Club Fahad Al-Ghanim to attend his retirement ceremony to be held under the patronage of Kuwait Sports Club President Khalid Al-Ghanim on the sidelines of Asia Championship to be held from Jan 16-27. Al-Ghanim praised the players and his performance for many year either with clubs and national teams. He asked to continue serving Kuwait sports in another capacity.

## Front runners feel the heat on Stage 9 at 2020 Dakar Rally

**WADI AL DAWASIR:** The 2020 Dakar Rally served up a mammoth Stage 9 which had competitors on the road for nearly 900 kilometres. The trip east from Wadi Al-Dawasir to Haradh included a 415-kilometre timed special stage that saw race leaders come under severe pressure.

The margins were dramatically squeezed in the car race as front runner Carlos Sainz (ESP) saw his advantage significantly dented. Sainz has led the general classification since day three, but his cushion is down to a mere 24 seconds following Stage 9.

"On the first part we lost a little bit of time when we lost the way - we lost five minutes or something like that. After, I don't know what happened... the tread came off the tyre and we had to stop. It was not a good day for us." - Carlos Sainz

It's none other than reigning car champion Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) who is breathing down the neck of Sainz in second overall. Also closing in is Monsieur Dakar himself, Stéphane Peterhansel (FRA) who set the fastest time today. Peterhansel stays third overall, only 6m38s behind fellow Mini Buggy driver Sainz.

"It looks like the three cars are very close together. For all three of us, it is possible that one can win the Dakar." - Nasser Al-Attiyah

Kuba Przygonski (POL) enjoyed one of his best day at the 2020 Dakar with fourth place on the stage. 2009 Dakar winner Giniel De Villiers (ZAF) brought his Toyota Hilux home with the eighth fastest time on Stage 9.

"We had a good day and attacked from the word go. The first part was very technical and great fun. After a fast section, the route headed into the sand, where it was very rocky." - Kuba Przygonski

The good news keeps coming for Red Bull Off-Road Team USA on the second week of the Dakar. Not only did they make it a third consecutive side-by-side stage win between Wadi Al-Dawasir and Haradh, but they also secured their first 1-2 stage result of the Dakar. Stage winner Blade Hildebrand (USA) was followed home a minute later by team-mate Mitch Guthrie Jr (USA).

"It's always good to have those days where you can set the pace for the rest of the pack. That's exactly what we did today." - Blade Hildebrand

While Hildebrand and Guthrie compete for stage wins in the Dakar Experience class, it's still all to play for in the general classification. Second placed Chaleco Lopez (CHI) trails SxS race leader Casey Currie (USA) by less than 24 minutes.

Bike race leader Ricky Brabec (USA) was another who was reeled in as the category resumed on Stage 9. Defending champion Toby Price (AUS) was among the chasing pack who closed the gap on Brabec on the way to Haradh. Price is now 26m43s behind Brabec and has climbed to third overall. "You have your good moments and you have your bad ones and unfortunately 2020 hasn't quite been good for us but we'll still keep giving it a good fight and see how we go." - Toby Price

## Sports

# Stokes named ICC player of the year after landmark 2019

‘This award is testament to my team-mates and the support staff’

**DUBAI:** Ben Stokes was yesterday named the International Cricket Council player of the year, capping an unforgettable 2019 for the swashbuckling England all-rounder that included a match-winning knock at the World Cup.

Stokes won the coveted Sir Garfield Sobers trophy — voted for by a panel of media representatives and former players — thanks to an unbeaten 84 in a dramatic final against New Zealand in July followed by a brilliant 135 not out to win the third Ashes Test against Australia six weeks later.

Stokes, 28, said it was a huge honour for any cricketer to receive such an award. “To be recognised and be the person to win that (award) it’s pretty amazing,” he said in a video statement. During the voting period, Stokes aggregated 719 runs and bagged 12 wickets in 20 ODIs. He also scored 821 runs and took 22 wickets in 11 Tests.

However, the New Zealand-born star said his award was not solely for him as an individual. “The past 12 months have been incredible for England cricket and to lift the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup for the first time was our greatest achievement,” said Stokes.

“This award is testament to my team-mates and the support staff that have been there every step of the way. “Fundamentally, without the support of these individuals, we would never have achieved our objective of lifting a major trophy.”

## ‘UNDER THE SCANNER’

Stokes, who carried his form into this year with a

man of the match performance in the second Test victory over South Africa last week, said the strong bonds between the players can lead to further success.

