



**2** Kuwaiti mountaineer Rifai climbs world's highest volcanic summit



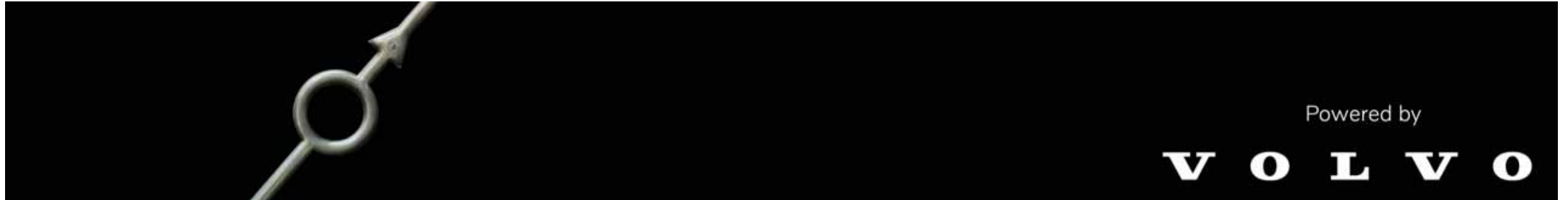
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# Xi warns of 'grave' situation as China rushes to build hospitals

Virus toll hits 41 • Kuwait issues travel warning for Hong Kong, Macau



WUHAN, China: Medical staff members wearing protective clothing to help stop the spread of a deadly virus which began in the city, arrive with a patient at the Wuhan Red Cross Hospital yesterday. —AFP

WUHAN, China: Chinese President Xi Jinping warned yesterday that China was facing a "grave" situation as authorities took more drastic steps to halt the spread of a virus that has killed 41 people and is overwhelming hospitals at the epicenter of the health emergency. The world's most populous country scrambled to contain the disease that has already infected nearly 1,300 people, building a second field hospital to relieve overwhelmed medical facilities and closing more travel routes as the country marked the Lunar New Year holiday.

After more countries reported cases, Xi said at a Communist Party leadership meeting on the disease that China was "faced with the grave situation of an accelerating spread of the new coronavirus" but that the country will "definitely be able to win the battle",

according to state media. The country's most important celebration has been all but cancelled for at least 56 million people as authorities expanded travel bans across central Hubei province to try and contain the spread of the virus.

Kuwait yesterday advised its nationals against non-essential travel to Hong Kong and Macau. Hong Kong's government has put in place the highest state of emergency in response to the outbreak of the coronavirus, closing all primary and secondary schools after five cases of the pneumonia-causing virus were reported, said Salah Al-Seif, Kuwait's consul general in Hong Kong and Macau. Kuwait's General Consulate in Hong Kong has set up an emergency hotline at 0085298211669 in case urgent assistance is needed, he said.

Continued on Page 24

## Kuwait summons Iran envoy over Soleimani claim

KUWAIT: Kuwait's foreign ministry summoned Iran's ambassador Friday after a high-level Iranian official implicated the state in the US drone attack that killed top general Qasem Soleimani, official news agency KUNA reported. Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah expressed Kuwait's "amazement"

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammed Irani on Friday. — KUNA

## Rescuers scramble to find survivors after Turkey quake kills 22

ELAZIG, Turkey: Rescue workers raced against time yesterday to find survivors under the rubble after a powerful earthquake claimed 22 lives and left more than 1,200 injured in eastern Turkey. The magnitude 6.8

quake struck on Friday evening, with its epicenter in the small lakeside town of Sivrice in Elazig province, and was felt across neighboring countries.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan cancelled a speech in Istanbul and headed to Elazig where he attended the funeral of a woman and her son, which he described as a "test" for Turkey. "We are doing everything we can as the state and nation, and we will continue to do so. Our efforts at all rescue sites will continue," he said at the funeral, adding state house developer TOKI would make sure no one was left "hungry or in the open".

Continued on Page 24



ELAZIG, Turkey: This handout aerial picture shows rescue workers searching for survivors in the rubble of a building after an earthquake yesterday. — AFP

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## Local

# First robotic radical nephrectomy conducted at Kuwait's Jaber Hospital

## Health minister forms panel on vaping

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital successfully conducted a radical nephrectomy using a robot; the first operation of its kind in Kuwait, the hospital announced yesterday. The da Vinci robotic surgery was done successfully with the participation of the urology surgery unit team at the hospital, said Dr Saad Al-Abdelhadi Al-Dousary, Senior Urologist and Head of Urology Surgery Department at Jaber Hospital. This is the seventh robotic surgery to be performed at Jaber Hospital, Dr Dousary said, adding that six other surgeries were previously performed to treat medical cases including obesity, urinary tracts diseases, colon, general surgery and others under the supervision of the head of surgery department Dr Salman Al-Sabah. Among robotic surgeries that can be done "with high precision" are radical prostatectomy, radical nephrectomy, cystectomy, transforming urinary tract pathways, and excision of the adrenal gland tumor, Dr Dousary said.

Meanwhile, Urologist Dr Mohammad Abdelmohsen Al-Ghanem said the robotic surgery allows patients to leave hospital within 48 hours and resume regular activity. "The robot technology allows doctors to have more control because they can reach areas where

doctors find difficulties reaching normally," he said, pointing out that the robot itself is controlled by the surgeon. "They do not operate on their own, but rather provide more accuracy," he said, adding that they only create a less than 1 cm opening in patients for the operation.

Separately, Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah has ordered the formation of a panel to examine reports issued by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on illnesses and deaths resulting from vaping. The Ministry of Health said in a statement yesterday that the committee, headed by the assistant undersecretary for public health Dr Buthaina Al-Mudhaf, will look into these reports, patients' cases and prospected upgrade of diagnosis and treatment policies and protocols at the national level. It indicated that the commission would also consider placing regulations on marketing and transactions. Moreover, its jurisdictions cover regular examination of technical reports, documents and recommendations, issued from meetings of signatory States of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, international agencies and centers specialized in regulating e-smoking. It will also seek to upgrade national policies on tobacco, in line with Kuwait's adherence to the WHO convention.



Dr Saad Al-Dousary, Abdelmohsen Al-Ghanem, Shadi Salem, Mohammad Al-Rowaished, Dr Mahmoud Mitwally and head Nurse Shareef Ali.

## Kuwaiti mountaineer climbs world's highest volcanic summit

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti mountaineer Yousef Al-Rifai recorded a new achievement for Kuwait by reaching the highest volcanic summit in the world in Chile, which is 6,893 meters above sea level. In a statement to the press yesterday, Rifai said the summit of the volcano of Ojos Del Salado in Chile is the highest volcanic summit in the world, noting that he is the first Kuwaiti to climb the sixth summit of the seven volcanic peaks in the world. The trip started from the Chilean capital Santiago to take a flight that took an hour and a half to reach the city of Copiapo, north of Chile, which is famous for gold and iron mines, starting point for the world's driest Atacama Desert, where this volcano is located, he added. He pointed out that after arriving in Copiapo; he drove to reach the heart of the desert to adapt to the harsh heights before the actual climbing of the volcano, noting that he climbed other peaks lower than this volcano as a kind of training. Rifai stated that he felt proud after raising the Flag of Kuwait at the highest volcanic summit in the world, expressing his thanks and appreciation to the sponsors of this trip, Kuwait Finance House, Ooredoo and Spark Sports Club. —KUNA



Mountaineer Yousef Al-Rifai raises Kuwait's flag after reaching the summit of the volcano of Ojos Del Salado in Chile.

## Brown Shrike raises recorded birds in Kuwait to 414

**KUWAIT:** The Head of the Kuwait Environmental Lens' team Rashed Al-Haji said Friday that the Brown Shrike bird was monitored at the Jahra Nature Reserve, bringing the amount of bird species logged in Kuwait to 414. Haji added that at the start of 2020, the Brown Shrike, one of the small birds from the reserve, was spotted since the last recorded bird detected in Kuwait was in 2019. The Brown Shrike was distinguished by its colors and relatively long tail, which has two feathers on the outskirts, while the male and female are similar in color, he mentioned. He showed that after hunting its prey, it

tortured and skinned it, often leaving its prey hanging while writhing in pain and flying far away, then later pouncing on it to devour it. This bird prefers prominent and high places of tree branches, usually flying down it at a height less than a meter from the earth's surface and when it approached the intended place it rose to it gradually, he pointed out. The Brown Shrike was not present in Arab countries but in East Asia, especially during the summer, migrating in the winter to the south, since going to the Arabian Peninsula at this time was very unnatural and rare, therefore bird enthusiasts are eager to photograph this event, Haji said. They are able to migrate and move over very long distances, about 20,000 kilometers, Haji noted. Environment Public Authority (EPA) was keen to protect creatures of all kinds until the reserves become a safe place to embrace birds, especially with the law prohibiting hunting and setting new laws that deter people from fooling around in the wildlife, he underlined. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The Brown Shrike bird pictured at the Jahra Nature Reserve. —KUNA

## New northern road project 94% complete

By Abdullatif Al-Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** A project to build a new road connecting the Saad Al-Abdullah road with the Bihaiith gate is 94 percent complete, the project's engineer Jaber Al-Qallaf said, adding that it is being completed by the Public Authority for Roads and Transport (PART) as part of

efforts to develop the country's road network to support Kuwait's development plans.

"This is considered one of the most important projects PART is currently carrying out," Qallaf said, adding that it falls under the main plans of developing the infrastructure in northern Kuwait area, and according to the structural plan to serve the planned housing cities of Sabriya, north Subbiya, and Silk City.

The 27.5 kilometers long road is the first stage of the regional road that extends all the way to Abdaly border outlet, he said, adding that it was designed with a high service level to meet future needs of the area and provide high safety measures, while increasing the logistic capacity to serve transport of goods and passengers smoothly from Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port to other roads.



## Kuwait Airways receives A320

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Airways has taken delivery of the third plane (A320) after being flown from the Airbus plant in the German city of Hamburg. The KAC Chief Executive Officer, Kamel Al-Awadhi, said in a press release yesterday that the plane, named Wara, was delivered as part of a contract to provide the KAC with up to 15 aircraft of this type. The other planes will be delivered in phases, as part of the Kuwaiti airlines' approach to upgrade the fleet and passengers' services. Awadhi explained that the KAC would be received in addition to the one that has already arrived five other aircraft, including three of the model A-320-New, two A-800-330. All planes that should be provided according to the contract will be in Kuwait by 2026. —KUNA



## Shame on women's rights

local spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net



I have become convinced that we in Kuwait are witnessing a sharp decline in the rights of women. Unfortunately, as the world moves forward, we are regrettably and shamefully moving backwards.

The health guardianship of minor or incompetent patients has caused social and human problems, as questions arise in light of preventing the mother from signing consent forms to approve surgical intervention for her children. This right is limited exclusively to the father, then the grandfather, sons and brothers.

As a citizen, wife, and mother, I raise a warning flag about the danger of continuing this situation that may threaten the lives of young children and cause great suffering to the mother, who finds herself unable to do anything when her children need even the most basic surgical procedures. We are in 2020, people, and this issue is serious as any of us can fall victim to such a situation.

While most opinions concur on the importance of "informed consent" for surgical intervention or any medical procedure that is required, however no country prevents the mother from signing the form, as is the case in Kuwait, which makes it practical to give permission to the doctor for any necessary surgical intervention for her children, in the event of her husband's absence for any reason. However, the problem is more complicated in the case of a foster mother or divorcee who could be at odds with her ex-husband. The right to custody also does not entitle her to sign a consent form to agree to the surgical operation on her child - rather, she must obtain the consent of the guardian or a court ruling, and here the question arises:

Can the child be able to endure extreme pain, for example, until the mother goes to the department of legal affairs and investigations at the ministry of health and brings proof that the father is not present (death certificate, health custody, letter from the prison or authorization if the father is outside the country) to get a "no objection" for surgical intervention?! How much time would this take? Days or more in case of public holidays, and these are not few here.

Ultimately, the crisis is not limited to the mother and children, but extends also to the medical staff that want to legally protect themselves, and thus turns into a legal problem. I believe that this issue requires all concerned parties to sit together to put in place a comprehensive framework that is free of gaps.

Recently, I read an article by a woman about her friend's husband. She said she saw her friend crying one day after she rushed her ill husband to the hospital. He was in urgent need for an operation, but it was not possible for her to sign his papers, because at that time her son and uncles were outside the country. She wondered who was behind this unjust decision to prevent her or other women to sign such papers for their beloved ones.

Therefore, others and I were happy that MP Youssef Al-Fadalah presented a proposal to grant women this mandate in order to eliminate discrimination in such humanitarian situations. But our joy was short-lived, as the health committee rejected the proposal on the justification that it has no basis in law or humanity. Sadly, unjust decisions against women here are usually covered with religion or legal and procedural excuses to create fear and hesitation against the rights of women.

With this article, I hope National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem - who is known for being supportive of women - stands by his Kuwaiti sisters on this humanitarian issue. I also wish the women ministers and the female deputy in the National Assembly have a clear and speedy stance on this issue. I also hope that women will not elect those who stand against their rights, so that people realize the impact of women and their strength in defending their rights.

Local

# Efforts to make nursing job more attractive to Kuwaiti staff

## Panel meets minister to discuss health services in southern areas

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Ministry of Health's (MoH) nursing services manager Sana Taqaddom said the new nursing staff cadre will be soon approved thanks to efforts exerted by Health Minister Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah and his keenness on taking care of and encouraging Kuwaiti nurses, adding that future plans have been set to make nursing more attractive to national staff through increments, training courses and scholarships.

Taqaddom said that a two-day conference on 'Innovation and Development in Nursing' will be held under the auspices of Sheikh Bassel on Wednesday, Jan 29 at Jumeirah Hotel. Taqaddom added that a new headquarters for the department will be soon completed, including lecture, seminar and workshop auditoriums for larger numbers of nurses. In another health issue, MoH recently received auditing bodies' approval to import osteoporosis and platelet deficiency

drugs at a total cost of KD 1.6 million to supply hospitals and polyclinics soon.

### Southern areas

Member of the parliamentary health affairs committee MP Dr Mohammed Al-Huwailah said he had recently met Health Minister Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah to discuss healthcare services in southern areas and accelerating the execution of Sabah Al-Ahmad City Hospital. Huwailah said the minister said the Sabah Al-Ahmad Hospital project is still being reviewed by the Central Tenders Committee (CTC), adding that the hospital's total services coverage area will be increased from 80,000 sq m to 300,000 sq m due to urban expansion in southern areas, which are currently served by only Adan Hospital.

Huwailah also demanded completing construction at Funaites polyclinic and providing it with necessary staff and equipment, opening Fintas polyclinic and opening a polyclinic in sector D in Sabah Al-Ahmad

City. Huwailah also demanded increasing Jaber Hospital to full capacity as it is currently working at only 25 percent of its total capacity in order to relieve other overcrowded hospitals, namely Adan.

### Health insurance

Official sources at the ministry of social affairs said in a bid to activate the ministry's social responsibility and provide healthcare and welfare, a study is being considered to grant senior citizens and those with special needs the privilege of health insurance. The sources added Minister Ghadeer Aseeri is currently studying giving more privileges to these categories including health insurance, similar to that given to retirees.

### MPW budget

The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) recently urged the finance ministry to allocate a budget of KD 600 million for its projects in the budget of the new

fiscal year due to commence in April, said informed sources, adding that the finance ministry will only approve KD 450 million. The sources said MPW had sent a long list of the projects to be executed in 2020-2021 and the cost of each project, but it seems that the finance ministry will implement strict austerity measures due to the KD 9 billion deficit declared by Finance Minister Mariam Al-Aqeel, who had urged various ministries to cut expenses on conferences, overseas assignments, training and excellent performance bonuses, which will be limited to less than 20 percent of employees through applying strict conditions.

### Fake cops caught

Two Egyptians were arrested for impersonating as police detectives by using police flashers and stopping a citizen to check his ID, said security sources, noting that the two fake police detectives had an argument with the citizen, which blew their cover. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

## Jleeb violations combat team resumes raids

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The joint ministerial committee formed to follow up the situations in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh yesterday toured the area where they raided unlicensed makeshift markets, arrested peddlers and tracked down violators. In this regard,

Farwaniya municipality manager Mohammad Sarkhouh said that a plan had been set to launch sudden inspection campaigns, adding that the most recent one resulted in confiscating eight truckloads of used clothes, six truckloads of scrap, used furniture and electric devices, and seven truckloads of fruits and vegetables, in addition to filing 38 peddler citations. Meanwhile, Sarkhouh added that power supply was disconnected in 70 violating properties, and promised that more striking campaigns would be launched within the coming few days to put an end to violating stores in the area.

## Kuwaiti-Ethiopian MoU on domestic workers almost done

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti-Ethiopian working team tasked with negotiations regarding a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on domestic workers has fulfilled 90 percent of the memo, Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs Ambassador Sami Al-Hamad said. Hamad added that the two sides signed the minutes of the meeting, which completed 90 percent of the memo's provisions. There was consensus between the two sides who conducted the negotiations smoothly and were



kept on maintaining the rights and duties of the concerned parties to the MoU, he noted. They will hold soon another round of negoti-

ations before the MoU is referred to the concerned ministers of the two countries for the final approval, he pointed out. —KUNA

## Kuwait's non-oil exports up 9.2 percent in 2019

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry said yesterday that the value of certificates of origin for Kuwaiti non-oil exports rose by 9.2 percent over the past year compared to 2018. The Ministry indicated in a statement that the number of certificates of origin for exports to Arab and foreign countries reached 14,830 at a value of KD 169.6 million (\$558 million) in 2019, compared to 8,270 with a value of KD 155.3 million (\$511 million) in 2018. The

number of certificates for Kuwaiti exports to Arab countries with the exception of the GCC countries reached 3,802, valued at KD 57.1 million (\$187.8) compared to 1,066 at value of KD 47.3 million (\$155.6 million) to foreign countries, the statement said. Those to GCC countries stood at 9,962, at a value of KD 65.1 million (\$214.2 million) last year. Iraq topped the list of Arab countries that are the most importers of Kuwaiti exports, followed by Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Algeria, Yemen, then Tunisia, while Qatar ranked first in the Gulf, followed by the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and then Bahrain. On Kuwaiti exports to other countries of the world, the statement said, Italy came first, then Belgium, followed by Turkey, France, Spain and Portugal. —KUNA

## Kuwait authority for disabled declares new plan

KUWAIT: Kuwait Authority of the Disabled announced yesterday it was working out the national scheme for the handicapped for the current year, in concurrence with the International Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disability. The authority's Director General Dr Shafiq Al-Awadhi said that the national strategy is in harmony with the international treaty, namely with respect of integration in sectors of education, labor, health care, entertainment and social participation. The authority aims, she said hinting at some aspects of the new plan, at improving quality of education, integrating persons of special needs into the society and providing education in the public teaching sector. It also seek to enhance this segment's skills and potentials and make them eligible for employment. —KUNA

## Kuwait extends aid to those in need

KUWAIT: Kuwait continued extending its humanitarian arm throughout the globe, helping those who are in dire need. Early last week, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) sent a plane carrying humanitarian aid, to Djibouti to help those affected by the rains and floods. KRCS Director of Disasters Management Department, Youssef Al-Maraj, said that the plane included tents, clothes, water pumps, blankets and first aid bags to help the friendly country to face the effects of the floods that swept the nation recently. The plane departed from Abdullah Al-Mubarak air base carrying 18 tons of humanitarian aid as well as several volunteers, he added. Maraj stressed the full cooperation with Kuwait's Embassy in Djibouti and the Red Crescent Society there in helping to deliver the aid to the affected people. He expressed thanks and gratitude to the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for helping in sending this plane, stressing KRCS keenness on participating in humanitarian projects.

KRCS sent another relief aid on Wednesday to Djibouti, in collaboration with the Djibouti Red Crescent Society. Maraj said the society's field

team distributed materials and clothes to a village inhabited by 400 families, located in the borders of Djibouti, Somalia and Ethiopia. Maraj explained that the deprived families were chosen based on a field survey conducted by Djibouti's Society, which supervised the distribution of humanitarian aid and reaching beneficiaries. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Djibouti Youssef Al-Qabandi, the embassy staff and numerous volunteers contributed to the distribution of aid to alleviate the suffering as a result of heavy rain and floods that caused damage to property and infrastructure, he mentioned.

