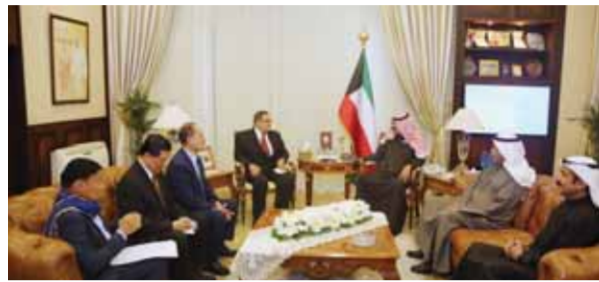




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Call to end foreign meddling in Libya; monitoring force sought

Erdogan warns Haftar must end 'hostile' attitude after commander's forces choke oil flows



BERLIN: World leaders and senior officials pose for a family picture during a peace summit on Libya at the Chancellery yesterday. — AFP

BERLIN: World leaders were poised to commit to ending all foreign meddling in Libya's war at a Berlin summit yesterday, but calls were growing for an international force to ensure that pledges are put into action. The presidents of Russia, Turkey and France were among global chiefs at the talks held under the auspices of the United Nations, which wants foreign powers wielding influence in the region to stop interfering in the war - be it through weapons, troops or financing.

Leaders of both warring factions - strongman Khalifa Haftar and the head of Tripoli's UN-recognized government Fayeze Al-Sarraj - were also in Berlin for the first such gathering since 2018. But pro-Haftar forces upped the ante on the eve of the talks by blocking oil exports at Libya's key ports, crippling the country's main income source in protest at Turkey's decision to send troops to shore up Sarraj's Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA).

Ahead of the talks, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lashed out at Haftar, saying he needed to drop his "hostile attitude" if Libya is to have any chance at winning peace. The flaring oil crisis underlined the devastating impact of foreign influence in the conflict, in which Sarraj's GNA is backed by Turkey and Qatar while Haftar has the support of Russia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

Voicing his "acute concerns over the arrival of Syrian and foreign fighters in the city of Tripoli", France's President Emmanuel Macron said as the Berlin summit opened that "that must end". If all goes to plan, all sides will sign up to a plan to refrain from interference, and commit to a truce that leads to a lasting end to hostilities, according to a draft of a final communiqué seen by AFP.

Continued on Page 24

Gulf carriers still fly over Iraq, Iran

KUWAIT: Gulf airlines still fly in Iraqi and Iranian airspace and to cities in both countries, even as other international carriers have rerouted planes since the United States and Iran traded military strikes. Executives and analysts said carriers in the Gulf, a major transit stop between European and Asian destinations, have few alternative routes to choose from in an area where much of the airspace is kept clear of civilian aircraft for military use.

In the latest flare up, a US drone strike killed a top general in Iraq on Jan 3 and Iran fired missiles at US targets in Iraq on Jan 8. In the tense aftermath, Iran's air defenses accidentally shot down a Ukrainian airliner. Gulf carriers have grown into major airlines even as regional tensions in recent decades erupted into conflict. Rerouting flights hurts profits, they say, although they also insist that they take every precaution to keep passengers safe.

Continued on Page 24

MPs keep up pressure on Aqeel over budget

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Lawmakers continued yesterday their criticism of Finance Minister Mariam Al-Aqeel over her controversial remarks about the need to cut spending and raise revenues by imposing selective taxes. Aqeel's remarks were made last week while presenting the

budget for 2020/2021, which projected the deficit to increase to well over KD 9 billion after making the deduction for the future generations fund, although spending remained unchanged.

Head of the financial and economic affairs committee MP Safa Al-Hashem said the projected budget is only an estimate and the actual shortfall is expected to be between KD 3 to 4 billion. She said the finance minister has provoked the people when she hinted that the wages bill should be rationalized, adding that speaking about salaries in this way is a "big mistake". Hashem said she will not blame lawmakers if they decide to grill the minister over that statement.

Protesters regroup after Beirut clashes

BEIRUT: Dozens of stone-throwing demonstrators defied police water cannons in the Lebanese capital yesterday, a day after rare violence between both sides wounded nearly 400 people. Unprecedented protests have rocked the country since Oct 17, with citizens from all religious backgrounds demanding the ouster of a political class they view as inept, corrupt and responsible for an ever deepening economic crisis.

Yesterday evening, hundreds of protesters gathered in the rain in central Beirut by a barricaded road that leads to parliament amid heavily deployed security forces. For a second night in a row, dozens started lobbing stones in the direction of the police behind the metal barricade, crying "revolution, revolution". The Red Cross said that 10 people had been taken to hospital as a result of renewed clashes yesterday evening.

One protester taunted the security forces with a flame-throwing aerosol, as others shone bright green laser lights in their direction. Anti-riot forces responded with water cannons, as well as a round of tear gas and rubber bullets, an AFP reporter said.

Continued on Page 24



BEIRUT: A Lebanese anti-government protester kicks back a teargas canister fired by riot police from behind the barricaded road leading to parliament yesterday. — AFP

Missile, drone attack kills 83 Yemen soldiers

DUBAI: More than 80 Yemeni soldiers have been killed and scores injured in a missile and drone attack blamed on Houthi rebels in central Yemen, medical and military sources said yesterday. Saturday's strike follows months of relative calm in the war between the Iran-backed Houthis and Yemen's internationally recognized government, which is backed by a Saudi-led military coalition. The Houthis attacked a mosque in a military camp in the central province of Marib - about 170 km east of the capital Sanaa - during evening prayers, military sources told AFP.

A medical source at a Marib city hospital, where the casualties were transported, said that 83 soldiers were killed and 148 injured in the strike. Death tolls in Yemen's grinding conflict are often disputed, but the huge casualty list in Marib represents one of the bloodiest single attacks since the war erupted in 2014 when the rebels seized Sanaa. Saudi-owned Al-Hadath television broadcast a video that it said showed the

Continued on Page 24

Snowfall shuts schools, delays flights in Tehran

TEHRAN: Heavy snow covered the streets of Tehran yesterday, causing major flight delays and forcing the closure of schools, authorities in the Iranian capital said. The snow started falling early in the morning and disrupted the flow of traffic on some of the city's main highways, AFP correspondents said. "We knew that it would snow as of last night and that it naturally affects traffic," head of Tehran's traffic police Mohammadreza Mehmandar told state television. "On some highways in the north (of Tehran) there was a bit of ice... and accidents

were responded to quickly," he added.

Schools in all districts of Tehran city and some parts of the province were closed both in the morning and the afternoon due to the heavy snowfall. Tehrani children took to parks to build snowmen and start snow fights as the capital was blanketed in white. The snow dump caused long delays to flights to and from Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport. "Flights at Mehrabad will go ahead but with delays due to the lack of proper vision," said Reza Jafarzadeh, spokesman for Iran's aviation authority.

But flights were still going according to schedule at Imam Khomeini International Airport, also in Tehran, he added. Flights at Mehrabad resumed around noon after more than 30 had been cancelled and others delayed for up to seven hours, state news agency IRNA said. — AFP



TEHRAN: People take part in a snow fight at a park in the Iranian capital yesterday. — AFP

Amir meets top Kuwaiti officials, visiting Iraqi Defense Minister

Sheikh Sabah offers condolences over victims of Algeria accident



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Sabah, Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khodhr, and Kuwait Army Deputy Chief of Staff Lt Gen Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a memento from GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Zayani.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi Defense Minister Najah Al-Shammari.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem.



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



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Zayani.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness Sheikh Sabah also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Amir then received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Moreover, His Highness hosted His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Chairman of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council and the Cassation Court, and President of the Constitutional Court, Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa.

Furthermore, His Highness received GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Zayani during his visit to the country. In the meantime, His Highness the Amir received Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Sabah and Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khodhr, accompanied with Kuwait Army Deputy Chief of Staff Lt Gen Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah. In addition, His Highness Sheikh Sabah received Iraqi Defense Minister Najah Al-Shammari on the occasion of his visit to the country. The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan

Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince received at Bayan Palace Speaker Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, and Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also received Zayani, in attendance of Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and the head of protocol at the Crown Prince Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. His Highness then received Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour, Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khodhr and Lt Gen Sheikh Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Kuwait's Deputy Premier, Interior Minister and Minister of Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of condolences to Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune over victims of the collision of two buses in Still village at El Oued Province, which resulted in deaths and casualties. In the cable, His Highness wished mercy for the deceased and a swift recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Premier, Interior Minister and Minister of Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh.

Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to the President of the Czech Republic Milo Zeman, expressing condolences over the victims of the fire

that broke out at home for people with disabilities. His Highness expressed sorrow over the victims and wished speedy recovery for those injured. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. —KUNA

Kuwait's PM meets Iraq's Defense Minister

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, with the attendance of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received at Bayan Palace yesterday the visiting Iraqi Defense Minister Najah Al-Shammari and his accompanying delegation. Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Khaled Al-Khodhr and Kuwait Army Deputy Chief of Staff Lt Gen Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah also attended the meeting. Earlier yesterday, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour and Lt Gen Khodhr introduced Lt Gen Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received the visiting GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Zayani and his accompanying delegation, in attendance of Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. Assistant Foreign Minister of the GCC affairs Ambassador Nasser Hajji Al-Muzain attended the meeting as well. Zayani also met separately yesterday with Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad, as well as His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT: (From left) Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Khaled Al-Khodhr, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Kuwait Army Deputy Chief of Staff Lt Gen Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah. —KUNA photos



His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Zayani.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Zayani.



Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Zayani.

Local

Cancer second leading cause of death in Kuwait

MP proposes special police unit against domestic violence

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Kuwait after cardiac disease, a Kuwaiti physician warned yesterday, noting that cancer is the cause of 15 percent of fatalities in Kuwait. "Cancer is the second cause of fatalities worldwide, with one out of every six deaths," Dr Ali Al-Mosawi, Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) Manager, said yesterday. "It is also the second leading cause in Kuwait after cardiac diseases."

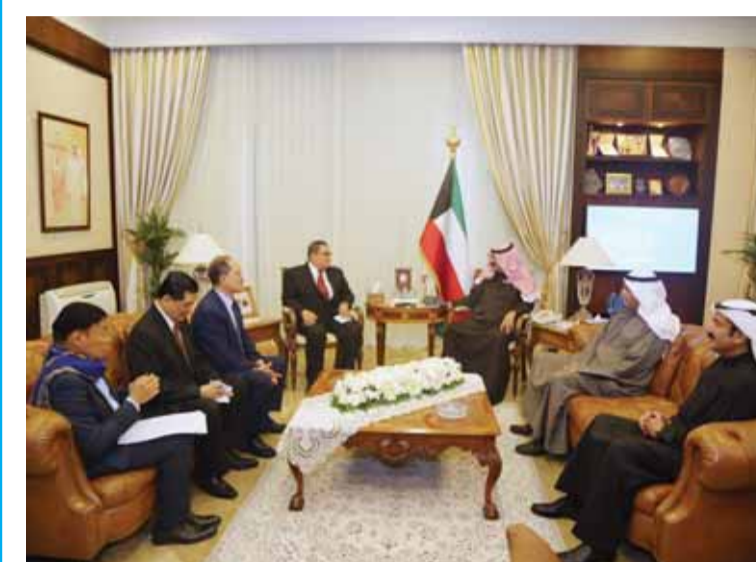
Speaking to reporters after inaugurating the Tissues and Cells Conference, Mosawi said: "Breast, colon, thyroid, leukemia, lymphoma and lung cancer cases represent 60 percent of detected cancers in Kuwait." Mosawi added that KCCC had been established as part of other steps to fight cancer, as it is the only center specialized in cancer diagnosis and treatment using the most up-to-date diagnoses and lab equipment and the best treatment protocols by the most qualified Kuwaiti and foreign medical staff. Further, Mosawi said KCCC has gained regional fame and reputation with its huge lab and five buildings including over 600 beds, two bone marrow transplant units, 13 operation theatres, various specialized departments and a helipad.

Meanwhile, Head of KCCC labs and

chairman of the conference organizing committee Dr Abdullah Akbar stressed 21,000 new cancer patients will be annually diagnosed by 2030. He also noted that breast cancer is the most widespread type amongst women, while prostate cancer is the most widespread amongst men. Akbar added the conference aims at discussing the latest in cancer care and focuses on exchanging expertise between doctors from Kuwait, Cleveland Clinic and from Abu Dhabi National Labs.

Domestic violence

MP Abdullah Al-Kandari proposed establishing a special police unit specialized in receiving grievances concerning violence committed against women and children and acting upon them. Separately, MP Khaled Al-Otaibi yesterday filed an inquiry to the minister of education concerning a professor at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) computer department who has allegedly been treating his female students harshly, especially those with excellent performances. Otaibi requested detailed information about the grades given by all computer professors, the results of a project for which a certain group of students were honored, yet they failed, and about the measures followed to reevaluate all projects.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the Philippines' Presidential Advisor on Overseas Filipino Workers Abdullah Mamaso. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets UN's Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance Alice Walpole.

Kuwait, Philippines meet on labor issues

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah held talks yesterday with the Philippines' Presidential Advisor on Overseas Filipino Workers Abdullah Mamaso, who is on a visit to the country. The discussions revolved around Kuwait's ties with the Southeast Asian archipelago, in the wake of a

labor ban imposed by Manila on its nationals working in Kuwait. During the talks, the Filipino official praised Kuwait for the legal procedures the country has taken to address the issue, ahead of a meeting between officials from both countries scheduled for next month, he revealed. Elsewhere yesterday, the

Kuwaiti deputy foreign minister met with the UN's Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance Alice Walpole. Jarallah's talks with the senior UN official mainly dealt with Kuwait's missing citizens in Iraq, in addition to the UN's Assistance Mission for Iraq. — KUNA

Two sports personnel to be prosecuted in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) announced yesterday referral of two sports personnel, one of them was former sports union president, to the public prosecution for suspected public funds' misappropriation. In a press statement, Nazaha spokesperson Dr Mohammad Buzber said the Corruption Detection and Investigation sector received a notice on suspicion of offense against public money. He indicated that the two personnel were suspected of receiving checks from the Public Authority of Sports without submitting bills to cover up these financial allocations fully upon their return from a championship and a training camp. Moreover, the pair have abstained from

returning surplus amounts of money. Buzber stated further that Nazaha referred required papers to the Attorney General after completing all procedures, collecting evidence, hearing witnesses and inquiries from government agencies. He emphasized determination of the Public Anti-Corruption Authority to continue efforts and procedures regarding the investigation, as well as collection of evidence and inquiries needed. He indicated that Nazaha always appreciates role of whistleblowers for assisting the authority that keeps their identity confidential. Nazaha is an independent and neutral body established in 2016 in response to requirements of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. — KUNA

Court adjourns 'MoI hospitality' case till Feb 2

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The criminal court yesterday adjourned hearing the so-called Ministry of Interior (MoI) hospitality case till Feb 2 so that the lawyers of 11 defendants can prepare their arguments and set another hearing on Feb 16 for the remaining defendants. The court also ordered the continuation of detaining the accused already imprisoned and refused lifting travel bans of those who had been released.

Meanwhile, speaking before the court, the public prosecution stressed that some of the names included in the 'MoI hospitality' case were of Saudi nationals who had applied for Saudi non-security jobs online. "The same names have been used over and over again as MoI guests by changing their ranks each time," the public prosecution said, showing the actual names of the secret security delegations MoI had hosted as per State Audit Bureau reports.

In another case, the court of cassation upheld a ruling sentencing a Kuwaiti man to death for beating his daughter to death inside a vehicle and sentenced the mother to 10 years with labor. The court of cassation also seconded a verdict sentencing Hamed Bu Yabis to two years imprisonment and suspending the verdict for three years provided he signs an affidavit and pays KD 5,000 bail in a case filed against him by the state security for blaspheming HH the Amir.

Meanwhile, the court of misdemeanor sentenced a blogger to pay a KD 3,000 fine, sign an affidavit and pay KD 200 bail to suspend the verdict passed against him for slandering educating ministry's assistant undersecretary Faisal Maqseed on social media networks.

Online service

The finance ministry announced launching the online issuance of certificates of refunding the income tax guarantee yesterday. The ministry explained that the new service will enable Kuwait and GCC companies and individuals to refund the sums withheld by government bodies with whom they have contracts to pay for their income tax as stipulated by articles 37 and 38 of the income tax decree number 3/1955 amended by law number 2/2008.

The finance ministry stressed that the new service aims at facilitating procedures and automating them upon direct instructions from the Cabinet. The finance ministry's assistant undersecretary for tax and financial affairs Aseel Al-Munaifi said the certificate will be delivered via email without having to check in with the ministry.

Jahra campaign

Jahra municipal inspection teams launched a large campaign in Kabd, Sulaibiya, Saad Al-Abdullah, Taima and Salmi. Speaking on the occasion, Jahra cleaning department manager Fahd Al-Quraifah said the campaign resulted in removing 29 abandoned vehicles, pasting 25 notice stickers on others, removing 3,586 cubic meters of debris, filing 16 warning notices, confiscating three tons of inedible foodstuff and filing 21 citations for various violations including peddling.

Restaurant robbery

A lawyer yesterday reported that his client's restaurant in Jabriya had been broken into and burgled by unidentified thieves, said security sources. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.



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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sunrise over a fishing pier near Kuwait City. — Photo by Easwar Krishnan (KUNA)

Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies honors NBK employees

KUWAIT: Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) has graduated 20 employees at the National Bank of Kuwait, who took part in the training programs organized by the institute for those working at the banking institutions.

The Professional Certificate Programs for 2018-2019 are accredited by the London Institute of Banking and Finance, one of the world's most prestigious institutions in the field of vocational education related to banking and financial services.

The certification ceremony was held at the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and under the patronage of His Excellency the Governor of Central Bank of Kuwait, Dr Mohammed Y Al-Hashel. The ceremony was also attended by Isam J Al-Sager, Group Chief Executive Officer, Director General of the Institute of Banking Studies, Dr Yaqoub Alrefaei, Emad Al-Ablani, General Manager, Human Resources Group and Mohamed Al-Othman, Head, Consumer Banking Group, Mohammed Al-Kharafi, General Manager- Operations Group at NBK.

The certificates which the trainees received included, Certified Bank Branch Manager (CBBM), Strategic Management Performance System Certificate (SMPS), Certified Manager (CM), Certified Bank Branch Operations Manager (CBBOM), and Risk Management Certificate (RMC).

"The bank's strategy encourages the employees to proceed with their studies and continue to develop their skills and knowledge. The bank has set scientific certificates and training courses, which the employees receive, among other criteria required to build career, attain promotion, and receive incentives," stated Emad Al-Ablani, General Manager - Group Human Resources at NBK.

"As a prominent financial institution, NBK is committed to help employees earn professional certificates and continuously improve their professional skills. These certificates are considered among the most internationally-applied learning tools, which help boost the professional capabilities of those working in the banking industry, in line with the global developments in the field," he added.



Kuwaiti students visit ancient Carthage sites

TUNIS: An all-girls group of Kuwaiti high school students were taken to several historic cultural and tourist sites in the northern ancient city of Carthage during a trip to Tunisia aimed at showcasing Kuwaiti-funded humanitarian projects worldwide. The significance of the city stems from its historic and cultural significance, the students said, particularly during the centuries-old Carthaginian Empire, and the many grand structures left behind by this civilization, regarded one of the most prosperous of the Ancient World. The destinations

included the historic Carthage Museum, the Carthage Amphitheatre, the Baths of Antoninus along with a separate stop at the touristic northern coastal town of Sidi Bou Said. Carthage Museum is located at the tip of Byrsa Hill, in the center of the northern seaside city. Built in 1875, it houses the largest collection of Carthaginian relics in the world. The city's amphitheater is known in modern times for hosting global musicians amid the renowned International Carthage Festival. The 7,500-spectator edifice continues to dazzle onlookers, despite being built in 2nd Century. The Baths of Antoninus, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are the biggest built by the Romans in the African continent and the second largest in the history of the great civilisation. The experience was supplemented by a brief stopover at the neighboring town of Sidi Bou Said, with its unique architecture and its perfect white houses, contrasted only by large blue intricately-patterned doors. — KUNA



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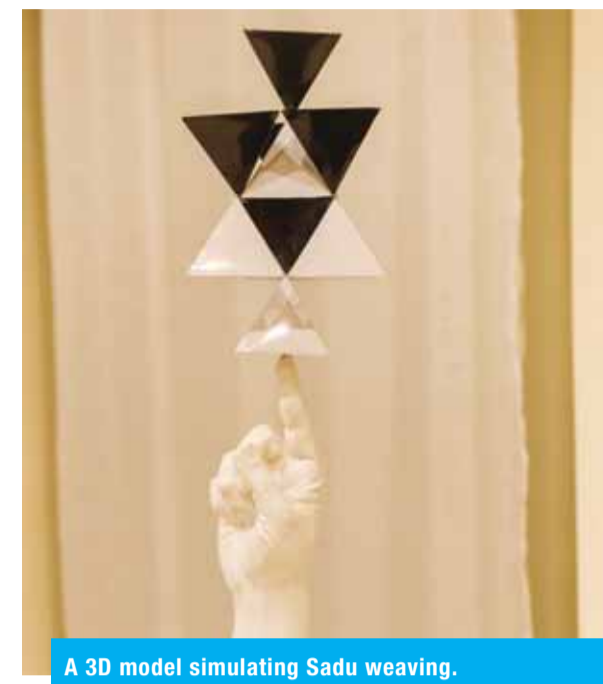
Local

Kuwait Sadu House introduces traditional weaving art to world

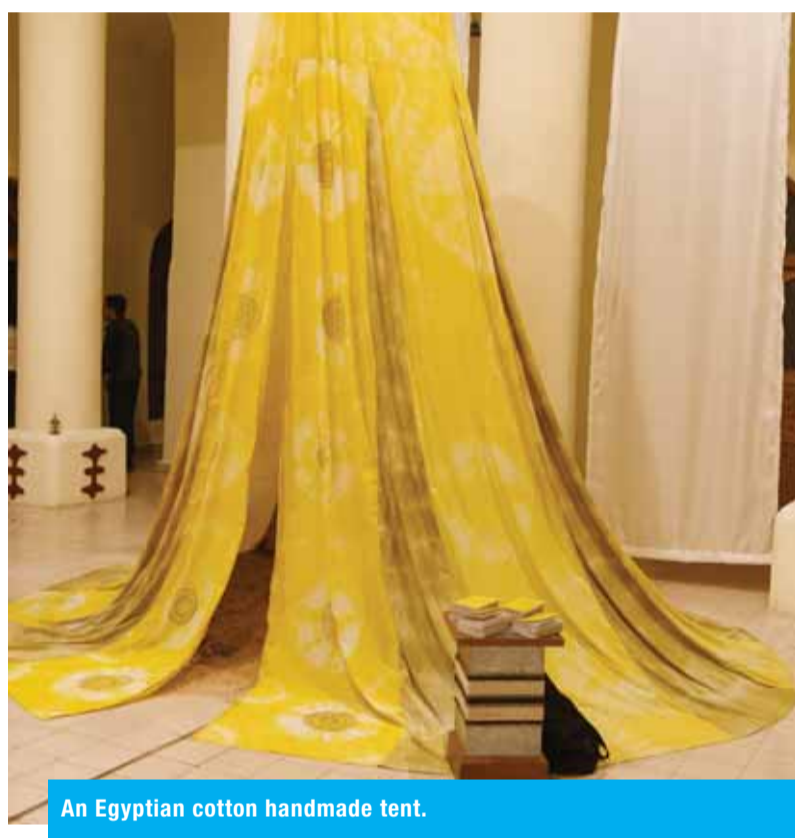
KUWAIT: Sadu exhibition, Sadi, hopes to showcase the creativity of Kuwaiti weavers to the world after the success of last year's event in Dubai. The event, which was launched once again at Kuwait Sadu House on Saturday as part of the Al-Qurain cultural festival, hosted five practitioners of the traditional wool textile art once only common to the country's desert dwelling Bedouin community. "The exhibition's participants have excelled in uncovering the harmony of sadu art and have applied this to their own works, through spinning and weaving in various patterns and rich colors," honorary president Sheikha Altaf Al-Sabah said. Kuwait Sadu House, a not-for-profit organization, is keen on introducing the event to a wider international audience following its success across several Gulf countries. Sadi is an "ambitious initiative aimed at encouraging creativity and innovation" amongst local sadu practitioners, she added. "It gives these artists the opportunity to unearth different aspects of this textile heritage and rethink and reinterpret these traditions in a contemporary manner - each artist has their own way of interacting with the fabric," she said. — KUNA



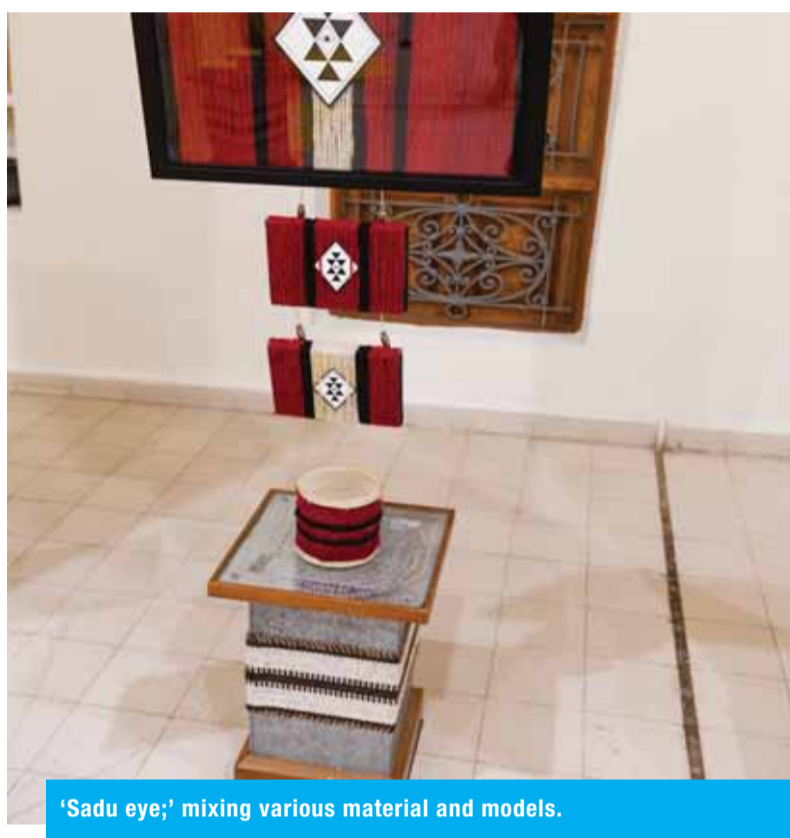
KUWAIT: Officials attend a press conference to announce the Sadi Exhibition. — KUNA photos



A 3D model simulating Sadu weaving.



An Egyptian cotton handmade tent.



'Sadu eye,' mixing various material and models.



Sadu prepared for weaving.

'Ukraine Week' kicks off at Sheikh Jaber Stadium



KUWAIT: Officials attend a press conference yesterday to announce the 'Ukraine Week.' — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A six-day 'Ukraine Week' kicked off yesterday with a photo exhibit at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Stadium. Dr Oleksandr Balanutsa, Ukrainian Ambassador to Kuwait, graced the occasion along with an official from the Public Authority for Youth. "I started my tenure in June 2019. I am here to showcase Ukraine so we can benefit from our strong relationship. We know we can offer more to Kuwait - likewise Kuwait to Ukraine - especially in sports. I am happy that the ban on Kuwait on participation in the Olympics was lifted. Now

we are ready to help in anything. Ukraine is a country full of talents. I have already received many requests for training in gymnastics, football and several other sporting activities. We want good cooperation and promote and share our experiences and the best from our side," Balanutsa said.

In a short video presentation, Ukraine was presented as a country full of positive people, described as artistic, fashionable, intelligent, progressive, creative, powerful and unique. Attendees at the press conference included a coach from Ukraine and two Kuwaiti citizens who had their own experi-

ences of Ukraine's hospitality to share.

Events yesterday included fit ball, gym workout and a football match. Events today include a piano concert, photo exhibit and kids expo. Tomorrow, there is a 'Business Outreach Ukraine' event. Jan 21: Ukraine arts, fashion and music. Jan 22: Discussion on medical and tourist potentials in Ukraine and Kiev classical orchestra concert. Jan 23: Tree planting, international students' conference, diplomatic receptions and Day of Unity of Ukraine. Coach Oleg Andricyuk was flown in from Qatar to join the Ukraine 'Week in Kuwait'.

Kuwait prioritizes elderly care: Official

KUWAIT: Providing better care for the elderly is among Kuwait's chief objectives, besides being a major sustainable development goal, said its ministry of social affairs yesterday. Through close conjunction with Kuwait's health ministry, the ministry of social affairs seeks to bring all elderly care plans to fruition, said Abdulaziz Shaaib, the ministry's undersecretary. Some 23 medical teams are working nationwide to provide quality healthcare for elder citizens in the confines of their

own homes, he said amid a gathering devoted to elderly care. Kuwait's health ministry is in the process of putting in place a better healthcare plan for elders, according to Dr Amani Tabtabie, the director of the ministry's elderly care department. Granting elder citizens 'priority cards' allowing them preferential treatment when getting transactions done across various state bodies is among the ministry's top accomplishments, added the official. — KUNA

Interior Minister meets ambassadors

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Deputy Premier, Interior Minister and State Minister of Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh received Turkish Ambassador

to Kuwait Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak in his office at the Interior Ministry yesterday. The minister welcomed his guest and spoke about the strong relations between the two countries, as both sides discussed issues of mutual interest. The

ambassador thanked Kuwait for its care of the Turkish community in the country. Minister Saleh also received Croatia's Ambassador to Kuwait Amir Muharemi, as he lauded the level of cooperation between Kuwait and Croatia.