“There is an incredible bond between team-mates and to savour our achievements, whether that’s winning the World Cup final at Lord’s or digging deep to win a Test match against Australia at Headingley,” said Stokes.

“It is satisfying you can accomplish these superb highs together. “The last 12 months have been the best in my career, and I believe what we attained will be the catalyst to achieve further success over the next few years.” Indian opener Rohit Sharma was named the ODI cricketer of the year while captain Virat Kohli bagged the Spirit of Cricket award for his gesture to stop fans from booing Australia’s Steve Smith during a World Cup match.

Smith was returning to international cricket from a one-year suspension for changing the condition of the ball. “I’m surprised that I have got it, after many years of being under the scanner for the wrong things,” Kohli said in a statement put out by ICC.

“That moment was purely understanding an individual’s situation. I don’t think a guy who is coming out of a situation like that needs to be taken advantage of.” Kohli was also named captain of both the ICC Test and ODI teams of the year.

In other major awards, Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins was named the Test player of the year and teammate Marnus Labuschagne was declared emerging cricketer of the year. — AFP



CAPE TOWN: File photo shows England’s Ben Stokes (R) plays a shot as South Africa’s Quinton de Kock (C) and South Africa’s captain Faf du Plessis (L) looks on during the fourth day of the second Test. Stokes was yesterday named the ICC player of the year. — AFP

## S Africa looking for change of fortune in third Test against England

**PORT ELIZABETH:** South African captain Faf du Plessis returns to one of his most productive venues, seeking a change of form and fortune in the third Test against England, starting at St George’s Park today.

In six Tests at the ground where South Africa played their first Test match, against England in 1888/89, Du Plessis has scored 509 runs at an average of 72.71, including two of his nine career Test centuries.

With the four-match World Test Championship series tied at 1-1, runs will be handy for the South African captain after a highest score of 29 in his most recent seven Test innings — as will some luck with the toss.

“That’s a record-breaking five (losses) in a row,” Du Plessis wryly noted when England’s Joe Root called correctly before the second Test in Cape Town last week. Root went into the second Test under some pressure but England squared the series with a 189-run win and he had a good match as batsman, scoring 35 and 61, and as captain.

Now there is pressure on Du Plessis, albeit primarily from the public through social media.

His place as captain and batsman is under no serious threat but his recent performances have been compared to those of Temba Bavuma, who was dropped after averaging below 20 in 2019 — even though Du Plessis was the country’s second-highest run-scorer behind Quinton de Kock last year.

What is beyond dispute is that South Africa need better performances from Zubayr Hamza and Du Plessis in the key number three and four batting positions. Hamza has scored 66 runs in four innings and Du Plessis 69. Du Plessis will also want to shore up his ratio of wins against losses as captain.

When South Africa completed a series win against Australia two years ago they had won 15 and lost five of 23 Tests under his leadership.

Since then, several leading players have left the stage and the Proteas have just three wins to set against eight defeats.

Five of those losses were in Sri Lanka and India, on each occasion after Du Plessis lost the toss in countries where the toss is usually more important than in South Africa. Arguably the team’s worst loss, though, was at St George’s Park last February when they were beaten by Sri Lanka inside three days — after Du Plessis won the toss. The captain scored 25 and 50 not out in what was largely a dismal batting performance against modest opposition.

England will be riding on a wave of confidence after Newlands, but hopes that first choice slow bowler Jack Leach would be rejoining the party have been dashed. Leach has not played in a match in South Africa because of illness and tour management said Tuesday that he would be heading home.

It was revealed that Leach, 27, who will leave the tour Thursday, suffered from Sepsis during the previous series in New Zealand when he had to be hospitalised. He also suffered bouts of flu and gastroenteritis which swept the England camp last month.

“It has been an unfortunate time for Jack with illness and since the Test series in New Zealand six weeks ago he hasn’t been able to get 100 percent fit,” said England head coach Chris Silverwood.

Without Leach, off-spinner Dom Bess is seen as certain to hold his place after bowling steadily at Newlands. There remains a selection dilemma, however, following a tour-ending injury to James Anderson, who took seven wickets in Cape Town.

England have to choose between the reliability of Chris Woakes and the pace of Jofra Archer or Mark Wood, who have both recovered from injury. — Reuters

## Will he, won’t he? Guessing game on Dhoni’s future

**NEW DELHI:** Former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni’s illustrious career is nearing its end, but his cryptic comments and long absences from the pitch have kept fans guessing how he plans to walk away.