The Kuwaiti Al-Najat Charitable Society distributed humanitarian aid to more than 10,000 Syrian refugees in the Turkish city of Sanliurfa. The society's women delegation head, Wadha Al-Blayes stated that their campaign included urgent food distribution for Syrian refugees and organizing a festival for 420 orphans in Turkey. Blayes stressed the society's keenness in organizing several entertaining activities, providing education and allocating awareness programs. In Iraq, Kuwait distributed 60 tons of foodstuffs to poor families in the city of Mosul, provided by the Islamic Charitable Organization. Director of the Barzani Charitable Foundation Mosul office, Razkar Obaid, said that 2,000 food baskets were distributed to the needy families in the city of Mosul. Kuwait also provided aid to a number of schools in order to continue the educational process, as fully-equipped five schools were opened, he added. —KUNA

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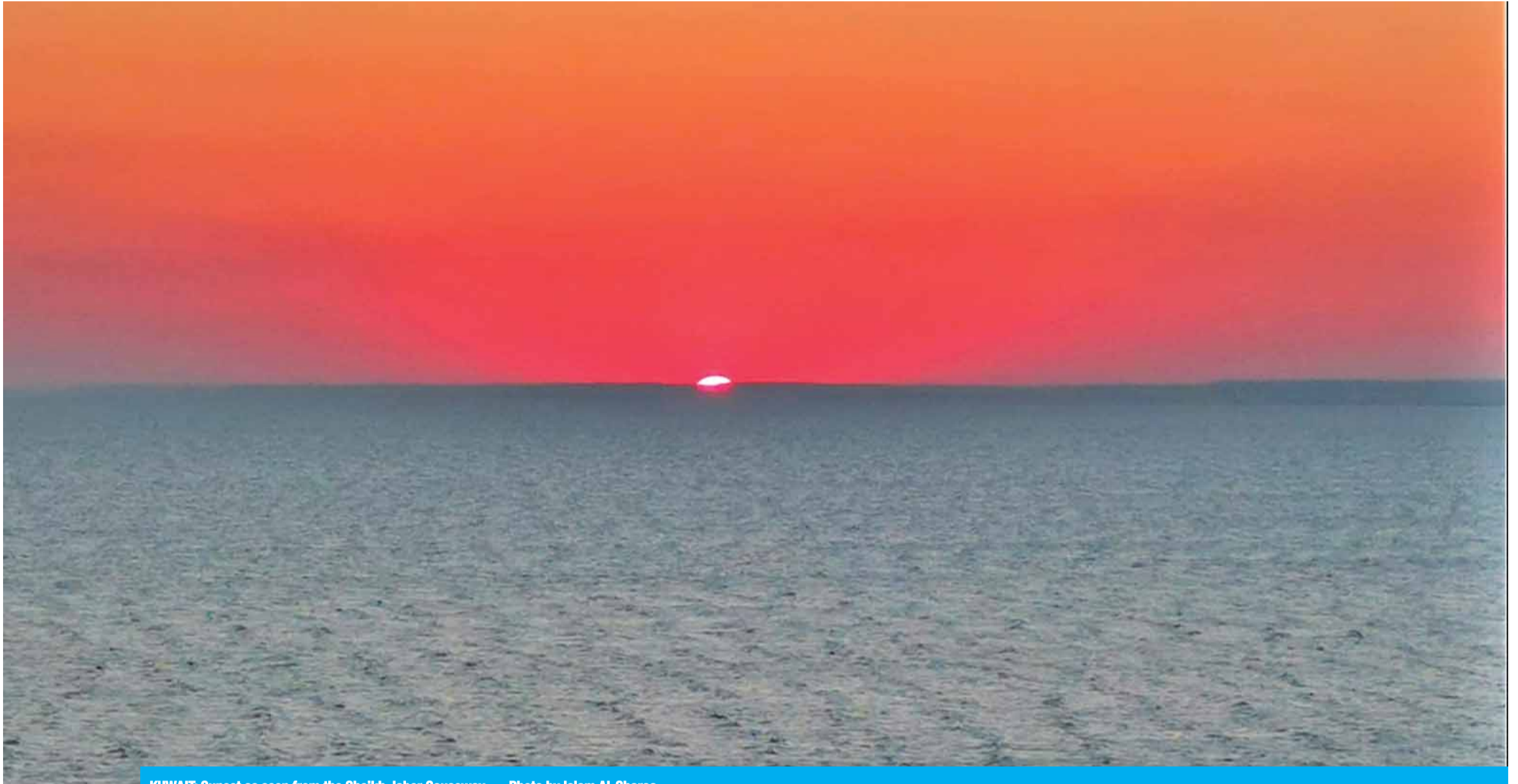
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## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sunset as seen from the Sheikh Jaber Causeway. — Photo by Islam Al-Sharaa

## Kuwaiti NGO participates in UN Day of Education

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**NEW YORK:** Head of Al-Nowair foundation Sheikh Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, said yesterday the Kuwaiti NGO was, for the first time ever, taking part in a high-level interactive dialogue marking UN Day of Education, highlighting Kuwait's Bareeq and Boomerang programs. "Bareeq is a valuable, educational and interactive educational program which is based on scientific research on psychology," Sheikh Intisar said. This program, she added, aimed at spreading positive thinking amongst high school students in Kuwait. Founded in 2017, Bareeq is involved with 47 government high schools and features around 500 teachers and over 11,600 students, she added.

The program, said Sheikh Intisar, contributed to improving behavior of students. Bareeq was included, in April 2018, in New Kuwait 2035 vision. She said schools' administrations reported improvement in behavior of students, including decline in violence and absence, contributing to success. Sheikh Intisar meanwhile said Boomerang aimed at addressing bullying at schools by spreading kindness and awareness with the aim of changing behavior of students. Application of Boomerang, she noted, resulted in a large quantity of students showing willingness to stop



NEW YORK: Sheikh Intisar Al-Sabah addresses the participants in the interactive dialogue. — KUNA

bullying and be more kind. Boomerang was applied on 15,100 students in 33 schools. Those students participated in 70 plays which offer solutions to bullying. Seventy-six teachers were trained to spread kindness in schools. Sheikh Intisar said her participation in the UN Interactive Dialogue was to highlight comprehensive educational policies alongside sustainable development goals (SDGs). She said many participants commended the Kuwaiti programs and how they contributed to changing behavior of students and

teachers alike. Her visit came after UN General Assembly President Tijjani Mohammad Bande's recent visit to Kuwait and seeing first-hand application of Bareeq and Boomerang. Sheikh Intisar said the UN was focusing on improving quality education, based on article 26 of the universal declaration of human rights which affirmed right in education for all. She said the UN Day of Education 2020 concentrated on importance of education as the largest source of humanity and ultimately SDGs. — KUNA

### NBK sponsors 'TAMAKAN' training program

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsors 'TAMAKAN' training program for fresh Kuwaiti graduates, as part of the strategic partnership with 'Creative Confidence'. The program is an innovative training experience especially tailored for fresh Kuwaiti university graduates. It aims to support young Kuwaiti graduates to develop their skills, expand their capabilities and grow their knowledge in a way that will make them compelling candidates for employment.

NBK will be hosting the program and providing a real business challenge that participants will work on into the final stages of the training sessions. The program will start on 10 February until 20 April, 2020. TAMAKAN is a full-time commitment for 10 weeks, 5 days a week, from 8:30am-3:30 pm.

NBK Public Relations and Communications Assistant General Manager, Manal Faisal Al-Mattar, said, "NBK's sponsorship and participation in the program comes as a part of its strategic partnership with Creative Confidence. NBK is dedicated towards supporting talented young graduates and empowering Kuwaitis."

"TAMAKAN is one of these initiatives that help invest and support young youths. NBK is looking forward to the outcome of the program and to seeing the participants moving into key leadership roles in their near future," she added. "NBK believes that investing in



Manal Al-Mattar

Sumayah Al-Jasem

human resources is investing in our future. TAMAKAN program goes along with NBK's initiatives to invest in Kuwaiti youth and support their aspirations," Mattar noted. Meanwhile, the Founder and Managing Director of Creative Confidence, Sumayah Mohamad Al-Jasem expressed her sincere thanks to NBK for sponsoring TAMAKAN. "We are proud of this strategic sponsorship that results in supporting and investing in the Kuwaiti youths," she said.

Jasem added that graduates will gain real, relevant experience and develop their skills without the commitment of a job. They will get exposed to the latest methods and tools that will help them in designing solutions and shaping ideas in any field.

TAMAKAN Program offers recent graduates a unique development opportunity before starting their first job. TAMAKAN is organized by Creative Confidence in collaboration with NBK. Creative Confidence is a Kuwaiti-based consulting and training company that specializes in creativity, innovation and collaboration training.

Local

# Gulf Bank's 2019 sustainability efforts progress in line with global efforts by the United Nations

## Promoting community, economic and environmental sustainability

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program and plays a vital role in contributing to the markets in which they operate in ways that extend well beyond finance. Throughout the years, Gulf Bank has been a leader in shedding light on major global challenges. By spearheading multiple corporate social responsibility initiatives, Gulf Bank has not only inspired local and regional enterprises, but is also leading by example on an international level with its unique approach to sustainability.



Lujain Al-Qenaei

'Reading Fun Day' for children to encourage reading and learning, in collaboration with That Al Salasil. Gulf Bank also held a 'Bring Your Kids To Work' for their employees and their children. Throughout the year, Gulf Bank also participated in and sponsored Qout Market.

As part of Gulf Bank's commitment to supporting and empowering Kuwaiti youth, Gulf Bank also sponsored the annual National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) Conference in the United States. During the summer, applications for Gulf Bank's summer internship program were also available to interested student applicants. Gulf Bank also organized a mobile

In 2019, Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility initiatives went hand in hand with international efforts, aligning with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Also known as the Global Goals, the SDGs were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

Gulf Bank proudly spearheaded a number of corporate social responsibility efforts in 2019, with an approach that consists of three pillars: community sustainability, economic sustainability, and environmental sustainability. Through a combination of efforts on all of these fronts, Gulf Bank proudly met a majority of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Commenting on Gulf Bank's ongoing commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility, Lujain Al-Qenaei, Assistant Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank, said: "Much like how the United Nations is shedding a spotlight on major global challenges, we recognize how important it is for larger enterprises to do their part on a local and national level. At Gulf Bank, we are not only aware of our role, but we are proud to take it on. We also believe that the UN's 17 SDGs are all interconnected, and that long-lasting development must strike a balance between community, economic and environmental sustainability. We are proud to see so many of our initiatives moving hand in hand with international efforts, and are looking forward to paving the way for even more initiatives to come in hopes for a more sustainable future for our beloved Kuwait."

### Community Sustainability

Throughout 2019, Gulf Bank's community sustainability efforts aligned with the following UN Sustainable Development Goals: 2) Zero Hunger, 3) Good Health and Wellbeing, 4) Quality Education, 5) Gender Equality, 8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, 9) Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, 11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, and 17) Partnerships for the Goals.

As one of the most important social sporting events in the country, the annual Gulf Bank 642 Marathon aims to raise the level of health awareness and encourage the local community to adopt a healthier lifestyle. By partnering with Kuwait Red Crescent Society this year, Gulf Bank was able to assist in bringing medical aid to those who are unable to afford medical treatment. This year's marathon attracted more than 9,300 participants representing over 100 nationalities from around the world, and more than 300 volunteers.

Gulf Bank is also keen on promoting a message of inclusion and diversity when it comes to hiring. Gulf Bank this year proudly employed 10 people with special needs among various branches, taking into account the unique needs of each individual. The Bank continues to strive to ensure to achieve gender equality and empowering women throughout the organization to deliver on the Bank's mandate. Currently there are 43 percent female staff in comparison to 57 percent male staff. The bank was one of the first Banks in Kuwait to become a signatory of the 'Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)' initiative by the United Nations to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

The Bank has a strong focus on developing Kuwaiti professionals. In terms of human capital initiatives, the Bank's graduate development program AJYAL is widely recognized for its intensive training to shape the future of banking in Kuwait. Accepting 21 applicants, AJYAL spans six months and aims to help candidates develop key banking skills, cultivating holistic bankers that have shown growth potential on both a personal and professional level. Since the program's inception in 2014, five generations have graduated with a total of 85 employees, to date.

Gulf Bank also demonstrated its commitment to preserving Kuwaiti heritage and traditions by sponsoring the production of 'Memoirs of a Sailor,' an epic musical comprised of poems from the Kuwaiti poet Mohammed Al-Fayez. The production took place during the second quarter of the year at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center.

During 2019, the bank also hosted a number of family fun activities, including a

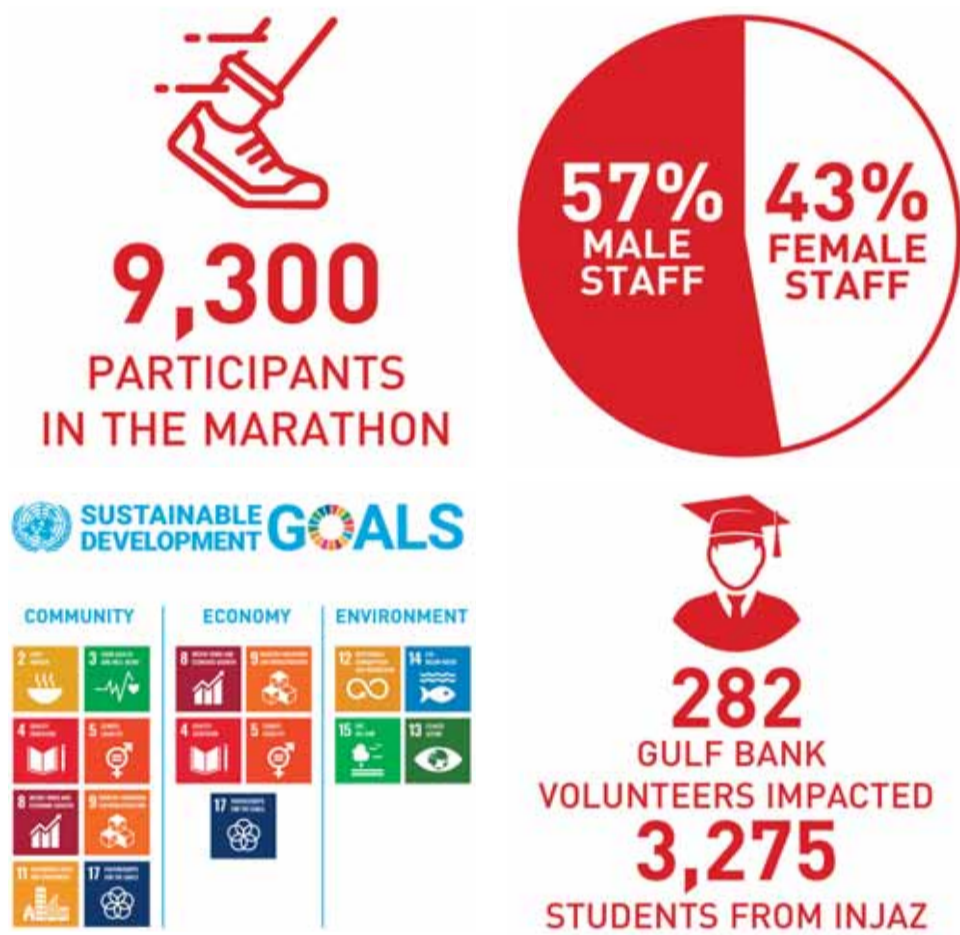
photography training workshop for aspiring photographers in collaboration with mobile accessories store, Cavaraty.

Gulf Bank also spearheaded other charitable activities during the holy month of Ramadan, including partnering with the Kuwait Food Bank and Savaco to distribute 'maachla' foodstuff boxes to local families in need. Gulf Bank also launched a social media activation in recognition of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle during the holy month. The community initiative, titled "Ten Minutes," consisted of a series of short social media episodes highlighting unique tips on how viewers can live a healthier lifestyle by enhancing their nutrition, mental health, fitness, and general well-being in only ten minutes.

In 2019, Gulf Bank also launched 'Al-Tijouri,' an entertaining escape room competition in which teams from all across the country joined together to solve puzzles and compete for cash prizes. The activation, which took place in Phase 3 of The Avenues over the course of three days, resulted in a



Fikra Program.



Injaz annual ceremony.



Beach cleanup.

total of three winning teams, each of whom took home a KD 300 cash prize for solving the escape room in the least amount of time.

For Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the bank launched a series of initiatives, including partnering with Mowasat Hospital and other local hospitals to provide special offers, exclusively for Gulf Bank clients, that aim to make the process of getting checked more convenient and more accessible. Throughout the month, the Bank also lit up its head office branch in Kuwait City in pink in an effort to encourage everyone to learn more about breast cancer.

### Economic Sustainability

In the past year, Gulf Bank's economic sustainability efforts also aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals of: 4) Quality Education, 5) Gender Equality, 8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, 9) Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, and 17) Partnerships for the Goals.

In keeping with annual tradition, Gulf Bank extended its support to INJAZ Kuwait,

a non-profit, non-governmental organization for education and training in workforce readiness, financial literacy and entrepreneurship. As part of our strategic partnership with INJAZ, Gulf Bank sponsored numerous educational and entrepreneurial courses for high school and college students across both the public and private sectors.

To date, Gulf Bank has participated in five INJAZ Al-Arab programs, two INJAZ Kuwait Job Shadow Days, seven INJAZ Kuwait Innovation Camps and four INJAZ Kuwait Entrepreneurship Master Class workshops. Additionally, 282 Gulf Bank staff members have volunteered their time and efforts at numerous schools and universities across Kuwait, inspiring over 3,275 students.

This year, Gulf Bank has also extended its economic sustainability role to social media. In an effort to promote financial literacy and create a culture of financial awareness, Gulf Bank's Economic Research Unit prepares weekly videos on topics including fintech, investment, saving, and general tidbits about the state of the economy. The one-minute tips are delivered by Tareq Al-Saleh, Deputy General Manager of the Economic Research Unit at Gulf Bank, and are aired across Gulf Bank's various social media channels.

Gulf Bank also participated in a number of other activities as part of its ongoing efforts to improve the local business environment. In October 2019, Gulf Bank hosted a real estate market focus group to discuss the current state of the real estate market and its latest developments. Gulf Bank also sponsored the Central Bank of Kuwait's annual International Banking Conference. In collaboration with the Manpower Restructuring Program, Gulf Bank also held the first-ever career fair for people with disabilities in Kuwait. In January 2019, Gulf Bank employees also participated in the Fikra Program, designed to equip Kuwaiti youth with the essential business skills and knowledge required to

transform their ideas into businesses.

### Environmental Sustainability

Gulf Bank is committed to environmental conservation and sustainability with its community sustainability efforts in 2019 going hand in hand with the following UN Sustainable Development Goals: 12) Responsible Consumption and Production, 14) Life Below Water, 15) Life On Land, and 13) Climate Action.

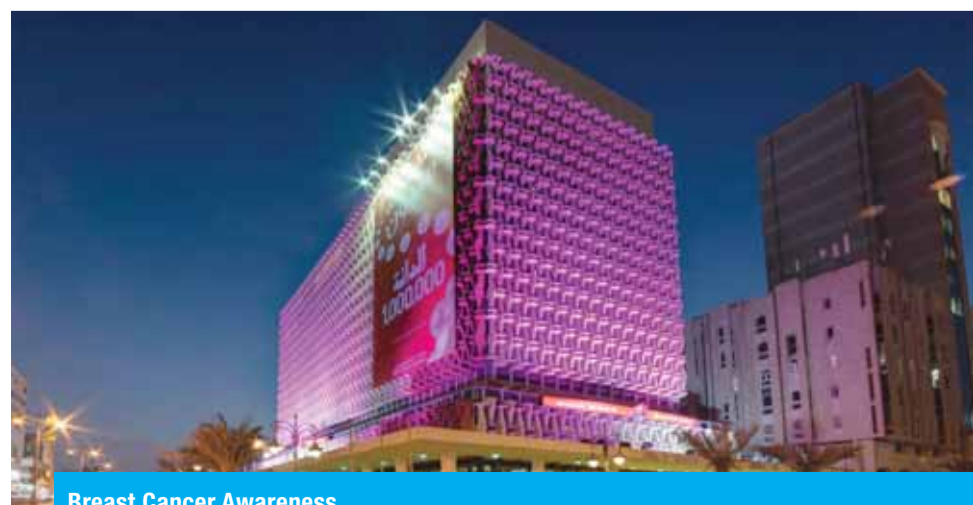
In 2019, the bank partnered with Omniya, a nationwide recycling initiative founded in 2015 by young Kuwaitis aiming to raise awareness for waste recycling. Through this partnership, the Bank committed to recycling paper and plastic waste, and strategically distributed recycling receptacles in front of Gulf Bank's Head Office. By placing the recycling receptacles in one of the most visible locations in the heart of Kuwait City, Gulf Bank is raising awareness for recycling not only with its employees, but also with members of the local community.

The bank also held a beach cleanup at the Kuwait Towers as part of its commitment to Earth Day. A non-profit NGO provided an awareness session on the hazardous effects pollutants have on our environment and assisted Gulf Bank employees in cleaning the beach. The bank also joins global community efforts in reducing power consumption during 'Earth Hour,' a worldwide initiative that encourages individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off non-essential electric lights.