KUWAIT: Deputy Premier, Interior Minister and State Minister of Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh meets with Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak. — Interior Ministry photos



Deputy Premier, Interior Minister and State Minister of Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh meets with Croatia's Ambassador to Kuwait Amir Muharemi.

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The property should be an independent (stand-alone) villa in Kuwait City. The property should preferably be located in the areas of Dahiya Abdullah Al Salem, Shamiya, Sharq, Dasman, Bnied Al-Gar, Shaab, or Surra.

The property should contain at least 2 large reception rooms with guest restrooms; large dining room; a minimum of 5 bedrooms; a Diwania; parking facilities for at least 4 - 5 cars; a garden or other entertainment space and domestic staff quarters.

Interested parties who have relevant properties for rent can send their expression of interest to Delegation-Kuwait-Administration@eas.europa.eu. The expression of interest should include details, layout and location of the property and contract details of the owner/agent.



After Modi Amazon snub, BJP slams Washington Post

Eight killed in blaze at Czech home for disabled



NAJAF: Anti-government protesters stand before tire smoke at a makeshift roadblock during a demonstration in this central shrine city yesterday. —AFP

Iraqi youth angry at slow pace of reform

Protests swell after thinning out in recent weeks amid rising Iran-US tensions

BAGHDAD: Iraqi youth angry at their government's glacial pace of reform ramped up their protests yesterday, sealing streets with burning tyres and threatening further escalation unless their demands are met. The rallies demanding an overhaul of the ruling system have rocked Shiite-majority parts of Iraq since October, but had thinned out in recent weeks amid rising Iran-US tensions. Protesters had feared Iraq would be caught in the middle of the geopolitical storm and last Monday gave the government one week to make progress on reform pledges.

A day before the deadline expires, hundreds of angry young people descended on the main protest camp in Baghdad's Tahrir Square as well as nearby Tayaran Square. They burned tyres to block highways and bridges, turning back cars and causing traffic jams across the city. At least 10 people including police officers were wounded when security forces tried to clear the sit-ins with tear gas and protesters responded by throwing rocks, medical and security sources told AFP.

"This is only the first escalation," one protester with a scarf wrapped around his face told AFP, as smoke from the tyres

turned the sky behind him a charcoal grey. "We want to send a message to the government: Stop procrastinating! The people know what you're doing," he said, adding ominously: "Tomorrow the deadline ends, and then things could get totally out of control."

Protesters are demanding early elections based on a reformed voting law, a new prime minister to replace current caretaker premier Adel Abdul Mahdi and that officials deemed corrupt be held to account. Abdul Mahdi resigned nearly two months ago, but political parties have thus far failed to agree on a successor and he has continued to run the government as a caretaker.

'Deadline ends tonight'

Demonstrators have publicly rejected the names circulating as possible replacements and are furious that other sweeping reform measures have not been implemented. "We began to escalate today because the government did not respond to our demands, notably forming an independent government that could save Iraq," said Haydar Kadhim, a demonstrator in the southern protest hotspot of Nasiriyah. "Last Monday, we gave them a deadline of

seven days. That deadline ends tonight," Kadhim told AFP.

A fellow protester, 20-year-old university student Mohammad Kareem, said more escalation could come. "We gave the government a timeframe to implement our demands, but it looks like it doesn't care one bit," he said. "We will keep up our movement and keep escalating to confront this government, which continues to procrastinate," Kareem told AFP.

Rallies also swelled in the cities of Kut, Diwaniyah and Amara, where most government offices, schools and universities have been shuttered for months. In the holy city of Najaf, youth wrapped in checkered black-and-white scarves and carrying Iraqi flags lit tyres and began a sit-in on a main road leading to the capital. Further the south in the oil-rich port city of Basra, students gathered in an ongoing strike in support of the rallies elsewhere.

Rival rallies

The protests are the largest and bloodiest grassroots movement in Iraq in decades, with nearly 460 people dead and over 25,000 wounded since they erupted on Oct 1. While the violence at the

protests themselves has dropped slightly, activists say they face an escalating campaign of intimidation, kidnapping and assassination attempts. Young protesters are also apprehensive about a rival protest on January 24 organized by fire-brand cleric Moqtada Sadr in order to pressure US forces to leave.

Last week, Sadr urged Iraqis to hold "a million-strong, peaceful, unified demonstration to condemn the American presence and its violations". Iraqi political figures have ramped up their calls for foreign forces - including some 5,200 US troops - to leave the country following a US drone strike that killed Iran's revered Quds Force chief Qasem Soleimani and top Iraqi military official Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis. Both were key brokers in Iraq's political scene, which has been left reeling by their absence.

Iraq's parliament voted on Jan 5 in favor of ousting foreign forces but the legal procedure for doing so remains murky. Bases where US forces are stationed have been under a steady stream of rocket attacks for several months that have killed one American contractor and one Iraqi soldier. —AFP

Starr, Dershowitz join Trump defense team



Alan Dershowitz Robert Ray Kenneth Starr

WASHINGTON: Ken Starr, who was at the center of Bill Clinton's impeachment in the 1990s, and America's biggest celebrity lawyer Alan Dershowitz were announced Friday to be joining President Donald Trump's Senate impeachment defense. The administration has yet to unveil the full team but confirmed that White House counsel Pat Cipollone will be lead lawyer, backed by Trump's personal attorney Jay Sekulow.

"President Trump has done nothing wrong and is confident that this team will defend him, the voters, and our democracy from this baseless, illegitimate impeachment," the White House said in a statement Friday evening. But where Cipollone is ultra-discreet, and rarely speaks on the record, Dershowitz and Starr will bring the legal world's equivalent of rock stardom when the trial begins on Tuesday.

US media reports said Starr, the special prosecutor in the 1998 Clinton impeachment saga, was joining the Trump legal team. He is a hero to many on the right, even if Clinton ultimately was acquitted in the Senate. Among the first to react - with expletive-laden astonishment - was Monica Lewinsky, whose affair with Clinton was the subject of Starr's investigation. "This is definitely an 'are you f***ing kidding me?' kinda day," she tweeted. No less controversial is the choice of Dershowitz, whose past clients include disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein, as well as film director Roman Polanski and former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson, both embroiled in notorious rape cases. Dershowitz himself has been accused of being a witness and participant in Epstein's sex crimes - allegations he strenuously denies. Dershowitz's most famous case was the successful defense of former NFL star O J Simpson, whose televised 1995 murder trial riveted the nation. In the Senate, Dershowitz, who teaches at Harvard University, says he'll be pursuing loftier matters. In a post on Twitter Friday, Dershowitz said he would "present oral arguments at the Senate trial to address the constitutional arguments against impeachment and removal."

Lead lawyer Cipollone is the author of the Republican president's uncompromising strategy to stonewall the Democrats' impeachment investigation, calling it "partisan and unconstitutional". Another high-powered player will be Sekulow, a stalwart in the White House pushback against a two-year probe by special counsel Robert Mueller into Trump's controversial dealings with Russia. A Supreme Court veteran and a big name on the right-wing evangelical Christian scene, he won't be dazzled by the bright lights of Washington's ultimate fight. Rounding off the roster will be Robert Ray, another figure from the investigations into Clinton that rocked Washington in the 1990s, US media reported.

Trump has been impeached by the House of Representatives on accusations that he abused his office to try and force Ukraine into digging up dirt on leading Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden. He was also impeached for allegedly obstructing Congress. But the White House enters the Senate trial with a massive advantage: Trump's Republicans have 53 of the 100 seats and the party is in lockstep. The majority leader, Senator Mitch McConnell, echoes Trump's claim that the impeachment is a political hit job. —AFP

Harry and Meghan begin life as ordinary people (almost)

LONDON: Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan began a new life yesterday as somewhat ordinary people with financial worries and security concerns after being stripped of their royal titles and public funding by the Queen. The settlement announced by Buckingham Palace on Saturday saw the 33-year-old monarch assume her painfully familiar role of managing a family crisis that threatened the very foundations of one of Britain's oldest institutions.

The "Megxit" mess began when the young couple gave up their front-line family duties and announced plans to chart a "progressive new route" in North America on Jan 8. They did so without winning Queen Elizabeth II's permission or seemingly knowing how it was all going to work out. A mad rush of royal family meetings and screaming headlines in the tabloid papers culminated with a ruling Saturday that The Daily Telegraph called "the hardest Megxit possible".

'Absolutely unprecedented'

The couple lost their right to be called "his and her royal highness" (HRH) - much as Harry's late mother Princess Diana did when she divorced Prince Charles in another family drama that upset the Queen in 1996. They further agreed to repay £2.4 million (\$3.1 million) of taxpayer's money spent on renovating their Frogmore Cottage home near Windsor Castle. "No royal has ever paid back money," former royal press secretary Dickie Arbiter wrote in The Sun yesterday. "It is absolutely unprecedented."

Harry was also stripped of the military titles and patronages he was awarded after serving two tours in Afghanistan with the British Army. But Arbiter said it

was the loss of the HRH "royal highness" title that really made Palace history. "Even when Edward VIII abdicated (in 1936) he dropped from being His Majesty The King to HRH the Duke of Windsor," he said. Arbiter noted that Princess Diana was not born a royal and had her HRH "obtained through marriage".

'The point of life'

Few know what Meghan - an American former TV actress with a huge social media following and A-list celebrity friends such as Oprah Winfrey and the Obamas - thinks of the British brouhaha about ancient acronyms. The 38-year-old frankly admitted on UK television in October that she "really tried to adopt this British sensibility of a stiff upper lip. I tried, I really tried." But she admitted sadly: "That's not the point of life. You've got to thrive."

Harry has also talked about still being haunted by his mother's death in a 1997 car crash involving a chasing pack of paparazzi. He and Meghan filed a series of lawsuits against UK media outlets in October - a step that predictably outraged the tabloids and renewed debates about the royals' role in public life. Harry is expected to join Meghan and their baby son Archie on a resort island near the southwestern Canadian city of Vancouver this coming week. Royal observers think they will spend little time in Britain once - in the restrained words of Buckingham Palace - "this new model" takes effect "in the spring of 2020".

'Stuck in public's throats'

The immediate question facing Harry and Meghan is how they will make ends meet. Sky News said Prince Charles will continue paying his son some money from his private income. Harry has undisclosed millions of pounds in savings and Meghan has enjoyed a lucrative acting career. She is now thinking of starting her own line of health and "wellness" products.

The Sunday Times asked a royal aide if Harry and Meghan will be able to cash in on the "Sussex Royal" brand they trademarked in December. "That is still



Harry and Meghan

one of the areas being worked through," the royal aide told the paper. "That translates as: 'The Queen isn't at all sure'." The Sunday Times wrote. But Arbiter stressed that Diana's "global appeal" was in no way affected by her losing the HRH tag.

Harry was already been seen talking to a Disney boss in December about Meghan's interest in doing voiceover. There has also been speculation about the couple teaming up with Netflix. The Palace said the separate issue of who pays for their pricey security detail will have to be resolved by the UK government at a later date.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson gave little of the game away when pressed by a British TV crew in Berlin. "I said before that I am sure that the royal family - it's been a round a very long time - will find a way forward," Johnson said with a smile. But royal biographer Penny Junor said the idea of the couple in any way profiting from their royal titles has really "stuck in the public's throats". "Harry is who he is simply by accident of birth," said Junor. "If he was able to make squillions of pounds from that it would be wrong." —AFP

International

Iran to examine black boxes; no plan to send them abroad

Bodies of Ukrainian victims of downed plane repatriated from Iran

DUBAI: Iran is trying to analyze the black boxes of a Ukrainian airliner that its military shot down this month, the state IRNA news agency reported yesterday, denying a report that a decision had been taken to send the plane's recorders to Ukraine. All 176 people on board the plane were killed in the Jan 8 crash. Canada, which had 57 citizens on board, and other countries that lost nationals have said the flight data and voice recorders should be analysed abroad.

The plane disaster has heightened international pressure on Iran as it grapples with a long-running dispute with the United States over its nuclear program and its influence in the region that briefly erupted into open conflict this month. The military has said it downed Ukraine International Airlines flight 752 in error in the aftermath of tit-for-tat strikes by the United States and Iran. But authorities delayed admitting this, prompting days of protests on Iran's streets.

"We are trying to read the black boxes here in Iran. Otherwise, our options are Ukraine and France, but no decision has been taken so far to send them to another country," Hassan Rezaifar, a director in charge of accident investigations at Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, told IRNA. Rezaifar had been quoted by Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency on Saturday as saying the black boxes could not be decoded in Iran and would be sent to Ukraine after Kiev's repeated requests. IRNA also reported yesterday that the official had made similar comments a day earlier.

It was not immediately clear what prompted Rezaifar to backtrack. The Boeing 737-800 was en route from Tehran to the Ukrainian capital. Most of those on board were Iranians or dual nationals. Ukraine has previously said it expected the recorders to be handed over, while Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said France was one of the few countries with the ability to read information on the recorders. France's air accident agency BEA said on Saturday it was awaiting an official request for assistance.

Solemn ceremony

The bodies of 11 Ukrainian victims were brought home yesterday in a ceremony at Kiev airport. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko said that "bereaved families and the whole nation have an opportunity to pay their respects". The plane was brought down when the military was on high alert in the tense hours after Iran launched missiles at US targets in Iraq in response to the killing of a top Iranian commander in a US drone strike on Jan 3 in Baghdad.

Around a thousand people including President Volodymyr Zelensky bid farewell to the victims. Zelensky laid flowers on the flag-draped coffins of the 11 Ukrainian victims - nine flight crew and two passengers - during the solemn ceremony at Kiev's Boryspil airport and briefly spoke to their relatives.

The caskets were to remain for several hours at the terminal so that relatives, Ukraine International Airlines staff and ordinary Ukrainians could say their last goodbyes. The funerals are expected to be held today. Earlier yesterday, the black-clad Ukrainian leader, Prime Minister Oleksiy Goncharuk and top officials stood on the tarmac outside the terminal to see the caskets with the remains of the downed plane's nine Ukrainian flight crew and two passengers being removed from the aircraft.

Ukraine International Airlines staff, some in tears, stood nearby clutching flowers. The airline staff and relatives formed two lines to make a corridor through which the honour guard carried the caskets draped in the yellow-and-blue flag of Ukraine. Some men fell to one knee to honor the victims. The honor guard also held flags of the countries whose citizens perished in the crash.

"Deep condolences to the relatives and eternal memory to the victims," Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's Security Council, said on Facebook. "Our work will not end until the full clarification of the cir-



KIEV: Honor guards carry the flag-draped coffins of 11 Ukrainians who died in a plane mistakenly shot down by Iran during a spike in tensions with Washington at Boryspil airport yesterday. —AFP

cumstances of the tragedy and the punishment of the guilty," he added. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko said on Twitter he was "deeply grateful for the messages of condolence & solidarity that we have received from around the world."

'Unforgivable error'

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has called the downing an "unforgivable error" and promised to hold

those responsible to account. The Revolutionary Guards also issued profuse apologies, as protesters raged against the Guards, an elite military force that was set up to protect the clerical system. The Islamic Republic's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said on Friday that "some tried to use it as an excuse to overshadow the martyrdom of our great commander" Qassem Soleimani, the powerful general killed in the US strike. —Agencies

African states seek more say in Libya crisis

NIAMEY, Niger: Victims of increasing militant attacks, African states bordering Libya are pushing for more say in efforts to end the crisis in their northern neighbor whose conflict risks becoming a growing source of regional instability. European powers, Turkey and Russia joined a Libya peace conference in Berlin yesterday, the latest international effort to end fighting between eastern commander Khalifa Haftar and the UN-recognized government in Tripoli.

African Union Chairman Moussa Faki also joined the Berlin talks hoping to bring a focus on the continent's perspective, but it will not be an easy mission. "The neighboring countries like Chad, Sudan, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, fellow AU members and beyond are suffering the consequences" of the crisis, said Ebba Kalondo, Faki's spokeswoman. "The AU has consistently asked for a more central role in the processes underway, but has consistently been ignored."

Sahel and African nations have long been at the sharp end of Libya's crisis. After the NATO-backed rebellion ousted and killed dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya collapsed into a conflict of

competing armed factions vying for control. In the chaos, militants and migrant smugglers expanded their influence. Libya's security vacuum allowed the spread of fighters, arms and explosives across its borders into Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, which face increasing violence despite a regional campaign to counter Islamist militancy.

The North African state remains in chaos, mostly split now between Haftar's forces in the east and the UN-recognized government in Tripoli. Haftar's forces launched an offensive on the capital in April. "The international community is responsible for what is happening to us through its disastrous decision to intervene in Libya," Niger President Mahamadou Issoufou said in December, referring to the 2011 NATO campaign. "Libya is African, we cannot solve the Libyan problem by keeping the AU on the sidelines," he told AFP.

Chad President Idriss Deby said solving Sahel violence was directly linked to ending Libya's instability. "Libya's chaos... remains the main source of destabilization for the whole of the Sahel," he said in Rome in December. In 2019, attacks killed 4,000 people in Burkina, Mali and Niger, despite the presence of several thousand French troops, a UN peacekeeping mission in Mali and the G5 Sahel cooperation among the armies of five regional nations. "Africa is looking to get more of a hearing now with the deterioration of



BERLIN: Protesters hold a banner reading "Stop war in Libya, Haftar and mercenaries" during a protest near the chancellery during the peace summit on Libya at the Chancellery yesterday. —AFP

the security situation in the Sahel," a Western diplomat said.

'Counter-productive'

One sign of possible increasing African involvement is that the African Union's Libya committee, inactive for months, has been back in session in recent weeks led by Congolese President Denis Sassou Nguesso. "Libya is an African country and the victims are essentially in Africa. So any strategy to end the Libya crisis that marginalizes the

African continent would be ineffective and counter-productive," Sassou Nguesso said earlier this month.

An emissary of the Congolese head of state this month travelled to Algeria, a key country in negotiations between Libyan rivals, to discuss how to "energize" the peace process, the Algerian presidency said. The Algeria talks also discussed the role of AU on reviving Libya's peace process. Algiers has been long been involved in negotiations with Libyan factions. —AFP

Jordan parliament passes law to ban gas from Israel

AMMAN: Jordan's parliament yesterday approved a draft law to ban imports of Israeli gas to the country just days after they started under a multibillion-dollar deal struck in 2016 which is opposed by much of the population. The motion was passed unanimously by Jordan's 130 lawmakers and will be referred to the cabinet to be made law, although legal hurdles may prevent it coming into force. The government has previously said it was a deal between companies rather than a political matter.

The \$10 billion supply deal was originally struck between Jordan's state-owned utility and a US Israeli consortium led by Texas-based Noble Energy, to provide gas to the country's power plants for electricity generation. It was not referred to parliament for approval. Although US ally Jordan has a peace treaty with Israel the deal, which supplies Jordan for 15 years, has faced much popular opposition, with lawmakers arguing it makes the kingdom dependent on its neighbor for energy.

Many Jordanians are also the descendants of Palestinians who moved to the country after the creation of Israel in 1948, and view Israel as an erstwhile enemy that expelled their ancestors from their homes. The Jordanian government said after the agreement was signed in 2016 that securing stable energy prices for the next decade could achieve annual savings of at least \$500 million and help reduce a chronic budget deficit. —Agencies

Iran warns of repercussions for IAEA

TEHRAN: Iran's parliamentary speaker yesterday warned of unspecified repercussions for the UN's nuclear watchdog if European nations that launched a dispute mechanism against the Islamic republic act "unfairly". Britain, France and Germany launched a process last week charging Iran with failing to

observe the terms of the 2015 deal curtailing its nuclear program, while Tehran accuses the bloc of inaction over US sanctions.

The EU three insisted they remained committed to the agreement, which has already been severely undermined by the US exit from it in 2018 and its reimposition of unilateral sanctions on key sectors of Iran's economy. "What the three European countries did regarding Iran's nuclear issue... is unfortunate," parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani was quoted as saying by state news agency IRNA.

"We clearly announce that if Europe, for any reason, uses Article 37 of the nuclear agreement unfairly, then Iran will make a serious decision regarding cooperation with the agency," he said, referring to

the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Since May 2019, Iran has progressively scaled back some commitments under the agreement in response to the US sanctions and Europe's inability to circumvent them. It has stressed, however, that they can be reversed if Tehran's interests are realized.

Iran's latest and final step in January entailed foregoing the limit on the number of machines used to make uranium more potent. The 2015 nuclear deal - known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - was struck in Vienna by Iran, the EU three, the United States, China and Russia. It has a provision that allows a party to claim significant non-compliance by another party before a joint commission. —AFP

Israel installing sensors along Lebanon border

JERUSALEM: Israel's army said it would start drilling to install ground sensors along its border with Lebanon yesterday, a year after an operation to destroy tunnels dug across the frontier. "We are deploying a defensive system into the ground...in various locations" along the border, spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Conricus told journalists. Work will get underway yesterday at the Israeli kibbutz town of Misgav Am, he said, to deploy the new noise-detecting technology.

The move comes a year after Israel concluded a weeks-long operation to destroy tunnels it accused Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah of building. At

least six tunnels were discovered in the operation dubbed "Northern Shield" along the border where a United Nations peacekeeping force is deployed. Conricus said the drilling is "not related to any new intelligence" and all military activity would take place on the Israeli side of the border.

Work at Misgav Am is expected to last a number of weeks before the sensors are installed along other sections of the border. "We understand that our activity might be seen, and most probably will be heard, on the Lebanese side," said Conricus. Israel has notified the UNIFIL peacekeeping force which patrols the "blue line" drawn by the UN to mark Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000. Lebanon and Israel are still technically at war. A month-long conflict in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah killed more than 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and more than 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers. —AFP



MISGAV AM: This picture taken yesterday shows a general view of the Israel-Lebanon border as Israeli army forces begin deployment of infrastructure for a ground "defensive system" along the fence. —AFP

Twelve dead after Algeria buses collide

ALGIERS: Twelve people were killed and another 46 injured when two buses collided early yesterday in Algeria's northeast, emergency services said, in the latest tragedy of its kind in the North African country. Emergency teams arrived at "around 1:10 am (0010 GMT) following a fatal accident, a collision between two buses, on the state highway near the city of Astil" in the province of Biskra, 500 km southeast of Algiers, a statement said. "Twelve people, aged 19 to 73, were killed and 46 were injured," it added.

Public radio quoted Ahmed Baoudji, director of emergency services for the nearby city of El Oued, as saying preliminary investigations indicated speeding was the probable cause. Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune offered his condolences to the victims' families and asked Prime Minister Abdelaziz Djerad to oversee assistance, the radio added, while Interior Minister Kamel Beldjoud and Health Minister Abderrahmane Benbouzid went to the scene.

According to the national road safety commission, a government agency, 3,275 people were killed in road crashes in Algeria in 2019 and more than 30,000 injured - fewer than in previous years. It also reported a small decrease in the number of accidents - almost 22,000 - compared to 2018. Last month Tunisia and Morocco, which neighbor Algeria, were in mourning after two bus crashes that were among the deadliest in the region. On Dec 1, 30 people died in northwest Tunisia, and at least 17 were killed the same day in the north of Morocco. —AFP

International

Mexican troops block US-bound caravan travelers on border

1,500 Central American migrants urged to maintain 'order and respect'

CIUDAD HIDALGO, Mexico: Mexican troops urged some 1,500 Central American migrants to maintain "order and respect" on Saturday after the group attempted to force entry into the country from Guatemala in the hopes of trekking onward to the United States. Standing on the wall above the Rodolfo Robles International Bridge that connects Mexico with its southern neighbor, National Guard General Vincente Hernandez told migrants they would be allowed to cross the border in a "controlled" manner.

"With order and respect, all will be served. There are opportunities for everyone," said Hernandez, who also coordinates the National Guard operations along the Suchiate River, the natural border between Mexico and Guatemala. "We understand the situation, you are our brothers from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala," Hernandez told the caravan. His speech was met with applause.

Some 800 migrants agreed to regularize their status and seek employment in Mexico, an official from the National Institute of Migration (INM) said. Earlier Saturday, troops had blocked the caravan, scuffling with the migrants as they attempted to cross the border.

One National Guard soldier standing guard at the bridge and speaking over a bullhorn told the travelers they could not enter without a visa or migration document, and that sneaking in was dangerous. "Do not expose yourself to people traffickers. Your life is in danger," said the agent, who also told them the idea that the United States will grant them asylum is false.

Most of the migrants left last Tuesday from Honduras

and had arrived Saturday morning at the bridge over the Suchiate River, which forms the border between Guatemala and Mexico to the north.

Some of the migrants insisted on getting in but others in groups of around 20 turned around and headed back to migration holding facilities on the Guatemalan side of the frontier.

Security beefed up

Mexico had beefed up its forces at the border crossing as it anticipated the arrival of a caravan of some 3,000 people mainly from Honduras and El Salvador. On Friday, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador offered 4,000 jobs to members of the caravan in an attempt to dissuade them from traveling on to the United States.

Mexico has come under pressure from US President Donald Trump to slow a surge of undocumented migrants who arrived at the US-Mexican border last year. Trump threatened in May to impose tariffs on Mexico if the government did not do more to stop them.

Lopez Obrador's administration then deployed 27,000 National Guardsmen to tighten its borders.

He has also allowed the United States to send more than 40,000 asylum-seekers back to Mexico while their cases are processed, under the so-called "Remain in Mexico" policy.

Human Rights Watch accused Mexico on Tuesday of violating migrants' rights by failing to guarantee the security of those returned by the United States and detaining others in "inhumane conditions."



National Guard troops stand guard at a crossing point in Ciudad Hidalgo to prevent migrants from entering Mexico. —AFP

Tens of thousands of Central American migrants crossed Mexico toward the US last year in large caravans, fleeing chronic poverty and brutal gang violence

and seeking safety in numbers from the dangers of the journey. That prompted Trump to warn of an "invasion" and deploy nearly 6,000 US troops to the border. —AFP

Russian activists take aim at Putin in march against repression

MOSCOW: More than a thousand opposition activists of various stripes marched in central Moscow yesterday after President Vladimir Putin proposed re-drafting the constitution, unleashing political upheaval. Protesters—mostly young anti-fascist activists—chanted "Revolution" and "No to dictatorship" and some carried copies of the constitution.

The annual sanctioned march was called to commemorate the memory of lawyer Stanislav Markelov and journalist Anastasia Baburova who were gunned down in Moscow by ultra-nationalists in 2009.

A number of independent local deputies including Yulia Galyamina and opposition-minded Russians joined the march, carrying copies of the constitution and chanting "Putin leave!"

About ten people including a protester who carried a placard urging Putin to quit power were detained by police. Pyotr Alyoshin, a 54-year-old lawyer, said at the march he was against changing the country's basic law. "The constitution that I hold in my hands protects our rights and basic freedoms," he told AFP. Galyamina, who had earlier said it was important to protest against Putin's attempts to cling to power and urged ordinary people to join the march, acknowledged the meager turnout but said average Russians were confused. "We will explain it to them," she told AFP. "I think people will be joining the fight to prevent a state coup in Russia."

More than 1,400 people took part in the march, said the White Counter group which monitors political protests. The march took place after Putin stunned the nation on Wednesday by proposing sweeping amendments to the constitution, the first major changes to the country's basic law since it was adopted under Boris Yeltsin in 1993. The move triggered the resignation of his government.

Opposition caught off guard

Observers say Putin's proposals are designed to ensure his grip on power after he leaves the Kremlin and his critics have accused him of orchestrating a "constitutional coup". But yesterday's turnout paled in comparison to the protests of last summer when tens of thousands took to Moscow's streets to protest against the exclusion of opposition candidates from local elections, leading to wide-scale arrests and long jail terms for a number of demonstrators. —AFP

At least eight die in blaze at Czech disability home

PRAGUE: At least eight people died and thirty were injured after a fire at a home for people with learning disabilities in a western Czech town early yesterday, rescuers said. "A total of 38 people were affected by the fire, of them eight unfortunately died," emergency services spokesman Prokop Volek told AFP.

He said 30 people were taken to hospital—one in critical condition, three with serious injuries and 26 with light or no injuries. Czech media said the fire was reported at 0349 GMT and that it has been put out. "The fire broke out in the boys' section of a home for the mentally handicapped," said Jitka Gavdunova, the mayor of Vejprty, a small town on the German border some 100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of Prague. Volek said all of those affected were adults.

The broadsheet DNES daily quoted

Gavdunova as saying the clients of the home had tried to set it on fire in the past, and that the home was heavily understaffed. People from the town tried to help when the fire broke out but eight clients suffocated. "The deputy mayor ran into the fire to help the clients and he paid for it. He's now in hospital under observation," said Gavdunova.

She told DNES the clients could walk around town freely, and that the home had fire sensors but only at the toilets used by the clients as smoking rooms. "We should not be so benevolent with people whose mental age is six to twelve years," said the mayor.

It was the second deadliest blaze in the country's three-decade post-communist history. In 2010, a fire in an abandoned building often used by homeless people in Prague killed nine people. A hotel fire in the capital in 1995 killed eight. The fire at the Vejprty home started in one room before spreading to three, Michal Zavoral, commanding officer of the region's fire services, told state broadcaster Czech Television. Police said the home had 35 residents. One police officer was among those injured.