The 38-year-old warhorse serves as an honorary lieutenant colonel in his army reserve regiment and spent part of last year in strife-torn Kashmir — missing an ODI tour of the West Indies.

He has now not appeared for club or country in more than six months, since New Zealand beat India in the World Cup semi-final, and he was left out of the three-match one-day international series against Australia which began on Tuesday.

Dhoni hinted late last year he would not reveal his plans until this month, but that hasn’t stopped constant questions about his sabbatical at team press conferences. With India’s demanding fanbase setting their sights on a Twenty20 World Cup win in Australia later this year, speculation over Dhoni’s participation has whipped up feverish discussion.

“The question that needs to be asked is of MSD himself,” said batting great Sunil Gavaskar last weekend, suggesting that the wicketkeeper-batsman’s long absence had already settled the matter.

“Does anybody keep himself away from playing for India for that long? That is the question and therein lies the answer.” Dhoni quit Test cricket in 2014 and national coach Ravi Shastri said he would likely soon quit one-day internationals, but his imminent return to the Indian Premier League with the Chennai Super Kings could mean his international swansong is yet to come.

“I have had a conversation with MS and that is between us... in all probability, he will finish one-day cricket,” Shastri told Indian television. “At his age, probably the only format he’ll want to play is T20 cricket which means he’ll have to start playing again, get back into the groove because he’s going to play in the IPL and see how his body reacts.”

For cricket-obsessed India, Dhoni’s international retirement will be a moment to rival the departure of batting icon Sachin Tendulkar, who was similarly coy about his plans in the lead-up to his farewell Test in 2013. Shastri recently sent Indian social media users abuzz after saying that the constant speculation about Dhoni’s retirement “feels like a break-up... you know it’s coming and it’s imminent but just don’t want to face (it)”. In the cricketer’s absence, Indian selectors have backed new talent such as Rishabh Pant and Sanju Samson for the wicketkeeper-batsman’s role in T20. Both have yet to convince. Dhoni led India to the inaugural T20 world title in 2007. He hit a six to seal the 2011 World Cup final victory and his status as a national hero. He has amassed 10,773 runs from 350 ODIs, but his form dipped noticeably at last year’s World Cup. Stellar performances from the likes of Kohli, who passed 11,000 runs while India captain against Sri Lanka on Saturday, have started to eclipse the Dhoni legend.



Mahendra Singh Dhoni

Kohli reached that mark in 196 innings, while Dhoni made his figure from 324. But there seems to be little appetite among national cricket authorities to bring the issue of Dhoni’s retirement to a head. India’s new cricket chief Sourav Ganguly promised last year that seniors like Dhoni will be respected and that the country’s champions “don’t finish quickly”. — AFP



FLACHAU: Slovakia’s Petra Vlhova celebrates winning on the podium after the women’s Slalom event during the FIS ski Alpine World Cup in Flachau, Austria. — AFP

## Vlhova wins Flachau slalom

**FLACHAU:** Slovakian Petra Vlhova beat Mikaela Shiffrin for the second straight World Cup slalom race to seal victory at Flachau on Tuesday. The 24-year-old posted a combined time of one minute and 53.65 seconds to edge out Sweden’s Anna Swenn-Larsson by only 0.10sec, with American star Shiffrin only third, another 0.33secs slower, after an error-strewn second run in Austria.

Vlhova claimed her seventh World Cup slalom win and 12th on the circuit in total to move second in the overall standings behind defending champion Shiffrin. “It was a really important win for me. I feel great, I feel really confident in my skiing,” she said. “I tried to be focused and think about how I could be faster.”

Vlhova and Shiffrin, who remains without a win in 2020, had finished as the top two in each of the previous three slaloms this season. But Swenn-Larsson produced the quickest second effort of 59.66sec to claim her third World Cup podium of the campaign.

Home hope Katharina Liensberger had to settle for fifth after sitting third following the opening run, with Switzerland’s Wendy Holdener finishing fourth in the event for the fourth time.

Shiffrin, bidding for a fourth straight big crystal globe, leads Vlhova in the overall World Cup standings by 273 points and the slalom standings by 80 points. It is the first time in over five years that Shiffrin has failed to win in successive slalom races, although she has now finished on the podium seven times in Flachau.