With multiple CSR initiatives throughout the year, Gulf Bank is setting an example for local and regional players to make even more progress in line with international efforts by the United Nations. Through a combination of efforts promoting community, economic and environmental sustainability, Gulf Bank is proud to wrap up 2019 with an impressive round-up of CSR initiatives and activities, with even more initiatives to come in 2020.



Helping families in need during Ramadan.



Breast Cancer Awareness.



Gulf Bank 642 Marathon.

# International

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2020



More evictions feared in India as citizenship law is enforced

## Dems wrap up case against Trump in impeachment trial

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WUHAN: People wearing facemasks to help stop the spread of a deadly virus which began in the city, wait for medical attention at Wuhan Red Cross Hospital in Wuhan yesterday. The Chinese army deployed medical specialists yesterday to the epicenter of a spiraling viral outbreak that has killed 41 people and spread around the world, as millions spent their normally festive Lunar New Year holiday under lockdown. — AFP

## Virus stills Lunar New Year celebrations

### Fears over a deadly new virus mount in China

BEIJING: A woman praying alone in front of shut temple gates was one of the only signs of Lunar New Year observances at Beijing's Lama Temple yesterday, as fears over a deadly new virus mount in China.

The popular Tibetan Buddhist temple, which had more than 80,000 visitors during the holiday last year, is usually packed with crowds queuing to burn incense for good luck. The epicentre of the SARS-like virus is in central China, but it has spread to other regions, prompting authorities as far as the nation's northern capital to close tourist attractions and cancel public events to prevent further contagion from a disease that has killed dozens and infected more than 1,000. Authorities even decided to stop long-distance bus services to and from the capital of 20 million from today as part of efforts to control the spread of the virus, state media reported.

Security guards loitered in front of Beijing's Lama Temple on Lunar New Year, shooing away anyone who lingered for too long. A red sign on the closed front gate said the temple was closed until further notice "in order to

guarantee the physical health of the religious masses and the Buddhist monks."

"It doesn't feel like the New Year," said a 21-year-old woman in a long beige jacket, who only gave her surname Li. Wearing a white surgical mask, Li told AFP she had planned to burn incense at Lama Temple, before realizing it was closed.

In the capital of 20 million, where health authorities have reported at least 39 infected patients, famous landmarks were closed to prevent the virus from spreading, including the historic Forbidden City and a section of the Great Wall.

The Ming Tombs and Yinshan Pagoda are also not open to visitors. Beijing Ditan and Longtan Temple Fairs—held for roughly three decades according to state media—were also cancelled.

In central Hubei province, where the majority of cases have emerged, more drastic measures were taken: travel restrictions have been imposed in cities housing 56 million people. "When we left home, it (the virus) wasn't that seri-

ous yet," said a 40-year-old woman, who arrived in Beijing from southern Guangdong province before the closures began. "I am worried, but I also feel like worrying too much is useless," she added. "It's better to face it head-on."

#### 'No point in worrying'

At a shopping district near Beijing's Houhai lake, where tourists buy street food and souvenirs, many restaurants were open on the first day of Spring Festival. The narrow streets were festooned with red lanterns and Chinese flags, while food stalls sold snacks like stinky tofu and sugar-coated fruit.

But there were fewer people than normal, pointed out Huo, a 63-year-old Beijing native who only offered his surname. "There's definitely an impact (from the virus)," he said. "Look at how few people there are."

But when asked whether he was worried about the virus, Huo remained nonchalant.

"In 2003, SARS was much worse," he told AFP, referring to an outbreak that killed nearly 650 people across

mainland China and Hong Kong. "I don't have to wear a mask because everyone else is," joked another man, who had travelled from eastern Shandong province.

"There's no point in worrying," he added. Some tourists also felt they had no choice but to go through with travel plans to Beijing despite the closures and risk of infection.

At the upscale Taikoo Li shopping district, a 26-year-old woman said her hotel refused to refund her booking. "Some people are over-panicking," she told AFP, explaining that some friends were worried about getting infected, even while staying at home.

"The atmosphere is a bit tense this year," agreed another woman, a 47-year-old who gave her surname as Zhang. The situation in Beijing is not as serious as Wuhan, the epicentre of the epidemic, she said, which was put under effective quarantine on Thursday.

Still, "people aren't really going out for gatherings or socializing—a lot has been cancelled," she told AFP, her voice muffled through a blue surgical mask. — AFP

### 'See the doctor': Fever-hit patients fret in China outbreak city

WUHAN: Trapped in a Chinese city at the center of a deadly viral outbreak, residents who should have been celebrating Lunar New Year lined up to have their temperatures taken by medical staff wearing full-body protective suits. At hospitals across Wuhan in central Hubei province, tense patients with high temperatures turned out in large numbers to get checked as the death toll rose to 26 and the number of cases topped 800, most of them in the city.

The streets were otherwise empty and quiet on Friday, with people ordered not to leave the city and public events cancelled. "I have a fever and cough, so I'm worried that I'm infected," a 35-year-old man surnamed Li said at the Wuhan Fifth Hospital.

"I don't know the results (of tests) yet. I'm a bit worried." Most of the people at the hospital were middle-aged or older, and were being given mercury thermometers on arrival. After taking their temperatures themselves from their mouth or armpit, jittery patients handed the instruments back to medical staff decked in full white protective suits with a hood, gloves, face mask and goggles. The thermometers were briefly checked, then dropped in a large metal box.

One nurse took a thermometer from a middle-aged woman, pausing to examine the reading, before quickly turning back to the patient and instructing her to "go and see the doctor".

#### Contagion fears

At another hospital, 42-year-old Huang Wei said he was worried the situation would worsen if sick people stood next to each other, and that the city of 11 million people would not have the medical capacity to cope with a bigger outbreak. "The medical treatment is not sufficient, the time is too long, and cross-infection may be caused by queuing in the hospital," he said. "This is what we are worried about." Patients waited for several hours for temperature checks at the Red Cross hospital, with many sitting on stools because the queue was so long.

Hubei governor Jiang Chaoliang said in a meeting Friday that hospitals must make sure patients are "admitted in time," according to a statement on the government's website. Wuhan must also "make every effort" to increase isolation places and beds, Jiang said. All staff at both hospitals were in full-body protection, but some of the patients waiting to be checked were not even wearing masks—in defiance of an order by city authorities. At a nearby pharmacy, nervous staff wouldn't allow people inside. Instead, they half-opened the door and passed out what customers were ordering—mostly face masks.

But not all their customers were as cautious. One older lady told AFP she had bought a mask, but didn't wear it because she only shopped at the local market and didn't believe there was a threat there.



WUHAN, China: Medical staff members wearing protective clothing to help stop the spread of a deadly virus which began in the city, arrive with a patient at the Wuhan Red Cross Hospital in Wuhan yesterday. — AFP

#### 'Get out'

A notice outside the Wuhan Fifth Hospital said the facility was to be "entirely used for handling fever patients". "Our hospital will no longer take in patients with other diseases," it read. But despite the high number of infected people, security was low and the hospital was disorderly. A nurse at a temperature station was the only member of staff at the entrance, meaning people could enter and leave from the street freely. The police were noticeably absent across the city, though a few well-covered officers waited in a van near the hospital, wearing plastic suits and face masks.

The Wuhan Health Commission told the

People's Daily that the city was seeing long queues at fever treatment centers, with seven hospitals "fully utilized".

The city is also building a new hospital within a staggering 10 days to deal with the outbreak. Dozens of excavators and trucks were working on the site of the future hospital. The facility will have a capacity of 1,000 beds, and the construction area is 25,000 square meters (270,000 square feet), state media said. For now, the doctors and staff at the Fifth Hospital know their priorities. "Those who are not ill, get out!" a guard called at the entrance to its outpatient department. — AFP

### India says nurse in Saudi not infected with China virus

NEW DELHI: An Indian nurse working in Saudi Arabia has tested positive for coronavirus, but with a different strain from the one wreaking havoc in China, Delhi's consulate in Jeddah said Thursday. Quoting Tarik Al-Azraqi, chairman of the Scientific Regional Infection Control Committee in Aseer Region, the consulate tweeted that the woman "is suffering from MERS-CoV & not 2019-nCoV (Wuhan)".

Earlier, India's minister of state for foreign affairs V Muraleedharan had said that the woman had tested positive for the same respiratory virus that has killed 18 people in China.

The woman was one of 100 Indian nurses working in Saudi Arabia who were tested. Media reports said she may have contracted the virus from a colleague from the Philippines. The SARS-like virus that emerged in Wuhan has infected more than 570 people and has been detected in Japan, Hong Kong, Macau, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and the United States, but not in India or Saudi Arabia. — AFP

## International

# 3 Iraq protesters killed in clashes as security forces clear streets

## Sadr supporters pull out amid crackdown

**BAGHDAD:** Three protesters were shot dead in Iraq yesterday in clashes with security forces clearing out streets and squares occupied for months by anti-government demonstrators, stoking fears of a wider crackdown. The fresh violence came a day after populist cleric Moqtada Sadr announced he would no longer back the youth-dominated movement, instead holding his own rally in Baghdad to demand US troops leave Iraq.

Protesters feared the withdrawal of his support could pave the way for authorities to suppress their movement and by yesterday evening, clashes had broken out between riot police and demonstrators across Iraq. In the southern flashpoint of Nasiriyah, two protesters were shot dead and some 20 wounded.

Another demonstrator was shot dead and more than 40 were wounded in skirmishes in Baghdad, a medical source said. Since early yesterday morning, security forces had been using tear gas and live rounds to clear protest camps in the capital, with an AFP reporter seeing some wielding batons chase a group of young protesters.

A medic told AFP she saw riot police set fire to large tents used as field clinics to treat wounded demonstrators. The city's military command announced it had retaken control of Baghdad's Ahrar Bridge, a flashpoint for clashes between security forces and demonstrators for months.

It also pushed protesters out of Tayaran Square and Mohammad Qasim highway, where new sit-ins this week were intended to pressure authorities into enacting long-awaited reforms. Security forces had not yet entered the main protests camp in Tahrir Square, where young men had deployed carrying black shields made out of metal drums, on which they had painted the words "Tahrir Shield Squad".

### Sadr supporters pull out

Sadr, a militiaman-turned-politician, is notorious for switching political positions with dizzying speed. He backed the protests when they erupted in October and called on the government to resign—even though he controls parliament's largest bloc and other top posts. But last week, he called for a separate rally to demand 5,200 US troops leave Iraq, after a US strike on Baghdad killed top Iraqi and Iranian commanders earlier this month.

Thousands streamed into Baghdad for Friday's rally and while Sadr did not attend, he hailed the turnout and said he would no longer be involved in the anti-government campaign. The about-face prompted Sadr supporters, who had earned the reputation as the most well-organized demonstrators, to dismantle their camps across the country.

In Hilla, Diwaniyah, Kut, Amarah and the Shiite shrine city of Najaf, tents were stripped down to their metal frames yesterday. In the southern port city of Basra, security forces stormed a protest camp and forcibly dispersed activists overnight, an AFP correspondent reported.

The tents were burned down and municipal staff were seen clearing the charred remains on Saturday to reopen the square. But a crowd of protesters returned in the afternoon to try to resume their rally, clashing with security forces. One young activist in Baghdad accused Sadr of greenlighting a wider crackdown by pulling political cover.

"When your people started leaving, the riot police came at 3:00 am and took the whole (Ahrar) Bridge. Why?" he asked angrily.

### US reveals wounded troops

The protesters have been calling for snap polls

country's only Muslim-majority region—of its partial autonomy. India also imposed a curfew, sent in tens of thousands of extra troops and detained dozens of Kashmiri political leaders and others, many of whom remain in detention, drawing criticism abroad.

Internet access will be restored later Saturday but only to 301 government-approved websites that include international news publications and platforms such as Netflix and Amazon.

"Access shall be limited only to the whitelisted sites and not to any social media applications," the Jammu and Kashmir home department said in a notification. Mobile phone data access will also be restored, but limited to slower second-generation (2G) connections, the department added.

India is the world leader in cutting internet services, activists say, and access was also temporarily suspended in other parts of the country during recent protests against a new citizenship law.



under a new electoral law, an independent prime minister and accountability for corrupt officials and for those who ordered violence against demonstrators. More than 470 people have been killed in protest-related violence since October, according to an AFP tally. The protest movement took a serious hit in recent weeks as US-Iran tensions skyrocketed, threatening to overwhelm Iraq and eclipse the campaign for sweeping reform.

A US strike outside the Baghdad airport on January 3 killed Iranian general Qasem Soleimani and a top Iraqi commander, infuriating Iraqi officials. Parliament denounced the strike as a viola-

tion of Iraqi sovereignty and passed a non-binding resolution demanding that all foreign forces, including 5,200 US troops helping fight the Islamic State group, should leave. Iran retaliated by launching a wave of missiles at US troops stationed in Iraq. No Iraqi or US forces were killed but on Friday, the Pentagon revealed 34 American soldiers had suffered traumatic head injuries or concussion.

It was an unprecedented attack on US troops in Iraq, who had faced a wave of smaller, proxy assaults in recent months that killed one US contractor and one Iraqi soldier. —AFP

## Indian govt to end five-month internet blackout in Kashmir

**SRINAGAR:** Internet services will be partly restored in Indian Kashmir from yesterday, ending a five-and-a-half-month government-imposed blackout in the troubled region, but social media will stay offline, local authorities said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government imposed a communications blackout in early August when it stripped the portion of Kashmir it controls—the

ment earlier this month for the move, calling it an "arbitrary exercise of power". The court also stated that having access to the internet "is integral to an individual's right to freedom of speech and expression".

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since independence in 1947, and has been the spark of two wars and numerous flare-ups between the two nuclear-armed foes.

A bloody insurgency against Indian rule that has raged in the scenic Himalayan region for decades has left tens of thousands dead, mostly civilians. —AFP

Since August freedom of movement in heavily-militarized Kashmir has been gradually restored as has cellphone coverage, but apart from a handful of locations there has been no regular internet access.

This made life even harder for the region's seven million inhabitants and hit the local economy hard. Modi's government said that the blackout was for security reasons, aimed at restricting the ability of armed militants—who it says are backed by arch-rival Pakistan—to communicate.

The Supreme Court however criticized the govern-

## 34 US troops hurt in recent Iranian strike: Pentagon

**WASHINGTON:** Nearly three dozen US troops suffered traumatic brain injuries or concussion in this month's Iranian air strike on a military base in Iraq, the Pentagon said on Friday. "Thirty-four total members have been diagnosed with concussions and TBI (traumatic brain injury)," Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman told reporters.

President Donald Trump had initially said that no Americans were injured in the strike on the Ain al-Asad base in western Iraq on the night of January 7-8 although authorities later reported that 11 troops were injured. Hoffman said that 17 of the victims had been initially transferred to Germany to receive treatment, eight of whom arrived back in the US on Friday.

"They will continue to receive treatment in the United States, either at Walter Reed (military hospital near Washington) or at their home bases," he told a press conference at the Pentagon.

The nine other victims who were flown to Germany "are still undergoing evaluation and treatment there," he added. Seventeen other



troops who were treated in the region have returned to duty in Iraq. The airbase—one of the largest in Iraq, with 1,500 US troops making up the bulk of a coalition presence directly adjacent to thousands of Iraqi forces—was targeted in retaliation for the US killing of top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in a January 3 drone strike in Baghdad. Democratic lawmakers seized on the announcement to accuse Trump of lying about the strike.

"Though he downplays these injuries as 'headaches,' roughly half of all TBIs require surgery and can lead to lifelong disabilities," said

congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida.

Rhode Island Senator Jack Reed, the Ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee, called TBI "a serious matter." "It is not a 'headache,' and it's plain wrong for President Trump to diminish their wounds. ... He owes them an apology," Reed said.

At a rally in New Hampshire, Joe Biden, a frontrunner to challenge Trump in this year's election, said the president "brushed off" the troops' injuries. "I find it, quite frankly, disgusting," Biden, a former vice president, said. —AFP

to seize Tripoli from the UN-recognized Government of National Accord, which is supported by Turkey. "I hope the Haftar side will take positive steps," Merkel said.

World powers have stepped up efforts in recent weeks to find a political solution, but rocket attacks on Tripoli's airport this week threatened resumed fighting.

Erdogan accused Haftar of showing "no intention for reconciliation" and criticised his failure to sign the ceasefire document during an international conference in Berlin on Sunday.

"Haftar has not signed it but only verbally accepted it," said Erdogan. "We do not see this as full acceptance." Erdogan and Merkel also inaugurated a new campus for the Turkish-German University in Istanbul, which opens at a time of warming relations between the two countries.

Merkel described it as "an extraordinary example of cooperation between Turkey and Germany". —AFP

## Germany, Turkey call for lasting Libya ceasefire

**ISTANBUL:** Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called Friday for the fragile truce in Libya to be turned into a lasting ceasefire, during a visit by the German leader to Istanbul. Erdogan warned the conflict in Libya risked "chaos (that) will affect all the Mediterranean basin".

"Efforts need to be made to turn the fragile truce into a solid and permanent ceasefire," Merkel said at a joint press conference. Eastern Libyan forces under strongman Khalifa Haftar have been battling since April

EUROPEAN UNION  
Delegation to the State of Kuwait & Qatar



الاتحاد الأوروبي  
بعثة الاتحاد الأوروبي لدى دولة الكويت

### The European Union Delegation to the State of Kuwait is recruiting for Administrative Assistant - Secretary - Driver

The European Union (EU) is an economic and political partnership between 28 European countries. It plays an important role in international affairs through diplomacy, trade, development aid and working with global organisations. Abroad, the EU is represented through more than 140 diplomatic representations, known also as EU Delegations, which have a similar function to those of an embassy. The EU Delegation to the State of Kuwait and Qatar is a fully-fledged diplomatic mission, responsible for the EU's political and economic relations with Kuwait and Qatar. It also covers the wide range of areas of cooperation that exist between the EU and these countries ranging from trade and investment, to energy, research and innovation, to security and counter-terrorism, to, culture and education, and to development cooperation.

We are recruiting for

- A bilingual (English and Arabic) **Administrative Assistant** for the administration section of the Delegation: The Administrative Assistant will assist the Delegation with public procurement, contracting, housing and infrastructural matters and inventory. The salary range will be between 1,200 – 1600 KWD per month, depending on the candidate's proven experience.
- A bilingual (English and Arabic) **Secretary** for the Political Section: The Secretary will assist the section with a wide range of secretarial and clerical tasks such as calendar management and set up of appointments, attend to visitors; assist with organisation of events; prepare replies to general inquiries and assist with document management. The salary range will be between 900 – 1,500 KWD per month, depending on the candidate's proven experience.
- A bilingual (English and Arabic) **Driver**: The Driver will assist with driving the Ambassador and other Delegation staff; deliver messages and documents; run errands and ensure the Delegation's vehicles are kept in good functioning order. The salary range will be between 550 – 800 KWD per month, depending on the candidate's proven experience.

All positions are full time positions of 37,5 hours per week from Sunday to Thursday with an initial contract for a period of 2 years, renewable. Candidates are required to be fluent in both Arabic and English (both written and spoken).

To apply for the positions please check the vacancy profiles on our website [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kuwait/area/jobs-funds\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kuwait/area/jobs-funds_en) and send your application including a motivation letter, detailed CV and copy of your ID to [Delegation-Kuwait-Vacancies@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Delegation-Kuwait-Vacancies@eeas.europa.eu) clearly indicating the vacancy you are applying for.

The deadline for applications is: 10 February 2020

## International

# Democrats wrap up case against Trump in historic impeachment trial

## Polls show Americans appear evenly split on impeachment move

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's lawyers prepared to deliver his first full-throated defense in the Senate's historic impeachment trial, after Democratic prosecutors spent three days making their case for the US president's removal from office.

Capping 24 total hours of arguments, Democrats told the 100 senators that Trump abused the power of the presidency in pressuring Ukraine to launch investigations that would help him politically, and then sought to block efforts by Congress to investigate. Democrats said they had met that burden of proof, as lead House impeachment manager Adam Schiff warned that Trump would remain an "imminent threat" to American democracy if he stays in power.

"This is Trump first, not America first," congressman Schiff told the chamber. "I ask you, I implore you," he added, addressing Republicans who hold the power to allow witnesses to testify, against Trump's wishes. "Give America a fair trial," Schiff said. "She's worth it." Trump has signalled he remains in tight control of his party, with many Senate Republicans expressing public support for the president despite a vigorous, comprehensive case outlining his misconduct.

"I don't believe anything they've said so far is impeachable," Senator Rick Scott told reporters.

"I'm looking forward to the White House tomorrow starting to set the record straight, because this has just been amazing." Trump's team begin their defense at 10:00 am (1500 GMT) Saturday, a timeslot which Trump, a former reality television star, referred to in a tweet as "Death Valley in T.V." His side's arguments will continue Monday and Tuesday, before the chamber turns to questioning and then votes on whether to hear from witnesses, something Democrats have sought from the start.