Four people were seriously injured, said Vejprty Mayor Jitka Gavdunova. "It is, for our city, a great tragedy because

given to opening arguments from the prosecution and defense, and questioning by the senators—the jury in the case.

The key issue: witnesses

Democrats are demanding that the Senate agree to subpoena crucial documents and four current and former senior White House officials to testify. They include former national security advisor John Bolton and Trump acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney.

Both are believed to have first-hand knowledge of what Trump is accused of: using his powers illicitly to pressure Ukraine to help his 2020 reelection campaign by investigating his potential Democratic opponent Joe Biden. The White House blocked the impeachment investigation in the House of Representatives from accessing the witnesses and documents, and shows no sign of giving in now.

McCormack says the issue won't be decided until after the trial's initial arguments and questioning take place, and has made clear he doesn't see the need anyway.

The White House signalled this week what it expects will happen: no witnesses.

"I think it's extraordinarily unlikely it will be going beyond two weeks," a White House official told reporters. He said there is no need to go any longer.



PRAGUE: Fire fighters trying to rescue people from a disabled home yesterday. At least eight people died and thirty were injured after a fire at the home for people with learning disabilities in a western Czech town early yesterday, rescuers said. —AFP

clients of the home... are part of our city," she said, adding that there were fire detectors in the home but not in the area where the fire started, she said.

The cause of the fire was not yet known. Prime Minister Andrej Babis travelled to the site and promised help with

the investigation, calling the fire a "huge tragedy". Poor weather prevented helicopters from being able to help transport injured people. Vejprty is on the country's northwest border with Germany and German rescue units took part in the operation, officials said. —Agencies

Trump trial could be over in two weeks

WASHINGTON: Bill Clinton's 1999 impeachment trial lasted five weeks; Andrew Johnson's went on for three months in 1868. If the White House and Republicans have their way, President Donald Trump's trial will be over in two weeks, just in time for him to celebrate his expected acquittal in the February 4 State of the Union Address. But that depends on Republicans being able to block Democrat demands to subpoena documents and witnesses that could strengthen the case against the president.

So far, Republicans, led by Trump's tough protector, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, have the upper hand. Trump's trial for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress opened with a solemn, ceremonial reading of the charges in the Senate on Thursday, but the rules and schedule have not been set. That will be decided on Tuesday, with the 100 senators debating voting on procedures: the time

department said. The authorities said 60 people were detained during the demonstration, which was again marked by sporadic clashes between protesters and police, with 45 held for questioning afterwards.

The protests were the latest of the weekly Saturday demonstrations held by yellow vests since November 2018, and which have been boosted by opponents of a planned pensions overhaul.

President Emmanuel Macron warned last week that the "unacceptable behavior" of some officers risked undermining the "credibility and dignity" of the force. But he also denounced the violence of some extremist protesters who have hurled paving stones and other projectiles at security forces during protests, while

smashing storefronts and bus stops or burning vehicles and trash bins.

Bistrot blaze

Prosecutors have also opened an inquiry after a posh brasserie favored by Macron was targeted in what is being treated as an arson attack before dawn on Saturday. Firefighters quickly put out the blaze and traces of combustible fuel were later found on the bistrot's heavily damaged terrace—where Macron drew the ire of critics after hosting a lavish party just after winning the first round of the 2017 presidential vote. "When there are marches and so on, you hear people saying 'Death to the Rotonde, Death to Macron'—it happens all the time: anonymous phone calls, people who enter in the middle of the day saying 'Death to

Macron'." Gerard Tafanel, who owns the bistrot with his brother Serge, told AFP. Unions have called for a new day of demonstrations on Friday, when the government is expected to present a final version of its hotly contested pensions overhaul to Macron's cabinet for approval.

But labour leaders at the Paris transport operator RATP voted Saturday to suspend a crippling metro and bus strike now in its 46th day, which also led to mass disruptions of national train services. The strike had already eased recently after the government temporarily dropped a measure that would have required people to work until 64 to have a full pension. However, an Ifop poll released yesterday showed that 51 percent of respondents backed the strike, while 33 percent were opposed. —AFP

French inquiry opened over police assault of protester

PARIS: French prosecutors said yesterday that an inquiry had been opened after a riot police officer was seen punching a detained protester at a demonstration in Paris, a scene that was caught on camera and went viral. The move comes after several alleged incidents of police brutality against pension reform protesters as well

as the "yellow vest" anti-government rallies that began more than a year ago.

In the incident filmed during a "yellow vest" protest on Saturday, a man with a bloodied head is seen being held down on his back by a helmeted officer, who then strikes him hard on the face.

The Paris prosecutors' office said it ordered the police oversight body to launch an investigation into "intentional violence by a person in a position of public authority". Another video of the incident, filmed near the Gare de l'Est train station by AFP TV, shows the man screaming in pain on his stomach as the officer pins down his elbow with his knee.

"The police chief has asked the department of public order to give a full account of this incident," the Paris police



NEW YORK: People participate in the annual Women's March in front of the Trump International Hotel on Saturday in New York City. In the fourth iteration of the Women's March, thousands are marching in cities across the world to draw focus on immigration, climate change and abortion rights. —AFP

"The president should be acquitted. We think it's going to happen and going to happen readily."

Controlling the rules

McCormack oversees a 53-47 Republican majority in the body, giving him all the power he needs to set the rules his way and

deny the witnesses. Unless four Republican senators break ranks, at the end of the arguments McConnell can defeat any motion to subpoena witnesses, and then can easily hold a vote to acquit Trump—meeting the White House timeframe. Democrats are pressing Republicans to support a witness resolution. —AFP

International

Evacuees pray for safety at Sunday mass amid Philippine volcano threat

Philippine city helps others rebuild after volcano

TAGAYTAY CITY, Philippines: Hundreds of people who have fled their homes near a restive volcano on the Philippines' main island Luzon attended a Catholic mass at a temporary shelter on Sunday, praying for safety amid fears of a violent eruption.

Some residents danced and brought wooden replicas of the Infant Jesus, locally known as "Santo Nino", to celebrate the feast of the Holy Child. Many worshippers in Asia's biggest Catholic nation believe the statues can grant miracles. "We prayed that we can rise up, put a stop to this calamity to allow us to return back to our homes," said 44-year-old evacuee Annie Villanueva. "A lot of families like us want to be together in our own homes and stand up."

More than 70,000 people have been evacuated since the Taal, one of the Philippines' most active volcanoes, began spewing clouds of ash, steam and gas on Jan. 12.

The volcano alert level remains at 4, just a notch below the highest, which means that "hazardous explosive eruption is possible within hours to days". "We feel afraid, especially for our families because we don't know our fate, if we will be safe," Villanueva said.

Nearly 800 volcanic earthquakes were recorded overnight within the danger zone, indicating "intense seismic activity (that) likely signifies continuous magmatic intrusion beneath", the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said in an advisory. High-risk areas within a 14-km (9-mile) radius of the volcano's main crater should remain strictly off-limits to people, Maria Antonia Bornas, chief science research specialist at Phivolcs, told reporters. "We continue to record earthquakes, and that is why we can't relax," she said.

Shrouded in ash

A Philippine city shrouded in ash from the nearby Taal volcano has turned adversity into an opportunity to help neighboring towns hit by the natural disaster. The mayor of Binan has ordered residents to collect ash blanketing homes, cars and roads and put it in sacks to be sent to a state-owned factory and turned into bricks.

"When the ash came, we thought we'd exchange the white sand which we mix with plastics to be converted into bricks with ash. We did it and they came out sturdy," Binan Mayor Walfredo Dimaguila, 48, told Reuters. The facility can produce up to 5,000 bricks a day which will be used to rebuild schools damaged since Taal, one of the Philippines' most active and deadliest volcanoes, began spewing massive clouds of ash, steam and gas on Sunday.

"What we plan is to turn them into hollow blocks and bricks and sell them to interested companies," Dimaguila said, adding that the proceeds would be donated to people directly affected by the restive volcano. Several buildings in lakeside towns near Taal volcano, located about 70 km (45 miles) south of the capital, were destroyed as heavy ash weighed makeshift roofs and toppled trees, and tens of thousands of people have fled their homes.

Some of the evacuees are unsure if they have home and livelihood to return to. "When Batangas is in recovery, we will bring the bricks there for building schools, community halls and livelihood centers so what we can give back what Taal has given us," Dimaguila said, referring to the province where Taal is located. Binan is in the neighboring province of Laguna. "The misfortune of our neighbors in Batangas is there. Let's transform this into opportunity." — Reuters



MANILA: Devotees carry their religious icons of Santo Nino (holy child) to be blessed by priests during the annual festival in Manila yesterday. The Philippines is Asia's bastion of Catholicism and Santo Nino is one among dozens of religious festivals honoring various saints and religious icons, a legacy of three centuries of Spanish rule across the archipelago. — AFP

India, Sri Lanka seek closer military ties as China clout grows

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka and India vowed to strengthen military ties and widen maritime links with neighbors after security talks, the president's office said yesterday, as China's economic clout increases in the region.

China has been widening its footprint in the region, including building ports and expressways and upgrading airports in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval met Saturday with recently elected Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and discussed setting up a maritime research coordination center, Rajapaksa's office said in a statement.

It did not give details of the proposed center, but said other nations in the region should be included as



COLOMBO: India's National Security advisor Ajit Doval with Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

observers. It said the two countries also discussed closer military and coastguard cooperation.

The meeting followed Rajapaksa's visit to New Delhi in late November for talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who offered \$450 million in aid to Sri Lanka after his landslide victory in the presidential election. Local

media reports said Rajapaksa will travel to China—his second foreign visit since coming to power—while his prime minister brother Mahinda will visit India on his first overseas trip. No exact dates have been announced, but official sources said it could happen within weeks.

Sri Lanka has traditionally been allied to India, but China invested and loaned billions of dollars to the island nation during the decade-long reign of Rajapaksa's elder brother, Mahinda. Chinese investments grew under the previous Colombo government too. China's foreign minister Wang Yi held talks with President Rajapaksa on Tuesday during a brief transit stop in Colombo and the two men discussed the president's impending Beijing visit. "As Sri Lanka's strategic partner, China will continue to stand by Sri Lanka's interests," Rajapaksa's office quoted Wang as saying.

The visit will focus on technology, tourism and infrastructure as well as other areas, the president's office said last week. Rajapaksa in December warned India and Western nations that Sri Lanka would be forced to seek more finance from China if they do not invest in the island.

Sri Lanka was forced to hand over the strategic Hambantota port south of Colombo to China in 2017 on a 99-year lease after the government at the time said it was unable to repay loans taken to build it. — AFP

Modi's party slams Bezos-owned Washington Post

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party slammed editorial policies of billionaire Jeff Bezos-owned Washington Post, even as his e-commerce firm Amazon announced plans to create a million jobs in the country by 2025.

Vijay Chauthaiwale, chief of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) foreign affairs department, said there was "a lot of problem" with the newspaper's coverage of India, but gave no examples. The swipe at the Post came a day after a cabinet minister gave short shrift to Amazon's investment plans for India.

Bezos has praised India during his visit, saying the 21st century will be the Indian century and calling the country's dynamism and energy "something special". "I am not opposing Amazon as a company, in fact I am a regular customer ... Jeff Bezos should go home tell Washington Post what is his impression about India," Chauthaiwale told Reuters.

"The Washington Post editorial policy is highly biased and agenda driven."

In a statement to Reuters, the Washington Post said it "has covered India fairly and accurately, even when the government has imposed tight restrictions on the flow of information." The Post's Opinions department is independent from the news division and publishes different perspectives from within India and around the globe, the newspaper added.

Chauthaiwale has in the past criticized foreign media's reporting, including on the disputed Kashmir region claimed by both India and Pakistan, saying coverage has been biased against Modi. Amazon did not respond to an email seeking comment on Chauthaiwale's remarks. In its statement announcing the job-creation plans, Bezos said "we're excited about what lies ahead."

Still, street protests this week with small retailers and adverse comments from politicians have made Bezos' visit a public relations nightmare for Amazon. India's shopkeepers have been a core constituency for the BJP since the party's early days. Sources told Reuters that Modi, who has courted other foreign investors, was unlikely to meet Bezos during his visit despite repeated requests by Amazon.

Souring sentiment

India last year enforced stringent rules for foreign investment in e-commerce, which forced Amazon to rework its business structures and strained ties between New Delhi and Washington. India's antitrust body this week launched a probe into Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart e-commerce service. India's shopkeepers have been a core constituency for the BJP since the party's early days. Sources told Reuters that Modi, who has courted other foreign investors, was unlikely to meet Bezos during his visit despite repeated requests by Amazon.

On Thursday, Bezos attended a company event in Mumbai with Bollywood actors such as Shah Rukh Khan and said the company would "double down" its investments on its video streaming service, Prime Video.

But the event was largely overshadowed by comments from India's trade minister Piyush Goyal, who raised questions about the company's business practices while addressing a security conference in New Delhi and said Amazon had done no big favor to India by announcing a \$1 billion investment. Industry executives and their advisers told Reuters on Friday that Goyal's remarks were likely to put off foreign investors, denting India's economic growth which is already projected to fall to a 11-year low this year. "This clearly is unbecoming, and it will hurt how the world views India as a destination," said a senior executive of a US-based company operating in India. — Reuters

Deadly kite strings kill 150 birds in India

SANAND, India: More than 150 birds have been killed by razor-sharp kite strings in an annual religious festival in western India that attracts millions of revelers. Volunteers raced to the rescue of pigeons, starlings and storks but 152 birds died before they could be treated, officials said Friday.

Hundreds of others were injured in Gujarat and Maharashtra states after getting entangled in strings which are coated with a paste of powdered glass and glue to make them sharp in order to sever the strings of rival kites. Harshil Shah, who works for a volunteer bird rescue group, said their centers in Maharashtra and Gujarat had received some 750 distress calls on January 14 and 15 when the festival of Makar Sankranti is celebrated with fervor. "We try to lessen response time during an emergency call to save as many birds as possible but 20 percent of the birds have succumbed to their injuries after getting entangled in the strings," he told AFP.

A bird rescue camp in suburban Mumbai reported treating injured owls, koels (cuckoo) as well as a squirrel. AFP images showed a volunteer trying to rescue a painted stork from the top of a tree in Gujarat's Sanand district.

In Surat, emergency calls were made after revelers were injured while chasing loose kites or falling from rooftops. On Wednesday, metro train services in northern Lucknow city were halted for 12 minutes after a kite string got entangled in the high voltage overhead electric wires, the fourth such instance in the past 10 months. The use of Chinese sharp strings or manjha is banned in New Delhi and elsewhere but weak enforcement means it continues to be widely used. Road accidents where two-wheeler riders are hit by manjha, sometimes fatally, are also common. — AFP



SANAND: A volunteer trying to save a stork after it was entangled in a kite string. More than 150 birds died before they could be treated, officials said Friday. — AFP



KATHMANDU: Trekkers arrive after a rescue operation from the Annapurna circuit, at the airport of Pokhara, some 200 km west of Kathmandu, on Saturday. — AFP

Heavy snow hinders search for missing Korean, Nepal trekkers

KATHMANDU: Avalanches, heavy snow and poor visibility hampered the search yesterday for four South Koreans and three Nepalis caught in an avalanche in the popular Annapurna region of the Himalayas, officials said. Relatives of the missing Koreans have arrived in Kathmandu alongside several officials sent by Seoul to help with the emergency rescue efforts. Ang Dorjee Sherpa of the Korean Alpine Federation told AFP.

The missing group was near the Annapurna base camp around 3,230 meters (10,600 feet) above sea level when the avalanche struck after heavy snowfall on Friday. "Our team reached the area but could not proceed with their search because of more avalanches. We are exploring ways to move the operation forward," said Mira Acharya from Nepal's tourism department.

Rescuers were working with Korean officials to deploy drones in the search on Monday, said Dilip Gurung of the tourism management committee in Chhomrong, which lies on the trekking route.

"It is difficult for people to go. We will try to fly drones to help find something," Gurung said.

Helicopters were sent out on Saturday to rescue about 200 people stranded around Annapurna and other nearby mountains after the incident. Guesthouses and the trekking route were blanketed in a thick layer of snow. "The snow was very deep and it took us more than double the time to dig through and walk," said Jeevan Dahal, a guide who was rescued by helicopter.

"We saw the avalanche-hit area from the helicopter. Everything was white." Tek Gurung, a guesthouse owner aiding the search operation, said more than two meters of snow (6.6 feet) had fallen on the trekking trails and it was "extremely difficult" to search the snow-covered area on foot. Six of the missing were part of the same expedition, while one Nepali porter was escorting a different group.

The four foreigners—two men and two women—were part of an 11-member team of South Korean nationals. Others have safely descended. Education officials in Seoul said they were part of a team of volunteer teachers working with children in Nepal.

Two more South Koreans were due to arrive in Nepal to help with the search, the country's foreign ministry said. Sherpa said it had snowed heavily around Annapurna in recent days, making the trek risky. "The weather and snow got worse and, feeling it was becoming dangerous and difficult, they decided to turn. As they were heading back the avalanche hit," Sherpa told AFP on Saturday.

Annapurna is an avalanche-prone and technically difficult mountain range with a higher death rate than Everest, the world's highest peak. Thousands of trekkers visit the route every year for its stunning views of the Himalayas. A snowstorm killed about 40 people on the circuit in 2014, in one of the biggest trekking tragedies to hit Nepal. — AFP

Analysis

Kuwait Times
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
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Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

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

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Lost and damaged: Philippine volcano steals livelihoods

Decimated fish, scarred coffee plants and vanished tourists: the Taal volcano eruption in the Philippines has inflicted significant damage on the livelihoods of tens of thousands and is expected to cause more. When Taal exploded to life Sunday it spewed towering columns of fine grey ash, which officials said destroyed crops and killed off potentially tonnes of fish raised in the lake that rings the volcano. "We lost a lot of money because all our fish are gone," said Cesario Rodriguez, 34, a fish farmer. "We just need to find a way to survive."

It didn't help either when government health officials warned people not to eat the fish as it could have been contaminated with volcanic sulphur, though the nation's health agency told AFP no formal ban is in place. The warning of a further, potentially catastrophic eruption, also led authorities to urge the thriving tourism industry near the volcano - a popular attraction - to suspend activity as a precaution.

The nation's seismological agency has issued its second-highest alert, saying Taal could unleash an "explosive eruption" at any time. With scores of bookings cancelled and many restaurants and hotels shuttered, the eruption will hurt, but no one knows how much yet. "It going to be negative... 90 percent of the tourism establishments in Tagaytay are closed," said Elinia Sanggalang, a local tourism official, referring to the resort town with stunning views of the volcano.

'We're still lost'

The town alone draws about 5.5 million tourists per year, in part because it is a mere 60 km south of the hot and crowded capital Manila. Estimates of the harm to farmers and fishermen are already coming in to focus, and authorities say the amount could grow. The agriculture agency said Friday it estimates so far the volcano caused about \$59 million in damage to the industry, which is just about four percent of what the region produced in 2017.

In the Philippines life is already hard for those who have not benefitted from the nation's rapid growth in the past decade. Millions still live on less than \$2 a day. However the pain for some, like coffee growers, will take years before it can be fully calculated. That's because it takes about two years for coffee plants to mature and begin bearing fruit, said Arnold Bay, an official with a cooperative of about 150 small growers.

There are already signs their plants were heavily damaged, though they hope to still harvest some of their crop. "It will be difficult for us and for our clients," said Bay. "It will take two years for the farmers to have their livelihood back." The process of recovering is far from started, especially for the over 60,000 people forced out of homes near the volcano and into evacuation centers. They can't go home while the threat of a new, powerful eruption remains, so they will live in limbo for now. "We don't know what to do next," Dandy Belencio, 43, a fish vendor whose home was destroyed in the eruption. "We're still lost on what will happen to us," he said. — AFP



A cat eats fish hanging from an ash-covered stall, damaged by the eruption of the nearby Taal volcano, in Buso Buso yesterday. — AFP

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Iraqi Kurdish men gather at a shop that serves Syrian coffee in the central bazar of Erbil, the capital of the northern Iraqi Kurdish autonomous region, on Dec 21, 2019. — AFP photos



An Iraqi Kurdish man prepares Syrian coffee.



A Syrian Kurdish man sells sweets.

Syrians bring new tastes, traditions to Kurdish Iraq

At first, no one in the Iraqi Kurdish capital Erbil would drink the bitter coffee at Syrian refugee Abdulsamad Abdulqadir's cafe. But now it's a hit, part of a growing cultural exchange. Since conflict broke out in Syria in 2011, many ethnic Kurds living in the country's northeast fled across the border to Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region.

Despite their similar ethnic origins, the two communities speak distinct dialects and have different cultural habits, but in recent years they have traded customs. When Abdulqadir fled his northeast Syrian hometown of Qamishli six years ago, he settled in Erbil and opened a cafe in its bustling market. During his opening week, he sent free cups of coffee to neighboring shopkeepers to win new customers, but they complained it was undrinkably bitter.

"Business was bad," the 45-year-old told AFP, saying Iraqi Kurds typically prefer instant coffee or tea so sugary it resembles syrup. With persistence and charm, Abdulqadir first converted his neighbors to drinking coffee with sugar - then, eventually, to the original bitter drink. He now has so much business that he opened a second quaint cafe in the market. "Now I sell between 200 and 300 cups of coffee every day and 90 percent of my customers are Iraqi Kurds who drink the coffee without sugar," he said proudly.

More vibrant

The changes go beyond caffeine, with restaurants adopting Syrian food, architects fusing Iraqi and Syrian styles and even musical and linguistic exchanges. Jumana

Turki, who has lived with her Syrian Kurdish husband in Arbil since 2014, said it used to surprise her how few women she would see in public in Arbil after dark. But now women - Syrian and Iraqi Kurds - are shopping and even working in markets and shopping malls until late. "This was the impact of Syrian refugees because in Syria, it was normal for women to work in markets and be out at night," said Turki, who holds a master degree in sociology.

Around the world, communities faced with an influx of newcomers often react with xenophobia, because of an instinctive fear that change would mar the host culture. Kurds in northern Iraq have carved out an autonomous enclave where they speak the Sorani Kurdish dialect, have their own television channels and government bodies. They, too, initially rejected Syrian Kurdish customs, but the slow integration in recent years "has deconstructed that historical rejection", said Hawzhen Ahmed, an Arbil-based academic who holds a doctorate in cultural studies.

Around 300,000 Syrian refugees - most of them Kurds - now live in Iraqi Kurdistan, with the threat of a Turkish offensive last year pushing thousands into displacement camps in the north. "Syrian refugees have proved the historical argument that host cultures become more vibrant and enjoyable when mixed with different traditions and norms," Ahmed told AFP.

'Strong empathy'

Integration is a two-way street, said Hussein Dewani, a Syrian musician and schoolteacher in Erbil since 2012. "Iraqi Kurds helped us revive our Kurdish language since

they speak a more pure Kurdish than Syrian Kurds, whose dialect was banned in Syria," Dewani said. Syria's government had long prohibited Kurds from speaking their language or celebrating their festivals and had even refused Syrian nationality for the community, worried they would threaten the state with calls for independence.

But in Iraqi Kurdistan, radio channels, government statements and street signs are mostly in Kurdish. Dewani said he has picked up the Sorani dialect of the region but also taught his colleagues some of the Kurmanji dialect used in Syria. "When I arrived, I heard some Kurdish words which I used to hear from my grandmother and they were all lost generation after generation," he recalled.

Dewani, also from Qamishli, has decorated his Arbil apartment with musical instruments including guitars and the daf, a frame drum. He learned to play the daf in his new hometown, which he said hosts some of the best drum musicians and instructors. The 33-year-old said the well-developed Iraqi Kurdish music culture had also seeped into Syrian Kurdish music, and that Syrian Kurds were now wearing more traditional attire that resembled their counterparts in Arbil.

Empathy and shared norms have blossomed in recent years, said Rodi Hassan, a Syrian physician working in Iraqi Kurdistan. Hassan arrived in Iraqi Kurdistan in 2008, three years before Syria's uprising began, to study medicine. "When I arrived, we had very little information about each other, and it was all stereotypes," he told AFP. "But now it is completely different. There is a strong empathy, friendship and intermarriage between us," he said. — AFP

Fearless Delhi women protesters inspire national movement

Defiant women who have been blocking a New Delhi highway for more than four weeks in protest against a bitterly disputed citizenship law have inspired thousands across India to copy their challenge to the Hindu nationalist government. Supported by volunteers who bring biryani meals, chai and blankets, groups have started occupation protests in about 20 cities across the country of 1.3 billion people to demand the repeal of the law that opponents say is anti-Muslim.

Nearly all pay tribute to the 200 grandmothers and housewives and students who sit and sleep across the main road in the Shaheen Bagh district of Delhi, fighting a law that would give passports to "persecuted" religious minorities from three neighbouring countries but only non-Muslims. Hundreds of thousands of people have taken part in rallies across India since parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Act on December 11.

Many of India's 200 million Muslims fear the government is getting ready to draw up a national citizenship register that could strip them of their nationality, though New Delhi denies this and calls the law a "humanitarian" gesture. Though at least 27 people have died in violence around some demonstrations, protesters have taken over parks and streets in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh states as well as two new

occupations in Delhi. Srijan Chawla, a student protest leader in Mumbai, said "Shaheen Bagh has inspired a lot of women in this country to go on the streets and protest. Be it Kolkata, be it Delhi, be it here in Mumbai". Hundreds of protesters have spent nearly three weeks on public land in Gaya in Bihar. A huge poster of Mahatma Gandhi hangs over one entrance. More than 10 other non-stop protests are taking place in the eastern state, including at Sabzi Bagh near the capital Patna. "It is like another Shaheen Bagh," said Afzal Imam, a former mayor of Patna. "We cannot sit silent at home when the government is hellbent on stealing our citizenship," said Shagufta Amin an activist at Sabzi Bagh, where weekend crowds swell to thousands.

'Like a mountain'

The government in neighboring Uttar Pradesh state is fiercely loyal to right wing Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has cracked down on protesters. Many of the 19 people killed there were allegedly hit by police bullets. Some 6,000 people were detained for taking to the streets. Hundreds of women camped in a park in Varanasi, Modi's constituency, face eviction notices after police filed a case for "disobedience". "This protest is like a mountain, we will not move from here until our demands are met," Nasreen Zafar, one of the women, told reporters.

In the central city of Indore a protest by hundreds of people in a central park has also faced police attempts to evict them. Some opposition ruled states have quietly encouraged the protesters though. In West Bengal, hundreds of supporters of the ruling Trinamool Congress party camp out on a road in the capital Kolkata. Police protect some 150 women occupying a park.

Political commentator Manisha Priyam said the protests



In this file photo taken on Jan 6, 2020, protesters hold placards as they listen to speakers in Shaheen Bagh, which has been blocked off by demonstrators protesting against India's new citizenship law, near the Jamia Millia Islamia university in New Delhi. — AFP

signalled that Indians wanted to defend the equality and justice enshrined in the constitution and shattered stereotypes about Muslim women. "Muslim women would not normally come out on streets to protest but now they are leading the fight for equality and justice," Priyam told AFP.

While Hindus and other religions have joined the protests, the public has not always appreciated the disruption to their lives however. Delhi commuters increasingly complain about the Shaheen Bagh women who have caused huge morning and evening traffic jams. "We are for the right to protest but blocking a road and holding up commuters for over a month is as obnoxious as the condemned law," said Delhi resident Mihir Tripathi. — AFP

Business

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Zain strategic partner of Kuwait Motor Show 2020

Kuwait's biggest automobiles and motorcycles event opens at 360 Mall



KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi along with ambassadors, diplomats, and officials from both public and private sectors during the inauguration of Kuwait Motor Show 2020 at 360 Mall.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, took part in the inauguration of the 9th edition of the Kuwait Motor Show 2020 as part of its strategic partnership with the biggest show for automobiles, vehicles, and motorcycles in Kuwait. The event, which offers a comprehensive platform for local dealerships to engage with the public, continues from 16 - 25 January at 360 Mall under the patronage of Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

The opening ceremony witnessed the attendance of Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, as well as many ambassadors, diplomats, and officials from both the public and private sectors.

Zain's strategic partnership with the event comes in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy, through which the company - being a leading national company in the Kuwaiti private sector - is keen on supporting the various innovative efforts that contribute to further pushing the national economy wheel. This is especially true as the event offers car enthusiasts with an opportunity to learn more about the latest innovations from the world's biggest car manufacturers and exclusive offers from local dealerships.

Zain will be present in the Kuwait Motor Show via its own dedicated booth throughout the ten days at

360 Mall, where the company will offer its exclusive offers and latest services to the show's visitors. The company will also offer visitors a free chance to enter the draw of its latest campaign, 'Score with Zain' through its booth.

The Kuwait Motor Show 2020 is considered the biggest event of its kind in Kuwait. The show's last eight seasons witnessed tremendous success, with over 150 vehicles showcased from the world's biggest car manufacturers, unveiling 24 all-new cars, some of which for the first time in the Middle East, over 312,000 visitors last season, and more.

Zain is aware of the important role private sector companies play in encouraging such initiatives that contribute to supporting Kuwait's national economy, especially that it is one of the leading national companies in the private sector. Zain's participation at this event further reflects its keenness in developing the various innovative efforts in the community, which bursts with dedicated talents who have vibrant ideas that offer viable solutions for the market needs.

Zain's support to this event comes in line with its core objectives that aim at shouldering the advancement of the community as a whole on all levels, where the company reaffirms the principal of partnership through similar efforts with the aim of contributing to the further progress of national economy.