The 24-year-old two-time Olympic champion trailed Vlhova by 0.60secs heading into the second run under the floodlights, but made two clear errors to miss out on a 65th World Cup triumph. Swenn-Larsson would have been dreaming of becoming the first woman other than Vlhova and Shiffrin to win a slalom in 25 races after seeing the latter fail to beat her time. But Vlhova recovered after an early mistake to hang on for her third victory of the season. — AFP

## Japan badminton king Momota arrives home

**TOKYO:** Badminton world number one Kento Momota arrived in Japan yesterday after being released from a Malaysian hospital following a car crash that killed his driver and left him with minor injuries.

The 25-year-old Japanese, who walked past waiting journalists without making a statement, faces two months out after suffering cuts to his face and multiple bruises when the vehicle carrying him to Kuala Lumpur International Airport crashed in the early hours of Monday.

Earlier in the day, he was discharged from hospital in Malaysia, and boarded a plane wearing a dark cap and face mask. An assistant coach, physiotherapist, and badminton official also suffered minor injuries in the highway crash, seen as a blow to Momota’s preparations for this year’s Tokyo Olympics where he will attempt to win gold on home soil to complete a full set of major titles.

The accident occurred just hours after he began his 2020 season in style on Sunday with victory over Denmark’s Viktor Axelsen in Kuala Lumpur. Momota had been in Putrajaya public hospital outside the capital Kuala Lumpur since Monday.

He will now aim to return to action at the All England Championships on March 11, the secretary general of Japan’s Badminton Association Kinji Zeniya told AFP on Tuesday. Momota, who won a record 11 titles last year, had “extraordinary enthusiasm towards the Olympics” this year in Tokyo, added Zeniya, but urged the gold medal favourite to take time to recuperate fully.

“I hope he will do his best without pushing and rushing himself too hard and without being impatient,” said Zeniya. The driver was killed at the scene while Momota received cuts to his face and bruising all over his body, Zeniya said, denying previous reports that he had broken his nose and chin.

Momota, currently the best player on the planet, enjoyed unrivalled success in 2019, with his title haul including the World Championship, Asia Championship and All England Championship — a dramatic turnaround for a player who had been banned for gambling in 2016. — AFP

Sports

# Lukaku double sends Inter into cup quarters, Lazio and Napoli cruise

## Victory help Inter bounce back after letting Juventus take top spot

**MILAN:** Romelu Lukaku scored after just 21 seconds as he bagged a brace in a 4-1 thumping of Cagliari that fired Inter Milan into the last eight of the Italian Cup, while Lazio and Napoli are set for a quarter-final clash after easing past second-tier opposition.

Belgian Lukaku has looked a player reborn since moving to Italy and his double took his hot streak to six goals in his last four appearances in all competitions, with his Serie A tally standing at 14 in 19 games.

"Inter was the best choice for me, here I can grow as a player and help the club go after its goals," Lukaku told broadcaster RAI. "I give everything for the team and that's how I play — that's what the fans like."

The 26-year-old lashed home his opener with the match barely underway and then, after Borja Valero had made it 2-0 in the 22 minute, headed home his side's third from Nicolo Barella's corner just three minutes after the break as Antonio Conte's side ran riot at the San Siro.

There was nerves among the home fans when Christian Oliva pulled one back for the Sardinians in the 73rd minute with a fierce drive, but Andrea Ranocchia headed in Cristiano Biraghi's corner to seal the win.

The victory helped Inter bounce back after letting Juventus take top spot in Serie A with a 1-1 home draw with Atalanta at the weekend, and the return of Alexis Sanchez after an injury lay-off will also boost coach Conte. Inter will face either Atalanta or Fiorentina, who face off on Wednesday afternoon, in the next round.

They will be joined in the quarters by Lazio and Napoli, who both cruised through with comfortable wins over second-tier sides Cremonese and Perugia to set up a mouth-watering last eight tie with each other.

Holdings Lazio, who are on a club-record run of 10

straight wins in Serie A and well in the title discussion, made short work of Cremonese in their easy 4-0 victory in Rome. The hosts were ahead in less than 10 minutes in front of a sparse crowd at the Stadio Olimpico thanks to Patric, who tapped home the opener after Cremonese stopper Michael Agazzi palmed the ball to him in the box, and the tie was done and dusted 16 minutes later when Marco Parolo bundled home the second from a Jony cross.

Simone Inzaghi made eight changes from the side that beat Napoli 1-0 at the weekend but kept Saturday's goalscorer Ciro Immobile, who took his tally to 23 in all competitions from the penalty spot 12 minutes after the break. The impressive Jony turned provider again for the goal that rounded off the scoring, his fizzing cross from a set-piece being met with Bastos' bullet header in the final minute. Troubled Napoli meanwhile are languishing in 11th in Serie A after winning just one league game since mid-October but eased into the quarters with a 2-0 win over Perugia thanks to two Lorenzo Insigne penalties.