Trump's defense will be "much more concise" and "easier to understand" than the prosecution arguments, Republican Senator Mike Braun told Fox News. Democrats argued that Trump's refusal to allow top officials to testify and to supply subpoenaed documents to the Ukraine investigation supported the second charge against him, obstruction of Congress.

Trump blocked the executive branch from responding to 71 specific requests for documents, including five subpoenas, related to his pressure on Kiev to help

his 2020 reelection effort, Democratic impeachment manager Val Demings told senators. Trump also prevented 12 current and former administration officials, most of them subpoenaed, from testifying to the investigation, she said. "President Trump's obstruction of the impeachment inquiry was categorical, indiscriminate and historically unprecedented," Demings said.

### 'Absolute power corrupts'

She said Congress could not afford to allow Trump to reject its powers in such a wholesale manner.

"Executive power without any sort of restraint, without oversight, and without any checks and balances, is absolute power," she told the Senate hearing. "And we know what has been said about absolute power. Absolute power corrupts, absolutely." On Twitter, Trump dismissed the entire process. "The Radical Left, Do Nothing Democrats have gone crazy," he tweeted. "They know it's a con, but just can't sell it! Public strongly against Impeachment." Americans appear about evenly split on whether Trump should be impeached and removed. Several polls show a healthy majority want the Senate to subpoena key witnesses for Trump's trial.

### Fight over subpoenas

Closure of the Democrats' opening arguments paves the way for Trump's team to urge acquittal in only the third ever impeachment trial of a US president. Trump's clearance is virtually assured: Senate Republicans hold a 53-47 majority, and a vote by 67 senators is required for conviction and removal.

Democrats were hoping however to woo some Republicans to embrace their arguments that the Senate should subpoena four current and former White House officials with direct knowledge of Trump's Ukraine machinations. There were hints that at least two or three Republicans were considering supporting the subpoenas, though none had committed. But without four crossovers, analysts were predicting that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a key Trump defender, would be able to bring the trial to a vote on the charges by late next week, and see Trump soon exculpated on a party-line vote.



WASHINGTON, DC: Democratic Presidential Candidate Sen Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) (left) goes through papers with in aide outside the Senate chamber during a recess in the impeachment trial proceedings against President Donald Trump at the US Capitol on Friday in Washington, DC. —AFP

### 'Rebut and refute'

If Democrats gain support for subpoenas, Republican leaders threatened to demand their own witnesses and call Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden and his son Hunter to testify, because their connections to Ukraine had been at the heart of Trump's scheme to tarnish his election rivals. Trump and McConnell also suggested the president would claim executive privilege to reject the subpoenas, which would lead to court challenges and ensure that the trial could go on for weeks more.

Neither party relishes that thought as the battle ahead of November elections intensifies. The prosecution showed senators scores of videos, internal documents and extensive witness testimony to lay out their case that Trump abused his powers.

Before a national television audience, Democrats detailed how Trump flagrantly undertook last year to force Kiev to help him tarnish Biden. Trump defense lawyer Jay Sekulow said they would open their reply by putting on an "affirmative case" that would "rebut and refute" those arguments. —AFP

## Brexit will not affect intel cooperation: EU official

ZAGREB: Brexit will not negatively affect cooperation between the intelligence services in Europe, the EU's anti-terrorism coordinator said. "The exchange of information is not impacted," Gilles de Kerchove said on the sidelines of a meeting of EU interior ministers in Zagreb on Friday. Cooperation between the intelligence services is already "outside the institutional framework of the EU," and non-members Norway and Switzerland are already part of it, he told AFP. Britain will also be represented within this framework after it leaves the European Union on January 31. He said that the issue is more whether if, and in what form, London will continue to have access to EU police data.

Britain shares intelligence through the Schengen Information System (SIS) for law enforcement purposes, although it is not part of the passport-free Schengen zone. In recent years, the SIS information base has become an important tool for tracking jihadists entering Europe from Syria and Iraq. De Kerchove was not able to say how the EU could continue to cooperate with Britain in regard to the SIS.

But "it is impossible for a non-EU member to have the (same) degree of intimacy as that of an EU member." The question should be resolved in talks between London and Brussels on their future relationship, expected to begin in February. De Kerchove said the EU has worked in close cooperation with the US on law enforcement matters and "it would be absurd that our geographically close neighbor finds itself in an inferior situation to that of the Americans, particularly in the fight against terrorism." The Belgian EU official also expressed concern over the situation in Iraq and Syria.

He said recent developments on the ground could lead the Islamic State group to "rebuild" after the defeat of its caliphate. A pullout of US troops "would certainly weaken the capacity of the Iraqi army to fight what remains of" the IS. He also said the fate of some 5,500 IS fighters has not been sufficiently clarified.

"A good number" of them have already returned home, around 600 are in prisons in the region and at least one quarter are dead. But the number of dead is probably higher as many jihadists have been killed in battles for the caliphate but authorities have not received confirmation. —AFP

## For mother and daughter, Trump era lays bare divide

DEFIANCE, US: Donna Baldwin felt excitement when she went to a rally for President Donald Trump but when she got home, she was aghast—the media, she says, distorted what he said. Whenever she goes on Facebook, though, she has her own fact-checker—her daughter, Jocelyn Evans, who doesn't hesitate to tell her that some

## Mass evictions prompt protests as housing crisis mounts in Nigeria

LAGOS: The men in naval uniforms charged into the Nigerian waterfront village of Okun Glass in the morning, chased out the residents, then called in the bulldozers.

De facto village leader, 75-year-old Dauda Musa, said he fled as the men fired guns into the air. "They demolished our homes," he said, standing in the rubble of what was once home to 3,000 people down the coast from the megacity Lagos. Nigeria's navy said it had moved in to clear an illegal settlement—and accused some of the residents of vandalizing nearby pipelines to steal crude. "This operation was not conducted in secrecy," naval commander Thomas Otuji said.

Musa said his fellow villagers were

farmers and fishermen, not thieves. And rights groups say the raid on Jan. 3 was part of a much wider trend where the government, backed by the military, clears informal settlements to make way for luxury housing and other developments. The accusations and counter-accusations highlight an increasingly fraught confrontation between officials, activists and small communities, exacerbated by the dramatic expansion of Nigeria's cities, most of all Lagos—a coastal giant that dwarfs the capital Abuja inland. "There has been persistent evictions across Lagos. Dozens of communities on the island have been evicted," Akinrolabu Samuel, a campaigner with the Nigeria Slum/Informal Settlement Federation, said at a rally against the evictions this week. "It's because of real estate," he added. "It's for real estate development."

### Housing crisis

Around 600,000 new people arrive in Lagos every year, according to the stats group BudgetIT, many of them pouring into ramshackle settlements, joining thousands of others impoverished fami-



LAGOS: A woman poses for a picture at the site of demolition of the Okun Glass community in Lagos —Reuters

lies who have lived there for generations. The United Nations said in September Nigeria was struggling to deal with a mounting housing crisis—and mass evictions were making the situation worse. In

2017, a coalition of communities won a court judgement against Lagos state government, arguing that evictions without notice and resettlement were cruel, inhumane and degrading. —Reuters

## Royal runaways' media war follows them to Canada

LONDON: Prince Harry and his wife Meghan may have quit Britain for a quieter life in Canada but their battle with the media has followed them to the new front line.

Harry believes "powerful forces" in Britain's tabloids are waging a ruthless propaganda war to vilify his US former actress wife—and he is hitting back through the lawyers.

Having struggled with media scrutiny since their May 2018 wedding, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex abandoned their royal roles this month in a bid for a calmer and more independent life.

But their bombshell departure has made them even more of a story—and

media, including paparazzi photographers, have now flocked to their Vancouver Island getaway.

Their lawyers have already issued warnings to the press over pictures of Meghan out walking the dogs near their luxury seafront home. After a slew of negative stories in the British press, the couple are trying to seize greater control of the narrative.

But they are not shunning all publicity—far from it. The Susses will keep working with their non-royal patronages, but now intend to work with hand-picked media only.

Meghan has already made a couple of visits to women's charities in nearby Vancouver, while they continue posting content on Instagram, where they have 11 million followers. Their success in becoming financially independent from the monarchy through creating their own commercial income will largely depend on them remaining hot property.

### 'Cloud cuckoo land'

Ian Murray, executive director of the Society of Editors, which campaigns for press freedom, said the couple could not control media scrutiny. "If Harry and



Amelia Brace, the North America correspondent for Australia's Channel 7, gives a live report in North Saanich, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. —AFP

Meghan had said: 'we want to withdraw completely from public life and occasionally appear for good causes', I think they

would have achieved their aim but they seem to want to have their cake and eat it," he told AFP. —AFP

of what she posts is "definitely not true."

The mother and daughter in the bellwether state of Ohio, like so many American families, have seen the divergence in their core views—even their sense of what is real—widen in an era of political polarization and incessant social media.

But Baldwin and Evans—who bear a strong resemblance with their rich, dark blond hair—have also learned to avoid confrontations as they instead prioritize providing a solid upbringing for Evans' two children, eight and four. As the US election season opens, a team of AFP journalists is taking the country's pulse by driving from Washington to Iowa, which on February 3 holds the country's first contest to choose presidential candi-

dates. Defiance, Ohio, population 16,663, is home to a General Motors engine part plant. On the road to Defiance's small private college, multiple fast-food restaurants advertise job openings.

Baldwin, a realtor, sees the jobs as evidence of a healthy economy under Trump. Her daughter, who is studying to be an archeologist, is not convinced. "I have friends that are married and have children and both them and their husbands are working three of these jobs and they still aren't making ends meet," Evans, 34, said at a diner in Defiance's historically preserved downtown.

Her mother, 59, calls herself "a realist," saying, "not everybody is cut out for college" and that too many "live

off government subsidies." "Now there are so many jobs available and they won't take any of those jobs."

### Climate divide

Younger voters by significant margins picked Trump's Democratic rival Hillary Clinton in 2016, although older people, as in past elections, went to the polls in far higher numbers.

Baldwin and Evans do not fit neatly into political boxes. Evans, her upper arm covered by a tadpole-design tattoo inspired by her son, first registered as a Republican, like her late father, and, disliking Clinton, voted for Trump. Her mother was long a Democrat but said, "I felt like the party left me." —AFP



## International

# More evictions feared in India as citizenship law is enforced

## 200 homes demolished in Bengaluru informal settlement

**MUMBAI:** Days after nearly 200 homes were demolished in an informal settlement in the southern Indian city of Bengaluru, human rights groups and slum dwellers said they expected more such evictions as a new citizenship law is enforced in the country. Police and municipal officials said the homes were built illegally on state land, and that residents were undocumented migrants from Bangladesh. The residents said they were migrants from other Indian states, and that they were evicted without any notice.

The Karnataka state high court has prohibited further evictions, and asked the municipal corporation and the police to respond to its queries on the eviction by Jan. 29. Human rights groups said it was an outcome of tensions around India's new citizenship law, which came into effect on Jan. 10 and lays out a path for citizenship for six religious minorities in neighboring mostly-Muslim countries - Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

Critics say that the omission of Muslims is discriminatory, and that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), as well as a planned National Register of Citizens (NRC), target poor Muslims and others who do not have sufficient documentation. Migrant workers are particularly vulnerable, as they often live in informal settlements, said Isaac Selva, founder of Slum Jagattha, a non-profit magazine on slum dwellers in Bengaluru.

"Bengaluru is full of migrant workers, and a large number of daily wage workers tend to live in slums. Not everyone has ID papers," he told the Thomson Reuters

Foundation. "We think more such evictions will take place because of the CAA and NRC, because authorities are being told these people do not have a right to be here." Nearly 2 million people - including Hindus - were left off a list of citizens released in Assam last year for failing to have adequate documentation, after a years-long exercise to check illegal immigration from Bangladesh.

On Wednesday, India's top court gave Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government four weeks to respond to 144 petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Citizenship Amendment Act, which has ignited protests across the country. "A large majority of people living homeless and in informal settlements do not have government-issued documents," said Shivani Chaudhry, executive director of non-profit Housing and Land Rights Network in Delhi.

"The current climate in the country has fuelled fears that the lack of adequate documents among large sections of India's urban and rural poor could lead to evictions and destruction of their homes and property," she said. The rapid growth of Indian cities, combined with unclear land ownership, has triggered the forced eviction of poorer communities over the last two decades, human rights groups say.

At least 11 million people in India risk being uprooted from their homes and land as authorities build highways and airports and upgrade cities, according to HLRN, which said more than 200,000 people were forcefully evicted in 2018. There are no official figures on evictions. — Reuters



**BENGALURU:** Demonstrators shout slogans during a protest rally against a new citizenship law, in Bengaluru, India, yesterday. — Reuters

## No qualms for India's hangman before first job of executing rapists

**MEERUT:** Pawan Kumar feels zero sympathy for the four men he is due to hang next month for a 2012 gang rape and murder that appalled India. "The people who are going to die are like beasts, not humans," the third-generation hangman and father-of-seven told AFP in his tiny flat in the northern town of Meerut.

"They are cruel people and that's why they are going to lose their lives," the 54-year-old said.

The group set to meet their demise before dawn on February 1 — although it may be delayed—were convicted for a brutal crime against Jyoti Singh, a 23-year-old student. They took turns to sexually assault the woman with an iron rod on a bus as it meandered through the streets of Delhi at night. They then dumped her on a road.

She died two weeks later in a Singapore hospital from extensive internal injuries. Angry demonstrations by tens of thousands of people broke out across the vast South Asian nation, sparking soul-searching about the plight of Indian women and leading to heavier sentences for sex crimes.

### Grisly details

Five people were convicted. One, a minor, was found guilty and spent three years in a juvenile detention center. A sixth, the ringleader of the group, died in jail before the case concluded—officially by suicide. For the remaining men, very few in India have expressed misgivings about their fate. Indeed, celebrations are expected to mark their executions and Indian media have been gleefully reporting grisly details about the preparations at Delhi's Tihar Jail.

Banana will be smeared on the execution ropes to soften them and ensure a smooth and quick hanging, and the men reportedly broke down when their necks were measured for the noose. Almost 400 people are on death row in India, but no-one has been executed since 2015. Kumar has been in high demand for media interviews, and AFP's allotted 20 minutes ended abruptly when an alarm on his mobile phone signaled time was up. "I have people from India and abroad who want to talk to me. You're not the only ones," he said as his armed bodyguard looked on.

### 'Guru' grandfather

Kumar comes from generations of hangmen but this will be his first execution. His grandfather, who he fondly describes as his "guru", hanged former prime minister Indira Gandhi's assassins and two men over a notorious 1982 kidnap and murder.

Kumar complains that his stipend of 5,000 rupees (\$70) a month is hardly enough to support his family, forcing him to look to others, including the media, for "help". But he says the adoration he expects to bask in from India's 1.3 billion people after the coming executions will go some way to compensate. "People around me, including my family, have always treated me well, but after this execution, I'm certain respect for me will increase," he said.

And he has no qualms about the job he does, which he expects his sons to continue, nor about the effectiveness of capital punishment. "Crimes will decrease only when there are executions. You give them life imprisonment, they appeal and they come out only to commit more crimes," he said. — AFP



**MEERUT:** Hangman Pawan Kumar (right) speaking during an interview as his security guard looks on at his residence in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. — AFP

## Duterte threatens to end US military pact over visa row

**MANILA:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has threatened to end a pact key to annual war games with American troops if the US does not restore the travel visa of an official who oversaw his drug war. It is the latest in a long line of Duterte's threats to shrink or sever ties with historical ally Washington, which have periodically followed criticism of his deadly narcotics crackdown.

Duterte spoke after Ronald Dela Rosa, the former national police chief who is now a senator, said the US had cancelled his visa but did not tell him why. Dela Rosa was the first enforcer of Duterte's internationally condemned campaign, in which police say they have killed just over 5,500 alleged dealers and users.

Human rights advocates say the true toll is four times higher, and could amount to crimes against humanity. The US State Department and the embassy in Manila have not responded to requests for comment about Dela Rosa's visa. Duterte went on the attack in a speech late Thursday. "Now, they won't let Bato go to America", he

said, using Dela Rosa's nickname. "If you do not make a correction there, one, I will terminate the bases-Visiting Forces Agreement," Duterte added. "I'm giving... the American government one month from now."

The Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) outlines the rules governing conduct of US troops participating in joint military exercises in the Philippines. The pact gave legal cover for the resumption of large-scale war games between the two allies after the US military closed its Philippine bases in the 1990s amid rising anti-US sentiment. Duterte also threatened in 2016 to cancel the agreement, but has generally attacked ties with the US, including an announced "separation" from its former colonial master.

Until now the president has not made good on those threats, some of which came after then US president Barack Obama was critical of Duterte's crackdown in 2016. Relations between Washington and Manila under President Donald Trump, who has voiced support for Duterte, are on a stronger footing. However, recent criticism from US lawmakers has introduced new tensions. The Philippines in December barred US senators Richard Durbin and Patrick Leahy, who were behind a measure to prevent officials involved in the incarceration of Senator Leila de Lima from entering the US.

De Lima, one of the highest-profile critics of Duterte's narcotics crackdown, has been held since February 2017 over a drug charge that she claims was fabricated to silence her. — AFP



**MANILA:** Ronald Dela Rosa (left) said the US had cancelled his visa but did not tell him why. — AFP

## Indonesia to increase imports from India amid Malaysia spat

**KUALA LUMPUR/NEW DELHI:** Indonesia has agreed to immediately increase imports of Indian buffalo meat, sugar and auto parts after India boosted purchases of Indonesian palm oil amid a spat with rival supplier Malaysia, two Indian government sources with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters on Friday. Indonesia and Malaysia account for 85% of the world's palm oil output while India is the biggest buyer of edible oil. India has effectively halted imports of refined palm oil from Malaysia since early January in retaliation for Malaysia's accusation that recent Indian policies discriminate against Muslims.

India is a Hindu-majority country while Malaysia is mainly Muslim. Indonesia, the world's biggest palm oil producer and exporter, is expected to be the biggest beneficiary of India's row with Malaysia. Indonesian crude palm oil has sold at a premium to Malaysian oil since India this month placed curbs on imports of refined palm oil. The trade ministers of India and Indonesia, which want to more than double their bilateral trade to \$50 billion by 2025, met in Davos on Thursday and agreed to fast-forward trade between them, one of the informed sources said.

"This is a goal we agreed upon earlier, now the process accelerates," said the Indian source. Both

declined to be named as they were not authorised to talk to the media.

"Starting now, they have promised that they will buy a lot more meat, a lot more sugar and autos/autoparts. Palm oil imports from Indonesia will increase and there are many areas where we will export more." The sources declined to give figures.

An Indian government document, reviewed by Reuters, said that Indonesia had "informally agreed" to double the annual quota for Indian bovine meat exports to 200,000 tons.

Indian-Indonesian trade was worth \$21.2 billion in the last fiscal year that ended in March, \$15.84 billion of which comprised Indian purchases. Indonesian Trade Minister Agus Suparmanto will visit India next month to hold further talks on enhancing trade, according to one of the Indian government sources.

A spokeswoman for Indonesia's trade ministry had no immediate comment. An Indian trade ministry spokeswoman did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

Indonesia imported 94,500 tons of Indian buffalo meat worth \$323 million in the 2018/19 fiscal year. It is the third biggest buyer of Indian buffalo meat after Vietnam and Malaysia.

Indonesia, however, bought only 555 tons of sugar from India last fiscal year. "They have now changed some of their norms to let more Indian sugar come in," said one of the sources. "In other areas, there's an ongoing process of discussion on easing regulations or standards, or increasing quotas in these areas."

Malaysia's top sugar refiner told Reuters on Thursday that it would increase purchases of sugar from India, a move that two sources in Malaysia said was part of efforts to placate New Delhi amid the palm spat. — Reuters

## Brazil president Bolsonaro in maiden India visit

**NEW DELHI:** Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro arrived for his first official visit to India on Friday aiming to boost ties between the two stuttering BRICS economies and with fellow right-wing leader Narendra Modi. Critics call both men authoritarian and populist in the mould of leaders like US President Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin of Russia, Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Viktor Orbán in Hungary.

Modi, facing more than a month of protests over a new citizenship law, has never given a proper press conference as prime minister and Bolsonaro said this week he would no longer give interviews.

Bolsonaro, accompanied by ministers and business leaders for the four-day visit, is this year's guest of honour at Republic Day celebrations today when India showcases its military might and culture.

"It will be an opportunity to re-energize our strategic partnership and take it forward in a focused manner," an official at the Indian foreign ministry said. Trade between India and Brazil-part of the BRICS group with Russia, China and South Africa—has risen in recent years, but reaching only a relatively modest \$8.2 billion in 2018-19.