KUWAIT: Al-Kharafi briefs Al-Abdullah with Volvo vehicle features.

Trump, EU chief to meet in Davos as US tariffs loom over digital tax

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump is expected to meet with EU leader Ursula von der Leyen in Davos, Switzerland, next week, three sources said, as tensions mount between the allies over tariff threats and the US president faces an impeachment trial at home.

Just days after Trump scored big victories by inking

a partial trade deal with China and passing a revamp of the North American Free Trade Agreement, he will travel to the World Economic Forum where he is expected to discuss deepening trade disputes with the European Commission president.

The White House and the European Commission did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Among the raft of trade issues dividing the allies, Washington's most immediate concern is France's plan to impose a 3 percent digital services tax, which the US government believes would harm US technology giants like Alphabet Inc's Google and Amazon.com Inc, with a host of other countries poised to follow suit.

In retaliation, the US trade representative last month threatened to impose a 100 percent tariff on French Champagne, handbags, cheese and other goods and services. Trade experts say those tariffs could hit as

soon as late January, given the lack of progress in negotiations.

"Things are not really going anywhere," said one of the sources, a European official, despite frequent talks between French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and top US trade negotiator Robert Lighthizer. "The US is not really ready to compromise in terms of having some sort of digital services tax," he added.

European Union Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan on Thursday, ended a round of talks with senior US officials in Washington, saying that negotiations were off to a "good start" but there was more work to do. Iran will also likely be high on the agenda, after Britain, France and Germany triggered a dispute mechanism in the 2015 nuclear pact with the country, following Tehran's decision to begin scaling back its compliance with the

agreement.

The pact offered Iran sanctions relief if it curbed its nuclear work, but Trump withdrew from the deal in 2018 and reimposed US sanctions, saying he wanted a tougher deal. Tensions in the region have heightened after the United States killed Iran's most powerful military commander in a drone strike. Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, canceled plans to attend the forum.

Trump and von der Leyen, Germany's defense minister, know each other well after sparring over Berlin's failure to reach NATO's 2 percent defense spending target. In a December 2016 interview, von der Leyen defended her shocked reaction to Trump's election, saying, "I am not a political machine, but a human being ... and I heard exactly what he said during the campaign, also as a woman." — Reuters

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

Global market uncertainties ease as US, China ink 'Phase One' deal

Muted inflationary pressures puzzle Fed policymakers



KUWAIT: The US and China have finally signed the "Phase One" deal after 18 months of tit-for-tat tariffs that almost plunged the global economy into a recession. Beijing has agreed to elevate its purchases of US goods and services by \$200 billion over the next two years. In addition, China also agreed for greater financial market access, promised to refrain from devaluing its currency, and protect intellectual property. As a result of China's consensus, the White House canceled a new round of tariffs that were supposed to be implemented last month and lowered the tariff rate on \$112 billion from 15 percent to 7.5 percent.

Despite signs that both sides are willing to play ball, the majority of levies will remain intact until a "Phase Two" deal is concluded and if the US administration believes that China is not living up to its promises, it can easily impose new tariffs on Chinese goods. Overall, the Phase One trade deal has reduced uncertainty around the globe, but a complete resolution between the two nations is far from being resolved. The Phase One deal does not encompass most of the core issues between the two largest economies and it will take time for the second part of the deal to be achieved. Hence, the tariffs theme may persist for a while.

Looking at the equities market, Wall Street registered a trio of record highs last week as all major indices traded in uncharted territories. The signing of the trade truce combined with decent retail sales figures and a positive start to the earnings season paved the way for a rally. As stocks rose, the S&P volatility index declined to a three-week low of 11.75, way below the high of 16.39 seen on

January 6. On the other side of the Pacific, Asian shares all cheered with Japan and South Korean shares jumping to 15-month highs.

In the FX sphere, most of the major currencies barely fluctuated after the news reached markets. It seems that the FX market had already priced in the possibility of a trade truce. The most affected pair was the USD/JPY, rising to an 8-month high of 110.28 from 109.77. Since the start of the year, the dollar has gained 1.39 percent versus its yen counterpart as risks to the global economy diminish. The main winner in the FX market was the Chinese Yuan, appreciating 0.75 percent on a weekly basis against the USD. Year to date, the CNY has soared by 1.50 percent against the US dollar.

Fed stance on rates

Muted inflationary pressures have puzzled Federal Reserve policymakers who expected that a falling unemployment rate will lift wages and price pressures. However, the aforementioned scenario has failed to come to life. The monthly consumer price index barely rose by 0.2 percent last month, its weakest reading since September. As for the core reading, which excludes volatile items like food and petrol edged higher by 0.1 percent m/m. The annual rate for both readings is at 2.3 percent. The FED's preferred indicator on inflation (Core PCE) has missed its 2 percent target throughout 2019 and is currently at 1.6 percent. US wages has been on a decline despite an unemployment rate near a 50-year low of 3.5 percent. Overall, the FED is concerned that price growth may fall even lower, which supports the FED's neutral outlook on interest rates for

Rates -19th January, 2020

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1114	1.1084	1.1172	1.1089	1.0980	1.1170	1.1157
GBP	1.3043	1.2950	1.3117	1.3006	1.2775	1.3125	1.3056
JPY	109.59	109.54	110.28	110.14	109.15	111.05	109.64
CHF	0.9736	0.9610	0.9736	0.9678	0.9480	0.9765	0.9618

2020. At the same time, financial markets aren't pricing in any significant changes to US interest rates in 2020.

US consumer confidence

American consumers ended 2019 on a solid footing, which supported retail sales in the final month of the year. Retail sales increased for a third consecutive month in December and registered a 0.3 percent m/m reading. Control sales, which ignore items like vehicles, petrol and building materials, soared by 0.5 percent, the largest surge since July and surpassed expectations for a 0.4 percent increase. It is evident in the data that US shoppers have been lifting the economy through consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity. However, recent economic figures revealed that consumer spending is losing some momentum after recording a 3.2 percent annualized rate in Q3. Economists expect that consumer spending will diminish to around 2.5 percent in Q4, combined with weaker wages seen in the latest labor report may pressure future sales data. In conclusion, the recent sales data are mostly optimistic and is supporting the economy to offset the weaknesses seen in the manufacturing sector.

Sterling pressured

The pound sterling's downward trajectory witnessed at the start of the year has gathered further momentum last week as expectations for a rate cut soared. At the commencement of 2020, the UK rate market attached less than a 10 percent probability for a rate cut on January 30, which is now hovering around 65 percent. Three MPC

members have verbally stated to back a rate cut this month and two more members are needed to seal the deal. Dovish MPC member Gertjan Vlieghe stated that he would vote for a rate cut later this month if key data do not show a bounce in the economy. Likewise, earlier dovish remarks from the BoE Governor and MPC Silvana Tenreiro had already signaled that a rate cut at the end of this month is more than just talk.

Since the Conservative party won the election, the pound has been more influenced by economic fundamentals than it did before. The latest economic readings have been dark indeed. UK's consumer inflation has fallen drastically below the 2 percent target to a three year low of 1.3 percent. In November, the economy contracted by 0.3 percent m/m. On a three-month basis, which reduces volatility in the monthly GDP figures, the economy was 0.9 percent larger than a year earlier with this growth rate having fallen through the year from 2.2 percent in March. The last time it was lower was in November 2011. The British economy has been uncomfortably frail which will keep alive prospects for a rate cut and could keep the pound on the defensive in the coming weeks. The most crucial forward looking data will be released on the 24th of January, encompassing the construction, manufacturing and service sectors. The results of the readings will likely dictate the BoE's future stance on interest rates. Year to date, the GBP has lost 1.87 percent of its value to the US dollar.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar
USD/KWD opened at 0.30365 yesterday morning.

Founder of S Korean retail giant Lotte dies

SEOUL: The founder of South Korea's sprawling retail conglomerate Lotte Group has died at the age of 97, company officials said yesterday.

Shin Kyuk-ho's reputation was tarnished in his final years when the wheelchair-bound tycoon was convicted of professional malpractice and embezzling from the firm to benefit his relatives in late 2017. He was sentenced to four years in prison but was allowed to stay out of jail on health grounds.

Born in the southern city of Ulsan, Shin stowed away on a ship to Japan at the age of 18 to seek his fortune and established Lotte to manufacture chewing gum in Tokyo soon after World War II. The business later grew to include dozens of subsidiaries in the food, retail and hotel industries.

Lotte is one of the biggest of the South Korean family-run "chaebol" conglomerates that powered the country's decades of runaway economic growth-but which are sometimes accused of murky business practices and overly-close ties with politicians. Shin's two sons made headlines in 2015 with a bitter public fight for control of the group, each accusing the other of mismanagement, personality flaws, and of manipulating their frail and aged father. His younger son Dong-bin eventually took over the reins as chairman but both he and Shin were accused of causing \$72 million in damages to the group by renting out Lotte Cinema concessions at discounted rates to the



Shin Kyuk-ho, founder and honorary chairman of South Korean retail giant Lotte Group. — AFP

founder's eldest daughter and mistress. The daughter was jailed for two years, while the mistress—a former model and actress 39 years Shin's junior, who came to his attention after winning a beauty pageant—was given a suspended sentence.

Shin was also found to have disposed of company assets in violation of his responsibilities as chairman by the presiding judge in his 2017 trial. He had been suffering from dementia and other diseases of old age before his death, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency. — AFP

India says no meeting with Malaysia in Davos

KUALA LUMPUR/NEW DELHI: India's trade minister will not meet with his Malaysian counterpart in Davos next week because of his tight schedule, an Indian trade ministry official said yesterday, as a spat simmers between the top buyer of palm oil and its biggest supplier.

Hindu-majority India has repeatedly objected to Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad speaking out against a new citizenship law which critics say discriminate against Muslims. Malaysia, a Muslim-majority nation, is the second biggest producer and exporter of palm oil and India's restrictions on the refined variety of the commodity imposed last week have been seen as a retaliation for Mahathir's criticism of New Delhi.

A Malaysian government spokesman said on Friday that trade ministers from India and Malaysia could meet on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos. But the Indian trade ministry official, who said he was speaking on behalf of the ministry, said no meeting was planned between India's Piyush Goyal and Malaysia's Dorell Leiking.

"I can tell you fair and square there's no meeting

between the Malaysian minister and the Indian trade minister at Davos," he said, asking not to be named as he was not a government spokesman.

"As part of a larger meeting of trade ministers they may be both together, but there's no meeting. The schedule is already finalized, and it's full." India last week imposed curbs on refined palm oil, which a source in New Delhi with direct knowledge of the matter said could be used to deny or delay imports from Malaysia. India has been Malaysia's top palm market for five years.

The row dragged benchmark Malaysian palm futures to their biggest weekly decline in more than 11 years on Friday. Malaysia's Leiking has sent a message to Goyal wishing him well for the Davos meeting, according to the message reviewed by Reuters. Spokespeople for the trade ministries of India and Malaysia did not immediately respond to queries from Reuters. Mahathir, the world's oldest premier at 94 and one of the Muslim world's biggest voices, has said he would continue to speak out against "wrong things" even if his words cost his country financially.

"Why is he harming his own country by his erratic actions?" the Indian official said, referring to Mahathir. "The comments he's making are very unprecedented." Responding to a question on India's new religion-based citizenship law, Mahathir said last month the country was trying to "deprive some Muslims of their citizenship". At the UN General Assembly in September, he said India had "invaded and occupied" Kashmir, a disputed Muslim-majority region also claimed by Pakistan. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

Aviation Show.

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.765
Indian Rupees	4.289
Pakistani Rupees	1.965
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.676
Nepali Rupees	2.676
Singapore Dollar	228.520
Hongkong Dollar	39.192
Bangladesh Taka	3.546
Philippine Peso	5.987
Thai Baht	10.045
Malaysian Ringgit	77.877

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.254
Qatari Riyal	83.688
ani Riyal	791.423
Bahraini Dinar	809.090
UAE Dirham	82.959

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.850
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	19.243
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	114.910
Jordanian Dinar	429.750
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.357

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.500
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Euro	342.410
Sterling Pound	401.030
Canadian dollar	235.680
Turkish lira	52.960
Swiss Franc	319.520
US Dollar Buying	297.050

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
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US Dollar	304.150
Canadian Dollar	233.520
Sterling Pound	397.310
Euro	338.775
Swiss Frank	296.905
Bahrain Dinar	808.850
UAE Dirhams	83.210
Qatari Riyals	84.450
Saudi Riyals	82.000
Jordanian Dinar	430.270
Egyptian Pound	19.245
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.677
Indian Rupees	4.277
Pakistani Rupees	1.966
Bangladesh Taka	3.550
Philippines Peso	5.987
Cyprus pound	18.095
Japanese Yen	3.760
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.678
Malaysian Ringgit	75.815
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.780

Thai Bhat	10.995
Turkish Lira	52.070
Singapore dollars	225.000

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
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EUROPE		
British Pound	0.389959	0.403859
Czech Korune	0.005465	0.014765
Danish Krone	0.041306	0.046306
Euro	0.330826	0.344526
Georgian Lari	0.114211	0.114211
Hungarian	0.001148	0.001338
Norwegian Krone	0.030213	0.035413
Romanian Leu	0.065258	0.082108
Russian Ruble	0.004980	0.004980
Slovakia	0.009104	0.019104
Swedish Krona	0.028051	0.033051
Swiss Franc	0.308493	0.319493
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.201470	0.213470
New Zealand Dollar	0.195571	0.205071
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.227886	0.236886
US Dollars	0.300400	0.304950
US Dollars Mint	0.300900	0.304950
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002917	0.003718

Chinese Yuan	0.042980	0.046480
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037251	0.040001
Indian Rupee	0.003669	0.004441
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002681	0.002861
Korean Won	0.000252	0.000267
Malaysian Ringgit	0.071385	0.077385
Nepalese Rupee	0.002626	0.002966
Pakistan Rupee	0.001295	0.002065
Philippine Peso	0.005906	0.006206
Singapore Dollar	0.220874	0.230874
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001319	0.001899
Taiwan	0.010129	0.010309
Thai Baht	0.009694	0.010244
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.000013

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.801547	0.809595
Egyptian Pound	0.019098	0.021839
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000199	0.000259
Jordanian Dinar	0.424573	0.433573
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000103	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021022	0.045022
Omani Riyal	0.785782	0.793672
Qatar Riyal	0.082983	0.083817
Saudi Riyal	0.080113	0.081413
Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
Tunisian Dinar	0.104084	0.112084
Turkish Lira	0.045110	0.054955
UAE Dirhams	0.082271	0.083097
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

Business

UK looks to offshore wind for green energy transition

Wind energy to help Britain's transition to carbon neutrality

LONDON: Britain, a global leader in offshore wind energy, plans to make the sector one of the pillars of its transition to carbon neutrality in the coming decades. The country aims to quadruple its offshore electricity production capacity by 2030 by utilizing the windswept North Sea and a favorable policy environment.

"It's more conducive to build offshore in the UK than anywhere else in Europe," said James Brabben, of Cornwall Insight energy consultancy. "There's quite a consensus of support around offshore wind from the public and politics," he told AFP. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government, returned to power with a thumping majority last month, pledged in its election manifesto to increase power from offshore wind from 10 to 40 gigawatts this decade. It wants Britain to be carbon neutral by 2050, with onshore wind, solar, hydro and biomass also set to contribute to its energy mix. The country already produces almost 40 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, according to figures published last week for the third quarter of 2019.

Planned expansions

Britain plans to favor the development of colossal offshore wind farms given the country's relatively small land mass. There were 38 operational sites comprising around 2,000 turbines at the end of 2018, according to the last available figures from the Crown Estate, the hereditary land and property portfolio of the royal family which owns most of Britain's seabed.

Nearly 1,000 more turbines are already in the planning stages.

Two of the biggest projects are Walney Extension, in north Wales, and London Array, at the mouth of the River Thames. The two sites are home to the highest



This file photo, New Brighton lighthouse is pictured at sunset, in New Brighton, at the mouth of the river Mersey, in north-west England with the Burbo Bank Offshore Wind Farm visible on the horizon. —AFP Photos



In this file photo, the Burbo Bank Offshore Wind Farm on the Burbo Flats in Liverpool Bay, operated by DONG Energy, is pictured from the window of an aircraft flying over the Irish Sea, off the west coast of northern England.

concentration of British offshore farms, thanks to the windy weather conditions created by their geography.

Several other projects are also under way, including at Hornsea and Dogger Bank off the coast of Yorkshire, which will compete for the title of largest offshore wind turbine field in the world.

Johnson has also touted rolling out floating wind farms, which utilize cutting-edge technology still being developed, to tap into windy marine areas with deeper seabeds. Maritime wind farms have not proved universally popular among residents when visible from the shore, while some NGOs have concerns over the impact on marine mammals and migratory birds.

'Sustainable technology'

The sector is also trying to account for the so-called "global cost" of building and running a wind turbine on the planet. Danish manufacturer Vestas has estimated it takes between five and 12 months of use to offset the energy cost of a turbine, the difference depending on the model and wind conditions. "As turbines repay their entire carbon footprint in such a short space of time, they are excellent examples of sustainable technology in action," Robert Norris, of industry trade association RenewableUK, told AFP.

Alastair Dutton, who heads a task force at the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) industry group, believes

bigger investment in technological innovation is needed "to further increase their sustainability". He expects that will allow turbine producers to "move away from carbon intensive raw earth materials and implement the highest level possible of recycling to insert wind within the circular economy". Offshore wind power had a record year in 2019, with the completion of projects off the coasts of China, Taiwan, Britain and the Netherlands, among others. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has highlighted the almost "unlimited potential" of offshore wind power, as production costs fall and technological progress increases turbines' power and efficiency. —AFP

Tough love for Amazon's Bezos in India

NEW DELHI: Amazon boss Jeff Bezos promised to create a million new jobs in India in a farewell love letter to the country, after ending a tough visit that reportedly included a snub by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Hundreds of small traders staged protests during his visit to the giant South Asian market this week, which came as anti-trust authorities launched a probe into the e-commerce behemoth and its main rival Walmart-owned Flipkart.

A government minister dismissed Bezos's announcement that Amazon would invest \$1 billion, and a leading ruling party member hit out at his ownership of the critical Washington Post.

"I fall more in love with India every time I return here. The boundless energy, innovation, and grit of the Indian people always inspire me," Bezos said in a farewell love letter to the country posted on Amazon's local website on Friday. The \$1-billion investment will "digitize micro and small businesses in cities, towns, and villages across India", he said, vowing Amazon would export \$10 billion of Indian-made products annually and create one million new jobs by 2025.

Amazon has invested heavily in India

offering goods and entertainment to its 1.3 billion consumers, with monthly subscription to Amazon Prime costing just 999 rupees (around \$14) a year.

But it and Walmart—which bought Flipkart for \$16 billion in 2018 — have been accused of driving small firms out of business by selling heavily discounted goods at a loss to win market share.

Small traders are seen as important trading bloc for Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which won a second term in a landslide election victory last year. Bezos reportedly wanted a meeting with Prime Minister Modi during his visit, which also saw him hobnob with Bollywood stars in Mumbai—but it was unclear whether he met any leading government member. "They may have put in a billion dollars but then if they make a loss of a billion dollars every year then they jolly well have to finance that bill," Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said Thursday.

"Where did the loss come from? How can a market place make such a loss unless they are engaging in predatory pricing or some unfair trade practices," Goyal said at a New Delhi conference.

The Indian government has also been angered by the editorial stance of the Washington Post, which is owned by Bezos, the world's richest man, particularly over New Delhi's actions in disputed Kashmir. Vijay Chauthaiwale, the head of the BJP's foreign affairs department, was quoted by local media as saying that he was "definitely against what the Washington Post is writing". —AFP



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. —AFP

France makes proposals to US to resolve tech tax row

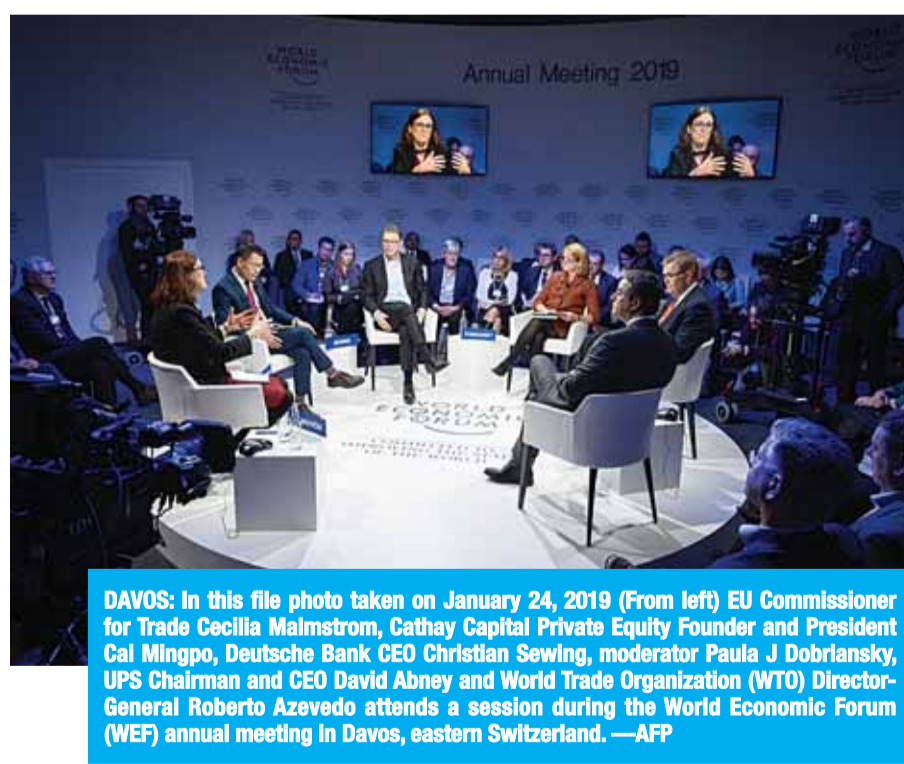
PARIS: France has made proposals to the United States to resolve the dispute over taxing multinational tech giants that aims to seal the framework for a global deal by the end of the month, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said.

"There are possibilities available, we are working with (US Treasury Secretary) Steven Mnuchin. I made several proposals to him," Le Maire said days before self-imposed deadline to find a resolution expires.

On January 7, Paris and Washington set a two-week deadline to end a row over a French tax on multinational tech giants, with a US threat of sky-high

retaliatory duties on \$2.4 billion of French products from wines to leather handbags still hanging in the air. Le Maire declined to unveil details about the proposals or whether France had made a gesture on the implementation of the tax that would hit US firms like Netflix and Amazon. "We are going to keep that to ourselves for the moment, but I think there is a path to a possible compromise between the United States and France on the issue which would permit both to advance towards the only reasonable solution: an international solution via the OECD," he added.

The deadline coincides with a scheduled meeting on the topic at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos from January 21 to 24. France last year approved a levy on tech firms as international efforts dragged on to find a new model for taxing companies who operate mostly over the internet. Currently, they often pay little tax to countries in which they are not physically present even though they earn lots of revenue in them via online sales and advertising. —AFP



DAVOS: In this file photo taken on January 24, 2019 (From left) EU Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmstrom, Cathay Capital Private Equity Founder and President Cal Mingpo, Deutsche Bank CEO Christian Sewing, moderator Paula J Dobriansky, UPS Chairman and CEO David Abney and World Trade Organization (WTO) Director-General Roberto Azevedo attends a session during the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos, eastern Switzerland. —AFP

Cyprus says Turkey 'pirate state' in gas drilling dispute

NICOSIA: Cyprus yesterday accused Turkey of "piracy" after Ankara announced new plans to drill for oil and gas in the divided island's maritime zone, despite the threat of EU sanctions. "Turkey is turning into a pirate state in the eastern Mediterranean," the presidency said in a statement. "Turkey insists on going down the path of international illegality it has chosen," it said. —AFP

Al-Tijari announces winner of Al-Najma weekly account

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly draw on Al-Najma Account. The draw was conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Ana'am Al-Fadhli. The winner was Tawfeeq Ali Al-Attar - 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.

Yemen's rival powers battle over banknotes

SANAA/ADEN: Yemen's warring sides opened a new front in their five-year conflict - a battle over old and new banknotes that threatens to create two economies in the same state.

As of midnight, the Houthi movement which controls the capital Sanaa outlawed the use and possession of crisp new Yemeni rial bills issued by its rivals in the internationally recognized government based in the southern port town of Aden. The Iran-allied Houthis, who say people should only use the old bills, have defended the ban as a move against inflation and what they call rampant money-printing by the government.

The government has branded the ban an act of economic vandalism. And the population, as ever, have been left stuck in the crossfire. Yemenis from both sides told Reuters the ban had effectively created two currencies with diverging values, adding to the turmoil in a state already governed by two powers and brought to its knees by the war.

In the one-month build up to the ban, people in Houthi-controlled areas have been queuing to try to exchange their new rial notes for old, turning the grubby and torn bills into a prized and relatively scarce commodity. The rial stood at about 560 to the dollar across Yemen before the ban was announced in mid-December. The rate has since slipped a little in Houthi-controlled areas to around 582, but slumped much further to 642 in the south, an area now awash with new bills. That relative strength might look like a boon for northerners, if only they could get hold of enough of the old notes in time to keep afloat in the largely cash-based economy.

"We go for the exchange and they won't take [the new notes] from us. Or say they need three, four or five days," craftsman Abdullah Saleh Al-Dahmasi told Reuters on a Sanaa street a week before the ban came into force. "The new one isn't accepted and the old one is worn out, they have to find a solution," the 27-year-old said. A few days before the ban came in, around 20 angry men and women were turned away from one exchange which said it had filled its quota for the day. Many had been coming there for three days in the hope of swapping their cash. North-south trade has become far more expensive as traders have to buy and sell two types of rial - told apart by the state of the paper and the different sizes and designs.

Two central banks

Many people in Sanaa told Reuters they felt the ban was needed to constrain inflation. But they were facing difficulties in the short-term. "When people saw that new currency come into circulation, they held onto it as it was new and shiny. But now it's a problem that they have it," said 28-year-old Abdallah Bashiri, a private sector worker in Sanaa. In that city, legal exchanges will swap 100,000 Yemeni riyals (around \$172) in new notes for electronic currency that can be spent on things like phone credit or electricity bills, for a small fee of around \$1.50.

But things get more challenging when it comes to actual paper that can be spent in food markets. Sanaa residents said unofficial exchanges are offering to change 100,000 riyals of new notes into 90-96,000 riyals of the scarcer old. After the Houthis stormed the capital Sanaa in 2014 and ousted the government of President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, Yemen's central bank split into two branches - one in Sanaa, under Houthi control, and one internationally recognized branch in Aden, which has access to money printers. —Reuters

Business

Huawei keeps strong R&D pace as 5th top investor worldwide

Company ranked in 2019 EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard

KUWAIT: Huawei has been ranked fifth on the recently released 2019 EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard as one of the biggest investors in research and development worldwide. The Scoreboard is made up of the 2,500 companies investing the largest sums in research and development in the world, with data collected from companies' annual reports and accounts.

As a result of its R&D investments focus, Huawei has been able to lead the development of 5G technologies globally and the Middle East region specifically. This has been powered by investments of USD4 billion in 5G research since 2009—more than the total 5G investment from all major equipment vendors in the US and Europe combined. Huawei began 5G research in 2009 and has submitted a total of 23,600 contributions to the 3GPP, which would be a stack more than 10 meters tall if printed out on A4 paper.

Huawei now owns 3,367 families of 5G patents accounting for more than 20 percent of the total and ranking first among all ICT vendors. The company has established nine 5G standards and research centers worldwide, has more than 500 experts working on standards, and holds positions in over 100 standards organizations. As Q3 2019, Huawei had been awarded more than sixty 5G commercial contracts, including 11 in the Middle East, shipping over 400,000 5G base stations globally.

Outside of the 5G arena, Huawei's enterprise business has also benefited from R&D advancements to lay



Huawei top 5 R&D investor worldwide

the foundation for the digital transformation of industries in the Middle East and abroad. Globally, more than 700 cities and 228 Fortune Global 500 companies have chosen Huawei as their digital transformation partner. A focus on innovation has also kept Huawei's popular smartphone range as a preferred global brand, achieving robust growth in 2019 with a total of 240 million units shipped.

The latest ranking comes at a time when Huawei leadership estimates that its global sales revenue will have topped \$122 billion in 2019, an increase of roughly 18 percent year-on-year.



Huawei headquarters

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi draw

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

The lucky winners are:

1. Fuad Naser Abbas Al-Salman
2. Sami Mijbel Nasser Hassan
3. Mohamed Sayed Galal Tawfik

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

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

Law on enforced receipts sets Germans grumbling

FARNKFURT: In January it became law in Germany that retailers must print a receipt for every last transaction in a bid to fight tax evasion, but shopkeepers, customers and industry groups are already bucking against the scheme. "Small shops' cash registers already have electronic chips that tax officials can read any time. Why should we go back to the old system?" asked Christian Koch, owner of Hammett, a specialist crime novel shop in Berlin.

"It's a pain, of the 50 tickets I print each day I'll throw 49 straight in the bin," he added.

Even bakers selling rolls for a few dozen euro cents each must now print a receipt for every transaction—even when their customer doesn't want one. With their high numbers of small sales each day now generating reams of unwanted documentation, bakeries and snack stands are especially outraged by the change in the law.