Insigne struck the opening goal from the spot on 26 minutes after Mexico's Hirving Lozano went down inside the area under a challenge from Marcdonchee Nzita. The Italy international added a second when Pietro Iemmello handled at a corner, with a penalty awarded following a VAR review.

Napoli goalkeeper David Ospina, whose blunder proved costly in their league loss at Lazio, then saved an Iemmello penalty before half-time following another VAR intervention. Juventus host Udinese and AC Milan take on SPAL on Wednesday, and Roma travel to Parma today. Torino are already in the last eight after beating Genoa on penalties last week. — AFP



**MILAN:** Inter Milan's Italian midfielder Stefano Sensi (C) collides with Cagliari's Italian midfielder Paolo Farago during the Italian Cup (Coppa Italia) round of 16 football match Inter Milan vs Cagliari at the San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

## Man United axe training camp over ME tensions

**LONDON:** Manchester United have called off a winter training camp in the Middle East due to fears over tensions in the region. United have often used the Nad Al Sheba Sports Complex in Dubai as a warm-weather base in recent years, and the Old Trafford outfit were set to visit the venue in the upcoming first ever winter

break for Premier League clubs. But United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer confirmed those plans have now been shelved in the wake of the United States' killing of Iran's general Qassem Soleimani.

The incident has triggered a tense political mood in the region and Solskjaer admits United won't travel to Qatar due to security concerns. "If there's one thing that worries me, it's not on the football pitch," Solskjaer said. "It's other things that worry me more."

"We were looking at the Middle East but that's definitely not going to happen," Solskjaer indicated he would instead give his players some time off to spend alone during the winter break, which will follow United's home match against Wolves on February 1.

"I'm going to give them a few days off, so I don't

know where they'll all scatter around but we'll stay in Europe," he said. Solskjaer sees the mid-season break, introduced this season, as being vital for his players after an intense run of games.

With United still competing on four fronts, Wednesday's FA Cup third-round replay against Wolves at Old Trafford will be their 15th game in 49 days, and the number will reach 19 in 66 days by the time they meet again at the start of February.

"I think the mid-season break is very, very important for everyone," he said. "We've got five or six games now until then, we've just got to stick at it, hang in there until then, get the performances and the results that we hope we're going to get, and then use that to get some vitamin D." — AFP

## Serena Williams back in the wins

**MELBOURNE:** Serena Williams is ominously back to winning ways as she looks to finally complete her long quest for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open. The American has been on the cusp of history since 2017, when she won her 23rd Major trophy in Melbourne, but after returning from giving birth has suffered straight-sets defeats in four Slam finals.

The signs are good for the 38-year-old Williams, who broke a three-year title drought at last week's Auckland Classic — a result that will not have gone unnoticed by her younger rivals. Australia's world number one Ashleigh Barty and defending champion Naomi Osaka are among her genuine challengers, but pressure and expectation will also pose problems for Williams as she pursues the 24 Grand Slam titles won by the Australian Margaret Court between 1960 and 1973.

"That was really important for me and I just want to build on it," Williams, now ranked ninth in the world, said after triumphing in Auckland on Sunday. The former number one, who celebrated on court with daughter Olympia, donated her US\$43,000 winner's cheque to victims of the Australian bushfires.

Practice and qualifying have been disrupted in Melbourne this week because of toxic air pollution from the deadly fires, but organisers are confident the tournament will proceed as planned. Williams has now won 73 WTA titles over four decades and although she is scaling back the number of tournaments she plays, there is no indication she plans to retire imminently.

Williams's latest Grand Slam final heartbreak came at the US Open, where she was stunned by Canadian teenager Bianca Andreescu. Williams — the highest-paid female athlete in the world last year with earnings close to US\$30 million, according to Forbes — afterwards played down her bid for Court's record.

"I'm not necessarily chasing a record," she said. "I'm just trying to win Grand Slams." At least she will not encounter the 19-year-old Andreescu, who is out of the Australian Open with a knee injury.

Of the challengers to Williams, Barty will also have to deal with great expectations from the Melbourne crowd. The 23-year-old Australian, who once took time off tennis to play professional cricket, won her maiden Major at Roland Garros last year.