Neither economy is doing well, with Brazil narrowly averting a fresh recession last year and Indian growth hitting a six-year low and unemployment its highest in four decades. The two sides are expected to sign nearly two dozen agreements on agriculture, defence and energy cooperation, including investments in the hydrocarbon sector amid political crises in oil-producing nations like Venezuela and Iran.

Differences over sugar may sour the mood, however, with Brazil unhappy about India's sugar subsidies. Some small protests by Indian sugar farmers were expected during the visit. — AFP

## Ex-army officer appointed North Korea's new top diplomat

**SEOUL:** North Korea has appointed a former army officer with little diplomatic experience as its new foreign minister, state media confirmed Friday, reflecting Pyongyang's already declared hard-line policy toward the US. Speculation had mounted that the country's foreign minister Ri Yong Ho had been replaced by former defense commander Ri Son Gwon as part of a major reshuffle during stalled nuclear talks with Washington.

Unlike his predecessor—who served as a diplomat for more than three decades—the newly appointed Ri is known to have little diplomatic experience. He went to a reception for foreign envoys as the nation's top diplomat, confirming his appointment, state media said Friday. Attending was "DPRK Foreign Minister Ri Son Gwon and other officials of the ministry," state media reported—using North Korea's official name.

Analysts say his appointment could indicate the country will take a harder line with the US, in line with Pyongyang abandoning its nuclear and missile test moratoriums earlier this year—and after Washington missed the North's 2019 deadline for nuclear talks.

"Having a former army officer as its top diplomat symbolises the North's uncompromising stance against Washington," Ahn Chan-il, a North Korean defector and researcher in Seoul, told AFP. "It's very rare for someone with military background to be tapped as Pyongyang's foreign minister." Negotiations between North Korea and the US have been deadlocked since a second summit collapsed in Hanoi last year over sanctions relief and what Pyongyang would be willing to give up in return.

North Korea has since ended its moratorium on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests and said it will not return to talks unless Washington first meets all its demands in full. — AFP

## Analysis

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## Ukraine's Zelensky weathers crises from Trump to downed jet

In his first nine months as Ukrainian president, former comedian Volodymyr Zelensky has found himself at the centre of major international crises, including the US impeachment investigation and Iran's downing of a passenger jet. Yet so far Zelensky has sailed through relatively unscathed, avoiding any major gaffes, political analysts said. The 41-year-old played a president in a popular TV sitcom before sweeping to power in elections last April on promises to "smash the old corrupt system" and end the separatist war in the east.

But many had voiced concerns about how someone without political experience could lead a country fighting a war with Russia-backed separatists while also dealing with widespread poverty and corruption. "Fears of his inexperience turned out to be exaggerated," said Oleksiy Melnyk, a foreign policy analyst at the Razumkov Center in Kiev. Polls show most Ukrainians are satisfied with Zelensky's performance. His approval rating reached 62 percent in December after his first face-to-face meeting with Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

When it comes to international relations, the political novice has been constantly in the spotlight. Just a few months into his first term, Zelensky found himself plunged into the impeachment scandal that threatens to take down US President Donald Trump. Trump is accused of pressuring Zelensky to investigate political rival Joe Biden and his son Hunter's dealings in Ukraine, making this a quid pro quo for military aid and a White House meeting. An impeachment trial is currently under way in the US Senate.

The Ukrainian leader has sought to distance himself from the scandal, stressing it is an internal affair for the United States. For Kiev it is vital to maintain support from both major US political parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, since Washington has been Kiev's key ally in its long-running fight with Moscow. December's summit with Putin in Paris was the next major test for Zelensky.

Many Ukrainians feared Russia's strongman would overwhelm the former showman, but he managed to restart peace talks that had been frozen for three years and agree on a prisoner exchange. "Zelensky is a fast learner," said David Stulik, senior analyst in the European Values Centre for Security Policy and former European Union diplomat in Kiev. "With each international meeting he has acted more and more confidently," Stulik said, while adding Zelensky should have been "more insistent and even assertive" at the negotiations with Russia and the West.

### Slow to blame Iran

Other analysts have also pointed to some flaws in Zelensky's tenure as president so far. When a Ukrainian airliner crashed in Iran in early January, killing all 176 people on board, Kiev's reaction was rather muted. As Ottawa and London openly stated that Iranian forces had accidentally shot the plane down with a missile, Ukraine was slow to pin the blame on Tehran, which ultimately admitted guilt.

Zelensky has faced criticism for what some see as a passive stance compared to other leaders. "During the crisis, the political leader of Ukraine was (Canadian Prime Minister) Justin Trudeau," analyst Mykola Davydiuk said ironically. Yet Kiev argued that its circumspect approach meant Iran granted it access to the wreckage and the crash site to shed light on the tragedy.

Serious rifts emerged in Zelensky's team last week with Prime Minister Oleksiy Goncharuk offering to resign after a leaked recording emerged where he questioned the president's grasp of economics. Zelensky seemingly smoothed over the situation, giving his PM a "second chance" and demanding an investigation into the leak.

Such successful management of ad hoc crises does not, however, give much indication of whether Zelensky will be able to transform the country in the way he has promised. Ukrainians want him to enact crucial reforms to root out corruption, reform the justice system and revive the economy of one of the poorest countries in Europe. "It's too bad he doesn't use his great popularity to do something really big," said Davydiuk. — AFP



Volodymyr Zelensky



Invading locusts spring into flight from ground vegetation as children in traditional Samburu-wear run past to their cattle at Larisoro village near Archers Post on Jan 21, 2020. — AFP

## Locusts latest curse of weather extremes

Billions of locusts swarming through East Africa are the result of extreme weather swings and could prove catastrophic for a region still reeling from drought and deadly floods, experts said Friday. Dense clouds of the ravenous insects have spread from Ethiopia and Somalia into Kenya, in the region's worst infestation in decades. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated one swarm in Kenya at around 2,400 sq km - an area almost the size of Moscow - meaning it could contain up to 200 billion locusts, each of which consume their own weight in food every day.

The locust invasion is the biggest in Ethiopia and Somalia in 25 years, and the biggest in Kenya in 70 years, according to the FAO. If unchecked, locust numbers could grow 500 times by June, spreading to Uganda and South Sudan, becoming a plague that will devastate crops and pasture in a region which is already one of the poorest and most vulnerable in the world. This could lead to "a major food security problem", Guleid Artan from regional expert group the Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), told a press conference in Nairobi.

The locusts, he said, were the latest symptom of extreme conditions that saw 2019 start with a drought and end in one of the wettest rainy seasons in four decades in some parts - with floods killing hundreds across East Africa. The FAO says the current invasion is known as an "upsurge" - when an entire region is affected - however if it gets worse and cannot be contained,

over a year or more, it would become what is known as a "plague" of locusts. There have been six major desert locust plagues in the 1900s, the last of which was in 1987-89. The last major upsurge was in 2003-05.

### Not 'the end of times'

Artan said the invasion had come after a year of extremes which included eight cyclones off East Africa, the most in a single year since 1976. This was due to a warmer western Indian Ocean, a climate condition known as the Indian Ocean Dipole which has conversely led to severe drought in Australia that is experiencing its own extremes: Bushfires, hail and dust storms. "We know East Africa is one of the most vulnerable to climate change. We know this region will see more extremes," he warned.

One expert at the press conference in Nairobi had to reassure attendees that the locust invasion following the drought and floods was not a portent of the biblical "end of times". The massive swarms entered Kenya in December and have torn through pastureland in the north and centre of the country. While farmers were relatively lucky as their crops had already matured or been harvested by the time they arrived, herders face another heavy blow as vegetation for their animals is consumed by the voracious locusts.

Artan said the pastoralists were just emerging from three years of drought, and that recovery from a dry spell usually takes them up to five years. And if the locusts are not brought under control by the start of the

next planting and rainy season - typically around March - farmers could see their crops decimated. As thick clouds of the insects descend on plants and blacken the sky, Kenyans have been seen shooting in the air, banging cans and racing around, waving sticks in desperation to shoot them away.

In eastern Meru, residents accused the government of not doing enough, complaining there were still swarms present despite aerial spraying being carried out. "They told us that we will not see them again but there are still many of them spotted yesterday and today on trees and vegetation in the farm," said Emmanuel Kubai, a resident of Igembe North where villagers were hurling stones to vegetation to scare them away.

### 'Bodes ill for the region'

Stephen Njoka, director of the Desert Locust Control Organisation for Eastern Africa, which is based in Nairobi, said Kenya had five aircraft spraying pesticides on swarms, and four others conducting surveillance. He said the chemicals did not pose a threat to humans and that authorities were doing their best to limit damage to other small insects, pollinators and pastureland. Similar control operations are under way in Ethiopia and Somalia. However insecurity in Somalia was hampering some spraying operations, the FAO has said. The species - desert locusts - are notoriously difficult to control as they often occur in remote areas and can move up to 150 km in one day. — AFP

## Heating woes fuel Balkan smog crisis

As winter grips the Balkans, the poor are caught in a cruel bind, being forced to light fires at home for heating while fuelling a pollution crisis smothering the region. In recent weeks, Balkan capitals from Belgrade and Sarajevo to Skopje and Pristina have been ranked among the world's top 10 most polluted major cities, according to the monitoring application AirVisual. While these are small cities compared to leading Asian polluters like New Delhi and Dhaka, a combination of coal-fired power plants, old cars and fires to heat homes are pumping the air with toxins.

"I know it is polluting. I am not an idiot but my only other choice would be to heat this home with electricity and that is damn expensive," said Trajan Nestorovski, who like many in his working-class Skopje neighbourhood burns wood to stay warm in winter. His wife Vera added: "There are a couple of factories near our neighbourhood that are burning God knows what in the evenings".

Thanks to the rise of mobile phone apps that measure air quality, like the local Moj Vozduh (My Air) created by a Macedonian developer, citizens are finally grasping the full extent of the crisis. "Serbia is suffocating, has anyone



A photo shows smog over Sarajevo from a cable car as it travels from Mt Trebevic into the city on Jan 18, 2020. — AFP

seen the minister of the environment?", said a recent headline in Belgrade's local Blic newspaper, speaking of the fog and dirty air enveloping the city.

Protests have been erupting around the region in recent days. In Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia, young people have taken inspiration from Swedish activist Greta Thunberg by holding a spate of protests on Fridays. "Greta inspired all of us," said 17-year-old Iskra Ileska. "In winter, half of my school class is absent because of lung problems. That is not normal," she said.

## Mexican children take up arms in fight against drug gangs

With baseball caps and scarves covering their faces, only their serious eyes are visible as a dozen children stand to attention, rifles by their side. In the heart of the violence-plagued Mexican state of Guerrero, learning to use weapons starts at an early age. In the village of Ayahualtempa, at the foot of a wooded hill, the basketball court serves as a training ground for these youths, aged between five and 15. The children practice with rifles and handguns or makeshift weapons in various drill positions for a few hours every week.

"Position three!" yells instructor Bernardino Sanchez, a member of the militia responsible for the security of 16 villages in the Guerrero area, which goes by the name of Regional Coordinator of Community Authorities (CRAC-PF). Guerrero is one of the poorest and most violent parts of Mexico, with one of the country's highest murder rates because of drug gang wars over the trade in opium and marijuana.

### Battle against cartels

In the face of indifference from the authorities, 600 people voluntarily joined the militia force to fight organized crime. They included children. At Sanchez's order,

the young people perform a drill and throw themselves face down on the ground in a cloud of dust, rifles aimed towards an imaginary enemy. Their opponent may be imaginary for the exercise but the drug cartel violence which plagues the region is all too real.

A week ago, nine men and a child - musicians and their assistants - were kidnapped and tortured, and their charred bodies were found inside their two vans at the bottom of a ravine. Mexican authorities immediately recognized the handiwork of the local Los Ardillos cartel but did not take any action against it. Exasperated by official indifference, leaders of communities across the region, including Ayahualtempa, decided to take matters into their own hands and teach their children to shoot.

Thirty children are in training. Those under the age of 13 are not yet taking part in patrols but are ready to fight in the event of an attack by Los Ardillos, as happened in May 2015 when the cartel entered the town hall of Chilapa and kidnapped more than 30 people. Since then, clashes between the militia and the drug traffickers have not abated. Near the training ground are some abandoned ramshackle huts. Inside are clothes, chil-



Children are taught to use weapons by the Regional Coordinator of Community Authorities (CRAC-PF) community police force at a basketball court in the village of Ayahualtempa, Guerrero State, Mexico, on Jan 24, 2020. — AFP

dren's shoes and bags of rotten corn cobs - everything left as it was when the occupants fled.

### 'They must defend themselves'

The situation has become so untenable for the inhabitants of the region that parents have agreed to let their children join the militia. "I wanted to study, but since the school is close to the area where Los Ardillos operates, I preferred the community police ... They were about to capture me," said 13-year-old Gustavo. The boy said he "feels good" holding his .22 caliber shotgun and already knows how to

use and clean it.

Gustavo's father Luis has been a member of the militia for three years. His other son, Gerardo, 15, is also learning to "defend himself and his family", he said during training. "The children decided to support us," said Luis, who recalls the day when his two children told him they wanted to arm themselves and leave school. Luis, who said he went to "great lengths" to buy hunting rifles for his children and his own weapon, believes the danger is the same for the patrols as for municipal police who go to school "unarmed, defenseless" at the mercy of drug traffickers. — AFP

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2020

## Business

## Zain's star entrepreneurs meet Kuwait's investment community

Company concludes its Zain Great Idea tech startup accelerator program



Eaman Al-Roudhan with Zain's 11 entrepreneurs and the company's team

- **Eaman Al-Roudhan:** "Technology brought up a new generation of entrepreneurs who lead the growth of digital economy".
- Zain's 11 entrepreneurs presented their tech startups to investors at Zain Demo Day.
- Zain supports digital innovation in line with New Kuwait 2035 vision.
- ZGI journey witnessed 1500 applicants, 350 bootcamp participants, and 80 accelerated startups.
- ZGI's last five editions helped create 250 job opportunities and nearly KD 6 million in investments.

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, successfully concluded the fifth edition of its Zain Great Idea (ZGI) tech startup accelerator program. The conclusion came during the company's Zain Demo Day event, through which Zain's 11 entrepreneurs met Kuwait's investment community at Four Seasons Hotel with the presence of their families, the local entrepreneurial community, and Zain officials.

The event witnessed the attendance of Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan, Mind the Bridge Founder and CEO Marco Marinucci, Zain Kuwait's Chief Technical Officer Nawaf Al-Gharabally, Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq, Zain Kuwait's Chief Commercial Officer Meshal Mohammed, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, Brilliant Lab Founder Neda Al-Dihany, as well as representatives of investment companies and the local entrepreneurial community.

Zain Demo Day came after almost four months of continuous hard work exerted by 11 bright entrepreneurs developing and accelerating their tech startups: Faisal Al-Basri - founder of Mezan, Yousef Al-Husaini - founder of Baims, Abdulwahab Al-Refaei - founder of Cybersys, Reem Al-Farhan - founder of CTC, Rawan Al-Sabah - founder of The Capital, Mishari Amin - founder of Touch point, Noor Asad and Dalal Al-Qattan - founders of That Designs, Fahad Al-Baghli - founder of The Wish List, Majed Al-Hamlan - founder of Blue Outdoors, Mohamed Al-Raqem - founder of Wellbii, and Altaf Al-Thekair - founder of Circle.

During her opening speech, Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan said: "first, I would like to welcome all our guests and thank our ZGI alumni. Lately, the number of entrepreneurs looking for quick business success has increased. They reached the conclusion that increasing the value of startups depends on many factors: business development continuity, catching valuable opportunities from large corporations, continuing as an individual business rather than an incorporated one, and finally: the key dependency on innovation and new technologies".

Al-Roudhan explained: "the entrepreneurship wave has invaded international markets during the past decade in particu-



Al-Roudhan delivers her opening speech

lar, and the technology revolution has contributed to raising this wave. Thus, a new generation of entrepreneurs was born thanks to tech startups, and they are leading the growth of the world's digital economy today".

Al-Roudhan continued: "we have witnessed lately how the region's markets adopted this direction, and worked to spread the freelance mentality within entrepreneurs in all areas, while increasing awareness about the influential role of startups in economic and social development. The connection in supporting entrepreneurs is greatly dependent on the value of innovations and ideas, and what these innovations and ideas can introduce to the business ecosystem. Business growth is linked with necessity, and necessity is the mother of invention".

Al-Roudhan added: "in spite of these efforts and initiatives across international, regional, and local levels, many entrepreneurs still face challenges like high capital costs of new technologies, cybersecurity and protecting data, lack of needed skills, need for a variety of specific skills, as well as the ability to build integrated partnerships or ecosystems to support their businesses".

Al-Roudhan further explained: "10 years ago, and as part of our Corporate Sustainability strategy, we at Zain innovated many initiatives to support and empower the youth and fuel the spirit of innovation within them. Throughout the years, we developed ZGI to make it what it is today: an academy that prepares and graduates



One entrepreneur showcases his tech startup to investors

promising talents".

Al-Roudhan continued: "this journey witnessed so much: we received over 1500 applications to take part in ZGI, trained over 350 participants in our bootcamp program, accelerated over 80 startups, had nearly KD 6 million in investments, and created 250 job opportunities. Today, we are executing an integrated strategy to support entrepreneurship and innovation in line with the New Kuwait 2035 vision. Being a leading national company in the private sector, we have put forth three pillars to achieve this strategy: inspire innovation, support entrepreneurship, and enrich creativity".

Al-Roudhan concluded: "The ZGI journey will go on, and we will continue to develop this accelerator program in line with our strategy and the New Kuwait Vision, because we believe that our support to entrepreneurs and startups - especially tech ones - will ensure us business continuity and growth".

Throughout five successful editions, ZGI empowered, trained, and invested in hundreds of creative and driven Kuwaiti youth, of which many now own thriving and active Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to this day. Zain Great Idea has been one of the most successful initiatives Zain presented to the Kuwaiti market as part of its comprehensive innovation and entrepreneurship strategy, with the aim of offering Kuwait's entrepreneurial community the chance to take their startups to entire new levels. ZGI is established by Zain in association with Brilliant Lab, a startup

Accelerator Service from Kuwait, and Mind the Bridge, a global organization bridging the world through entrepreneurship education for startups, enterprises and investors to succeed in global markets. Mind the Bridge is based in Silicon Valley with offices in US, London, Italy, and Spain.

During the first phase of ZGI, participants took part in the Bootcamp phase in Kuwait, which featured a carefully designed comprehensive academic program that lasted for three weeks. Participants learned the essentials of accelerating their tech startup at the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh, led by world-class instructors from a selection of the best regional and international academic institutions, including Stanford University, IE Business School, Venture Capital firms, entrepreneurs, and more.

In the second phase, nearly 100 ambitious entrepreneurs pitched their projects and ideas to the judging panel, who in return selected 11 finalists that took part in the third phase: the international accelerator program in collaboration with Brilliant Lab and Mind the Bridge. During the third phase, the finalists travelled to San Francisco, where they presented their tech startups to Mind the Bridge's top management, headed by Founder and CEO Marco Marinucci, who shared his strategic experience in business and entrepreneurship with them. Throughout an entire day, the finalists also met many local entrepreneurs in San Francisco, who shared their success stories and mentoring advice.

During the second week of their stay in San Francisco, Zain's entrepreneurs gained invaluable experiences to develop and accelerate their tech startups by visiting the headquarters of the world's biggest technology leaders. The trips featured visits to the main headquarters of Google, Microsoft, Pinterest, and venture capital firm 500 Startups in Silicon Valley. ZGI 5's finalists also took part in a seminar presented by Tesla cofounder Marc Tarpenning, which took place at Stanford University, the world's first-ranked university in entrepreneurship. Zain's entrepreneurs also presented their tech startups to a number of Silicon Valley investors and specialists, who provided valuable feedback and insights with the aim of developing and accelerating their startups. The presentations were supervised by Mind the Bridge's consultants and mentors.

ZGI was first launched in 2010 as a Corporate Social Responsibility initiative designed to support the youth into making their entrepreneurial dreams come true. Zain was the first in the region to launch such a comprehensive program of this kind. Then, throughout nearly 10 wonderful years, the company embraced over 500 entrepreneurs, travelled to 4 countries, and helped nearly 80 of the brightest Kuwaiti minds accelerate their ideas into active and thriving SMEs in the market.

The latest edition of the program features an all-new phase to the program: Co-developing. After Zain Great Idea is over, finalists will get full access to Zain's cross-functional team to help them get the most out of their newly accelerated startup. ZGI's entrepreneurs will be able to get consultations, mentoring, deals, tactics/strategies, and more from Zain specialists in various areas that are essential to any business, including sales, marketing, communications, legal, networks, IT, and more.