"I've already emptied this once," said a worker at Frankfurt sausage stand "Best Worscht in Town", pointing to a bin overflowing with discarded slips of paper during the busy lunch hour trade. "It's a really stupid idea for the environment."

Obligatory receipts were voted through in 2016, but the law slipped under the public radar until shortly before it came into effect on January 1. Economy Minister Peter Altmaier asked Finance Minister Olaf Scholz to give up on the plans, especially because receipts printed on thermal paper cannot be recycled. Since then, retailers' federation HDE has also written to Scholz, asking him to exempt businesses that issue more than 500 receipts per day on average.

"That's one receipt per minute for a shop open nine hours a day," the group said in the document, seen by AFP. Until now Scholz has resisted all such calls, saying the fight against tax evasion—estimated at around 10 billion euros by tax officials—must include preventing shops and restaurants from failing to record transactions properly. —AFP

ABK launches 'Friendship Thursday'

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) launched its Friendship Thursday Initiative during the last quarter of 2019 as part of its dedication to promoting a cohesive, and inclusive work environment.

Friendship Thursday is a weekly program where a small group of ABK staff from different divisions meet for a morning coffee outside the office. The initiative is welcomed by staff, who seize the opportunity to exchange stories, and strengthen interdepartmental ties. It is also an opportunity to banish silos, which can become a barrier to communication and growth in an organization.

ABK's strategic initiative, Solidarity, a culture of one, aims to connect staff and build relationships that contribute to individual, team and business success. The initiative does not only aim to foster a friendly and welcoming work environment but encourages a collaborative culture while maintaining each member of staff's authentic self. ABK's organizational ethos are centered on respecting and valuing the importance of a cohesive work culture. The initiative is the latest in a series of events



focused on driving relationships between staff that create value for the employees, clients and society. It is also testament to ABK's efforts to promote an inclusive culture which rewards

behaviors that support all staff to reach their full potential.

The initiative, spearheaded by ABK's HR and Service Quality teams will enter a new phase in 2020 and will form an

integral part of a wider campaign focused on achieving an inclusive workplace in order to maximize productivity, attract new talent and increase employee commitment.

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

BRUSSELS: With just two weeks to go before Brexit, European diplomats are preparing for the next phase: intense negotiations to hammer out a future with Britain after its EU divorce. Brussels is braced for new rounds of Brexit battles, aware that a bullish Prime Minister Boris Johnson is feeling reinvigorated after an electoral victory in December.

Here are the main battle lines revealed to AFP in interviews with 18 European officials and diplomats closely involved in the talks:

No extension

Throughout his campaign, Johnson said he would seal a trade deal by December 31, the deadline set by the EU-UK divorce agreement, though London can request an extension of one or two more years. This marked the EU's first reality check—only reluctantly accepted. They no longer expect Johnson to ask for a delay. That leaves only eight months, from March to October, to reach an agreement and allow time for ratification. "It's an impossible task," warned one European diplomat.

"At the end of the year, we could get the skeleton of a trade agreement plus something on internal and foreign security, but there is no guarantee," the diplomat added. Talks can begin as soon as EU ministers agree their joint mandate on February 25.

Johnson is not May

Johnson's campaign promised "to get Brexit done" and to do away with his predecessor's goal to keep close ties

with Europe and disruption to the cross-Channel economy to a minimum. Theresa May's government had proposed a "dynamic alignment", where London would match EU rules on the environment, state aid and other standards to allow UK companies easy access to Europe.

Johnson will instead pursue a far more minimal trade deal that will seek zero tariffs and quotas on goods. "The prime minister has been clear that he wants a Canada-style free trade agreement with no alignment," a UK official told AFP.

This refers to the EU's trade deal with Canada that Europeans consider ambitious as a trade deal, but too narrow for an important neighbor like Britain.

Threat to unity

A mere trade deal would be an economic blow to Britain, but also to the UK's closest trading partners—such as Ireland, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. No alignment on EU standards means custom checks, paperwork and all sorts of new limits to trade. "Our first choice is that nothing changes," lamented a diplomat. "But that is not going to happen, so we must now be realistic."

Johnson's low-bar strategy could be the biggest challenge to European unity since the Brexit referendum in 2016, diplomats said. Member states will be pulling in different directions with some like France, Belgium and Denmark concerned about fishing while land-locked eastern Europeans and Germany will want a deal on cars.

'Zero-dumping'

Referred to as keeping a level playing field, member states with the most trade with Britain will be dead-set on ensuring that British companies gain no unfair advantage after Brexit. When British goods and services come knocking on Europe's door, they will insist that UK goods are subject to checks like those



LONDON: Pro-Brexit demonstrators hold up placards outside the Houses of Parliament in central London. —AFP

from any other non-EU country.

"Zero tariffs, zero quotas, zero dumping," the EU's chief negotiator Michel Barnier said on recent visit to Sweden. Diplomats warn there were not many ways to enforce the level playing field in a simple trade deal, except through threatening tariffs that can take months or even years to impose.

As a sign of London's good faith, Europeans will be keeping a close eye on British compliance with the withdrawal agreement, in particular the customs arrangements on the Irish border. "If they play around with that, the impact on trade talks will be immediate," one diplomat warned.

Big deal?

One question nagging Europeans, notably France, is the future structure of the EU's relationship with Britain. Will it be something formal, with clearly set joint institutions, or a looser arrangement structured by separate deals on trade, security and other topics as necessary?

Many European capitals abhor the latter, spooked by the EU's confused ties with Switzerland, which are governed by over 100 deals. "We would favor a more organized structure," an EU diplomat told AFP.

'Negotiation tables'

Months of intense discussions, to alternate between London and Brussels, will be coordinated by EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier and his UK counterpart, probably David Frost. The tight deadline allows "about 40 days of pure negotiation" in eight to 10-week sessions, an official warned.

This is a far cry from the years devoted to trade deals with Canada, Japan or South Korea.

Another diplomat said negotiators would open about ten "negotiating tables" with some done in parallel. "We will give each subject two or three weeks and see what is possible. If the divisions are too great, we move on. Some issues will be well advanced, others will go nowhere," he said. —AFP

What's On



Left to right: Sheikha Maymona Al-Sabah, General Supervisor of Kuwait's Historical Archive Center Museum, Dr Aameera Al-Hassan, Head of United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Abdullah Buwair, Director of Kuwait's historical Archive Center Museum and Head of the consultations group for small-sized enterprises Dr Mustafa Behbehani.



Kuwait's Historical Archive Center Museum opens

By Faten Omar

Kuwait's Historical Archive Center Museum opened yesterday at Kuwait University in Shuwaikh. Director of the museum Abdullah Buwair said that the idea of the museum was important to the Amiri Diwan. "The idea started seven years ago, and after hard work and continuous efforts, the museum is open to the public today," he said.

"Sheikha Maymona Al-Sabah offered us this place at Kuwait University to turn it to Kuwait's historical Archive Center Museum. The rooms are divided into sections. The first room has the belongings of Kuwait's martyrs during the Iraqi invasion war and the martyrs of Imam Al-Sadiq Mosque. Another hall is dedicated to the rulers of Kuwait and the history of folklore. A room called 'The Diwan and Heritage Hall' includes books and documents about the history and rulers of Kuwait, along with old secret documents related to Kuwaiti heritage," he added.

Buwair praised HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's effort in developing Kuwait, wishing the Amir good health and wellbeing after his return from treatment in the United States.

Sheikha Maymona, General Supervisor of the Archive Center Museum, said the museum contains historical documents of the history of Kuwait, and they are in the process of bringing more documents in cooperation with various sectors. "The museum was supposed to open last Sunday, but it was postponed after the tragic death of Oman's Sultan Qaboos bin Said last week, where the countries of the Cooperation Council lost one of the wisest men in the Gulf. Best of luck to Oman's new sultan, Haitham bin Tariq," said Sheikha Maymona.

Dr Aameera Al-Hassan, Head of United Nations Human Settlements Program, explained that the main goal of the museum is to document the history of Kuwait and introduce it to the next generation, praising the opening of the museum for its value to educate the next generation about the history of Kuwait.



LOYAC conducts blood donation campaign

Out of its humane vision, LOYAC recently launched its 8th annual blood donation campaign under the slogan of "Your Blood, Their Hope", which is dedicated to support cancer patients.

The campaign was held at the Sharq Market under auspices of ABK and in collaboration with The Tri Star Motorcycles, the bikers team and Kuwait Central Blood Bank. The launching ceremony was attended by LOYAC general manager, Al-Razi Al-Bedaiwi, ABK board chairman, Fauzi Al-Thonayyan and Tri Star executive manager, Ja'far Bahbahani.

Speaking on the occasion, Al-Bedaiwi said that even since establishing LOYAC 18 years earlier, the value of benevolence was the base of all youth activities. "The equation is so simple, Give youth due trust, care and opportunities, they give time, effort and dedication



to add value to their societies", he added urging parents to accompany children while they donate blood to develop this value in them at early ages.

On his part, ABK's Fauzi Al-Thonayyan expressed his joy and pride for sponsoring the campaign for the fifth year.

Ja'far Bahbahani, Tri Star, stressed the significance of this particular year's campaign as it is dedicated to children with cancer.



Seminars on food and beverages for local firms

In preparation for opening Horeca 2020, due Monday-Wednesday at Hall number 8 of Mishref International Fair Grounds, Leaders Group company announced that this year's activities would include three main symposiums for specialized speakers to discuss the future of the sectors on display.

A statement made by Leaders Group, which organizes the exhibition in collaboration with Hospitality Services (Lebanon), said that this year's exhibition includes a record number of participants in addition to hundreds of contestants in over 25 categories of cooking competitions.

The committee explained that the first seminar would be held on the first

day from 5-6 pm under the title of "The Rising Food and Beverage Trends in Kuwait" for speakers Khaled Al-Baqer; Ventri Group founding partner and CEO, Mohammed Al-Wehaib; Seazen Group general manager, Chef Frank Bordoni; Al-Shaya Group and Nawwaf Al-Hussein; Qout Market founding partner.

The second day seminar will be held the same time on the second day under the title of "Ideas & Trends In Today's Catering Industry" to be presented by Ibrahim Al-Houtti; MMC Catering company CEO, Shawqi Barakat; Barakat Foods Company manager and Bibi Hayat; founder and owner of Bibi Hayat Events.

The third day seminar will be titled "Privileges of Online Restaurant Ordering Systems & Benefits for Restaurants" to be presented by speakers Hamad Al-Jedai; founder and chairman of Zyda company, Waseem Makarem; TALABAT App general manager and Ahmed Salamah; partner in Bilbalyt.

Notably, all three seminars will be moderated by Nada Alameddine, Partner - "Hodema Consulting Services.

Jumeirah Group announces 2020 MICE offer in Abu Dhabi

Jumeirah Group, yesterday announced its diverse meetings, incentives, conferences and event (MICE) offering for 2020 at two of its renowned hotels in Abu Dhabi. Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort provides a beautiful beach option with luxury ocean views, in contrast to the vibrant downtown location of the acclaimed Jumeirah at Etihad Towers, complemented by panoramic views of the capital.

Whether guests are corporates or individuals participating in local events, Jumeirah Group's hotels in Abu Dhabi offer distinctive environments, each providing a unique and tailored backdrop to meet all MICE requirements, both locally and internationally. Guests at meetings and events held in the heart of the city, can enjoy access to the one of a kind Observation Deck, located on the 74th floor of Jumeirah at Etihad Towers. The platform is the highest vantage point in Abu Dhabi where visitors can relish an uninterrupted birds-eye view of the city's skyline, the Corniche, and Arabian Gulf.

Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort, the Jumeirah Group's first luxury "eco-conscious" resort, located 20 minutes away from Abu Dhabi airport, has the capacity to host exhibitions, product launches and parties. In addition to this, the versatile meeting space can be utilised with flexibility as a key offer-



ing, based on the size and nature of meetings. Those looking to host C-Suite meetings can make the most of the complete array of planning services offered by the property, with prices starting at AED 350 per person inclusive of dining, while corporate team building is also catered to via unique packages starting at AED 150 per person. The one of a kind team building provision spans beach activities, water sports and Bodyism classes, to ensure a seamless experience for corporate guests. Guests can also take advantage of the luxurious spa and proximity to the Gary Player designed course at the Saadiyat Beach Golf Club.

Jumeirah at Etihad Towers houses one of Abu Dhabi's largest conference centres, inclusive of 13 cutting edge meeting rooms, a ballroom with a capacity of 1,400 guests in a conference setting or 1,000 guests for seated banquet dinner; as well as a Bridal and

Chairman Suite. A dedicated pre-function area is also available for use, with a spectacular crystal installation serving as a focal point of design, within the MICE facilities. Conference packages start from 150 AED per person inclusive of a coffee break and lunch or dinner.

Linda Griffin, General Manager of Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island, comments: "Jumeirah Group's dedicated event offerings in Abu Dhabi have been inspired by the city's standing as a regional leading MICE destination. This has been further spearheaded by its reputation as a cultural hub and its success hosting a broad range of global events."

Savino Leone, General Manager of Jumeirah at Etihad Towers adds, "We recognise the importance of this segment and have developed our MICE portfolio across our properties in the capital, to meet the needs of local and international organisations."

ICSK flags off mega Higher Education Fair 2020

The Indian Community School, Kuwait (ICSK), took pride in hosting the Higher Education Fair 2020, a mega event, on the 17th and 18th of January 2020. ICSK conducted this Education Fair for the second time as the school is commemorating the 61st year of its glorious existence. The school had conducted this fair last year for the first time as a part of its Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

ICSK launched this unique event through a press conference held on 15th January 2020 at ICSK Senior, Salmiya. The education fair is an enterprising venture, offering career talks, aptitude tests, career counselling and multiple courses in a single program. The Education Fair supplies a platform to interact with many of the leading universities from around the globe. The fair offered unlimited opportunities to students who wish to pursue higher education at various Universities. The entry was free to this distinctive programme.

This year, Indian Institute of Technology-IIT Roorkee & National

Institute of Fashion Technology-NIFT New Delhi conducted separate sessions for the first time in the Middle East, to guide the students towards the right career path. The world renowned Career Guru & popular columnist Dr B.S. Warriar (Indian universities) and prominent USA based career guidance specialist Jihad Yaacoub (Foreign universities) conducted the career guidance seminars and clear all the queries regarding various career prospects enabling the students benefit from the wide range of opportunities available before them. These seminars were free of cost.

The spotlight was on more than 50 universities & colleges from around the world who participated in this exclusive programme. They will be extending their plethora of opportunities to the career aspirants.

The Press conference on 15th January 2020 was attended by Azharuddin Amer Mohammed - Hon Secretary - Board of Trustees, Vinu Kumar Nair - Hon. Vice Chairman - Board of Trustees, Dr V. Binumon - Principal and Senior Administrator - Indian Community School Kuwait, Senior, K. Gangadhar Shirsath - Principal, Indian Community School Kuwait, Khaitan, Mrs. Susan Rajesh Pothan - Vice Principal, Indian Community School Kuwait, Senior, Mrs Mini Shaji - Deputy Vice Principal - Indian Community School Kuwait, Senior and Vinod Lakshmanan - Project Director, Higher Education Fair 2020.

China says 17 new cases in virus outbreak, Wuhan restricts gatherings

BEIJING: China said yesterday that 17 more people had become infected with a new coronavirus strain, fanning fears it will spread further as hundreds of millions of people travel to celebrate the upcoming Lunar New Year.

Three of those patients are seriously ill, according to a statement issued by the health commission in the central city of Wuhan, where all 62 of the cases in China have occurred. Two people have died. Two cases have also been reported in Thailand and one in Japan - both involving people who travelled from Wuhan. One of the two patients in Thailand has recovered.

Wuhan officials have been providing updates on new cases almost daily since Jan 11, and 17 is the highest number reported since then. The 17 new patients began exhibiting symptoms such as a fever or cough before Jan 13, the statement said.

The World Health Organization said in a tweet yesterday that some of the new cases appear not to be linked to the Huanan seafood market, believed to be the center of the outbreak. Due to China's efforts to implement broader screening, new cases may be identified in the coming days and weeks, it added.

"The fact that three cases have been exported to Thailand and Japan without connection to the Huanan Seafood Market suggests that the virus has spread beyond the Huanan Seafood Market into the community," said David Hui, a professor of respiratory medicine at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Chinese health authorities did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, a national level body, issued a large infographic on Saturday on social media, urging people not to believe rumors about the virus and stressing it is not SARS. The unknown virus however is from the same large family of coronaviruses that includes

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which killed nearly 800 people globally during a 2002/03 outbreak that also started in China.

Screening strengthened

Wuhan will strengthen oversight of large-scale events and reduce the number of public gatherings, state media quoted Chen Yanxin, the city's deputy mayor as saying yesterday. Wuhan officials said since Jan 14 they are using infrared thermometers at airports, railway stations and other passenger terminals in the city to strengthen screening.

The outbreak has stoked worries globally as many of China's 1.4 billion people will travel both domestically and overseas during the Lunar New Year holidays that begin next week. Airport authorities in the United States as well as most Asian nations are screening passengers from Wuhan. Although some experts at Georgetown University say current evidence shows the new virus may not be as deadly as SARS, there is little known about its origins and how easily it can spread.

A report by the London Imperial College's MRC Centre for Global Infectious Disease Analysis said there are likely to be "substantially more cases". It estimated that by Jan 12 there were 1,723 cases in Wuhan City with onset of related symptoms. News about the outbreak was trending on Weibo, a microblogging platform in China, yesterday morning. Weibo regularly filters content that is deemed sensitive.

There has been some local-level censorship however. Two individuals told Reuters they were ordered by police to remove social media posts. Many on social media called on people to be careful. "We're about to celebrate the New Year, hope everyone is safe. Don't go to places where there's a lot of people," said one user. — Reuters

What we know so far about new virus outbreak

BEIJING: Chinese authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO) say a new strain of coronavirus is behind the outbreak of pneumonia in the central city of Wuhan, which has erupted just ahead of the Lunar New Year, the country's biggest festival. Health officials say the strain does not appear as lethal as some other strains of coronavirus such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, which killed nearly 800 people worldwide during a 2002/03 outbreak that also originated from China.

Known cases

As of yesterday, there were 65 confirmed cases of patients with pneumonia caused by the new strain of coronavirus. All patients were either Wuhan residents or people who recently went to the city. Their symptoms included fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Of the 62 patients in Wuhan itself, two have died and 19 have been discharged. Thailand has also reported two confirmed cases of the pneumonia, both of whom were Chinese tourists from Wuhan. Japan has also confirmed one case of a Japanese citizen who visited Wuhan.

Little known about virus itself

Chinese authorities says the outbreak is strongly linked to a seafood market in Wuhan, but some patients diagnosed with the new coronavirus deny exposure to this market. Health officials say there is no clear evidence the virus spreads easily from one person to another, but they cannot completely rule out the possibility of human-to-human transmission. Wuhan municipal authorities released information about a married couple that contracted the virus on Jan 15. The husband, who got sick first, worked at the market but the wife denied any exposure to the market in question. The authorities did not explicitly state whether this was a case of human-to-human transmission, however.

Countermeasures

There is no vaccine for the new virus. Symptoms include fever, difficulty in breathing as well as pneumonic infiltrates in the lungs. Chinese authorities have stepped up monitoring and disinfection efforts ahead of the lunar new year holiday in late January, when many of the country's 1.4 billion people will travel domestically and overseas. Airport authorities in the United States as well as many Asian countries, including Japan, Thailand, Singapore and South Korea, have stepped up screening of passengers from Wuhan. The World Health Organization sent directives to hospitals around the world on infection prevention and control. It has advised against travel or trade restrictions based on available information, however. — Reuters

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- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4-Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
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Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

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- ◆ Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the Eurpean Laryngological Society

Specialized in:

- ◆ Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- ◆ Vocal cord augmentation.
- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
- ◆ Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- ◆ Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- ◆ Treatment of snoring.
- ◆ Treatment of vertigo.

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- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
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- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com
Tel: 1886677

Scope of Clinical Practice:

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

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

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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

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

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

Academic Certificates - Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

Stars

CROSSWORD 2414

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ACROSS

- One millionth of a gram.
- A thrombolytic agent (trade name Activase) that causes fibrinolysis at the site of a blood clot.
- 100 pyas equal 1 kyat.
- Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- A personal attractiveness that enables you to influence others.
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
- A shaft on which a wheel rotates.
- God of fire.
- Sheet glass cut in shapes for windows or doors.
- Any member of Athapaskan tribes that migrated to the southwestern desert (from Arizona to Texas and south into Mexico).
- An enzyme produced in the stomach that splits proteins into peptones.
- Having branches.
- An account of what transpired at a meeting.
- Being one more than one.
- White Southerner supporting Reconstruction policies after the Civil War usually for self-interest.
- Make unable to perform a certain action.
- A resource.
- An ancient Assyrian city on the River Tigris and traditional capital of Assyria.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- (computer science) Memory whose contents can be accessed and read but cannot be changed.
- Expressive of contempt.
- Satisfy (thirst).
- A loss of the ability to write or to express thoughts in writing because of a brain lesion.
- Tranquilizer (trade name Ativan) used to treat anxiety and tension and insomnia.
- A Kachinic language.
- (archaic) Of persons.
- The 3 goddesses of fate or destiny.
- The part of the small intestine between the jejunum and the cecum.
- The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- A communist nation that covers a vast territory in eastern Asia.
- Mythical bird of prey having enormous size and strength.
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- Used of a single unit or thing.
- Any of several plants of the genus *Hepatica* having 3-lobed leaves and white or pinkish flowers in early spring.
- A slight amount or degree of difference.

DOWN

- A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- Large swift fly the female of which sucks blood of various animals.
- Wild or seedling sweet cherry used as stock for grafting.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A member of an Algonquian people who lived west of Lake Superior.
- A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
- A native or inhabitant of Iran.
- A malicious fierce-tempered woman.
- The sign language used in the United States.
- Slanderous defamation.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- A folded part (as a fold of skin or muscle).
- An expensive vessel propelled by sail or power and used for cruising or racing.
- Red pear-shaped tropical fruit with poisonous seeds.
- Fig tree of India noted for great size and longevity.
- A member of a North American Indian people of southeastern California and northwestern Mexico.
- A murderer (especially one who kills a prominent political figure) who kills by a treacherous surprise attack and often is hired to do the deed.
- A fractional monetary unit in Bangladesh and India and Nepal and Pakistan.
- The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- The formation of frost or ice on a surface.
- An extreme state of adversity.
- A bachelor's degree in religion.
- A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
- The content of cognition.
- A murderer (especially one who kills a prominent political figure) who kills by a treacherous surprise attack and often is hired to do the deed.
- Relating to or applicable to or concerned with the administration of a city or town or district rather than a larger area.
- Make improvements or corrections to.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
- An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
- A member of the Algonquian people formerly inhabiting the Maritime Provinces of Canada.
- Step on it.
- The 19th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- Swiss psychologist remembered for his studies of cognitive development in children (1896-1980).
- A Dravidian language spoken in south central India.
- American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
- Reconnaissance (by shortening).
- The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
- A blow from a flat object (as an open hand).
- A village in eastern Ireland (northwest of Dublin).
- Any of various small biting flies.
- Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- A hormone secreted by the anterior pituitary gland that controls the degree of pigmentation in melanocytes.
- Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- Being nine more than ninety.

Yesterday's Solution

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

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Not all friendships are the same, Aries. You may have learned that the hard way, but that's OK. Today you could feel like putting your friendships in some kind of order and getting a bit of perspective on things. It's time to figure which of your friends are really there for you when you need them, which of them show you how much they care about you, and which ones do not. Each kind of friendship can be useful to you in its own way. Don't be afraid to admit this.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Not only do you want to live life to the fullest every second, you also feel the need to leave your special mark on the world you live in. You just have to be creative in life, Taurus. You can't help it. That great project you've been thinking about for a while is just beginning to take shape. Today you may find some of the materials you needed to really get things going! A financial gift or the gift of someone's time? Someone's generosity could really make your day!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your mind is in a period of great activity, and your curiosity about the world around you is practically insatiable. You're interested in anything and everything. You want to be able to understand everything from the simplest to the most complicated. Nothing could get in the way of your thirst for knowledge. So get a good supply of books about the things you would like to learn about and try and meet some new people.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

It's very difficult for you to reconcile your desire for creativity and originality in your life to the constraints that society puts on you to be an efficient, productive person, Cancer. This is one of the great dilemmas facing a lot of people these days. It's as if you have to hide your real personality in order to live up to what other people expect of you. Some advice for today: don't be so hard on yourself. You're only human.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You seem to have a lot of resentment toward someone who may have hurt you. Don't keep these feelings inside or they'll eat away at you, Leo. Take advantage of your day today to put all your cards on the table and forget about revenge, because it could just turn against you. Instead, why don't you try to reach out to that person and explain your feelings to him or her? The good energy you get from this experience could be very beneficial to you tomorrow.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today, Virgo, you may feel like hiding yourself away in your ivory tower and watching the performance that is going on before your eyes. And why not, if this allows you to get the perspective you need on things? Use this period in your life to give things their real value and to see where certain people actually fit into your world. You're a very lucky person to be able to find this kind of balance in your life.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Have you been wanting to talk to your partner about something important, Libra? Well, it's up to you to make the first move. In fact, that's just what your partner is waiting for you to do. Take advantage of your day today to tell your partner exactly what you expect from him or her and to share some of your worries. You're someone who is lucky enough to know what you want, but it isn't always easy for you to tell other people what that is. Be strong.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You enjoy your freedom, Scorpio. You're a very independent person and you hate it when anything gets in your way. That's all right, but you may want to take a look at your financial situation even if that's not really your thing. You tend to resent having to deal with these lowly material questions, but if you don't, you could severely restrict your freedom to live life to its fullest. Be reasonable about things.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today is a good day to take chances, Sagittarius. You may be quite successful if you're ready to defend the things you really care about. Pretend that you're the director of a film and that you've just met a potential producer for your movie. You just happen to have your script in hand. Are you ready to move up in the world? Are you ready for success?



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You have a kind of creativity that knows no bounds today, Capricorn, and a kind of originality that knows no limits. How are you going to go about expressing this rich creativity that abounds inside of you? If your environment doesn't allow you to express this creativity, change environments and try to make a new reality for yourself. This is the only way you'll be able to use this incredible energy productively.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is an ideal day to take a look at your financial situation, so get out your bank statements or dividend reports. Try and pretend that you're with your banker and describing your situation as objectively as possible, without overestimating what you bring in or underestimating what you spend. You won't regret this process, since it could prevent you from making some big mistakes later on.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may have been worrying about something you did recently that you aren't very proud of. Today you'll discover that all that worrying was for nothing. The reality you've been trying to run away from lately will be right before your eyes and you'll see that it isn't so bad after all. You'll be rewarded for all your hard work, as if life were trying to give you a lesson about being optimistic. So don't be so negative!

Wordsearch Puzzle

USA States

Find and circle all of the USA States that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - an Adlai Stevenson quotation. Note: VIRGINIA and WEST VIRGINIA do not overlap. The same goes for KANSAS and ARKANSAS.

V	I	M	N	P	H	A	W	A	I	D	N	A	L	S	I	E	D	O	H	R	O	
I	W	A	O	A	E	A	M	E	S	O	U	T	H	D	A	K	O	T	A	S	R	R
R	Y	I	S	I	I	N	I	A	R	K	A	N	S	A	S	C	A	N	I	L	A	E
G	O	N	A	G	H	N	Y	A	K	S	A	R	B	E	N	A	O	U	E	W	A	G
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P	D	O	I	E	S	G	K	O	A	E	A	G	I	C	M	S	E	W	H	Y		
I	A	R	D	N	S	A	S	R	A	E	L	I	M	E	A	E	U	L	A	A	K	L
S	D	A	P	A	N	R	A	O	Y	D	N	I	N	A	P	E	O	A	S	M	C	A
S	I	C	K	S	R	C	E	O	A	I	H	N	F	I	E	S	A	W	H	P	U	N
I	R	H	I	S	H	O	R	J	O	U	R	T	D	O	T	S	N	A	I	S	T	D
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I	F	O	F	T	U	I	A	H	C	O	N	E	R	I	N	N	I	S	T	R	K	K
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| ALASKA | IOWA | NEVADA | SOUTH DAKOTA |
| ARIZONA | KANSAS | NEW HAMPSHIRE | TENNESSEE |
| ARKANSAS | KENTUCKY | NEW JERSEY | TEXAS |
| CALIFORNIA | LOUISIANA | NEW MEXICO | UTAH |
| COLORADO | MAINE | NEW YORK | VERMONT |
| CONNECTICUT | MARYLAND | NORTH CAROLINA | VIRGINIA |
| DELAWARE | MASSACHUSETTS | NORTH DAKOTA | WASHINGTON |
| FLORIDA | MICHIGAN | OHIO | WEST VIRGINIA |
| GEORGIA | MINNESOTA | OKLAHOMA | WISCONSIN |
| HAWAII | MISSISSIPPI | OREGON | WYOMING |
| IDAHO | MISSOURI | PENNSYLVANIA | |
| ILLINOIS | MONTANA | RHODE ISLAND | |

Yesterday's Solution

USA State Capitals

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

MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2020



A model presents a creation by Balmain, during the men's Fall/Winter 2020/2021 collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP

Dutch art sleuth finds rare stolen copy of 'Prince of Persian poets'

A stolen 15th-century book by the famed Persian poet Hafez has been recovered by a Dutch art detective after an international "race against time" that drew the alleged interest of Iran's secret service. The gold-leafed volume worth around one million euros (\$1.1 million) was found to be missing from the collection of an Iranian antiques dealer after his death in Germany in 2007. It sparked a decade-long search for one of the oldest surviving copies of the "Divan of Hafez"—the collected works of the poet who remains extremely popular in Iran and has inspired artists worldwide.