But Barty has had a patchy start to the year after losing her season opener last week, going down in two sets in Brisbane to American qualifier Jennifer Brady. She dismissed afterwards the hype in Australia surrounding her.

"It doesn't change the way that I practise, it doesn't change the way that my team and I prepare, it doesn't change me as a person," Barty said. Japan's Osaka arrives for her title defence accompanied by her fourth coach in less than a year, Belgian Wim Fissette.

The 22-year-old squandered match point in losing to Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic in the semi-finals in Brisbane on Saturday. The 27-year-old Pliskova goes into Melbourne under the radar but the world number two beat American Madison Keys in the final to close the gap on Barty at the top of the rankings. However, she is yet to win a Grand Slam and her best appearance in a Major was back in 2016, when she lost the US Open final to Germany's Angelique Kerber.

There will be added interest in Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki, the former world number one who finally broke her long Grand Slam duck in Melbourne two years ago, and who will retire after the tournament at the age of 29. — AFP

## Kerber suffers Australian Open injury setback

**ADELAIDE:** Angelique Kerber's preparations for the opening Grand Slam of the year were dealt a blow yesterday when she was forced to retire from the Adelaide International with back pain.

The German former world number one, who won the Australian Open in 2016, pulled out when behind 6-3, 2-0 in her second-round clash with Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska. The ninth seed began showing serious signs of the back problem early in the second set then stopped after two points in the third game on her own serve, calling for the trainer.

A medical evaluation on court ended with the 31-year-old world number 18 calling it quits against her teenaged opponent. Yastremska kept calm during the delay, reading what she called "secret" notes.

"I didn't want to lose focus," said the world number 24, who has won three titles over the past two seasons. Men's second seed Felix Auger-Aliassime converted on the first of six match points,

firing a service winner to complete a 6-3, 7-6 (7/0) defeat of Australian James Duckworth.

The 19-year-old Canadian set up a quarter-final against a second straight Aussie wild card, local Alex Bolt, who defeated German seventh seed Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 6-4. "He pushed me to bring good shots when I needed them," Auger-Aliassime said of Duckworth.

"He had chances in the second set, but I got myself to the tiebreaker — from there I played fantastic tennis." Women's top seed Ashleigh Barty got an opponent as Marketa Vondrousova hammered Australia's Arina Rodionova 6-0, 6-0 in 52 minutes.

Second seed Simona Halep will take on Aryna Sabalenka after the Belarusian booked her spot 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 over US qualifier Bernarda Pera. Swiss wild card Belinda Bencic, the fourth seed, struggled with frustration but emerged a 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/4) winner over Julia Goerges and next plays Danielle Collins, who put out seventh seed Sofia Kenin 6-3, 6-1.

Croat Donna Vekic rallied past Maria Sakkari of Greece 2-6, 7-5, 6-1, winning in two hours and overcoming six aces to reach a quarter-final against Yastremska. In men's play, Russian Andrey Rublev, who the Qatar Open at the weekend, beat American Sam Querrey 6-3, 6-3 to



**ADELAIDE:** Angelique Kerber of Germany hits a return to Dayana Yastremska of the Ukraine during their women's second round singles match at the Adelaide International tennis tournament in Adelaide yesterday. — AFP

move into a last-eight clash against Britain's Dan Evans.

Rublev, who missed six weeks in 2019 with a wrist injury, improved to a perfect 5-0 for the season. "It's important that I have mental confidence," he said. "One day you still can play so good, the other day can be not that good."

Rublev's win in Doha moved him up to number 18 in the world. "It's an amazing

feeling to be top 20 for the first time, but there are still so many things that I can improve," he said.

Fourth seed Pablo Carreno Busta started with a 6-3, 6-2 defeat of Frenchman Jeremy Chardy. South African qualifier Lloyd Harris also advanced to the quarters with a 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 win over Laslo Djere 7-6 (7/5), 6-3. — AFP

## Teenager Louis named in Wales' 6 Nations squad

**CARDIFF:** Teenager Louis Rees-Zammit's eye-catching season with Premiership side Gloucester has earned him a call-up to holders Wales Six Nations squad who embark on their first campaign under Wayne Pivac.

Rees-Zammit, 18, is one of five uncapped players Pivac has selected in the 38-man squad that begin their defence of the Grand Slam at home to Italy on February 1. Rees-Zammit on Monday had been awarded a long-term contract by Gloucester for whom earlier this season the wing became the youngest ever Premiership hat-trick scorer.