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



Al-Roudhan with Zain's top executive management



From the event

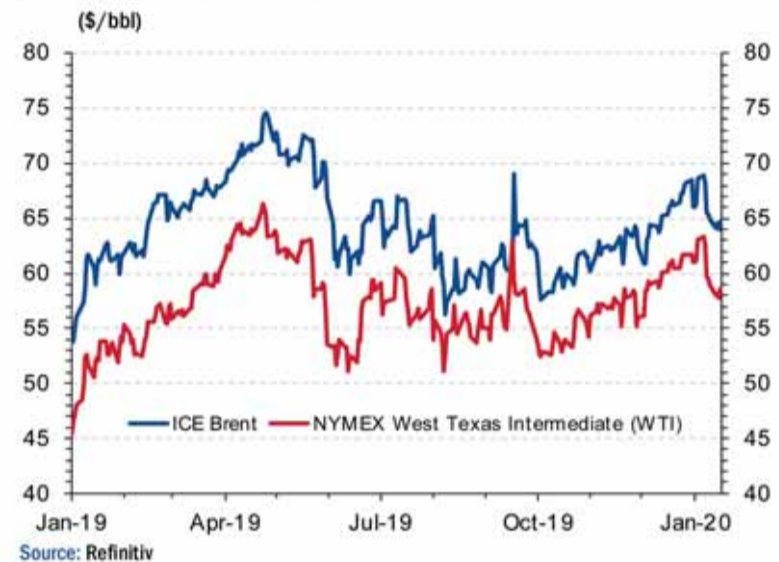
## Business

## NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

# Oil prices soften as markets refocus on fundamentals after Iran-US standoff

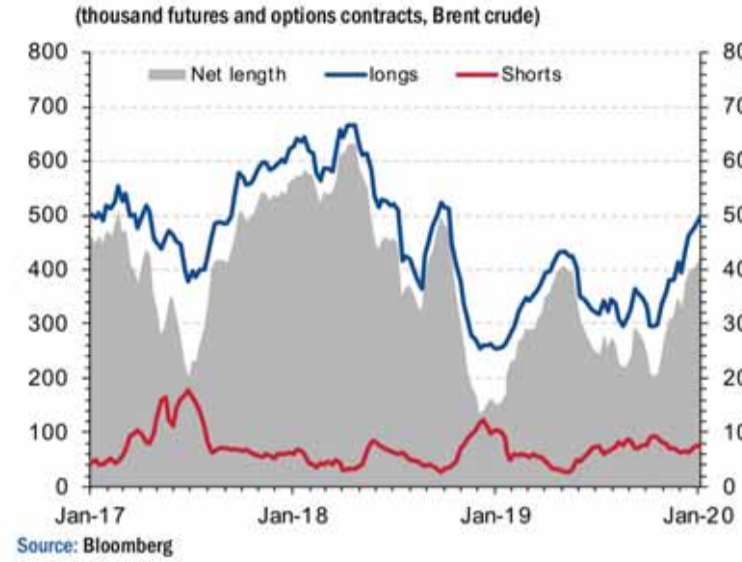
## OPEC acknowledges 2020 challenge, deepens production cuts

Chart 1: Crude oil prices (\$/bbl)



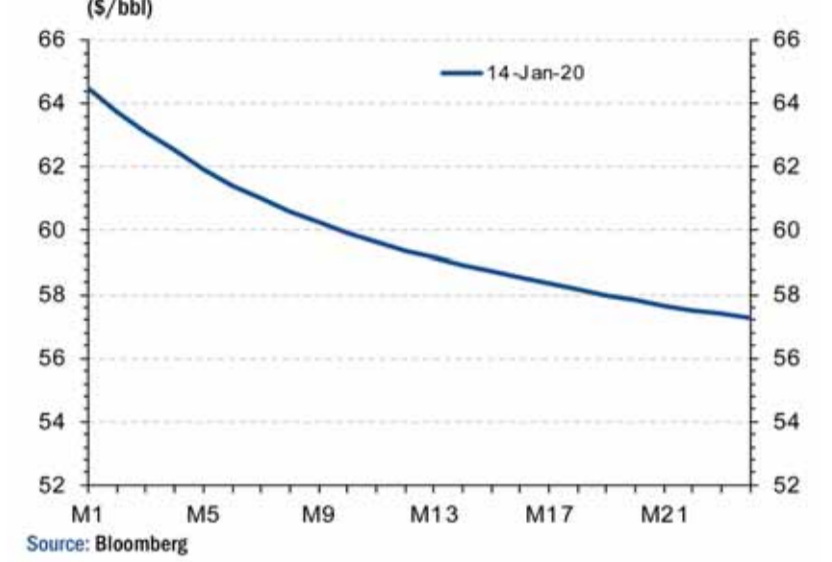
Source: Refinitiv

Chart 2: Money manager net length (thousand futures and options contracts, Brent crude)



Source: Bloomberg

Chart 3: Brent forward curve (\$/bbl)



Source: Bloomberg

**KUWAIT:** 2020 started with geopolitical risk back on the oil market's agenda. Oil prices jumped more than 3 percent after the US targeted Iranian general Qassem Soleimani, leader of Iran's Quds brigade, in a drone strike in early January. Despite regional tensions spiking as countries braced themselves for an Iranian response, when the retaliation came—a salvo of missiles against two US bases in Iraq without reported casualties, it was restrained. With both the US and Iran looking to pull back from the brink and cap the incident, oil's direction has been downward. International benchmark Brent crude closed on Friday 17 January at \$64.9/bbl down 1.7 percent in 2020—having been as high as \$69/bbl just ten days earlier. West Texas Intermediate (WTI), the US marker, closed at \$58.5/bbl.

While the recent signing of the US-China phase one trade deal was met enthusiastically, rising US refined product inventories amid the broader reassertion of supply-demand dynamics has had a moderating influence.

### Oil finishes 2019 on an upbeat note

Oil's performance in 2019 was its best since 2016, with Brent and WTI posting annual gains of 23 percent and 35 percent, respectively. Local crude grade, Kuwait Export Crude (KEC), ended the year up 31 percent at \$68.4/bbl. Since the beginning of the third quarter of 2019 oil prices benefitted tremendously from an apparent thaw in US-China trade tensions. This culminated in the announcement in November of the first phase of a trade deal between the world's two largest economies and oil consumers. The deal was signed on the 15 January 2020, much to the relief of the financial and economic community. The risk that degenerating US-China relations would trigger a global descent into trade-tariff protectionism has been the most dominant negative factor hanging over global markets and the global economy.

Oil price gains were also driven by the OPEC+ group's decision in early December to deepen production cuts by an additional 500 kb/d effective January 2020. The oil production cuts orchestrated by the Saudi and Russian-led 21-member group that amount to 1.2 mb/d or roughly 1.2 percent of estimated global oil demand in 2019—have been broadly effective in reducing the oil market's supply overhang, minimizing crude stock increases and, importantly, supporting the oil price over the last 12 months of the existing agreement.

Evidence of the increased bullish sentiment has been evident in the futures markets, where money managers have been piling back into oil funds since mid-October. Net length—the difference between the number of future contracts that take a 'long' position by betting on prices rising and the number of contracts that take a 'short' position by wagering on prices falling—has increased in all but one of the last twelve weeks. As of 7 January, the net long position in Brent futures and options stood at 425,763 contracts (426 million barrels of oil), more than double the number on the 8 October and the highest level since October 2018.

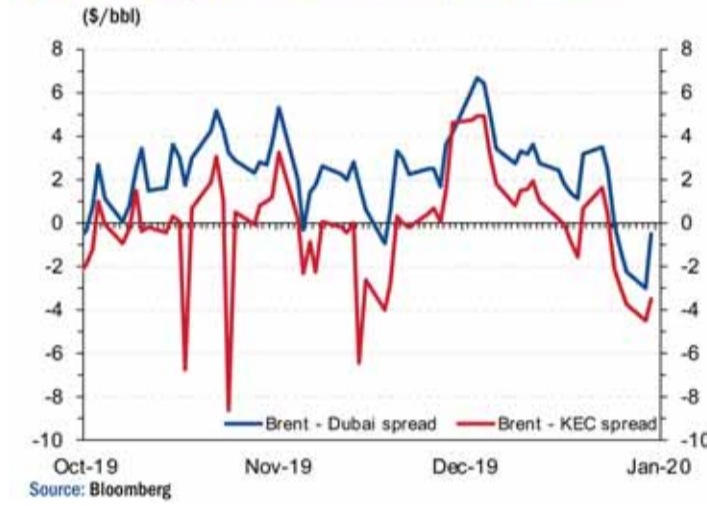
Moreover, the Brent forward curve remains in backwardation (downward sloping), a structure where near term oil prices are higher than future prices. This is a reflection of robust seasonal demand and a tighter physical market, especially in sour crudes. A decline in seaborne tanker freight rates has also helped boost loadings, though prices remain elevated due to a shortage of vessels—some are out of service awaiting the installation of scrubbers to meet International Maritime Organization (IMO) 2020 regulations—and since the US imposed sanctions on Chinese shipping firm COSCO last September.

### New IMO 2020 regulations

The current tightness in the medium and heavy sour crude market, which is evident in the premiums commanded by regional crude grades such as Kuwait Export Crude (KEC), Saudi Arab Medium, Dubai and Omani crudes over lighter, lower sulfur variants such as Brent and WTI, has caught the market somewhat by surprise. With the new IMO regulations coming into effect on 1 January to limit sulfur emissions in fuels used by seagoing vessels (bunker fuels) to 0.5 percent from 3.5 percent, it was expected that the price of medium/heavy sour crudes, which yield refined products containing a greater percentage of sulphur (eg High Sulfur Fuel Oil, HSFO) compared to light sweet crudes and therefore trade at a discount, would fall in relation to the price of sweeter crudes (sweet-sour crude spreads would widen and become more positive). Instead, prices have risen and spreads have turned negative.

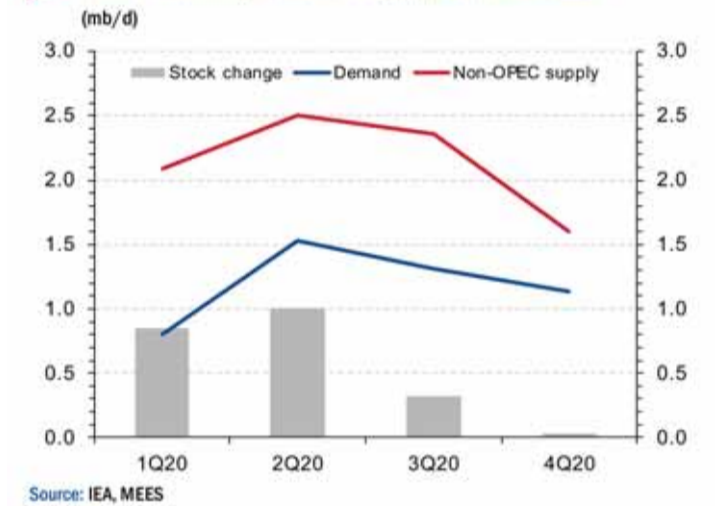
This phenomenon can best be understood by considering that Asian refineries, where the bulk of crude flows to these days, have historically been configured to more readily process medium and heavier sour crude

Chart 4: Light sweet – medium/heavy sour differential (\$/bbl)



Source: Bloomberg

Chart 5: Demand, non-OPEC supply & stocks in 2020 (mb/d)



Source: IEA, MEES

grades, and by noting that at this time, with the market suffering from a shortage of medium and heavy sour crudes due to both involuntary supply cuts (e.g. US sanctions on traditional suppliers such as Iran and Venezuela) and voluntary cuts (OPEC+ production cut agreement), the demand for these grades is exceeding the supply. Medium/heavy sour crude demand was especially high in the latter half of 2019 as refineries rushed to secure supplies before the IMO January 2020 deadline.

Conversely, there is a surplus of light sweet crudes in the Atlantic basin, due to the tremendous growth of US shale, so the pressure on prices is downwards. The current situation is not likely to persist, however, as refineries and the shipping industry move more firmly towards sweeter, low sulfur crude varieties. [Ships that choose to continue burning higher sulphur fuel could also comply with the new regulations by installing 'scrubbers' to remove the sulfur, but this may be costly.]

### World oil demand rising

The IEA pegs global oil demand growth this year at 1.2 mb/d, a modest improvement on 2019's multi-year low of 1.0 mb/d. OPEC also sees global oil demand rising to around 1.2 mb/d this year. Both agencies cite an improved economic outlook spurred by better US-China trade relations; the signing of the phase one agreement between the two powers—which also has among its terms a

Chinese commitment to buy \$52.4 billion worth of US energy products over two years—has been met with a mixture of enthusiasm and relief. And while US trade tariffs remain on two-thirds of Chinese imports at least until a second phase deal has been agreed, the overall direction appears to be towards trade reconciliation.

On the supply side, expectations of continued robust US shale growth should propel non-OPEC supply to increase by 2.1 mb/d, almost twice the rate of demand growth, according to the IEA. Notable supply gains are projected in Brazil, Canada, Australia and Norway. With supply growth outpacing demand growth, global stocks will likely continue to accumulate in 2020 (+0.55 mb/d on avg.), with the bulk of gains occurring during the first half of the year. Consequently, the demand for OPEC crude (the "call") is expected to fall in 2020, to 29.5 mb/d, according to the OPEC Secretariat. This is 1.2 mb/d lower than last year's average and similar to December 2019's OPEC-14 output of 29.4 mb/d.

### OPEC acknowledges 2020 challenge

Recognizing the demand-supply imbalance, OPEC+ deepened production cuts by a further 500 kb/d to 1.7 mb/d, with OPEC reducing output by a further 372 kb/d from its Oct/Nov 2018 baseline and the Russian-led non-OPEC group by an additional 132

kb/d. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia announced that it would maintain crude output during 1Q20 at around 9.7 mb/d, in effect an additional voluntary cut of 444 kb/d, so long as producers that had yet to comply, such as Iraq and Nigeria, brought their own output down to the new target levels. The total OPEC+ output adjustment would therefore amount to more than 2.1 mb/d. OPEC+ is expected to meet again in March to assess compliance and the state of the oil market. It is likely, but by no means certain, that the current deal will be extended to at least June, when the Secretariat holds its official biannual meeting.

### Softer oil price outlook

Downward pressure on oil prices is expected to be greatest during the first half of 2020, with supply in excess of demand and stocks rising. Geopolitical risk, though de-emphasized, remains a constant factor. Recent troubles in Libya, where armed forces shut down an oil pipeline and the Iran-US standoff, which is likely to be played out in the Iraqi arena, are significant hotspots. Supply outages in the latter, OPEC's second largest producer, at 4.6 mb/d, might be expected to have a sizeable impact on the oil market. Markets, feasting on robust US shale growth, have tended towards complacency about geopolitical supply risks, but should remember that the bulk of global spare oil production capacity resides in the region.

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.787
Indian Rupees	4.273
Pakistani Rupees	1.968
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.676
Nepali Rupees	2.666
Singapore Dollar	227.240
Hongkong Dollar	39.177
Bangladesh Taka	3.546
Philippine Peso	5.999
Thai Baht	10.061
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	21.650
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	19.304
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	114.040
Jordanian Dinar	429.750
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.359

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.500
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Euro	339.520
Sterling Pound	402.400
Canadian dollar	233.960
Turkish lira	52.500
Swiss Franc	317.520
US Dollar Buying	297.050

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.150
Canadian Dollar	233.620
Sterling Pound	397.380
Euro	339.090
Swiss Frank	297.015
Bahrain Dinar	808.850
UAE Dirhams	83.210
Qatari Riyals	84.450
Saudi Riyals	82.000
Jordanian Dinar	430.270
Egyptian Pound	19.293
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.677
Indian Rupees	4.273
Pakistani Rupees	1.964
Bangladesh Taka	3.550
Philippines Peso	5.970
Cyprus pound	18.095
Japanese Yen	3.765
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.676
Malaysian Ringgit	75.635
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.590

Thai Bhat	11.010
Turkish Lira	51.810
Singapore dollars	225.000

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
EUROPE		
British Pound	0.390931	0.404831
Czech Korune	0.005381	0.014681
Danish Krone	0.040973	0.045973
Euro	0.328851	0.342551
Georgian Lari	0.114211	0.114211
Hungarian	0.001148	0.001338
Norwegian Krone	0.029857	0.035057
Romanian Leu	0.065258	0.082108
Russian Ruble	0.004944	0.004944
Slovakia	0.009104	0.019104
Swedish Krona	0.027897	0.032897
Swiss Franc	0.307519	0.318519
AUSTRALASIA		
Australian Dollar	0.200103	0.212103
New Zealand Dollar	0.195419	0.204919
AMERICA		
Canadian Dollar	0.226555	0.235555
US Dollars	0.300400	0.304950
US Dollars Mint	0.300900	0.304950
ASIA		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002917	0.003718

Chinese Yuan	0.042721	0.046221
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037251	0.040001
Indian Rupee	0.003676	0.004448
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002703	0.002883
Korean Won	0.000250	0.000265
Malaysian Ringgit	0.071291	0.077291
Nepalese Rupee	0.002626	0.002966
Pakistan Rupee	0.001295	0.002065
Philippine Peso	0.005906	0.006206
Singapore Dollar	0.220187	0.230187
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001319	0.001899
Taiwan	0.010129	0.010309
Thai Baht	0.009671	0.010221
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.000013

#### ARAB

Bahraini Dinar	0.801542	0.809598
Egyptian Pound	0.019098	0.021839
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000199	0.000259
Jordanian Dinar	0.424573	0.433573
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000101	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021022	0.045022
Omani Riyal	0.785780	0.793677
Qatar Riyal	0.082983	0.083817
Saudi Riyal	0.080113	0.081413
Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
Tunisian Dinar	0.103694	0.111694
Turkish Lira	0.044843	0.054688
UAE Dirhams	0.082271	0.083097
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

## Business

# Mnuchin expects next China trade talks in 'near future'

## EU, China and others agree on temporary trade dispute appeal system

**DAVOS:** US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Friday that he expects to begin negotiations with China on a so-called Phase 2 trade deal soon, with Washington and Beijing on the same page.

"My guess is they (China) will consider waiving other tariffs as part of their purchasing program," Mnuchin said of the \$200 billion in additional US goods and services that China has pledged to buy.

"I don't see any difference in our views. My expectation is that we'll start conversations on phase two in the near future," he said in an interview at the end of the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in the Swiss ski resort of Davos.

China had a low-key presence at the Davos meeting, with most of the focus on trade concentrated on a dispute between the United States and the European Union over a "digital tax", with Washington threatening retaliation if the bloc's members tax US based companies before an apparent compromise was reached. "Once there is a consensus, those tax changes need to be implemented and in many places, require legislation. We object to a tax that targets just American companies," Mnuchin said.

With chief executives representing many of the biggest companies from around the world at Davos, it is often used as a barometer of business confidence and the economic outlook.

"It seems like Europe and Asia have bottomed and the US still looks in very good shape. So there's a lot of positive attitudes," Mnuchin said, with US tax cuts in prospect. "My expectation is that the focus of tax cuts will be for the middle class and some pro-growth incentives," he added.

### 'Other issues'

The biggest battleground during the four-day event has been the debate over how politicians and business leaders should tackle climate change, with much of the

focus on exchanges between U.S. President Donald Trump and activist Greta Thunberg. This year's WEF included a contingent of young activists like Thunberg, with the organizers keen to add to the voices engaging in debate at the exclusive event. "I was at dinner last night and people were very focused on the climate issue. My comment was, look we're in the middle of a serious health issue in China. It was not a topic of discussion until I brought it up," Mnuchin said.

"The environment is important. I just think it should be put in context. This goes back to a little bit of communication. The youth have focused on this one issue. But there are many other important issues that will impact the next generation." One possibility, Mnuchin said, was to change the lexicon. "Perhaps the historical language that we use, we need to reconsider. When young people hear capitalism, perhaps it has a different meaning to them," Mnuchin said.

"Perhaps the language we should be using is free markets versus managed markets. Open society versus closed society." Addressing the use of sanctions by the United States, Mnuchin said it was a strategy that needed scrutiny because of the potential impact it could have on the U.S. dollar.

### Appeal system

"Sanctions are up dramatically. Over a very long period of time, we have to be careful in how we use these, where it could impact the use of the dollar. So we take that responsibility very seriously," he said. Mnuchin is also looking at increasing the amount of US borrowing at longer maturities, with a focus on 20 years. "We can issue a lot more 20-year bonds than we could issue 50- and 100-year bonds. So in terms of our objective in both raising proceeds and extending duration, the 20-year bond is a priority at the moment," he said.

Meanwhile, the European Union, China and 15 other



**DAVOS:** A general view at the opening of a World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meeting on the sideline of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos. —AFP

countries agreed Friday to develop a temporary system for appealing trade dispute rulings after the recent US-provoked collapse of the WTO appeals body. Ministers from the group published a joint statement announcing a "multi-party interim appeal arrangement".