But Arthur Brand, dubbed the "Indiana Jones of the Art World" for tracing a series of lost works, finally tracked down the tome via the murky stolen arts underworld. "This is a hugely important find for me, because this is such an important book," Brand said as he showed AFP the recovered book at an Amsterdam apartment. Along with Rumi, Hafez—full name Shams al-Din Muhammad Hafiz Shirazi—is one of the best known mystical bards. American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson called him the "Prince of Persian poets". Hafez's Divan can still be found in most Iranian homes where it is traditionally read out during family celebrations for the Persian New Year.

'Scared and threatened'

The theft of the manuscript, which dates from 1462 to 1463, was discovered by the family of book dealer Djafar Ghazy after he died in an old people's home in Munich in 2007. While going through Ghazy's computer, they realized the reclusive

pensioner had in fact collected hundreds of ancient manuscripts—but that they were all gone. In 2011 German police recovered 174 of them raiding the home of another Iranian pensioner who had befriended Ghazy.

"But the most important piece, one of the earliest and most accurate copies of the famous 'Divan of Hafez', was still missing," said Brand. German police announced a 50,000-euro reward and issued a flyer describing the book in 2016 but there was still no trace of it, until late 2018.

Brand then received a phone call from an Iranian dealer, asking the Dutchman to "urgently" meet him in Germany. "The man told me he was visited by two officials who said they were 'linked to the Iranian embassy'." The men-alleged by the dealer to be Iranian secret agents—told him to "report any news of the missing Divan", Brand said. "My informant was clearly scared, felt threatened and decided to call me into the case," Brand told AFP.

Iran had already shown an interest in the case, saying it would take "all legal means" to get back the manuscripts that were found in 2011, after Germany gave two back but decided most of the rest were legally owned by the collector, German news reports said. "After my informant was contacted, I knew that Iran was also looking for the missing Divan and I started a race against time to see if I could find it first, as the book belonged to Ghazy's family," Brand said.

'Rare and valuable'

The Dutchman then flew to



A picture taken at the apartment of Dutch art crime investigator Arthur Brand in Amsterdam shows a rare 15th-century book of poems by Shams-ud-din Muhammad Hafiz's "Divan". — AFP photos



London to meet an unnamed man "who became extremely nervous" when shown the flyer of the missing book, and confessed he had seen it as a friend of his had sold it to a major buyer. By then Iranian agents were also in London asking questions about the manuscript, Brand said. "The buy-

er was shocked and furious. After all, he was sold a stolen book and now everybody including the Iranian government was looking for it," Brand said. By now afraid, the buyer flew to Paris to demand his money back from the original seller.—AFP



Painting found in Italian museum wall is stolen Klimt



This file image shows Police officers standing by a painting stolen over 20 years ago and for which initial indications suggest that it was painted by Austrian painter Gustav Klimt, found by chance in the gardens of a museum in Piacenza, northern Italy. — AFP

A painting found stashed inside a wall at an Italian museum has been confirmed as the stolen "Portrait of a Lady" by Austria's Gustav Klimt, prosecutors said on Friday, two decades after the artwork went missing. The century-old painting was discovered concealed in an external wall by gardeners at the Ricci Oddi Gallery of Modern Art in Piacenza, north-east Italy, last month. The museum estimates that the 55-by-65-centimetre (21-by-26-inch) expressionist work could be worth between 60 and 100 million euros (\$67-111 million), but notes the difficulty in estimating the work as it has never been sold on the market.

"It is with no small emotion that I can tell you the work is authentic," prosecutor Ornella Chicca told reporters. Museum officials had initially said they could not immediately determine whether the painting was indeed the stolen Klimt until scientific tests were undertaken. Painted in 1916-1917, the expressionist work depicts the face and torso of a young woman with brown hair, over an emerald green background. The painting went missing in February 1997 while the museum was closed for work.

Wrapped in a bin bag

In December, gardeners removing ivy from a wall found a small ventilation space and discovered the painting inside, without a frame and wrapped in a black garbage bag. The ivy covering the space had not been cut back for almost a decade. Chicca said further tests would determine whether the painting had been lingering inside the wall space since it was stolen, or whether it had been hidden there at a later date. "At the moment, we can't say whether it has been there all along," the prosecutor said.

Once those tests were completed, the painting will hopefully be returned to the gallery's walls, she said. Art expert Guido Cauzzi studied the work under infrared and ultraviolet light, comparing images to those taken during tests performed in 1996. "The correspondence between the images allowed us to determine that it's definitely the original painting," Cauzzi said. "The condition of the painting was 'relatively good,' he said. "It's gone through a few ordeals, but only needs some routine care, nothing particularly complicated," Cauzzi added. — AFP



Picture shows materials at French designer Paloma Casile's shop in Paris. — AFP photos



This picture shows red ribbon at French designer Paloma Casile's shop in Paris.



This picture shows straps at French designer Paloma Casile's shop in Paris.

Designer hopes green lingerie takes off

In a tiny workshop in central Paris, Paloma Casile puts finishing touches on eco-friendly lingerie that she hopes will catch on at an international show a few days hence. Below her chic little shop on the Rue du Jour, the designer pieces together bits of lace, sometimes combined with lurex, taking care to gather up scraps to be used in other models or donated to fashion schools. "I was always careful when it came to cutting, I have worked in factories and seen the waste" generated by industrial processes, says the 30-year-old who intends to create another line to be made in Morocco.

Casile launched her eponymous line in 2012, with most suppliers in France and a standardized production process to limit losses. All the fittings are identical, "and they're made from zamak, which requires half the water compared to other metals," she notes in reference to an alloy of zinc, aluminum, magnesium and copper. Casile also limits her range of colors and uses certified Oeko-tex dyes that are free of toxic substances. Finally, she repairs her wares for up to four years. "Ok, it keeps the client on board, but it is also with a view towards not seeing them thrown away," she explains.

The approach has begun to gain ground in the fashion industry as environmental concerns encourage more and more companies to explore sustainable methods. Young designers are spearheading the trend, which

remains a niche within a sector that was worth an estimated 2.4 billion euros (\$2.7 billion) in France alone last year.

"As a consumer, I did not find a brand that offered sexy outfits that were completely responsible along the entire production chain," explains Margot Dargegen, 25, who founded Nenes Paris with recycled lace a year ago. "Scraps of fabric and plastic bottles are ground up and turned into fibres that become thread that you can then make the material you want to from," she adds.

Chains sign up

"When we started out, finding eco-friendly materials was harder, but we see now that things are starting to move," says Mathilde de Sacy, 28, who created the Olly brand with a friend three years ago. "We use certified material, organic GOTS cotton, lace made with recycled fibres and Oeko-Tex 100 dyes. We also wanted the work to be done in Europe to ensure proper working conditions," she adds. "Consumers pay more and more attention to such things," notes Cecile

Vivier-Guerin, marketing director for a lingerie show in Paris. In particular, suppliers are offering wider ranges of fabrics that respect the environment, she said.

They include classic recycled cotton, or satin, or bra shells made from coffee fibre. A Swiss company offers a line of lingerie that is completely biodegradable. In a sector that has stagnated in recent years, "it encourages consumers to buy better quality products that require less transport and add value," Vivier-Guerin said. "It's a significant stimu-

lus," she noted.

National brands such as Etam have taken note, and now offer collections made from recycled lace as well. "Everyone understands that it is an important factor consumers look for," says Gildas Minvielle, head of the Economic Observatory at the French Fashion Institute. That said, "100 percent ecological is hard to attain," admitted Casile, who emphasizes that brands interested in the idea must go beyond the purely marketing aspect. — AFP



French lingerie designer Paloma Casile shows lace fabric at her workshop in Paris.



French lingerie designer Paloma Casile works on a model of bra at her workshop in Paris.

The joy of suits: Berluti gives fashion lesson in luxury



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



Berluti had earlier gone hell for leather for luxury in a day marked by a strong streak of decadence. Kris Van Assche, the Belgian creator who has rebooted the high-end French cobbler into a major fashion player, made a pitch to be the tailor of choice for the gods of global showbiz. With hundreds of screaming fans waiting outside the Opera Garnier to catch a glimpse of Korean K-pop heartthrob Sehun and Taiwanese-Canadian actor Eddie Peng, Van Assche produced a collection that was as sensual to the touch as it was to the eye.

The former Dior designer has long been a prophet of a return to serious tailoring, and the rest of fashion seems to have caught up, with a battalion of other labels this week revisiting the classic men's suit. Rethought double-breasted suits came in rich reds and decadent purples and greens, with supermodel Bella Hadid rocking a mothball-blue one in the co-ed show whose front row was crammed with American rappers. Van Assche further played with people's minds by making a puffer coat in feather-light patent, as well as Prince of Wales pattern overcoats and bomber jackets finely woven with leather.

Fake Kate Moss

"It is that little bit of originality that people come to Berluti for," the designer told AFP. "Sure, we are a traditional shoe company, but that doesn't mean our clothes should not stand

out in the street." "My job is to bring beauty to the world," Van Assche declared. The Dior and Berluti shows were further proof that Paris fashion was turning away from streetwear, which has dominated the catwalks for several seasons, towards a new and often eye-catching eccentric classicism.

Dries Van Noten, the Belgian "Prince of Prints", talked about the emergence of a new "playful decadence" as he sent his models out with false fox furs and jewels draped around check jackets and coats. Japanese designer Junya Watanabe tried to combine the two competing currents, splicing bomber jackets and sportswear into tweed jackets and coats in a valiant attempt to have the best of both worlds.

But Vetements, the rebel label founded by fashion's current enfant terrible Demna Gvasalia, was there to kick convention between the legs. Its first show without Gvasalia, who is now concentrating on designing for Balenciaga, was typically iconoclastic. It featured a Kate Moss lookalike sprayed with fake tan (the real one was in the front row of the Dior show) and a baseball cap with the legend, "Gvasalia for President" above a T-shirt that warned sarcastically, "No social media thank you." Balmain, meanwhile, sought out elegance in the desert in the show that round off the evening, with silky draped sand-coloured combos that often echoed Tuareg attire. — AFP





Designer for Balmain, Olivier Rousteing (center), acknowledges the public at the end of his men's Fall/Winter 2020/2021 collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP



Models present creations by Balmain, during the men's Fall/Winter 2020/2021 collection fashion show in Paris.

Designer Ayissi is first black African at fashion's top table

His father was undefeated boxing champion of Africa, now Imane Ayissi is making history himself by becoming the first sub-Saharan designer to show in the elite Paris haute couture week. Not only is he joining fashion's *creme de la creme*, the Cameroonian couturier is shaking up the stereotype of what "African materials" are by refusing to use wax prints which he dismisses as "colonial".

Highly colorful wax cotton prints flooded West Africa after Dutch mills began turning out millions of rolls of the material with patterns borrowed from Indonesian batik in the 19th century. "Still when we talk about African fashion it's always wax, which is a real pity, because it's killing our own African heritage," Ayissi told AFP. "We only started wearing wax during the colonial era. Africa has more to show for itself than that-

and the whole world needs to know that," he insisted. The 51-year-old former dancer dreams of "opening up a new path for Africa" in an "alternative way of doing luxury fashion". With his show called "Akouma" or "wealth", Ayissi has tried to create a debut collection that nods both to the depth of indigenous African know-how and the fact that haute couture is also preserve of the ultra rich.

Ancient African techniques

While every piece is painstakingly handmade, as haute couture demands, the designer has had recourse to African materials and techniques rarely if ever seen on the Paris catwalk. Strip fabric kente woven by the Akan people of Ghana and the Ivory Coast, which was originally worn only by nobles, has been transformed into elegant evening wear, with spectacular dresses decorated with obom, the bark of a tropical tree. Ayissi has also played with African luxury tropes by using a Cameroonian tie dye technique "which is expensive and slow to do" called "Mon mari est capable" (roughly translated as "My husband can handle it"), which is all about showing you how deep your pockets are.

Like his late father, Jean-Baptiste Ayissi Ntsama-who founded his own political party after quitting the boxing ring-Ayissi wants to become a champion for African talent. His childhood home was a crossroads of many worlds: politics and boxing from his father and fashion



Imane Ayissi

from his mother, a former Miss Cameroon. "Within the family we had boxing and dancing clans, and a bit of modelling too, and mother loved all that," the designer said. "I did a bit of boxing-it was obligatory, it was the family tradition after all-then I started to dance."

Dancing with the stars

His dance career mixed ballet, modern dance and pop, including dancing in videos for superstars Sting and Seal as well as touring with French tennis star-turned-singer Yannick Noah. But it was his parallel

career as a striking Paris runway model that really reignited his passion for fashion. That re-awoke childhood memories of cutting up and re-sewing his mother's and his aunt's old dresses. Yet Ayissi-whose show closes haute couture week Friday-has been far from an overnight success.

He staged his first Paris fashion show in 1993 "for his friends" with some 200 dresses, of which "only one or two" really worked, he remembers with laugh. He has come a long way since, with his last collection, which helped get him in the door of the extremely select haute couture club, centred on ecological concerns.

It included dresses in black and mauve embroidered with plants and fish using an applique technique inspired by Abomey tapestries from Benin and the colonial era Asafo warrior flags from Ghana, then called the Gold Coast. One particularly striking dress called "The Black Sea" was embroidered with a blue whale and large-eyed fish. Ayissi said the dress was a reference to the "black tides (of pollution) on the one hand and sadness on the other."

But ironically his own insistence on trying to use only natural dyes and organic cotton means that he has to buy a lot of material in France and then send it to Africa to be made. "If we buy there it will have come from Asia and probably won't be organic. It's costly, but it's a choice I make," he said. — AFP

Chinese community in Kuwait celebrates Chinese New Year



The young Chinese children and their parents enthralled the audience for two hours with their skillful performance at the National Library of Kuwait. The program was organized by the president of Chinese community Zhang Yongda and the chief guest, Economic and Commercial Counselor Cheng Young Ru. The Chinese New Year falls on January 25, 2020 celebrating the Year of the Rat.

Welcome to Ocean City: Dry island, and proud of it



A high school team runs down an empty boardwalk in Ocean City, New Jersey. — AFP

Pizza joints and popcorn stands jostle for attention all along the boardwalk in Ocean City, New Jersey—but good luck finding a drink. A full century after the Prohibition era began in America, being dry has become a trademark for the beachside resort. In between ads for local churches, signs posted all along the Atlantic serve as a stern warning to anyone tempted to crack open a beer on the beach: "Alcoholic beverages prohibited. Strictly enforced. Fine \$275." Although Prohibition ended nationwide in 1933, the island of 11,000 residents is one of hundreds of American cities and jurisdictions that continue to ban alcohol sales.

Restaurant menus offer a choice of hot drinks, water and sodas, and—although as many as 150,000 people flood the resort during summer weekends—it doesn't have a single bar. Founded in the late 19th century by Methodists who wanted to turn it into a Christian resort, Ocean City is what is known as a "dry town."

Alcohol production and sales have been outlawed there since 1909, a decade before Prohibition was ushered in nationwide on January 17, 1920. A century later, very little has changed. You can drink a glass of wine in the privacy of your own home, but to do so you need to trek to one of the large liquor stores strategically placed at the end of the bridges onto the island—often jammed with traffic during high season.

Tense referendum

Drinkers or not, residents have embraced their town's sobriety with a certain pride, particularly in comparison to less virtuous neighbors along the Jersey shore. The city's slogan is "America's greatest family resort." The casinos and strip clubs of neighboring Atlantic City, a major hub for organized crime during Prohibition, are less than half an hour away by car. Most of the surrounding beaches are filled with hordes of young partiers. Eric Plyler, a graphic designer who spent his childhood vacations in Ocean City, created the "Dry Island" brand to celebrate its "most unique characteristic."

The design, drawing visual and verbal inspiration from the Prohibition era, is emblazoned on mugs, baseball caps and T-shirts filling the shelves of the 26-year-old's store on main

street. "People appreciate the fact that it being dry improves the value of life here, but it doesn't mean that they don't like alcohol," said the bearded young entrepreneur—himself a fan of craft beers. "It just means that it's something that we can hold on to as a claim to fame."

So when a local business owner in 2012 gathered enough signatures to hold a referendum on whether customers could bring their own bottle of beer or wine into restaurants, some, like Drew Fasy, saw it as a threat to the city's image. "If you have a successful brand, you don't mess with it. Nobody is gonna change McDonald's golden arches," said the former real estate agent. He is adamant about not letting Ocean City go the way of other Jersey shore towns, which are "built around alcohol," in his opinion.

'Gray area'

The 2012 BYOB ("bring your own bottle") referendum sharply divided the city. Opponents were accused of being religious zealots. Supporters of seeking to open the flood gates to debauchery. Chris and Sharon Hoffmann, owners of the Captain Bob's restaurant, said they have been boycotted for calling for a little more flexibility when it comes to alcohol. "It was a little nervewracking," recalled Sharon Hoffman. "People who would make reservations but not show up. We had people who smashed our flower pots, someone who sliced my tire. It was heated."

As it turned out, the "no" to BYOB won a comfortable two-thirds majority, but the couple has since found a way to work around local alcohol laws by privatizing their restaurant. Patrons pay \$10 per year to join the "Foodies Dinner Club" and are then able to bring their own bottle, as if they were going over to a friend's house to eat. Approved by local authorities, the concept is catching on in the island—where high-end restaurants are almost nonexistent due to the fact owners are unable to offer alcoholic beverages with meals. "Why should I have to leave the island to get a good dinner?" lamented Chris Hoffmann. That said neither he nor his wife would dream of pushing for alcohol to be legalized throughout the city. "You have to respect the culture," he said. —AFP

Meghan: TV actor gives up starring royal role

Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, was hailed as a breath of fresh air for the royal family when she married Prince Harry, but the fairytale quickly turned sour. Saturday's announcement from the Queen Elizabeth and Buckingham Palace set the seal on her withdrawal from royal life. It came less than two weeks after the couple's shock announcement that they wanted to step back from their frontline duties. It had already become clear that Meghan was struggling to cope with royal life, especially since the birth of their son Archie last May.

Since entering the family, the 38-year-old former television star appeared determined to do things her own way. But in the end, the strictures and scrutiny that come with the monarchy appeared too much, spurring her and Harry to take a step back. Meghan made her name as savvy paralegal Rachel Zane in the US legal drama series "Suits", but cultivated a high profile for herself outside the show. She became a United Nations advocate for women's empowerment and a global ambassador for the World Vision Canada relief agency.

The Los Angeles-born actress had more than two million followers on her personal Instagram account and ran a successful lifestyle blog, The Tig, but closed them both as she entered the royal family. Meghan was also revealed as the anonymous blogger behind 'The Working Actress', which chronicled the struggles of hustling for parts in Hollywood. "She's very focused and someone who has been very ambitious," said royal writer Andrew Morton, who has penned a biography of Meghan. "Her great phrase is 'make the change'," he told AFP.

Ancestors royals and slaves

Rachel Meghan Markle was born on August 4, 1981 to Thomas Markle, a white, Emmy Award-winning television lighting director who worked on top US shows like "Married With Children", and Doria Ragland, a black social worker and yoga instructor. On her mother's side, her ancestors were slaves on cotton plantations in Georgia. Her mother's surname is taken from a slave owner. Meghan's parents separate when she was two and divorced five years later. She is now estranged from her father and his other children, her older half-sister and half-brother.

Ahead of the wedding in May 2018, her father set himself up for staged paparazzi photos which backfired, then suffered chest pains and needed heart surgery, causing him to miss her big day. His leaking to the press of a handwritten letter from Meghan pleading with him to stop serially leaking to journalists seems to have done irreparable damage to their relationship. His actions had, it said, already "broken my heart into a million pieces". Meghan went to a

private Catholic girls' school where she is remembered for her strong sense of right and wrong. Aged 11, her letter-writing campaign got the consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble to change a washing-up commercial, referring to people rather than just women.

Determined to give herself options, she studied theatre and international relations at Northwestern University. The future duchess graduated in 2003, after which she landed a six-week internship as a press officer at the US embassy in Argentina.

'Suits' springboard

Returning to Los Angeles, in 2004 she fell in love with go-getting film producer Trevor Engelson, who helped her get on the acting ladder as she struggled for bit parts. They married in Jamaica in 2011. Soon after their engagement, Meghan had landed her signature role in "Suits". While she filmed in Toronto, her relationship with her then husband became a long-distance one. A series of flops followed for Engelson while the struggling actress became a star, and the marriage collapsed in 2013.

Through a mutual friend, she met Queen Elizabeth II's grandson Harry in July 2016 while visiting London. Their romance quickly blossomed on a



In this file photo Britain's Prince Harry stands with his fiancée US actress Meghan Markle as she shows off her engagement ring whilst they pose for a photograph in the Sunken Garden at Kensington Palace in west London, following the announcement of their engagement. —AFP

whirlwind camping trip to Botswana. After their engagement was announced in November 2017, Markle immediately began accompanying Harry on public events, with a focus on women, youth empowerment and the Commonwealth.

After their glittering wedding, seen as a moment of renewal for the royal family, media coverage became increasingly negative. Reports appeared of a rift with her sister-in-law Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, of her staff quitting in droves, and a new nickname "Me-Gain" to reflect her allegedly pushy style. A vastly expensive, celebrity-laden New York baby shower also attracted criticism. Surviving in the royal spotlight has proved to be her toughest role yet. —AFP

Classifieds

Monday, January 20, 2020

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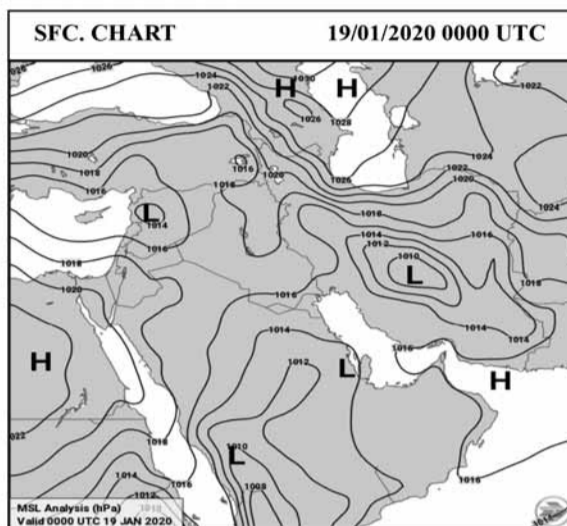
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Fair and Partly cloudy with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

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
-----------------	---------------------

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	22 °C	15 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	11 °C
ABDALY	22 °C	08 °C
BUBYAN	19 °C	11 °C
JAHRA	23 °C	12 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	19 °C	15 °C
AHMADI	21 °C	16 °C
NUWAISIB	22 °C	15 °C
WAFRA	22 °C	14 °C
SALMY	21 °C	09 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	01/20	Fair	21 °C	07 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Tuesday	01/21	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear later on	20 °C	05 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Wednesday	01/22	Partly cloudy to cloudy causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	20 °C	16 °C	SE-SW	25 - 60 km/h
Thursday	01/23	Cool and some scattered clouds will appear	16 °C	06 °C	NW	12 - 38 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:20
Sunrise	06:43
Zuhr	11:59
Asr	14:55
Sunset	17:15
Isha	18:36

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	24 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	68 %
MIN. RH	26 %
MAX. Wind	S 57 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	.3 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mohammad Rahmat Ali holding Indian Passport No. K8033943 residing at Mahboba Kuwait, need to change my name as Mohammad Rahmat. (C 5615)

I, Mohd Mushtaq S/o Sainf Ali R/o Khadrian, Tehsil Kalakote District Rajouri do hereby declare that my name is wrongly written in my Passport (J1801610) as Mustaq Ahmed instead of correct name Mohd Mushtaq and also my father name was wrongly written in same Passport Sanifo instead of Sainf Ali, I want to correct my name in Passport. (C 5616)

I have changed my son's name from Pritesh Nilesh Neve, son of Mr. Nilesh Ashok Neve. Here in after all his documents will be known by name Pritesh Nilesh Neve. His Passport No. S0930833. (C 5617) 20-1-2020

ALAUDEEN S/o SHAIK BABA, holder of Indian Passport No. P1094143 & Civil ID No. 274071201684 has changed my name from ALAUDEEN to SHEIK ALAUDEEN (Given Name). (C 5614) 19-1-2020

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EMERGENCY 112

Airlines

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

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 20/1/2020				Departure Flights on Monday 20/1/2020			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
PIA	239	Sialkot	00:05	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:10
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
AIC	989	Mumbai	00:10	JZR	115	Doha	13:00
JZR	716	Sohag	00:35	QTR	1075	Doha	13:00
JZR	254	Amman	00:45	MSR	611	Cairo	13:25
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC	781	Jeddah	13:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	105	London	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:55	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KAC	504	Beirut	01:05	RBG	554	Alexandria	14:45
DLH	625	Dammam	01:30	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:40	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
IGO	1759	Delhi	01:55	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:55	UAE	878	Dubai	15:40
UAE	853	Dubai	02:15	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	673	Dubai	15:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	SVB	501	Jeddah	16:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	541	Cairo	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:30
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:35
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:30	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	04:40	JZR	103	Bahrain	16:50
JZR	702	Asyut	04:50	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	KAC	361	Colombo	17:30
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	KAC	357	Kochi	17:35
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	KAC	619	Doha	17:35
KAC	358	Kochi	05:10	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:20	FDB	052	Dubai	17:45
KAC	382	Delhi	05:20	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
JZR	654	OSS	05:25	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:35	JZR	733	Dubai	18:10
JZR	502	Lahore	05:35	JZR	715	Sohag	18:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:45	FEJ	342	Sohag	18:20
UAE	873	Dubai	05:50	SVB	511	Riyadh	18:20
JZR	216	Jeddah	05:50	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:55	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	KAC	301	Mumbai	18:35
KAC	344	Chennai	06:10	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
KAC	544	Cairo	07:00	KAC	381	Delhi	18:50
BAW	157	London	07:05	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:55
KAC	678	Dubai	07:05	JZR	253	Amman	19:20
RBG	213	Sohag	07:10	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	120	Dubai	07:35	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:10
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:25	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	622	Doha	08:30	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:25
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:35
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	FDB	058	Dubai	20:45
JZR	102	Bahrain	08:55	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	QTR	1091	Doha	21:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
KAC	384	Delhi	09:30	DLH	624	Dammam	21:45
KAC	304	Mumbai	09:30	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	203	Lahore	22:15
QTR	8511	Doha	09:40	JZR	701	Asyut	22:15
JZR	114	Doha	09:45	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:25
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:50	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
JZR	708	Luxor	10:55	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
JZR	122	Dubai	11:15	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
KAC	352	Kochi	11:35	KAC	783	Jeddah	23:15
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	383	Delhi	23:20
MSR	610	Cairo	12:25	QTR	1083	Doha	23:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	543	Cairo	23:30
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	KAC	303	Mumbai	23:40
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:50	KAC	062	CNN	23:55



Iraqi anti-government demonstrators block a bridge with debris and burning tyres in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriya yesterday. — AFP

Protesters regroup after...

Continued from Page 1

On Twitter, the security forces called for protesters to avoid throwing "explosives and stones" at personnel. The majority of protesters huddled nearby, in rain coats or bright waterproof ponchos, with some clutching umbrellas.

Earlier, a 34-year-old protester called Mazen said he and others were "fed up with politicians". "After three months of revolution, they have proven to us that they don't change, don't listen, and have nothing to give," he said. On Saturday, at least 377 people were wounded - both protesters and members of the security forces - according to a toll compiled by AFP from figures provided by the Red Cross and Civil Defense. An AFP photographer at the scene said security forces fired rubber bullets at stone-throwing protesters as thick clouds of tear gas covered central Beirut.

Yesterday, local television aired the testimonies of relatives of two young men they said were hit in the eyes by rubber bullets. Human Rights Watch condemned what it called "the brutal use of force unleashed by Lebanon's riot police against largely peaceful demonstrators". "Riot police showed a blatant disregard for their human rights obligations, instead launching tear gas canisters at protesters' heads, firing rubber bullets in their eyes and attacking people at hospitals and a mosque," said its deputy

MPs keep up pressure...

Continued from Page 1

education and health services and sell public companies. He also charged that the government is using the deficit as a pretext to borrow and to show that mismanagement of government agencies is because of the shortfall.

Muwaizri also threatened to grill HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah if a top Kuwaiti bank completes the acquisition of another bank.

Call to end foreign meddling in Libya...

Continued from Page 1

That document also urges all parties to re-commit to a much-violated UN arms embargo and raises the prospect of intra-Libyan political talks in Geneva at the end of the month. But with warnings multiplying that pledges are often little respected in reality, calls have grown for international monitors to police the promises.

Libya has been torn by fighting between rival armed factions since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising killed dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Most recently, Sarraj's troops in Tripoli have been under attack since April from Haftar's forces. Clashes since April have killed more than 280 civilians and 2,000 fighters and displaced tens of thousands, until a fragile ceasefire backed by both Ankara and Moscow was put in place on January 12.

In the latest apparent ceasefire violation, GNA forces yesterday accused Haftar's militia of opening fire on them in southern Tripoli. Sarraj has issued a plea for international "protection troops" if Haftar were to keep up his offensive, echoing a similar call by the EU's chief diplomat Josep Borrell, who stressed that monitors must be present to check that any ceasefire and weapons embargo are respected.