Pivac has called up England-born Saracens centre Nick Tompkins, who was a member of the England Under-20 side that won the 2014 world championship. Tompkins, 24, qualifies for Wales through a Welsh grandmother.

The other uncapped players are Sale Sharks prop WillGriff John, Wasps lock Will Rowlands and Scarlets' New Zealand-born wing Johnny McNicholl. Pivac, who replaced fellow New Zealander Warren Gatland as head coach after the latter stepped down following a highly successful 12-year tenure, has also recalled scrum-half Rhys Webb. Webb last played Test rugby just over two years ago before joining French club Toulon and ruling himself out of Wales contention because he did not meet the minimum 60-cap selection criteria for players plying their



Louis Rees-Zammit

trade outside the country. However, he is to leave Toulon early to re-join Ospreys as his family failed to settle in France. The call-up will be a much needed boost for the 31-year-old as he has been told by Toulon owner Bernard Lemaire he will never play for the club again due to his "dishonest" attitude.

### Squad

#### Forwards (21)

Rhys Carre (Saracens/ENG), Rob Evans (Scarlets), Wyn Jones (Scarlets), Elliot Dee (Dragons), Ryan Elias (Scarlets), Ken Owens (Scarlets), Leon Brown (Dragons), WillGriff John (Sale/ENG), Dillon Lewis (Blues), Jake Ball (Scarlets), Adam Beard (Ospreys), Seb Davies (Blues), Alun Wyn Jones (Ospreys, capt), Will Rowlands (Wasps/ENG),

Cory Hill (Dragons), Aaron Shingler (Scarlets), Aaron Wainwright (Dragons), Taulupe Faletau (Bath/ENG), Ross Moriarty (Dragons), Josh Navidi (Blues), Justin Tipuric (Ospreys)

#### Backs (17)

Gareth Davies (Scarlets), Rhys Webb (Toulon/FRA), Tomos Williams (Blues), Dan Biggar (Northampton/ENG), Owen Williams (Gloucester/ENG), Jarrod Evans (Blues), Hadleigh Parkes (Scarlets), Nick Tompkins (Saracens/ENG), Owen Watkin (Ospreys), George North (Ospreys), Josh Adams (Blues), Owen Lane (Blues), Johnny McNicholl (Scarlets), Louis Rees-Zammit (Gloucester/ENG), Jonah Holmes (Leicester/ENG), Leigh Halfpenny (Scarlets), Liam Williams (Saracens/ENG). — AFP

**25** Penguins hammer Wild in Crosby's return from injury



**26** Stokes named ICC player of the year after landmark 2019



**27** Kerber suffers Australian Open injury setback



## Giannis, Bucks crush Knicks for third time



MILWAUKEE: Julius Randle #30 of the New York Knicks shoots the ball against the Milwaukee Bucks at the Fiserv Forum Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. — AFP

**MILWAUKEE:** Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 37 points in just 21 minutes Tuesday night for the host Milwaukee Bucks, who concluded their season-long dominance of the New York Knicks by cruising to a 128-102 victory. The Bucks swept the three-game season series from the Knicks and never trailed in outscoring New York by total of 91 points (383-292). The Bucks have won four in a row overall and nine of 10 while the Knicks have lost six of seven. Antetokounmpo, who also had nine rebounds and four assists, is just the second player this season to score at least 30 points while playing fewer than 22 minutes. Paul George had 37 points in 20 minutes for the Los Angeles Clippers against the Atlanta Hawks on Nov. 16. Khris Middleton scored 17 points while Ersan Ilyasova had 14 points off the bench for the Bucks. Julius Randle (25 points, 15 rebounds) had a double-double for the Knicks. RJ Barrett scored 22

points, and Bobby Portis had 20 points.

**LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS 128 - CLEVELAND CAVALIERS 103**

Kawhi Leonard scored a season-high 43 points, and Los Angeles pounded visiting Cleveland. Clippers forward Paul George missed his third consecutive game due to a strained left hamstring, but Leonard more than made up for his absence. Leonard connected on 14 of 22 shots from the floor and 6 of 10 3-point tries in 29 minutes. Lou Williams had 24 points on 10-of-13 shooting, and Ivica Zubac added 12 points, 10 rebounds and four blocks for Los Angeles. Collin Sexton led the Cavaliers with 25 points, and Cedi Osman scored 21.