This arrangement, reached during a meeting at the World Economic Forum in Davos, will allow all the participating parties to "preserve a functioning and two-step dispute settlement system at the WTO in disputes among them," the EU explained in a statement.

The move came after the WTO appeals panel, sometimes dubbed the supreme court of world trade, halted its operations last month after years of

relentless US opposition. Washington, which accuses the court of serious overreach, has blocked the appointment of new judges, leaving it without the quorum of three needed to hear cases due to mandatory retirements.

Ahead of the December 11 shutdown, Canada and the EU struck a bilateral deal last July to set up an interim panel to hear appeals in disputes that might arise between Brussels and Ottawa.

In Davos, they were joined by more than a dozen other countries: Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, South Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Singapore, Switzerland and Uruguay. —Agencies

## NBK named 'Best Trade Finance Bank in Kuwait in 2020'

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has been recognized as the "the Best Trade Finance Bank in Kuwait in 2020" by Global Finance, the renowned international finance magazine. The rankings are based on input from industry analysts, corporate executives and technology experts.

Global Finance named NBK as one

of world's and MENA best trade finance providers in its 20th annual survey that comprised 97 countries and eight regions around the world.

Criteria for choosing the winners included transaction volume, market share, scope of global coverage, customer service, competitive pricing and innovative technologies. The award is a recognition of the bank's innovative and disruptive banking solutions and high-quality services that fulfill the clientele needs. Last year, NBK had arranged and lead-managed a number of mega loan facilities in Kuwait and the Middle East.

NBK has been consistently awarded the highest credit rating of all banks in the region from Moody's, Standard &

Poor's, and Fitch Ratings. The bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, its disciplined risk management approach, in addition to its highly experienced management team. NBK also maintains its position as one of the world's 50 safest banks for the 14th consecutive year. Global Finance, founded in 1987, has a circulation of 50,000 and readers in 188 countries. Global Finance's audience includes senior corporate and financial officers responsible for making investment and strategic decisions at multinational companies and financial institutions. Global Finance, headquartered in New York, regularly selects the top performers among banks and other providers of financial services.



## Lebanon's new finance minister meets with IMF official

**BEIRUT:** The new finance minister of debt-saddled Lebanon met yesterday with an official from the International Monetary Fund for what he said was a "courtesy visit" and not bailout talks. Ghazi Wazni's meeting with IMF alternative executive director Sami Geadah came as Lebanon grapples with its worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war.

The meeting served to "congratulate Lebanon on the formation of a new government," Wazni said on Twitter afterwards. He had told AFP earlier that it was "a courtesy visit... to get to know the IMF team." "The discussions will not focus on an economic rescue plan, which is being prepared (separately) inside government," he added. It follows a

meeting on Friday between Wazni and a delegation from the World Bank led by its regional director Saroj Kumar Jha. Wazni assumed the post of finance minister on Tuesday with the formation of a long-awaited cabinet that faces huge economic and political challenges.

The previous government resigned on October 29, two weeks into a nationwide protest movement demanding the removal of politicians deemed incompetent and corrupt. Wazni comes into the post at a time when the plummeting Lebanon pound has lost over a third of its value against the dollar in the parallel market.

Lebanese banks are tightening restrictions on dollar transactions amid a liquidity crunch.

The economic downturn has raised questions over whether Lebanon will turn to the IMF for a bailout — an option the government has yet to comment on but which some officials regard as inevitable. Last month, former prime minister Saad Hariri discussed a possible economic rescue plan with the heads of the IMF and the World Bank, further



**BEIRUT:** A handout picture provided by the Lebanese photo agency Dalati and Nohra yesterday shows Lebanon's new Finance Minister Ghazi Wazni (right) meeting with IMF Alternative Executive Director Sami Geadah in the capital Beirut. —AFP

fuelling speculation of a bailout. If Lebanon does turn to the IMF it may have to increase its value-added tax, slash subsidies to the state-owned elec-

tricity company, tackle rampant corruption and enact a raft of structural reforms, according to previous IMF recommendations. —AFP

## Huawei nova 5T offered exclusively only at stc

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Telecommunications Company-stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it is the exclusive and only telecom provider to offer the all new Huawei nova 5T in Kuwait.

The revolutionary smartphone is available to customers with postpaid commitment plans that extend from 18 to 24 months. The plans include up to 500 free local minutes, as well as 10GB to 50GB internet packages for only KD 12,500 to KD 16 and a free portable charger. Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) of stc, Haneen Ibrahim Al-Fulaj, said, "We are proud to offer the Huawei Nova 5T exclusively to our customers in Kuwait, providing them with a flagship high performing AI-powered smartphone with Huawei's latest technology features.

Al-Fulaj added, "We are committed to providing innovative and tailor-made offers featuring the latest devices that enrich our customer's experience while catering to their needs and exceeding their expectations. In line with our strategy targeting sustainable

growth, our focus relies on providing our customers with integrated solutions that contribute towards enhancing their lifestyles beyond the traditional telecom services. She concluded, "Through our advanced integrated digital solutions platform and growing capabilities towards pursuing the digital transformation, we distinguish ourselves as a pioneer in the telecom sector. Our strategic partnership with HUAWEI, one of the leading smartphones manufacturers in the world, is a testament to our pursuit towards providing our customers with unprecedented and exclusive offers to enjoy the latest tech and smartphone gadgets offered in the market."

### A groundbreaking device

The HUAWEI nova 5T features a powerful 48MP HD lens that is capable of delivering outstanding and professional shots with a class-leading AI-powered 1/2-inch sensor that utilizes HUAWEI's latest premium grade camera technology. The device also has a f/2.2 ultra wide-angle lens to capture nature's grand scale with a super macro lens that can take close up shots from 4 cm away.

Located in a left side notch on the front of the device, Huawei's 32MP AI-powered front facing camera allows users to take high quality selfies that are optimized to adjust to the best settings in any lighting.

To capture shots in in low-light photography, the device offers a AI-powered Super Night Mode set-

ting with intelligent light sensing, image de-noising, long exposure and stabilization technology so that every moment is captured in bright and vivid colors. Aside from its premium camera functionalities, the flagship device includes 8GB of RAM capable of running multiple applications simultaneously, 128GB of storage, and Huawei's high performance Kirin 980 chipset for a revolutionized gaming experience. The smartphone device is packed with additional features such as the fingerprint scanner located alongside the screen to unlock the device and enable a seamless and instant user experience. The Huawei nova 5T also delivers a bigger screen-to-body ratio while retaining the full integrity of Huawei's vivid LCD panel, revolutionizing the user experience.

The new generation GPU Turbo dramatically improves the device's CPU processing performance allowing a faster response time and satisfying gaming experience. Equipped with Huawei's SuperCharge system, the device can fully charge its 3750mAh battery in just 30 minutes.

When it comes to the exterior design, Huawei did not lose sight of their creative touch in having this device being noticed. The Huawei nova 5T comes in a variety of dazzling colors with amazing texture and an eye-catching reflective design that immerses the light and shadow of the smartphone, projecting a surreal and innovative multi-layered 3D effect on a flat surface.

## EQUATE successfully produces first batch of Viridis 25

**KUWAIT:** Leaping forward with a breakthrough innovation to help address the global need for the increased use of chemically recycled PET, the EQUATE Group yesterday announced the production of the first successful batch of Viridis 25. Viridis 25 is a new food-grade polyethylene terephthalate (PET) by Equipolymers (EQP), which uses up to 25 percent chemically recycled PET as feedstock, significantly reducing the need for virgin PET, thereby helping close the loop in the circular economy.

As part of their sustainability strategy, EQP started this innovative project in 2009 to make use of more recycled PET, the basis of most plastic beverage bottles. They began with Viridis 10, a PET grade containing up to 10 percent recycled PET, but, in 2016, EQP advanced to the V25 project in collaboration with a major brand owner to increase the amount of recycled material in its PET.

"We continue to progress in our journey to lower our carbon footprint with world class manufacturing facilities and producing a 25 per cent chemically recycled PET is a significant milestone," said Naser Aldousari, Senior Vice President at the EQUATE Group. "It was a collaborative effort between the petrochemical and commercial business communities, and as a result Viridis 25 will have far-reaching environmental, social and business benefits."

Viridis 25 is now available in the POLYMER through the EQUATE Group's subsidiary EQUIPOLYMERS and will primarily target the European market.

Muayad Al-Faresi, Global Business Director, PET at EQP said, "There is strong demand for PET bottles, and our mission is to provide a sustainable product that meets quality of life and public health needs. Chemical recycling technology has opened new horizons for the plastic industry, enabling us to address the increasing environmental impact and waste concerns in a sensible and sustainable way. EQP has tapped into this opportunity, making it a focus area to foster future innovation."

## AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad weekly draw

**KUWAIT:** Ahli United Bank announced on the 22nd of January 2020 the winners of its weekly draw of Al Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait that has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners. Al-Hassad has have over 850 prizes, over 12 month period.

The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 as Abdulmoneim Omar Alfarra.

20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 as follows: James Mendonsa, Grace Puzal Alcedo, Adel Yateem Alenezi, Mona Sulaiman Alfarhan, Huda Ibrahim Alhajri, Fakhreyah Mohsen Alshammari, Abdulrahman Mahmoud Alkhanji, Suad Yaqoub Alrasheed, Mahmoud Mohammed Yousef, Tanveer Ahmad Sakhawat, Nayef Abdullah Mollaq Almutairi, Saud S Alotaibi, Hanan Taher Alnajadah, S Arif Qarooni, Ahmed Ahmed Al-Sammak, Tariq Al-Hussaini, Hasan Ghuloom Abbas, Sha Noor Alkhalifa, Khanim Askar Hussain, A Aziz Husain Ali Dashti.

On the occasion, Ahli United Bank congratulated its winning customers, and commented that there are many chances to win waiting for our customers. Draws are held every Wednesday at AUB Kuwait or AUB Bahrain depending on the draw plan. On public holidays, the draw is postponed to the next business day. Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 4 quarterly mega prizes of KD 250,000 that will help the lucky winners achieve their dreams and aspirations in addition the monthly draw to win a prize of KD 100,000.

# ACK focus on human capital for the New Kuwait Vision 2035

## Interview with Australian College of Kuwait President Professor Isam Zabalawi

**Question:** How is higher education linked to the New Kuwait Vision 2035?

**Prof Zabalawi:** The New Kuwait Vision 2035 provides clarity to all sectors of the local economy regarding key government strategies for continued and shared growth. The national vision has a total of seven pillars that collectively afford a roadmap toward more enriched economic, environmental and social landscapes. In relation to the education sector, the sixth national pillar, human capital, seeks to reform the education system to prepare the youth population to become competitive and productive members of the workforce.

With rapid developments in technology, it is certain even if unclear that the nature of the workplace will continue to experience disruptive change. Accordingly, the next generation of graduates must be prepared for a flexible working environment where all staff are responsive to emerging opportunities and view these as means of improving marketplace competitiveness. For this reason, at the time of graduation, advanced levels of academic knowledge will on their own be insufficient. Employers will increasingly seek graduates who demonstrate sound communication skills, critical thinking, creativity and flexible attitude. For this reason, the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) has always adopted an experiential or immersive learning model of study whereby students learn by applying classroom theory to workplace related practical scenarios that are meaningful to the student and their future life/career.

**Q: Why does ACK use Experiential Learning in preparing students for their future careers?**

**Prof Zabalawi:** Students learn best when they are drawn rather than dragged into new knowledge and skills acquisition. At ACK, experiential learning is presented to students through an umbrella approach referred to as CDIO, an acronym for Conceive, Design, Implement and Operate. During the Conceive stage, students are provided with access to, or guided to search for theory that will assist them with understanding and interpreting the nature of an assigned task. Having gathered core information, students then consider how to structure (Design) their solution to the task. Then follows the Implementation phase during which students assemble all the resources needed to complete their task and finally, action (Operate) is taken to introduce, test and review the product, service or process. Within this overarching CDIO approach, a selection of experiential learning methodologies is used depending on the nature of particular courses. Key methodologies used across ACK include:

- **Project Based Learning (PBL).** The college has adopted the PBL framework developed by Aalborg University, Denmark and each year ACK faculty members visit Aalborg to gain further insights and share experiences with their staff. Project Based Learning essentially involves learning in the process of developing a solution for a situation that can be expected upon graduation in a professional career. Students are given a general description of the task to be completed and are then required to drill down and consider the detailed aspects. The project can be undertaken either individually or preferably in teams so that students also gain experience in working together collaboratively to complete the task. Students are required to demonstrate a considered strategy in fully exploring and researching background relating to the designated task, then a structured approach to planning, undertaking, documenting, presenting and reviewing the solution, whether it be in the form of a product, design, process or service.

- **Internships.** Since most students at ACK have no prior workplace experience, industry placements or internships provide a valued opportunity to gain a first-hand insight into the dynamics associated with being part of a professional team and how to communicate and collaborate effectively in the timely achievement of organizational goals. In preparation for their internship, the PBL experiences of students at the college provide a background for using this same professional approach within the workplace. In addition to local placements, through its membership of the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE), ACK students have the opportunity to undertake their internship at a number of leading workplaces around the world. In return, the college assists with coordinating engagements inside Kuwait for international students wishing



Professor Isam Zabalawi

to gain industrial/business experience within the Middle East region.

- **Graduation Projects.** In their final two semesters at ACK, students prepare for and complete a major graduation project to demonstrate their synthesis of knowledge and skills acquired throughout their program of study. Students are given the flexibility to creatively interpret the broad requirements of this summative assessment and the culmination of their work is presented to a panel of industry judges for face to face review. Although this prospect adds some pressure, it is further preparation for what graduates can expect in the workplace when their performance is constantly under professional scrutiny. A major positive associated with the exhibition of graduation projects is that it provides a unique opportunity for students to showcase the depth and originality of their product/design ideas.

The combination of Project Based Learning, Internships and Graduation Projects enable students to

The Australian College of Kuwait was established in 2004, as one of the first private higher education institutions in Kuwait.

benefit from a variety of experiential learning methodologies using similar techniques to those they can expect in the workplace as professionals.

**Q: How does ACK ensure that programs of learning are relevant to future labour market needs?**

**Prof Zabalawi:** To ensure that ACK students are benefiting from learning that is relevant to their future careers, the college has established three ACK Industry Advisory Boards that include representatives from local industries and businesses. These advisory groups provide direct input to ACK academic heads with regard to course content and methods of assessment so that student learning is focused on emerging workplace graduate needs.

In addition, both the Schools of Engineering and Business hold a weekly guest speaker program on campus for students and faculty to have regular direct communication with local industry and business lead-

The next generation of graduates must be prepared for a flexible working environment where all staff are responsive to emerging opportunities and view these as a means of improving marketplace competitiveness.

ers. Such occasions provide a valued opportunity for the college to ensure that emerging knowledge and technologies are presented for awareness and in particular, for students to take these into account in their career plans.

Regular field visits to worksites are organized across all academic programs so that students and supervising faculty can see first-hand the usage of latest technologies and discuss practices and other professional considerations with industry and business



ACK students during Huawei competition

professionals.

As a result of the above initiatives, the college ensures that through the Industry Advisory Boards, the learning materials and assessments at ACK are relevant to emergent labor market needs, and through the weekly guest speaker program and field visits to workplaces, the students themselves are in direct communication with local employers. Direct initiatives to enhance ACK students' employability include:

- **Career Fairs** held regularly on campus so that graduates are able to speak with recruitment officials from leading employers and present their resumes for consideration;

- **Internship and work placement opportunities** for students in the Schools of Engineering, Business and Aviation to gain first-hand understanding of what to expect in desired career fields upon graduation; and

- **Entrepreneurship courses** available as electives for all students regardless of their program of study. These courses provide students with a structured framework for use in exploring their future enterprise ideas and then developing a comprehensive business plan as they proceed toward establishment. Ongoing mentor support is available both to students and alumni as they continue even beyond graduation toward the startup and growth of their business.

**Q: What strategies does the college use to facilitate continuous improvement in teaching practices?**

**Prof Zabalawi:** The New Kuwait Vision 2035 places emphasis on nurturing youth toward a creative and competitive mindset so they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to embrace new opportunities

the individual to remain current with new knowledge, technology and workplace practices. In this light, to empower students with active personal management of their futures, an important part of the experiential learning process is for students to take direct responsibility for the planning and completion of their project work, either as an individual exercise or as part of a team. Accordingly, faculty step back from being the primary source of learning to being facilitators, mentors and even co-learners. As part of this, increasingly a flipped classroom approach is used whereby students are required to manage their own pre-class reading and preparation, thereby enabling class time to be available for discussions, workshops and other active learning

To simulate the workplace environment as far as possible, there is a continuous cycle of upgrading in ACK workshops and laboratories for both equipment and related software. This investment is considerable but essential so that students have access to materials and systems relevant to their future professional needs. At the same time, ongoing expansion is scheduled for enhanced digital libraries and laboratories as well as smart classrooms.

Associated professional development programs are available for faculty and other staff so they are skilled in usage of new technologies. Further, an incentive bonus scheme has been established to encourage excellence in research and publication in high ranked journals. Indeed, ACK is proud of the recognition received by teaching staff with their research as individuals and as part of collaborative teams. The college has a Research Center to coordinate research efforts and to assist with securing financial contributions from public and private funding sources. ACK also has a joint research committee arrangement with international strategic partner, Central Queensland University, Australia.

In addition to research papers by faculty members that have been published in journals and conference proceedings, ACK is tremendously proud of the contribution by many fourth year students toward research projects with faculty members particularly in association with their graduation projects. This has resulted in joint faculty/student research publications and therefore including the names of contributing students. These achievements are recorded in a register of published student authors.

**Q: What is meant by rounded education and why is this needed?**

**Prof Zabalawi:** For this new millennium, UNESCO established an International Commission on Education for the 21st Century which identified that for students to be fully prepared for life and work in a continuously evolving and globally connected environment, a rounded education is necessary with a focus on four key pillars of Learning to Know, Do, Be and Live Together. Other pillars have since been added including Learning to Transform Oneself and Society, Learning to Unlearn and Re-learn, and Learning to Gain Employment.



At ACK, experiential learning is presented to students through an umbrella approach referred to as CDIO, an acronym for Conceive, Design, Implement and Operate



ACK students in team learning in a laboratory

Business



Project Based Learning essentially involves learning in the process of developing a solution for a situation that can be expected upon graduation in a professional career.

Communities are now living within "Society 5.0" (Digital Society) or the Innovation Society, recognizing that individual people are increasingly part of globally focused and proactive communities where members of all ages are highly connected through smart phones. At the same time, within the workplace, enterprises are entering the age of "Industry 5.0" (The interaction of human intelligence and cognitive computing), where there is a synergy between humans, artificial intelligence and autonomous machines. Therefore, humans will need to be increasingly fluid in their thinking, learning, living and professional lives. As a result, within the education system, the emphasis must shift from What to Learn toward How to Learn so that graduates are flexible, creative, multi-dimensional and resilient.

Resilience is a term regularly used now to highlight the need especially for the next generation of graduates to maintain a positive and focused attitude when faced with disruptive change. In this regard, for con-

countries whereby students have a degree of choice as to when and where they participate in learning activities. Provided the standard of learning and assessment is not diminished and is independently validated, such blended learning is a seamless extension of lifestyle activity in association with the already ubiquitous nature of smart technology.

**Q: What is the future direction of Higher Education?**

**Prof Zabalawi:** All sectors of every economy must adapt to and preferably anticipate expected changes. Higher Education providers, by their very nature, should be at the vanguard of change through institutional research and collaborative projects with research organisations and industry. However, in recent years, higher education has been struggling to keep pace with industry based research and therefore, more emphasis is now required to re-establish such partnerships. Perhaps this might be facilitated by the recognition and appointment of industry expert facul-



Students from ACK have achieved success in many contests

enrichment of the next generation of commercial, industry and community leaders. Personal exposure to higher education within a shared environment is vital for balanced, responsible and engaged citizenship in a multicultural and globalized world.

**Q: What have been the major achievements at ACK to date?**

**Prof Zabalawi:** The Australian College of Kuwait was established in 2004, as one of the first private higher education institutions in Kuwait. Students are able to undertake follow-on diploma and bachelor degree studies through the 2 + 2 model with the first two years providing an optional exit point with a diploma, followed by immediate or delayed continuation for a further two years for a bachelor's degree. This provides flexibility for those students wishing to gain an initial qualification and then benefit from some work experience prior to rejoining their studies.

At present, the college offers bachelor degree programs in Engineering (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical

Civil Aviation in Kuwait (DGCA), the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The English Language programs are accredited by the Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality Language Services (EAQUALS). ACK itself is accredited for provision of private higher education programs by the Kuwait Private Universities Council (PUC).