Middle East director Michael Page. The authorities must act quickly "to end this culture of impunity for police abuse", he said.

Saturday's clashes began after dozens of protesters threw stones and plant pots at security forces, and tried to charge police lines near parliament with traffic signs. The security forces responded with water cannon and thick tear gas. Protesters had called for a week of "anger" over the political leadership's failure to form a new government even as the country sinks deeper into a financial crisis.

The state-run National News Agency said around 30 people were briefly detained after the violence Saturday. Security forces said they had opened a probe after a video shared online showed police beating up people believed to be protesters as they were brought to a Beirut police station. "Another day without a government, another night of violence and clashes," UN envoy to Lebanon Jan Kubis said on Twitter.

Outgoing prime minister Saad Hariri, who stepped down on Oct 29, urged political parties to "stop wasting time". "Form a government and pave the way towards political and economic solutions," he said. Political factions agreed on Dec 19 to appoint former education minister Hassan Diab as the new premier but have since squabbled over proposed ministers. Diab yesterday evening met President Michel Aoun to discuss the matter, NNA said. Protesters have demanded a new government be comprised solely of independent experts, and exclude all established political parties. The World Bank has warned the poverty rate in Lebanon could rise from a third to half of the population if the political crisis is not resolved soon. — AFP

He said four government bodies together own over 48 percent of the bank and the planned acquisition involves suspicions and clash of interests, adversely affecting public funds. MP Adasani also threatened to grill Electricity and Water Minister Khaled Al-Fadhel after he allegedly failed to provide details about a contract at a power station for a consortium of two companies.

MP Adel Al-Damkhi meanwhile sent explanations demanded by Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Ghadeer Al-Aseeri over a grilling Damkhi filed against her. In his reply, Damkhi insisted that the grilling is very clear and is based on events that took place after the minister had been sworn in, and accordingly the grilling is in line with the constitution. The grilling is scheduled to be debated tomorrow after a two-week delay.

With the idea gathering pace, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said London would be ready to send "people and experts" to help monitor a Libya ceasefire. Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte likewise said his country "is ready to bring its contribution". Russia also appeared open to the idea, with President Vladimir Putin's special representative Mikhail Bogdanov saying that the "idea must be discussed on the basis of consensus."

Although Sarraj's government is recognized by the UN, powerful players have broken away to stand behind Haftar - turning a domestic conflict into what some have described as a proxy war in which international powers jostle to secure their own interests. Russia has been accused of sending in mercenaries to help Haftar as Moscow seeks to extend its influence in the region, allegations it denies.

For Turkey, the fall of Sarraj's GNA could jeopardize a maritime boundary agreement the parties signed. It gives Ankara extensive rights over the eastern Mediterranean where the recent discovery of undersea gas reserves has triggered a scramble by littoral states. Erdogan has repeatedly urged Europe to stand united behind Sarraj's government, warning that Tripoli's fall could allow groups like the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda to regroup. He has also cautioned that further unrest could prompt a new wave of migrants to head for Europe. Underlining the stakes involved, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said "we have to make sure Libya doesn't become a second Syria." — AFP

Gas-rich Qatar inks \$470m solar deal

DOHA: Gas-rich Qatar signed a \$470-million deal yesterday to build its first solar energy plant, capable of meeting up to one-tenth of peak national power demand. The Al-Kharsaah plant, near the capital, is a 10-sq-km joint venture with French and Japanese partners due for completion in 2022 ahead of the football World Cup. "Eight times the solar power pledged in the World Cup bid will be produced," Energy Minister Saad Al-Kaabi told a media briefing in Doha.

Qatar's ruler, Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, vowed at the United Nations last year that the tournament would be carbon neutral, but gave little detail on how this would be achieved. "Production capacity will be around 800 megawatts and 10 percent of peak demand," said Kaabi fol-

lowing a signing ceremony between Qatari state firms, France's Total and Japan's Marubeni.

"Eight-hundred megawatts will be the largest (solar power plant) built by Total," said the French energy giant's chief executive, Patrick Pouyanné. By contrast, Abu Dhabi's Sweihan plant, one of the world's largest solar projects, produces 1,177 megawatts. The capital cost of the venture is 1.7 billion riyals (\$470 million), Kaabi said, with state firms taking a 60-percent stake and foreign investors 40 percent. Marubeni will take 51 percent of the minority holding, while Total will have 49 percent. "It's a pilot project, you have to assess how successful it is," added Kaabi.

Gulf states, heavily depend on oil and gas, have invested tens of billions of dollars in clean energy projects, mainly in solar and nuclear. But critics say many such projects are slow to get off the drawing board. The United Arab Emirates said last week its first nuclear power plant would start operating within months after repeated delays to meet safety and regulatory conditions. — AFP

Missile, drone attack kills 83...

Continued from Page 1

gruesome aftermath of the attack. Body parts can be seen on the floor, among shredded debris, and with blood pooled on the carpet and spattered against the walls. The drone and missile strike came a day after coalition-backed government forces launched a large-scale operation against the Houthis in the Nihm region, north of Sanaa. Fighting in Nihm was ongoing yesterday, a military source said according to the official Saba news agency. "Dozens from the (Houthi) militia were killed and injured," the source added.

Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi condemned the "cowardly and terrorist" attack on the mosque, Saba reported. "The disgraceful actions of the Houthi militia without a doubt confirm its unwillingness to (achieve) peace, because it knows nothing but death and destruction and is a cheap Iranian tool in the region," it quoted Hadi as saying.

The president also stressed the importance of increasing military vigilance "to foil hostile and destructive plans and maintain security and stability". The Houthis did not make any immediate claim of responsibility and the Saba report did not give a death toll. The uptick in violence comes shortly after United Nations envoy Martin Griffiths welcomed a sharp reduction in air strikes and the movement of ground forces.

Gulf carriers still fly over Iraq...

Continued from Page 1

"Iranian airspace is important for all carriers in this region," said Adil Al-Ghath, Emirates' senior vice president, commercial operations, Gulf, Middle East and Iran. Dubai-based Emirates and sister carrier flydubai together serve 10 cities in Iran and Iraq, and have continued to use the airspace of both countries for other flights. Kuwait Airways and Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways have continued using Iranian and Iraqi airspace.

"We will continue to fly to Iran because Iran is an important country to us and it is our neighbor and we want to serve the people of Iran," Qatar Airways Chief Executive Akbar Al-Baker said on the sidelines of a Kuwait aviation conference. Qatar has forged closer economic ties with Iran since 2017 when neighboring Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other Arab states cut relations with Doha in a diplomatic row. The Qatari state carrier turned to Iranian airspace to keep

"We are surely, and I hope this is true and I hope it will remain so, witnessing one of the quietest periods of this conflict," he said in a briefing to the UN Security Council on Thursday. "Experience however tells us that military de-escalation cannot be sustained without political progress between the parties, and this has become the next challenge."

A year after Yemen's warring sides agreed to a UN-brokered truce for the key Red Sea port city of Hodeida and its surroundings, fighting in the province has subsided but the slow implementation of the deal has quashed hopes for an end to the conflict. The landmark agreement signed in Sweden in Dec 2018 had been hailed as Yemen's best chance so far to end the fighting that has pushed the country to the brink of famine.

Tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians, have been killed and millions displaced in the war that has ravaged the country, triggering what the UN describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Saudi Arabia and its allies intervened in the conflict to back the government against the Houthis in March 2015, shortly after the rebels seized control of Sanaa. A senior UN official warned Thursday that certain key factors that threatened to trigger a famine in Yemen last year were once again looming large, including a plunge in the value of the national currency.

"With a rapidly depreciating rial and disrupted salary payments, we are again seeing some of the key conditions that brought Yemen to the brink of famine a year ago," Ramesh Rajasingham, who coordinates humanitarian aid in Yemen, told the UN Security Council. "We must not let that happen again," he said. — AFP

its network that flies through its Doha hub operating.

At the same time, many other international carriers have rerouted flights to avoid Iraq and Iran since the military strikes this month, including Lufthansa, Air France, Singapore Airlines and Qantas. Some regional carriers have also rerouted changed their routes. Bahrain's Gulf Air has redirected European flights away from Iraqi airspace and now flies longer, more fuel-consuming routes over Saudi Arabia and Egypt. "We want to take the safest option even if it costs us a little bit more for a period of time. We can live with that," Gulf Air Deputy Chief Executive Waleed Abdulhameed Al-Alawi told Reuters.

The UAE regulator told its carriers - Emirates, Etihad, flydubai and Air Arabia - this month to "evaluate flight path risks" although it said it was up to the airlines to make the final decision on the routes they chose. "Gulf carriers face a big challenge but that doesn't mean that risks can be taken - even if that inflicts damage on the business model," independent aviation consultant John Strickland said. Ukrainian International Airlines flight 752, bound for Kiev, was shot down in error after taking off from Tehran on Jan. 8, killing all 176 people aboard. Iran said on Saturday it was sending the black boxes to Ukraine. — Reuters

Sports

Ovechkin leads Capitals with second straight hat trick

Merzlikins blanks Devils as Jackets win 4th straight

NEW YORK: Alexander Ovechkin recorded a hat trick to pass Hall of Famer Mario Lemieux for 10th place and tie Steve Yzerman for ninth place on the NHL's all-time goals list and the Washington Capitals rallied for a 6-4 victory over the host New York Islanders on Saturday afternoon. Ovechkin tied Lemieux midway through the first period with a breakthrough goal but after his 690th goal, the Capitals did little offensively until their comeback bid in the third to win their third straight game. Ovechkin got his 691st career goal on a spectacular play 5:18 into the third when he scored while falling to the ice after making a move through the right circle. He then tied Yzerman by capping Washington's comeback with an empty-net goal with less than a minute remaining. Ovechkin recorded his 26th career hat trick and posted a hat trick for the second straight game.

CANUCKS 4, SHARKS 1

Tanner Pearson collected one goal and one assist, while goaltender Thatcher Demko made 17 saves as host Vancouver beat San Jose and moved atop the Pacific Division standings. The Canucks, who have won four of five games overall and eight straight at home, are one point ahead of the Edmonton Oilers, Calgary Flames, Vegas Golden Knights and Arizona Coyotes in the standings. It's the first time the top five teams in a division have been separated by one point since it happened with the Norris Division on Jan. 1, 1987. San Jose, which managed only three shots in the first period, received a boost when Barclay Goodrow made it a one-goal game at 7:09 of the third period. Goalie Aaron Dell made 35 saves for the Sharks, who have dropped three straight games and have fallen 12 points behind the Canucks.

AVALANCHE 5, BLUES 3

Cale Makar and Andre Burakovsky scored 22 seconds apart late in the second period. Nathan MacKinnon and Tyson Joost also scored, and Colorado beat St. Louis in Denver. MacKinnon and Burakovsky each added an assist. Ian Cole had two assists and Philipp Grubauer stopped 21 shots. Gabriel Landeskog scored into an empty net with 1.8 seconds left. David Perron and Alex Pietrangolo each had a goal and an assist, Oskar Sundqvist also scored and Zach Sanford and Ryan O'Reilly had two assists each for the Blues.

OILERS 7, COYOTES 3

Connor McDavid scored two goals and Riley Sheahan had a goal and three assists as Edmonton earned a victory over visiting Arizona. Josh Archibald had a goal and two assists and Sam Gagner. Kailer Yamamoto and Joakim Nygard also scored goals for the Oilers. Edmonton won for the sixth time in its last eight games and heads into its

bye week and All-Star Game break with 57 points, one point behind the Pacific Division-leading Canucks. Leon Draisaitl and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins each added two assists for Edmonton. Mike Smith finished with 27 saves.

CANADIENS 5, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 4 (SO)

Tomas Tatar scored the game-deciding goal in the shootout as host Montreal handed Vegas coach Peter DeBoer his first loss with his new team. Tatar and Ilya Kovalchuk potted goals as the Canadiens won the extra session 2-1 after allowing two late goals to force overtime. Jonathan Marchessault scored for the Golden Knights, but Canadiens goalie Carey Price stuffed Reilly Smith's tying bid to end the shootout in the bottom of the fourth round. Nick Cousins scored twice, Kovalchuk and Joel Armia contributed goals, Dale Weise assisted on two markers and the Canadiens were victorious for the fourth time in their last five games despite blowing a three-goal lead.

BLUE JACKETS 5, DEVILS 0

Rookie goaltender Elvis Merzlikins stopped 41 shots for this third shutout of the season, and Columbus defeated visiting New Jersey for its fourth straight win. With No. 1 goaltender Joonas Korpisalo sidelined by a knee injury, Merzlikins has posted shutouts in three of his last four games, with the only exception when he allowed two goals on 34 shots to Carolina in Thursday's win. Cam Atkinson scored twice, and Jakob Lilja, Nick Foligno and Alexander Wennberg also scored for Columbus, which is 14-2-4 in its past 20 games. The Blue Jackets are 7-1-1 in the past eight home games, outscoring the opposition 30-12.

BLACKHAWKS 6, MAPLE LEAFS 2

Jonathan Toews scored twice and added two assists, Dominik Kubalik had two goals and an assist and visiting Chicago defeated Toronto. Drake Caggiula added a goal and an assist, and Brandon Saad also scored for the Blackhawks, who have won four in a row. Erik Gustafsson chipped in with two assists for Chicago. William Nylander and Alex Kerfoot scored for the Maple Leafs, who have lost five of their past six games. Tyson Barrie contributed two assists for Toronto.

PREDATORS 2, SABRES 1

Craig Smith scored a tiebreaking power-play goal in the third period as Nashville gave new coach John Hynes his first home victory by defeating Buffalo. Ryan Johansen also scored, and goaltender Pekka Rinne made 30 saves for the Predators, who evened their record at 3-3 since Hynes took over for the fired Peter Laviolette on Jan. 7. They had lost their first two home games under Hynes. Sam Reinhart scored for the Sabres, and goalie Linus Ullmark stopped 35 of 37 shots. Buffalo's three-game winning streak, which tied



NEW YORK: Ovechkin #8 of the Washington Capitals moves past Scott Mayfield #24 of the New York Islanders to score at 5:18 of the third period at NYCB Live's Nassau Coliseum on January 18, 2020 in Uniondale, New York. With his second goal of the game, Ovechkin passed Mario Lemieux (690) for the 10th most goal in NHL history. — AFP

for its longest of the season, came to an end.

SENATORS 5, FLAMES 2

Brady Tkachuk, Connor Brown and Vladislav Namestnikov each had a goal and an assist and Marcus Hogberg stopped 40 of 42 shots as Ottawa snapped a nine-game losing streak with a victory over visiting Calgary. Chris Tierney and Colin White also scored goals for the Senators, who won for the first time since before Christmas, a 3-1 home victory over Buffalo on Dec. 23. It was Brown's third consecutive multi-point game and the second career win for Hogberg. Mark Jankowski and Noah Hanifin scored goals and David Rittich finished with 16 saves for Calgary, which lost for just the second time in the last eight games.

PANTHERS 4, RED WINGS 1

Sergei Bobrovsky made 27 saves to lead Florida to a win at Detroit. The Panthers won their sixth straight game against the Red Wings and fourth straight overall, in what was the first of a six-game road swing. Evgenii Dadonov, Mark Pysyk, Aleksander Barkov and Denis Malgin each scored. Dylan Larkin scored the lone goal for the Red

Wings, who lost their fourth straight game.

FLYERS 4, KINGS 1

Travis Konecny scored two goals and James van Riemsdyk added one goal and two assists to carry host Philadelphia past Los Angeles. Joel Farabee contributed one goal and Claude Giroux had two assists for the Flyers, who improved to 16-4-4 at home. Flyers goaltender Brian Elliott made 34 saves. Dustin Brown scored the lone goal for the Kings, who fell to 7-17-4 on the road. Kings goaltender Jack Campbell stopped 22 shots.

WILD 7, STARS 0

Jason Zucker scored his first goal since returning from injury and added two assists as Minnesota stomped visiting Dallas. Zucker fractured his fibula during a Dec. 15 game against the Chicago Blackhawks, blocking a slap shot from Brent Seabrook. He had surgery and returned to the ice Jan. 12 against the Vancouver Canucks, but had been held off the scoreboard. Mattias Janmark had the Stars' best chance of the third period to end Minnesota's shutout bid, trying to sneak a wrister past goaltender Alex Stalock, who turned away all 27 shots by Dallas. — Reuters

Chequered flag falls on ultra-tough 2020 Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia

JEDDAH: The offroad odyssey of over 7,500 kilometres that was the 2020 Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia has crossed the finish line. Competitors across five categories were pushed to the limit over 12 stages on unforgiving terrain. It's not just the winners that are celebrating tonight, everybody making it to the end of the Dakar is a motorsports hero.

In the car race a third Dakar title has been secured by Carlos Sainz (ESP) and his co-driver Lucas Cruz (ESP). The champions put their Mini Buggy in pole position on Stage 3 and stayed on top of the general classification all the way to Qiddiya.

"It makes the victory even nicer when the battle is so tough. On top of that I win in a third different car. I'm very proud of that." - Carlos Sainz

El Matador Sainz was pushed all the way by Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) and Stephane Peterhansel (FRA). The Spanish champion needed to call on all his offroad experience and expertise to keep the challengers at bay. At the conclusion of Stage 12, Al-Attiyah was in second overall and Peterhansel third. This trio now have a grand total of 19 Dakar wins between them.

"The fight with Carlos (Sainz) and Stephane (Peterhansel) has been tough. There were three drivers at the front of the race giving it everything to win. Well done to both Carlos and Stephane because we were all involved in a great race." - Nasser Al-Attiyah

Also equipping himself well on the Dakar's debut in the Middle East was Giniel De Villiers (ZAF). A fifth place finish for the South African gives him his 13th Top 5 at the Dakar. Meanwhile, Kuba Przygonski (POL) battled back from a tough first week to show impressive speed in the closing stages and rose to a Top 20 finish.

"This was not an easy Dakar, we had some technical issues. However, in the end our speed was quite good. Now we think about the next Dakar and one year of hard preparation." - Kuba Przygonski

Following nine Dakar truck wins in 11 years while the rally was hosted in South America, Team Kamaz Master have continued their winning record in Saudi Arabia. Andrey Karginov (RUS) won his second Dakar title and the nearest non-Kamaz truck to him was more than two hours back in the general classification. "It was important for us to confirm the first position of Kamaz in the truck category of the Dakar and to show the advantage of our vehicles in this new region for the rally." - Andrey Karginov

Karginov's team-mates Anton Shibalov (RUS) and Dmitry Sotnikov (RUS) finished



Nasser Al-Attiyah

second and fourth overall. "Congratulations to the crew of Andrey Karginov. We are grateful to all the fans and partners of our team for their support." - Anton Shibalov

Building his own legacy at the Dakar is Ignacio Casale (CHI) who claimed his third quad bike title. Casale put together an unsailable lead in the opening stages, so when he did suffer a navigation error on Stage 10 he was able to stay in top spot. "We worked hard all year long with the mechanics and now I can celebrate this win. Thanks a lot and Viva Chile!" - Ignacio Casale

History was made in the side-by-side race when Cyril Despres (FRA) - alongside co-driver Mike Horn (SUI) - became the first Dakar competitor to win stages in three different categories (bike, car and SxS). Despres's result was one of six stage wins collected by Red Bull Off-Road Team USA as they debuted their OT3 by Overdrive vehicle at the Dakar. Despres and Horn coached and mentored young drivers Mitch Guthrie Jr. (USA) and Blade Hildebrand (USA) throughout the rally in Saudi Arabia.

"There's still a lot work to go into this program to get it to where we want it to be, but there were lots of positive steps at this Dakar." - Blade Hildebrand

Chaleco Lopez (CHI) arrived at the 2020 Dakar as the defending SxS champion and dug deep to come away with a podium finish at this latest edition of the world's toughest rally. "We had a huge problem the day before yesterday, so a podium place isn't that bad after all. The first edition in Saudi Arabia was interesting, I'm sure the rally will be even better next year." - Chaleco Lopez

The 2020 Dakar Rally bike race will be remembered for the fatal crash suffered by Paulo Goncalves (POR). Goncalves was a much loved and respected rider within the bivouac and his passing on Stage 7 led to Stage 8 being cancelled for the bikes and quads in honour of the former Dakar runner-up. The bike race in Saudi Arabia was won by Ricky Brabec (USA) on a Honda, the first time in 19 years that the fastest Dakar rider had not been on a KTM. Brabec was followed home in second place by Pablo Quintanilla (CHI) on a Husqvarna.

Third place gave Red Bull KTM Factory Team rider Toby Price (AUS) his fifth Dakar podium result. The two-time Dakar winner maintains his incredible record of landing in the Top 3 every time he has finished motorsports' ultimate test of endurance.

"It's not the result we came for but with the two weeks we've had I'm quite happy to keep my podium streak going. Now we're going to regroup ahead of Dakar 2021. I'll be back and looking to get the #1 plate again." - Toby Price It was fifth and sixth place finishes for Price's KTM team-mates Matthias Walkner (AUT) and Luciano Benavides (ARG) respectively. "It's been a tough Dakar and there's been some really bad crashes. I'm pleased to get over the line safely." - Matthias Walkner There were also strong results in the bike race for Stefan Svitko (SVK), top placed female rider Laia Sanz (ESP) and Original by Motul competitor Martin Freinademetz (AUT). "I've started 10 Dakars and I've finished all 10. This is something that is really difficult and it's an achievement I'm very proud of." - Laia Sanz



Kuwait to meet Iran in handball championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Handball team will face its Iranian counterpart at 8 pm at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdallah hall in group 2 competition of the second round of the Asian championship which qualify for the world cup. Meanwhile Qatar will play South Korea at 6 pm.

In Group 1 UAE will play Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia will play Japan. The first and second teams in each group qualify for the world cup directly, as well as the semi-finals.

Kuwait was on top of Group 4 with 6 points after defeating UAE 20-17 during the match, as UAE was second, Iraq third and Hong Kong fourth. The first group was headed by Bahrain, which qualified along with Iran to the second round, New Zealand was third. Qatar and Japan qualified in Group 2 as China was third. The third group saw Saudi Arabia and Korea qualify, while Australia was third.

Kuwait team will have a tough task when it faces Iran's team which is a strong and experienced team and shoots very well from the nine meters line, with solid defence. Kuwait players must comply with instructions of the coaches, and not to hasten attempts of scoring, as the zone defence of 5-1 or 3-2-1 will be ideal against a team that shoots from a distance. -

Kuwait coach Aameen said all quarter final matches are considered finals as far as he is concerned, adding that all teams in the second group are tough. He said his goal is to reach the World Cup finals in 2021, to have Kuwait handball restore its normal status.

Assistant coach Mohammad Mubarak said that his team thinks about the match with Iran only, because it is a well developed team, and winning this match means getting strongly into competition within the quarter finals, which is more difficult.

He said the rest day will be beneficial for preparations, and "we promise the fans with a good result, and ask them for their support in the court as always."

Kuwait players were pleased for being on top of Group 4 through three wins, and promised to give better performance during the quarter finals, as Mahdi Al-Qallaf said qualifying with the full six points made Kuwait fans happy, as they were always behind the players.

Goalkeeper Ali Safar congratulated his teammates for being on top and thanked fans for attending the ongoing matches. Captain of Bahrain team Hussein Al-Sayyad lauded the performance of his teammates during the third match with Iran, adding that the win against Iran was very difficult, especially that some of its players play in European teams.

Sports

Clinical India, Rohit outplay Australia to clinch ODI series

India chased down their target of 287 in 47.3 overs

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the third and final one-day international between India and Australia in Bangalore yesterday:

Australia	
D. Warner c Rahul b Shami	3
A. Finch run out (Jadeja//Iyer/Shami)	19
S. Smith c Iyer b Shami	131
M. Labuschagne c Kohli b Jadeja	54
M. Starc c (sub) Chahal b Jadeja	0
A. Carey c Iyer b Yadav	35
A. Turner c Rahul b Saini	4
A. Agar not out	11
P. Cummins b Shami	0
A. Zampa b Shami	1
J. Hazlewood not out	1
Extras (lb 14, w 13)	27
Total (9 wickets, 50 overs)	286
Fall of wickets: 1-18 (Warner), 2-46 (Finch), 3-173 (Labuschagne), 4-173 (Starc), 5-231 (Carey), 6-238 (Turner), 7-273 (Smith), 8-276 (Cummins), 9-282 (Zampa)	
Bowling: Bumrah 10-0-38-0 (w8), Shami 10-0-63-4 (w4), Saini 10-0-65-1, Yadav 10-0-62-1 (w1), Jadeja 10-1-44-2	
India (target 287)	
R. Sharma c Starc b Zampa	119
KL Rahul lbw b Agar	19
V. Kohli b Hazlewood	89
S. Iyer not out	44
M. Pandey not out	8
Extras (lb2, w8)	10
Total (3 wickets, 47.3 overs)	289
Did not bat: S. Dhawan, R. Jadeja, N. Saini, K. Yadav, M. Shami, J. Bumrah	
Fall of wickets: 1-69 (Rahul), 2-206 (Sharma), 3-274 (Kohli)	
Bowling: Cummins 7-0-64-0 (w5), Starc 9-0-66-0 (w2), Hazlewood 9.3-1-55-1 (w1), Agar 10-0-38-1, Zampa 10-0-44-1, Labuschagne 1-0-11-0, Finch 1-0-9-0.	
Result: India won by 7 wickets.	

BANGALORE: A sparkling century by Rohit Sharma and inspired bowling helped India to a series-clinching seven-wicket win over Australia in the third one-day international yesterday. Sharma made 119 and put on a key 137-run second-wicket stand with skipper Virat Kohli, who made 89, as India chased down their target of 287 in 47.3 overs in Bangalore.

The hosts fought back in the series after a 10-wicket drubbing in the opening game to go past the Aaron Finch-led tourists 2-1. Pacesman Mohammed Shami claimed four wickets to lead the bowling charge with the hosts restricting Australia to 286 for nine on a good batting pitch despite Steve Smith's 131.

Sharma took the attack to the opposition with a steady flow of boundaries — eight fours and six sixes in his 128-ball knock — and completed his eighth century against the Aussies.

He finally fell to Adam Zampa's leg spin as the senior batsman attempted a big hit but the ball top-edged off his bat to be caught by Mitchell Starc at long-on. Kohli kept the chase on track with an attacking Shreyas Iyer, unbeaten on 44, as the pair put on 68 runs before the captain was bowled by Josh Hazlewood.

Indian opener Shikhar Dhawan did not bat after injuring his shoulder while fielding in the fifth over Australian innings. He went for an X-ray later and TV pictures showed the batsman's arm in a sling.

India though did not feel his absence as Sharma and wicketkeeper batsman KL Rahul put on 69 runs to set up the chase. Rahul was given not out by the on-field umpire after being trapped lbw off Ashton Agar for 19 but Australia successfully reviewed the decision in their favour.

SMITH CENTURY

Earlier Smith followed up his 98 in the second match with his ninth ODI hundred and his first since January 2017 — a period during which he served a one-year ban between March 2018 and 2019. Smith put on 127 runs for the third wicket with Marnus Labuschagne to



BANGALORE: India's cricketers pose for a team photograph with the trophy after winning the third and last one-day international (ODI) cricket match of a three-match series between India and Australia at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday. — AFP

lay the foundation for Australia's total after they elected to bat. Shami struck first to send David Warner trudging back to the pavilion for three after the left-handed opener edged to wicketkeeper KL Rahul. Finch and Smith started to build, but their partnership was cut short by a big mix up between the two batsmen with the captain being run out for 19.

Smith played the ball to short third man and Finch ran for a single only to get stuck with his partner at the striker's end, and fell well short of the crease while try-

ing to make it back. Smith kept the scoreboard ticking with singles and twos and the occasional boundary with partner Labuschagne, who got a maiden ODI fifty after making his debut in the opening match of the series.

Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja broke the partnership with the wicket of Labuschagne for 54, and struck twice in his ninth over to pull Australia back. Smith played a lone hand before falling to Shami as the middle and lower order did not fire. — AFP

Conor McGregor demolishes Cerrone in 40-second

LAS VEGAS: Conor McGregor made a triumphant return to the UFC octagon on Saturday, pummeling Donald "Cowboy" Cerrone for a technical knockout victory in just 40 seconds. The mixed martial arts superstar from Ireland — returning to the Ultimate Fighting Championship for the first time since he was battered into submission by arch-rival Khabib Nurmagomedov in October 2018 — overpowered his American foe without ever being tested.

After charging in with a left and missing, McGregor immediately bloodied a clinching Cerrone's nose with an upward shoulder strike — quickly followed by another. As soon as Cerrone stepped back, McGregor caught him on the jaw with a high kick, then buried him under a hail of punches. Referee Herb Dean stepped in to call a halt to the welterweight bout 40 seconds into the first round at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. "I made history here tonight," McGregor said. "I'm the first UFC fighter to secure knockouts in featherweight, lightweight and now welterweight."

"Eh my name in the history books one more time," he said. "For the Irish people, for my mom back home." McGregor who took his record to 22-4, was the first UFC fighter to hold two championship belts at the same time.

He achieved that feat in 2016, when he stopped Eddie Alvarez in a lightweight title fight, adding that belt to his featherweight title. But he hadn't won since. That triumph was followed by a loss to boxing great Floyd Mayweather in a cross-combat superfight in 2017, his loss to Nurmagomedov, announcements of retirements and returns to fighting.