**UTAH JAZZ 118 - BROOKLYN NETS 107**

Joe Ingles tied a career-high with 27 points as Utah pushed its winning streak to a season-high 10 games in a victory over

Brooklyn in New York. Ingles hit 10 of 14 shots and made 6 of 8 3-point attempts. He tied a career high for field goals and nearly matched a career best for 3-pointers. Donovan Mitchell scored 14 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter after sitting out Sunday's game in Washington due to an illness. Mitchell shot 8-for-19 and scored 14 of Utah's final 16 points. Kyrie Irving led all scorers with 32 points on 12-of-19 shooting while handing out 11 assists, but the Nets were unable to win a third straight game despite shooting 50 percent. Spencer Dinwiddie added 17 points for Brooklyn.

**MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES 121 - HOUSTON ROCKETS 110**

Ja Morant paired 26 points with eight assists and took over down the stretch as host Memphis extended its winning streak to six games with a victory over Houston. Dillon Brooks added 24 points on 6-for-10

shooting from 3-point range, while Jonas Valanciunas and Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 19 and 15 points, respectively. James Harden scored a game-high 41 points but shot just 13 of 37 overall and missed 14 of 19 3-point attempts. Houston played without guard Russell Westbrook (rest), with his replacement, Ben McLemore, producing 14 points on 5-of-12 shooting.

**DALLAS MAVERICKS 124 - GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS 97**

Stanford product Dwight Powell celebrated his Bay Area homecoming with a game-high 21 points in San Francisco, leading Dallas to a third straight blowout of Golden State. Luka Doncic totaled 20 points in just 27 minutes for the Mavericks, who were able to spread out the minutes among 13 players on the first night of a back-to-back set. Dallas, which has won two in a row, visits Sacramento on

Wednesday night. Rookies Jordan Poole and Eric Paschall had 17 and 16 points, respectively, to lead Golden State, which lost its fourth straight at home and ninth straight overall.

**ATLANTA HAWKS 123 - PHOENIX SUNS 110**

Trae Young scored 36 points and Kevin Huerter flirted with a triple-double as Atlanta ended its four-game losing streak with a double-digit victory over visiting Phoenix. Young scored 23 in the second half and posted his 20th game with at least 30 points this season. Huerter was 8-for-14 from the floor and scored 23 points. He set career highs with 15 rebounds and eight assists. Phoenix was led by Devin Booker, who scored 39 points — the eighth time in the last 10 game he's scored 30-plus — and grabbed seven rebounds. But Booker was ejected with 1:35 remaining after a technical foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. — Reuters

## Sainz stretches Dakar Rally lead

**SHUBAYTAH:** Spanish veteran Carlos Sainz stretched his lead atop the overall Dakar Rally standings by winning the 10th stage through the dunes of Saudi Arabia's Empty Quarter yesterday. The 57-year-old Mini driver clocked 2hr 03min 43sec on a stage shortened by high winds to a 233km special between Haradh and Shubaytah, finishing ahead of Poland's Jakub Przygonski (mini) and South African Giniel de Villier (Toyota).

Sainz took full advantage of navigational problems by closest rivals Nasser Al-Attiyah, the defending champion, and France's 'Mr. Dakar', Stephane Peterhansel. Peterhansel, who has won the Dakar 13 times (seven times in a car and six times on a bike), finished 11min 48sec off Sainz's pace, while Qatar's Al-Attiyah was further back, at 17:46.

The result means Sainz, with two stages to go, now sits 18:10 ahead of Al-Attiyah and 18:26 in front of Peterhansel. "It was a dangerous stage with lots of difficult dunes," Peterhansel said. "Several kilometres before the neutralised section, we got completely lost with Nasser and other drivers. Some drivers got there at the right time, when we eventually found the right way and gained a lot of time.

"In the end, it's a good stage for my team-mate Carlos who has opened up a gap on Nasser, whilst we have got a bit closer to Nasser even if we are still in third position." Dakar debutant Fernando Alonso, the two-time former Formula One champion, lost more than an hour after double rolling his Toyota, an accident that saw the Spaniard carry on driving with no windscreen.

American Ricky Brabec increased his lead in the general standings of the motorbike category with a second-placed finish. The HRC rider now leads Chilean Pablo Quintanilla (Husqvarna) by 25 minutes and stage winner Joan Barreda of Spain by 27 minutes.

Thursday's penultimate stage 11 sees competitors negotiate 744km, featuring a 379km special, from Shubaytah back to Haradh. — AFP



HARADH AND SHUBAYTAH: A biker rides past a camel as he competes during the Stage 10 of the Dakar 2020 between Haradh and Shubaytah, Saudi Arabia, yesterday. — AFP