Along the way there were brushes with authorities outside the octagon. He pleaded guilty to hitting a man in a bar in Ireland and was accused of smashing a fan's phone in Florida. The New York Times reported he is the subject of two alleged sexual assault investigations in Ireland. Nevertheless, McGregor remains the most popular fighter in UFC history, and his return brought out stars including British heavyweight Tyson Fury and New England Patriots superstar quarterback Tom Brady for the sold-out show. And McGregor didn't disappoint against Cerrone, an experienced veteran whose 36 wins included the most knockouts (20) in UFC.

"He destroyed me," Cerrone said. "100 percent I've never seen anything like it. I got my ass whipped early." Although there was no title at stake, McGregor said the outcome was a harbinger of things to come.

"I like this (welterweight) division," he said. "I feel really good. I came out of here unscathed. I've got work to do to get back to where I was." McGregor has expressed interest in a rematch with Nurmagomedov, who is scheduled to defend his lightweight title in April against Tony Ferguson.

At welterweight there is the enticing prospect of Jorge Masvidal. UFC boss Dana White said he was "blown away" by McGregor's performance. "He looked fast, he hit hard, he had a game plan and he finished a real tough kid who came to win," White said, adding that in his opinion the obvious fight to point McGregor toward was a rematch with the 28-0 Nurmagomedov.

"Khabib is the fight to make," White said. "We're looking at Hagler-Hearns. We're looking at, like, Ali-Foreman, Ali-Frazier. This is a massive fight with global appeal." White was unflinching by the chance that his top draw McGregor could be lured back to the boxing ring, for a Mayweather rematch or even a clash with Filipino fight king Manny Pacquiao. "These are great problems to have," White said. — AFP

Kuwait's veteran tennis players meet

By Abdellatif Sharara

KUWAIT: President of Arab and Kuwait Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah brought together veteran Kuwaiti Tennis players who represented Kuwait during the past thirty years in tournament events most important of which is the men's world cup (David Cup), and left good impressions on Kuwait's tennis over many years.

Kuwait Tennis Federation held a dinner banquet that was attended by Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Tennis Federation Abdelsamad Al-Aryan, Secretary General Faleh Al-Otaibi, Assistant Secretary Ali Hayat, Technical Director Abbas Al-Busairi and National Teams Supervisor Abdelredha Al-Shatti.

The surprise of the dinner which was the presence of the long term coach of the national team during the 1980s and 1990s until 2002, during which many achievements were made at many levels and Kuwait was on top of GCC countries and had a monopoly over the Gulf championships for all age groups, he is coach Damian Sancilio, from USA. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah thanked the veteran players for accepting the invitation and lauded their efforts in establishing the tennis game in Kuwait.

He told them KTF is in need for their experience and opinions to develop the game. He also urged them to stay in touch with the federation for the good of tennis. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah also thanked American coach Damian Sancilio for accepting the invitation adding that his presence gave the event warmth and brought memories of the past.

LeBron double lead Lakers by Rockets

HOUSTON: LeBron James produced his 31st double-double, Kyle Kuzma chipped in 23 points and the visiting Los Angeles Lakers turned a third-quarter defensive clinic into a 124-115 win over the Houston Rockets on Saturday. The Lakers delivered an efficient offensive display without their leading scorer, Anthony Davis, by following James' lead. James paired a team-high 31 points with a game-high 12 assists to steward the Lakers. Their defensive might turned the tide in the third, which they won 32-17. JaVale McGee and former Rockets center Dwight Howard recorded three blocks each, while Danny Green had four steals. The Lakers posted 13 steals and nine blocks while limiting the Rockets to 12-for-37 shooting from behind the arc. Russell Westbrook (35 points, nine rebounds, seven assists) and James Harden (34 points, seven assists) paced the Rockets, who have dropped three straight and four of five. Houston committed 20 turnovers.

PHOENIX SUNS 123 - BOSTON CELTICS 119

Devin Booker scored 39 points and fell an assist shy of his first career triple-double as visiting Phoenix held off undermanned Boston. Booker added 10 rebounds. Deandre Ayton had 26 points and 15 boards and Mikal Bridges scored a career-high 26, as the Suns won for the fourth time in their last five. Dario Saric scored 13 with 11 rebounds and five assists. Marcus Smart scored a career-high 37 points on a team-record-setting 11 3-pointers, but the Celtics fell for the sixth time in their last eight. Jayson Tatum scored 26 with 10 rebounds, and Gordon Hayward had 22 points, seven boards and seven assists. Boston played without starters Kemba Walker (left knee) and Jaylen Brown (thumb sprain).

LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS 133 - NEW ORLEANS PELICANS 130

Kawhi Leonard scored 39 points, and Lou Williams had 32 as visiting Los Angeles defeated New Orleans in



Leonard's fifth consecutive game with more than 30 points in the absence of second-leading scorer Paul George. Despite being with George because of a hamstring injury, the Clippers had plenty of help. Montrezl Harrell added 24 points, and Landry Shamet scored 11. The Clippers outscored New Orleans 31-20 in the fourth quarter. Derrick Favors (10-for-10 from floor) had 22 points and 11 rebounds, Brandon Ingram scored 21, JJ Redick tallied 19 while Lonzo Ball had a triple-double with 18 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds for New Orleans.

OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER 119 - PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS 106

Chris Paul tied his season high with 30 points to lift Oklahoma City to a win over visiting Portland. Paul was 11 of 15 from the floor in the game and added seven assists. Portland was without guard CJ McCollum, who suffered a sprained left ankle Friday. The Blazers' bench was further depleted before the game when swingman Kent Bazemore and forward Anthony Tolliver were reportedly traded to the Sacramento Kings. According to ESPN, Portland will receive Trevor Ariza, Wendell Gabriel and Caleb Swanigan in the deal. Rookie Darius Bazley, starting at forward in Danilo Gallinari's absence (rest), had a career-best 13 rebounds for the Thunder. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 22 points. Dennis Schroder added 15 — all in the final 15 minutes.

TORONTO RAPTORS 122 - MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES 112

Fred VanVleet scored 29 points in his return from a hamstring injury, and Kyle Lowry added 28 points as visiting Toronto used a third-quarter charge to earn a victory over Minnesota. Norman Powell scored 20 points, and Pascal Siakam added 14 as the Raptors continued to get their regulars back on the court. Powell and Siakam returned from injury last weekend. Marc Gasol returned Friday. VanVleet was the latest to see the court again after missing the last five games. Jarrett Culver scored 26 points, and Robert Covington added 22 as the Timberwolves lost their fifth consecutive game. Karl-Anthony Towns scored 12 for Minnesota in his second game back from a 15-game

absence because of a sore knee. Andrew Wiggins had a triple-double in the defeat, scoring 18 points with 10 rebounds and 11 assists.

MILWAUKEE BUCKS 117 - BROOKLYN NETS 97

Giannis Antetokounmpo encountered little difficulty collecting 29 points and 12 rebounds as Milwaukee led most of the way and cruised to a victory over Brooklyn in New York. Antetokounmpo posted his 37th double-double while also tying his career-high with eight turnovers, including four offensive fouls. The star forward made 12 of 20 shots and hit two 3-pointers, as the Bucks pushed their winning streak to six games and beat the Nets for the 16th time in the past 19 meetings. Khristian Middleton added 20 points as the Bucks led for the final 40:33, shot 50.6 percent (45 of 89) and led by as many as 25 points. Former Nets center Brook Lopez contributed 12 points, while Donte DiVincenzo and Wesley Matthews finished with 11 points apiece.

PHILADELPHIA 76ERS 90 - NEW YORK KNICKS 87

Tobias Harris drained a go-ahead 3-pointer with 28.2 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter as Philadelphia won at New York. Ben Simmons scored 21 points to reach the 20-point plateau in a career-best fourth straight contest for the 76ers, who snapped a six-game road losing skid and improved to 8-14 away from the City of Brotherly Love. Josh Richardson scored 18 points, and Furkan Korkmaz added 17, one night after he erupted for a career-best totals in points (24) and 3-pointers (six) in the 76ers' 100-89 victory over Chicago.

UTAH JAZZ 123 - SACRAMENTO KINGS 101

Bojan Bogdanovic made six 3-pointers and scored 30 points to help Utah roll over Sacramento at Salt Lake City. Rudy Gobert recorded a season-high 28 points on 9-of-11 shooting and also had 15 rebounds and three blocked shots. Donovan Mitchell scored 22 points as the Jazz won for the 16th time in their past 18 games. De'Aaron Fox recorded 21 points and eight assists for the Kings, who have lost four straight games and 13 of their past 16. Marvin Bagley III scored 17 points, and Buddy Hield added 14. — Reuters

Sports

Lewandowski strikes again as Bayern go second in Bundesliga

Lewandowski, Werner first players in Bundesliga history to score 20 goals

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski hit his 20th league goal this season as Bayern Munich climbed to second in the Bundesliga yesterday with a 4-0 romp at Hertha Berlin to trim RB Leipzig's lead to four points.

Having seen RB Leipzig go five points clear with a 3-1 win over Union Berlin on Saturday, Bayern climbed a place in the Bundesliga with second-half goals in the capital by Thomas Mueller, Lewandowski, Thiago Alcantara and Ivan Perisic. After Leipzig's Germany striker Timo Werner had edged ahead of him as the league's top scorer with two goals against Union, Lewandowski drew level with his main rival's tally on 20 league goals by converting a penalty.

Lewandowski and Werner are now the first players in Bundesliga history to have scored 20 goals after 18 games in their challenge to Gerd Mueller's record of 40 goals in a Bundesliga season, set in 1971/72.

After a groin injury last month, Lewandowski proved his fitness with an lively display at Berlin's Olympic Stadium. He now has 31 goals in 26 games in all competitions, including 10 in just five Champions League games.

There was good news before kick-off for Hertha coach Jurgen Klinsmann as the German Football Association (DFB) confirmed his coaching licence is

valid after doubts emerged last week over whether the certificate earned in 2000 had expired. There was little else to cheer Hertha fans as Bayern established supremacy with nearly 70 percent possession as the defending champions struggling however to break Hertha's defence.

The breach finally came on 60 minutes when Leon Goretzka put a cross to the far post, Perisic headed back and Mueller crashed home the shot. Lewandowski had a header disallowed soon after when the video assistant referee spotted the striker made contact with Hertha goalkeeper Rune Jarstein, who had claimed the cross a millisecond before.

However, when Bayern were awarded a penalty after Goretzka was upended, Lewandowski sent Jarstein the wrong way to put Bayern 2-0 up with 73 minutes gone. Alcantara added a third with superb finishing after the Hertha defence had again been shredded and Perisic was finally rewarded for a good display when he headed home with six minutes left with an assist from Mueller.

The victory in Berlin sets Bayern up for Saturday's crunch home clash against fifth-placed Schalke, who beat fellow title contenders Moenchengladbach 2-0 in Gelsenkirchen on Friday. — AFP



BERLIN: Bayern Munich's Canadian midfielder Alphonso Davies (C) vies with Bayern Munich's New Zealand midfielder Sarpreet Singh (R) during the German first division Bundesliga football match Hertha Berlin v Bayern Munich in Berlin, yesterday. — AFP

Barty eyes home party as Serena continues chase

MELBOURNE: Ash Barty faces the double burden of being world number one and the focus of an expectant host nation as she seeks to win the Australian Open amid challenges from record-chasing Serena Williams and a host of other Grand Slam winners.

The 23-year-old Queenslander Barty spectacularly climbed to the top of the women's rankings in 2019 and will start her Melbourne Park campaign next week having won her maiden Grand Slam at the French Open and the WTA Finals in Shenzhen.

Her successes saw her become the first Australian woman since Evonne Goolagong-Cawley to gain the world number one accolade and also raised hopes that she could end the country's 42-year wait for a home winner in Melbourne.

She will be the cynosure of the sports-loving nation and the local media when the year's first Grand Slam kicks off on Monday but going by what happened in the recent past, handling the pressure could prove arduous for Barty.

In November, leading Australia's charge to win the Fed Cup against France in Perth, she suffered an upset loss to Kristina Mladenovic which ended her team's hopes of winning the trophy for the first time in 45 years.

Yet Barty, who regained her number one spot in September after holding it for seven weeks following her Roland Garros triumph, says she is ready for the next daunting chapter. "Having a number next to your name doesn't guarantee anything. It doesn't guarantee wins. You still have to go out there, do the work — put all those kind of runs on the board, I suppose — and work from there," the former cricketer told reporters in Adelaide this week.

"All you can do is try and do your best every single match." Japan's Naomi Osaka knows all about the struggles of coping with the pressure of being world number one but she will defend her crown having rediscovered her confidence. Osaka started 2019 by lifting her second straight Grand Slam title in Melbourne following her success at the 2018 US Open but subsequently suffered early exits at the French Open and Wimbledon.

The 22-year-old, who appointed her third coach of the year in Belgian Wim Fissette in December, also disappointed in the defence of her US Open title. Yet Osaka regained some end-of-season form with the Pan Pacific Open and China Open titles and, after having dropped to number four, is back to third in the world

behind Karolina Pliskova.

Williams, who has for years thrived under the pressure of expectation that faces Barty, has won seven of her 23 Grand Slam singles in Melbourne but faces a different test in the twilight of her illustrious career.

She was eight weeks pregnant when winning in Melbourne in 2017 but similar success in Slams has proved elusive since she returned to the circuit as the mother of baby Olympia. She has lost four finals in her quest for a 24th Grand Slam singles title to equal Margaret Court's all-time record but last week enjoyed her first WTA singles title in almost three years at the Auckland Classic.

"It's pretty satisfying to get a win in a final," Williams told reporters. "That was really important for me. I want to build on it. Obviously it is a step towards the next goal in Melbourne." While Melbourne will miss the US Open winner Bianca Andreescu, of Canada, who pulled out with a knee injury, there will be plenty of others who have tasted major success before in what looks a wide open field.

Last year's finalist Petra Kvitova and Simona Halep are equipped to add to their multiple majors while the 2018 Australian Open champion Caroline Wozniacki will aim to bow out from the sport on the highest note.

Angelique Kerber, Sloane Stephens, Garbine Muguruza, Jelena Ostapenko, Venus Williams and Maria Sharapova are the other Grand Slam winners who are outside the top 16 seeds. — Reuters

Inter Milan trip up again as Lecce earn Serie A draw

MILAN: Inter Milan were held to a 1-1 draw by relegation-battling Lecce in Serie A yesterday, as Antonio Conte's side dropped points for the second weekend in a row. Inter substitute Alessandro Bastoni headed in a second-half opener four minutes after coming on, but Lecce soon drew level through captain Marco Mancosu. Marcelo Brozovic hit the post for Inter in the first half but Lecce, who went into the game on a four-match losing run and without a home win all season, went close to grabbing a late victory when Filippo Falco's free kick struck the woodwork.

Inter, who were held to a 1-1 draw by Atalanta last Saturday, are second and one point behind leaders Juventus, although they will be cut four points adrift if the champions beat Parma later on Sunday.

Lecce remain in 17th place on 16 points, one above the relegation zone. "We are a team who have to go at 100 kilometres per hour," Conte told Sky Sport Italia. "If someone is below par, or off the pace, we cannot afford that and will end up drawing a game we comfortably should have brought home."

"If we hold an average pace, we cannot get victories. We had to go at full pelt throughout the first half of the season. Once we don't do that, we become a perfectly normal team." Lecce squandered a good early chance when the unmarked Mancosu blasted over with just the goalkeeper to beat, before Brozovic went close for Inter with a shot that came back off the post.

The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) saved Inter on the brink of halftime when a penalty was awarded to Lecce for handball, only for the decision to be overturned following a review on the pitchside monitor.

Conte made his first change in the 68th minute by bringing on centre back Bastoni and within four minutes the move had changed the game, as the defender rose to power in a header from a Cristiano Biraghi cross.

However, Inter's lead lasted just five minutes before Mancosu tucked in a Zan Majer cross from close range, and Falco nearly turned the game on its head when his looping free kick clipped the outside of the post.

Elsewhere, substitute Mario Balotelli was sent off eight minutes after coming on as a substitute as his Brescia side held Cagliari to a 2-2 draw. Brescia striker Ernesto Torregrossa and Cagliari forward Joao Pedro scored two apiece, before Balotelli picked up two bookings late on for a clumsy challenge followed by dissent.

Fabio Borini came off the bench to score a debut goal and rescue a point for Hellas Verona as they earned a 1-1 draw at Bologna. Mattia Bani put the home side in front in the first half before being sent off for a second booking after the break, and Borini headed in an 81st-minute leveller less than a week after joining from AC Milan. — Reuters



LECCE: Inter Milan's Italian defender Alessandro Bastoni (3rdR) heads the ball to score the opening goal during the Italian Serie A football match Lecce vs Inter Milan yesterday at the Via del Mare stadium in Lecce. — AFP

Bryan backs 'madman' Murray to march on

MELBOURNE: Doubles legend Bob Bryan is backing "madman" Andy Murray to play for "many more years" despite the Briton being forced out of the Australian Open with another injury. The veteran American had a major hip operation in 2018 but bounced back to continue his hugely successful doubles partnership with twin Mike.

Three-time Grand Slam champion Murray had similar, career-saving surgery 12 months ago and in October won his first title since going under the knife. But the 32-year-old pulled out of the Australian Open with a pelvic injury and last week further delayed his comeback, renewing fears for his tennis future.

"I talked to him last week," the 41-year-old Bryan said yesterday in Melbourne. "He's got something unrelated to the hip injury — his hip feels great. "All

his numbers are off the charts, he tests the speed and the strength."

"He's right back where he was when he was number one, which is incredible. That's good to hear." Murray has taken inspiration from Bryan as the Briton attempts to recapture a semblance of the form and fitness that made him world number one in 2016.

Bryan said that he has no issues with his hip — Murray has consistently said that he is also now pain-free, but the pelvic problem is a fresh setback. The American cited a recent documentary about Murray which charted the Briton's painstaking comeback. "If anyone saw the documentary, you'll know how crazy he is with the work, he's a madman," Bryan said. "He's going to put it in, he's going to do everything he can. "I expect to see him playing for many more years, winning." — AFP

Live		Matches on TV (Local Timings)	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE			
Atalanta v Spal	beIN SPORTS	22:45	

Chelsea rocked as Hayden's late strike lifts Newcastle

NEWCASTLE: Frank Lampard admitted he wants to sign a new striker after Newcastle damaged Chelsea's bid for a top-four finish in the Premier League with a dramatic 1-0 win at St James' Park on Saturday.

With Tottenham held by Watford earlier in the day and Manchester United facing runaway leaders Liverpool on Sunday, Chelsea would have cemented their grip on fourth place with a win on Tyneside.

But Lampard's side were unable to muster the cutting edge required to break down stubborn Newcastle and fell to Isaac Hayden's header with just 20 seconds left in stoppage-time. Chelsea's first defeat in four league matches leaves them five points clear of fifth-placed United and Lampard is growing tired of his team's struggles against defensive opponents.

"We know we have problems at the top of the pitch in terms of we don't get enough goals. If you don't score you are always liable for a sucker punch and they got it," Lampard said. "If we are looking for people to bring in to the areas to win games when you are controlling it, it is scoring goals."

"We can't work anymore in training on finishing. You need to have that killer instinct in front of goal. We need to score more goals from front-line areas if we are going to get to where we want to be."

"It's quite clear from what I am saying now that we know where we need to strengthen but we shall see." After four league games without a victory, this was a much-needed success for Newcastle, but a wasted opportunity for Chelsea to open up a bigger gap in the race to qualify for the Champions League.

"We dominated every aspect of the game. The lads have got their heads down in there. But the brutal reality of football is if you don't score, teams stay in the game and something like that happens at the end," Lampard said.

"We have had more possession than any of our opponents in every game this season. It is a sign we have a lot of the ball but we are not scoring enough."

Miguel Almiron opened up Chelsea down the right flank early on and Allan Saint-Maximin met the cross with a header that looped over. Newcastle's lengthy injury list gained another casualty inside 12 minutes when Jetro Willems was stretched off after taking a knock in a challenge on Callum Hudson-Odoi.

Chelsea were dominating possession but Newcastle striker Joelinton, his confidence lifted by an FA Cup goal against Rochdale in midweek, went close to his first league goal since August when his powerful header cannoned back off the bar. Reece James signed a new contract with Chelsea this week as a reward for his impressive breakthrough campaign and the young right-back gave a glimpse of his potential when his pinpoint pass found N'Golo Kante for a shot that Martin Dubravka saved with his leg at the near post.

Chelsea remained vulnerable at the back and Federico Fernandez headed wastefully over from a Jonjo Shelvey free-kick. Willian squandered a good opportunity from a Chelsea counter early in the second half when the Brazilian dragged wide from the edge of the area. Chances were at a premium and Cesar Azpilicueta's long-range effort lacked the power to beat Dubravka before Shelvey finally had Newcastle's first shot on target in the 59th minute. Chelsea's frustration mounted when James limped off injured and moments later Tammy Abraham, teed up by Azpilicueta's header, saw his effort turned away by Dubravka's brave save.

Emerson fired just wide with an angled drive and in the fourth minute of stoppage-time Chelsea paid for their profligacy. Saint-Maximin had space to whip in a teasing cross and Hayden got behind Antonio Rudiger for a close-range header that keeper Kepa Arrizabalaga could only push into the net. — AFP

25 Ovechkin leads Capitals with second straight hat trick



26 Clinical India, Rohit outplay Australia to clinch ODI series



27 Lewandowski strikes again as Bayern go second in Bundesliga



Liverpool power past Man Utd

Burnley fight back to sink Leicester



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk (L) battles with Manchester United's Belgian-born Brazilian midfielder Andreas Pereira (R) during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Manchester United at Anfield stadium in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool stretched their commanding lead at the top of the Premier League to 16 points and advantage over Manchester United to 30 as goals from Virgil van Dijk and Mohamed Salah earned a 2-0 win over their historic rivals at Anfield. A 13th straight league win since the sides last met at Old Trafford in October continues Liverpool's relentless run towards a first league title in 30 years, while United remain five points off the top four in fifth.

Liverpool also have a game in hand to come on closest challengers Manchester City and could have been more comfortable winners after seeing two first half goals ruled out and a host of clear chances go astray. United are the only team to take Premier League points off the European champions this season, but it rarely looked like lightning would strike twice once the hosts went in front on 14 minutes.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's game plan was undone by a simple set-piece as Van Dijk rose highest to power home Trent Alexander-Arnold's corner. The Norwegian had set up with a back five, with Luke Shaw forced to deputise out of position as a third centre-back, and only a great challenge from the former Southampton left-back denied Sadio Mane a certain second as he burst onto Roberto Firmino's pass.

Jürgen Klopp's men did have the ball in the net twice more before the break, but VAR and the offside flag came to United's rescue to keep the score down.

Firstly, Firmino's brilliant strike was ruled out as Van Dijk was penalised for an aerial challenge with David de Gea after a VAR review. Georginio Wijnaldum then slotted past the Spaniard after a brilliant through ball from Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, but the Dutchman had strayed marginally offside.

Shorn of injured top scorer Marcus Rashford, United failed to even muster a shot in anger for the first 40 minutes until Anthony Martial pulled his effort wide of the near post. However, they could easily have been level against the run of play moments later when Andreas Pereira could not stretch to turn home Aaron Wan-Bissaka's ball across the face of the goal.

At the other end, De Gea had one more key intervention before the break as he saved with his feet from Mane's driven effort. However, the hosts held out for a seventh consecutive clean sheet in all competitions and took another giant step towards the title as Salah secured the three points with virtually the last kick of the game. The Egyptian was picked out by goalkeeper Alisson Becker and ran from inside his own half before slotting under De Gea.

Earlier, Burnley recovered from a goal down to beat high-flying Leicester City 2-1 at Turf Moor yesterday, ending their four-match losing streak in the Premier League. Sean Dyche's Claret failed to score a first-half goal for an 11th successive league game, and their problems worsened when midfielder Harvey Barnes put the visitors ahead with a stunning solo effort in the 33rd minute.

Jack Cork lost the ball in midfield and Burnley-born winger Barnes broke forward, racing goalwards and past Ben Mee before firing home. The hosts responded after the interval with striker Chris Wood scoring the equaliser from a rebound after Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel saved a header from Mee.

Leicester, third in the standings, had an opportunity to reclaim the lead when Mee brought down Barnes in the box but

Burnley goalkeeper Nick Pope kept out Jamie Vardy's weak penalty. The turnaround was complete, with 11 minutes remaining, when Ashley Westwood blasted in after a Charlie Taylor cross from the left to ensure Burnley took all three points, lifting them to 14th place in the table, five points above the relegation zone.

"I thought we deserved to win the game but we didn't take our chances," said Leicester boss Brendan Rodgers. "A mixture of their keeper making some brilliant saves and our finishing and we somehow lost the game," he added. Pope, who made some vital saves in the second half, was delighted the team's losing streak was over. "It's a massive win for us. The lads worked so hard and the atmosphere was electric. You go on bad runs during the season so to snap them quickly is important," he said. —Agencies

Direz shocks Shiffrin to claim maiden WCup win

SESTRIERE: France's Clara Direz won the women's parallel giant slalom in Sestriere yesterday, eliminating US star Mikaela Shiffrin on the way to her first World Cup victory. The 24-year-old edged Austria's Elisa Moerzinger by 0.22sec in the final, with Italy's Marta Bassino finishing third in the Italian Alps.

Direz had beaten three-time overall World Cup champion Shiffrin in the earlier rounds. The American finished ninth overall. It was also a first podium for the French skier whose previous best had been a seventh-place finish in the slalom at Lienz, Austria, in December.

"What a day! It's unbelievable, I didn't

expect it," said the skier from the French Alps. "I didn't know I could be capable of something in parallel GS because it's my first. "It's pretty outstanding, I'm trying to enjoy the moment right now."

Her only previous win had been a gold medal in the giant slalom at the 2012 Winter Youth Olympics in Innsbruck. "(Winning) brings confidence and with confidence you can take more risks when we ski and then we go faster," she said of yesterday's victory.

"I do hope it will help me for my giant slalom." Moerzinger, 22, also took her first podium competing in just her fifth World Cup race. Shiffrin suffered more frustration after also finishing third in Saturday's giant slalom just 0.01sec behind Federica Brignone and Petra Vlhova, who shared first place.

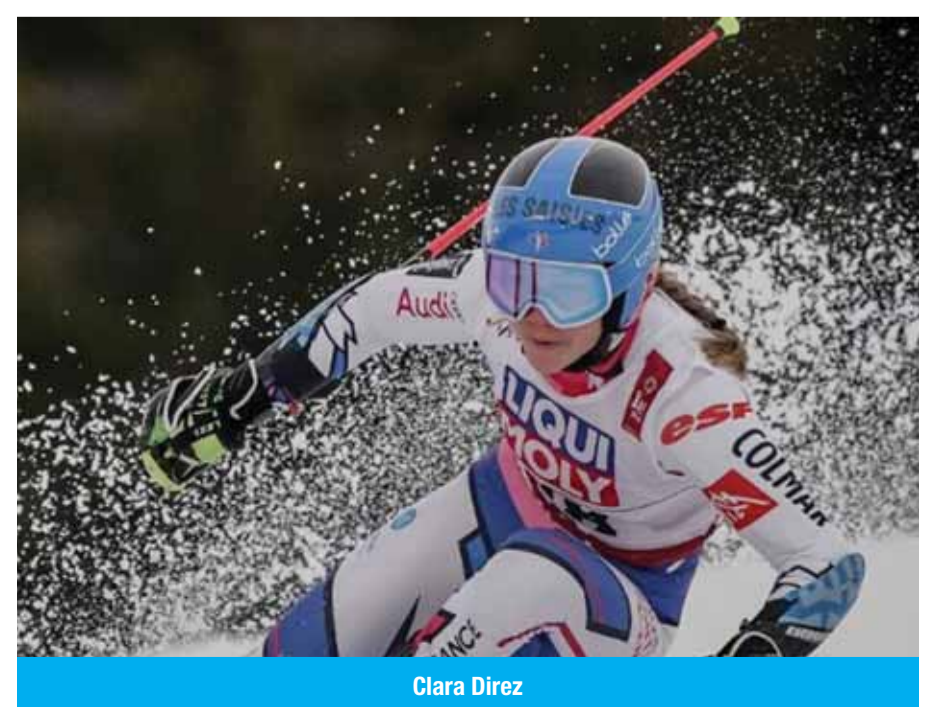
The American nevertheless extended her lead in the overall World Cup standings to 249 points ahead of Vlhova, with Brignone 11 points further back in third. But the two-time Olympic champion was unhappy about the format for the new competition where two skiers compete against each other.

The 24-year-old from Colorado, who is still

chasing her first win of 2020, claimed that her red course was slower than the adjacent blue course over the final four gates. "I don't like to talk about luck playing a role even yesterday. .01 out, I feel like that was in my control," said Shiffrin. "But these two courses are not the same at all. "I'm a little bitter, this event is still new and there are so many things to work out," Shiffrin added. "But it's fun and people like to watch it. It's just a work in progress to make it the best it can be."

The figures backed up Shiffrin's claim with 17 wins on the blue course from the last 16 round compared to three on the red. But Dinez was not worried: "I don't know if it's really fair or not. "I've been lucky because I was always on the blue courses for the last run. I've been a little bit lucky, so I won't complain about that."

For Bassino it was a fourth podium this season, after achieving her first World Cup win the giant slalom in Killington, Vermont in November. She was followed by fellow Italians Brignone and Olympic downhill champion Sofia Goggia, fourth and fifth respectively, with Vlhova finishing 18th. —AFP



Clara Direz