In line with the experiential learning approach that has been adopted across all programs at the college, faculty members use various strategies to bring the workplace environment into the classroom and equally to extend the classroom out into the workplace. Firstly, bringing the workplace into the classroom is achieved by such learning activities as Project Based Learning and Graduation Projects, each requiring students to undertake a workplace standard and approach in planning, organizing, establishing and presenting their work. Secondly, extending the classroom out into the workplace is

In their final two semesters at ACK, students prepare for and complete a major graduation project to demonstrate their synthesis of knowledge and skills acquired throughout their program of study.

tinued success in their future careers, students must be ready to continuously unlearn redundant knowledge and re-learn, based on replacement information and technology. Accordingly, part of the education process must lead to empowering students with self-authorship; the capability to look inward and outward to determine what makes sense to them for their future as an individual and as an engaged contributor to their family, workplace and community in an ongoing environment of change. In this regard, the ACK Award was established as a voluntary personal development program through which students use a template to set lifewide goals at the start of each semester and then document their progress at regular intervals with the support of a staff mentor.

**Q: What are the future plans at ACK?**

**Prof Zabalawi:** Recognizing the emphasis in the New Kuwait Vision 2035 to encourage a more diversified economy with a vibrant entrepreneurial mindset, ACK has for some time offered an Innovation and Entrepreneurship course as an elective for all students. During this particular study program, students are guided through the various licenses and other requirements needed to commence a business and the major considerations that are essential in developing a comprehensive feasibility study and subsequent business plan ready for submission to prospective

ty members within higher education. This will simplify the interchange of academic and professional experiences and ideally lead to increased and enhanced industry/academic exchange programs.

For the students themselves, self-selected or tailored degrees will enable individuals to decide the courses that are most relevant to their desired career path. Already within industry there is increasing adoption of multi-disciplinary teams in recognition of the need for specialists to work in closer communication. Tailored degrees will provide a pathway at an individual level for students to determine their own multi-disciplinary knowledge and skill set that they consider will best address their particular learning needs.

Further, as learning will be a lifelong process, there should be a more seamless flow between formal (Qualifications), non-formal (Short Term Courses) and informal learning (Unstructured and Casual Learning). Especially with online access to learning from anywhere, people are acquiring knowledge and skills through various means in their own time as well as on campus or at their place of work. Therefore, the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework will facilitate the formal recognition of non-formal and informal learning, not only within but also across borders. This is especially desirable for people wishing to

Communities are now living within Society 5.0 or the Innovation Society. As a result, within the education system, the emphasis must shift from What to Learn toward How to Learn so that graduates are flexible, creative, multi-dimensional and resilient.

investors or funding bodies. The next phase is for the college to establish an ACK Incubator as a physical location as well as an associated electronic resource for students and alumni who are ready to take the active step toward self-employment. Ongoing guidance and mentorship will be available through the center as students/alumni address each of the stages in converting their idea to a reality.

A short course on digital entrepreneurship is being developed for those students/alumni wishing to establish a totally or predominantly online business. In this regard, there are obvious indications that customers are increasingly preferring to do their shopping online from the comfort of their own home in preference to personal buying.

With regard to the general learning approach across the college, the growing emphasis will be on promoting a faculty and student attitude of 'classrooms without walls', where the strongest possible connections are established physically and online between students, industry and the environment. Virtual reality will increasingly enable students even in their classroom to be instantly and actively communicating and collaborating with industry professionals, research experts, community leaders and even student peers anywhere. This will also facilitate incremental learning so that instead of each class having to commence a project from the beginning, they can join and add to tasks already started elsewhere. There are not only academic but also cultural benefits from such networking across, as well as within communities.

Such online virtual reality shared learning does not have to be confined to the classroom. Education should not be seen as a process restricted to a physical campus and period of time at college. With smart technology, students have non-stop digital access anywhere to knowledge and communication. Blended learning has already proved most successful in many

continue their studies at higher levels, locally or elsewhere, and avoid the need to undertake formal study in subject areas where they are already proficient.

**The above should ideally be part of an officially endorsed, National Strategic Plan for Higher Education that would also include such considerations as:**

- More flexible external governance to allow individual higher education institutions to be more responsive to market shifts and preferably anticipate these.
- National MIS (Management Information System) framework for the higher education sector to facilitate collection and sharing of key information and statistics.
- National Communications Network, including a shared national electronic library for faculty and student research.
- Facilitation of joint and advanced research programs within Kuwait, the Gulf and beyond, and with universities, scientific research organizations and industry.
- Greater emphasis on promoting lifelong learning so that initial graduation is seen by professionals and their workplaces as the first step in a continuing process of upgrading knowledge and skills to escalate career opportunities associated with emerging products, services and technologies.
- Potential International Educational collaborations with ministries from other countries in and beyond the GCC for the purposes of joint cooperation in such educational fields as shared development of IT resources and virtual reality learning materials.

Higher education should be the focal point of research and advanced learning for the betterment of communities. Within increasingly disruptive living and working environments, higher education institutions must be vibrant centers of learning for the holistic



Australian College of Kuwait

and Petroleum streams) and Business (Management and Marketing streams), as well as diploma level qualifications in Human Relations and Aviation Maintenance. Foundation English Language programs are also available.

**In response to the emerging growth opportunities for graduate employment, it is proposed to offer additional qualifications including:**

- Biomedical, Environmental and Chemical Engineering.
- Business fields of Accounting, Banking and Finance.
- Aviation programs in Airline and Airport Maintenance, Air Traffic Management, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Commercial Pilot Training, Aviation and Airport Operations Management.
- Maritime diploma.

These new programs are presently being developed in communication with our international strategic partner and will bring to Kuwait the latest and best transnational educational practices.

The continued growth of ACK over the past 15 years since establishment is confirmed by the statistics. From an initial enrolment of 228 students, the college has steadily grown to a current population of over 3000 students and in excess of 400 staff. As at December 2019, more than 8000 students have completed their studies at diploma or bachelor degree level.

arranged through on-the-job internships that are available for all engineering, business and aviation students as well as regular site visits by classes and accompanied by supervising faculty.

Outside the classroom, ACK offers a range of sporting and other club activities for the wider development of students. In addition to recreational endeavors, there are also more career oriented clubs such as the Robotics Club as well as ACK Student Chapters of Engineers Australia, IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers), and the Society for Petroleum Engineers. In addition, the college facilitates involvement by students in national and international sporting and academic related competitions at which ACK teams have enjoyed considerable success. For instance, ACK students gained first, fourth and fifth places in the Kuwait Annual Huawei ICT Skills competition. As a result, the college was well represented at the international final held in China.

Students from ACK have also achieved success in many other contests including the National Robotics competition (organized by SACGA), General Electric Competition, IEEE SYP Congress Robotics Competition (ACK team took first place), IEEE SYP Congress Projects Competition (ACK team in first place), INJAZ Kuwait Company Program Competition (with ACK gaining the Best Company Award and Best

To ensure that ACK students are benefiting from learning that is relevant to their future careers, the college has established three ACK Industry Advisory Boards that include representatives from local industries and businesses.

ACK has always determined to offer programs of learning that are of international standard but tailored to the local marketplace. Accordingly, all diploma and degree level qualifications in the Schools of Engineering and Business have been reviewed and endorsed by international strategic partner university, Central Queensland University (CQU) in Australia. Further, as evidence of the industry relevance and standard of ACK qualifications, accreditation has been achieved for all School of Engineering programs from Engineers Australia (EA), and for all School of Business programs from Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). The School of Aviation is accredited by many local in and international agencies including the Directorate General of

Innovative Product for the Year 2019), and the INJAZ Al-Arab Regional Competition (where the ACK team was nominated among the top three companies with Social Impact).

Each student has a dedicated academic advisor who is available online and in person for guidance and support regarding any academic matters, including course progression and graduation requirements. For non-academic matters, Student Affairs and Student Counselling staff are also available electronically or face to face so that students are able to discuss wider personal matters and be guided to professionals as needed. These services reflect the primary core value of ACK which is to 'enable human potential within a culture of care'.

Health & Science

# As China virus spreads, fear spreads faster

**PARIS:** Inflamed by past scares and Hollywood disaster blockbusters, few things feed collective panic like a virus, experts said Thursday, as China locked down the epicenter of a deadly flu-like outbreak. AFP spoke to health specialists to find out why this is the case, and what can be done to limit the spread of worry.

**Why so scary?**

"There is an innate sense of fear around disease outbreaks, principally because it is an invisible enemy to the human eye," said Adam Kamradt-Scott, an expert in the spread and control of infectious diseases at the University of Sydney. "This generates a level of fear, as no-one can really know if they have been infected until symptoms develop, by which time it may be too late."

Unlike bacterial infections, which can be treated by antibiotics, viruses respond to very few treatments, according to Sanjaya Senanayake, associate professor of medicine at The Australian National University. "Also, respiratory viruses, such as influenza, seem to spread more easily from person to person than bacterial infections, and therefore have a higher outbreak potential," he said.

The outbreak has so far claimed 26 lives across China. Authorities say there have been more than 800 confirmed cases, with infections reported in several Asian countries and the United States. Science historian Laurent-Henri Vignaud said popular culture plays an underappreciated role in conditioning populations to fear pandemics. "It's like in horror films where those infected become zombies," he said. "It's extremely unsettling because it calls into question the social bond. We come to fear the sick."

**What can authorities do?**

The main driver of anxiety over the new strain of virus is likely to be its similarity to SARS, a viral lung infection which killed nearly 650 people across mainland China and Hong Kong in 2002-2003. The Chinese government took months to report SARS and initially denied World Health Organization experts any access.

This time Beijing has locked down some 41 million people in several cities, closing roads and suspending rail and flight routes to contain the virus. But Tom Solomon, a professor at the University of Liverpool, warned that quarantine could be "counter-productive".

"It can increase the level of panic, and just cause people to flee by other means," he said. It is necessary to limit not only the spread of the virus, but also the fear it provokes, according to Rania MacIntyre, head of the Biosecurity Research Program at the Kirby Institute at the University of New South Wales.

"Health authorities need to find the balance between providing transparent information to the community without causing panic," she said. Kamradt-Scott said it was incumbent on authorities to effectively "counter conspiracy theories and rumors". Communication by authorities was poor during the last global pandemic scare, of avian flu in 2009, said Vignaud. "The World Health Organization went straight away to the maximum alert level," thus causing panic, he said.

**What does history tell us?**

For Vignaud, the fear of epidemics spans much of our history. "What comes to mind most is the plague" that spread periodically through Europe in the Middle Ages, he said. Franco-Croat historian Mirko Grmek last century came up with the theory of pathocenosis — that each epoch of human history will have diseases that fit their particular context.

Vignaud said this includes economic, political and social conditions, as well as those diseases perceived to be the most dangerous. He gave the examples of cholera and tuberculosis in the 19th Century, which were helped to spread by the water pollution, overcrowding and lack of cleanliness that came with rapid urbanization.

The modern-day fear of a pandemic — a truly global killer — stems from globalization, according to Vignaud. "The good side of it is you can take a plane and in a few hours' time be anywhere on the planet," he said. "The flip



**WUHAN:** Medical staff members wearing protective clothing to help stop the spread of a deadly virus which began in the city, walk next to patients (left) waiting for medical attention at the Wuhan Red Cross Hospital in Wuhan yesterday. — AFP

side is that the virus can now travel with you."

**What role does media play?**

"The media has a crucial responsibility to ensure that only accurate, factual information is reported, and needs to refrain as much as possible from speculation and hyperbole in these types of events," said Kamradt-Scott.

But the nature of 24-hour news cycles could neverthe-

less stoke fears with blanket coverage of what ultimately has only affected a few hundred people worldwide thus far, according to Senanayake. "They need to keep reporting it till they feel that the outbreak is under control and no longer newsworthy," he said. "With this outbreak, because it is in its infancy, I think it is reasonable for the media to keep updating the public as new information comes to light." — AFP

CLINIC  
PAGE

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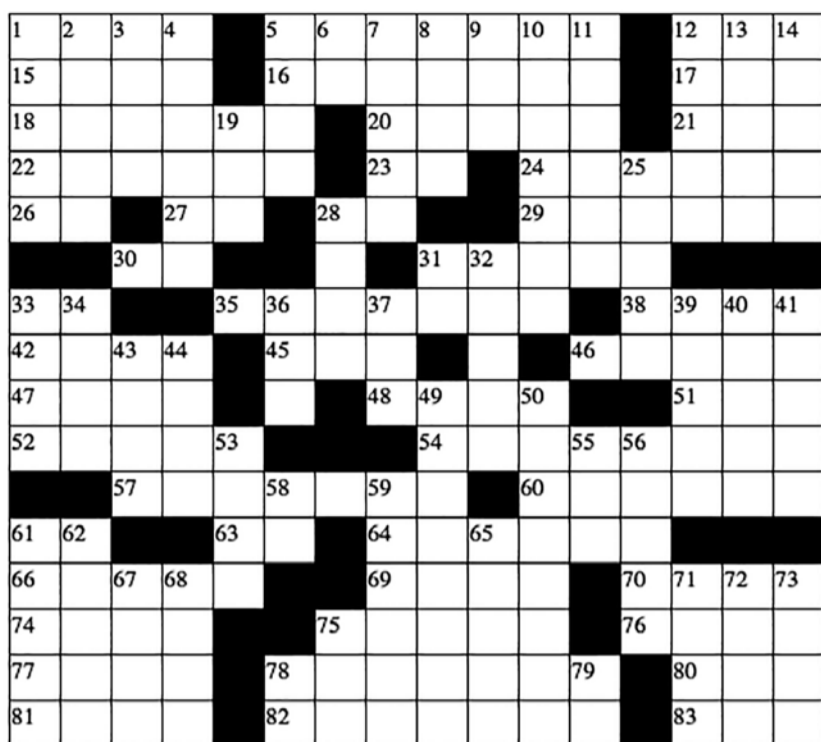
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2419



- ACROSS**
- Small deciduous Asiatic tree bearing large red or orange edible astringent fruit.
  - The largest island of Denmark and the site of Copenhagen.
  - A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
  - (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
  - The slender spear of the Bantu-speaking people of Africa.
  - A tube in which a body fluid circulates.
  - A deep bow.
  - United States artist whose work reflected social and political themes (1898-1969).
  - (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
  - South American cavy.
  - A soft yellow malleable ductile (trivalent and univalent) metallic element.
  - One of the two branches of the Finno-Ugric family of languages.
  - A state in midwestern United States.
  - An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
  - Paralysis of the vocal cords resulting in an inability to speak.
  - A linear unit of length equal to 12 inches or a third of a yard.
  - The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
  - A language of Australian aborigines.
  - A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
  - An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
  - A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
  - A noisy riotous fight.
  - An aromatic ointment used in antiquity.
  - Goddess of fertility.
  - A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
  - (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
  - A check issued in payment of wages or salary.
  - The father of your father or mother.
  - Affectedly dainty or refined.
  - 1,000,000,000 periods per second.
  - An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
  - Characterized by intense emotion.
  - Made of grated potato and egg with a little flour.
  - Wild or seedling sweet cherry used as stock for grafting.
  - Fabric dyed with splotches of green and brown and black and tan.
  - Other than what is under consideration or implied.
  - A complex red organic pigment containing iron and other atoms to which oxygen binds.
  - (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
  - The network in the reticular formation that serves an alerting or arousal function.
  - An association of people to promote the welfare of senior citizens.
  - A state in the southeastern United States on the Gulf of Mexico.
  - Large northern deer with enormous flattened antlers in the male.
- DOWN**
- A river of southwestern Africa that rises in central Angola and flows east and then north (forming part of the border between Angola and Congo) and continuing northwest through Congo to empty into the Congo River on the border between Congo and Republic of the Congo.
  - (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
  - Informal terms for money.
  - A hostel for pilgrims in Turkey.
  - The battle in 202 BC in which Scipio decisively defeated Hannibal at the end of the second Punic War.
  - A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.
  - State in northeastern India.
  - A Loloish language.
  - Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
  - A member of any of various Indian peoples of central Mexico.
  - A small wooded hollow.
  - A means of serving.
  - An island of central Hawaii.
  - (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
  - A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
  - (the feminine of raja) A Hindu princess or the wife of a raja.
  - A city in northern India.
  - A Russian river.
  - A sheet or band of fibrous connective tissue separating or binding together muscles and organs etc.
  - South African term for 'boss'.
  - Water frozen in the solid state.
  - A run that is the result of the batter's performance.
  - Not contained in or deriving from the essential nature of something.
  - Show a response or a reaction to something.
  - Permitting leaks or leakage.
  - (informal) Exceptionally good.
  - The sixth month of the civil year.
  - A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
  - English physician (1624-1689).
  - (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and raised by hand.
  - Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc.
  - A period of time spent in military service.
  - A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
  - An Asian temple.
  - South African plant widely cultivated for its showy pure white spathe and yellow spadix.
  - The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
  - A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
  - The financial means whereby one lives.
  - A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
  - The food served and eaten at one time.
  - A city in the Asian part of Russia.
  - (computer science) The smallest discrete component of an image or picture on a CRT screen (usually a colored dot).
  - An informal term for a father.
  - A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today may find you more impulsive than you usually are. You seem to be direct and outspoken when dealing with others today. You desire a fresh start. Your mind is on new beginnings and developing new habit patterns. Out with the old and in with the new. The consequences of the choices and decisions you make today will be long lasting. Take your time and put much thought into the changes you are making. Remember, acting on impulse is not always the best way to handle decisions and problems. Change can be good as long as you take the time to think things through and realize every action has a consequence.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today may find solutions to old problems seem to fall in your lap. Ideas and dreams may easily turn into realities. You have a strong sense of independence today. You are a one of a kind. Others may see you as quite eccentric. You are special and full of life. Communication with others comes natural. Clear thoughts of the past may be flowing today and you are able to really get in touch with your inner self. You know what you want and you are determined to achieve your goals.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may be entering a phase of directness and impulsiveness. You could find yourself experiencing powerful and forceful feelings. Your emotions are at an all time high. You seem to be craving a new start, some sort of new beginning is what you feel you need. New habits will start to be developed. These are habits that will have lasting effects on your life. Make sure these are positive things for you because they will have a long-term effect on your life. You may find that your mind is in overdrive. Slow down and think things through before making any big decisions. Do not act in haste.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Will find you entering a phase of directness. You may be very impulsive. You may want to bite your tongue to prevent putting your foot in your mouth. Others could find this quite offensive. Try and remember to take a moment to think before you speak. You should have no problem getting your point across to others, whether it be positive or negative. Try and remember to keep things positive today and put on a happy face to avoid conflict. This is a great day for new beginnings. Out with the old and in with the new.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You are not lacking charm today. It seems as if everyone is drawn to you. Today is the date to make the date or apply for the job you have been thinking about. Others will be drawn to you today. You crave a fresh start. Out with the old and in with the new. Reach out to mend fences and ask for new beginnings. This is a time in your life where new habit patterns will be developed. Make sure they are good ones. Actions have consequences and these new habits will have lasting effects on your life. Make yourself known, Leo. This is a time for you to shine.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today finds you direct and impulsive. What a combination! Powerful emotions are the driving force behind your mood. You may want to count to ten before you speak today. You are driven to make a fresh start. New beginnings are what you desire. This is a great time to make decisions and changes you will stick to. Make sure they are good ones. New habits will set the tone for quite some time in your life. A good day to keep to yourself to avoid conflict with others. That mouth could get you in trouble.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today is a day of high energy and quick thinking. Your mind is sharp but your tongue is sharper. Be sure and wash your feet this morning as you may find yourself with one in your mouth. Stop and take a breath before responding to any negativity you encounter. Ask yourself if you had rather be right or if you had rather be happy. You may find biting your tongue is worth keeping the peace. Don't get carried away under pressure and make any hasty decisions. Take some time to think things through today before making any major decisions.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Powerful and forceful feelings seem to be your driving force today. A mixture of being outspoken and impulsive could be a dangerous recipe. You may want to practice biting your tongue. You could end up with your foot in your mouth if you aren't careful. A fresh start is what you crave. This is a great time to start new habit patterns. Make sure these are good ones, because your actions have consequences and these will be long lasting.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your artistic temperament is in conflict with your practical self today. What you are doing may be fun and aesthetically satisfying, but it is producing the income you need? Look for a project that is creative and financially profitable. You have many talents. You don't have to settle for either/or. You can have it all.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find yourself having emotional differences with someone. This could cause you to become frustrated. There may be someone or something that just doesn't feel right to you and you are unable to put your finger on it. Trust your gut on this one. You are usually a great judge of character and able to know who and who not to keep in your circle. This is one of those people that you do not need to allow to become a part of your life. You can save yourself some heartache by walking away.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Communicating with others comes naturally to you today. You seem to have a gift when it comes to getting your point across with ease. It seems as if clear thoughts about the past flow freely through your mind today. You seem to have great understanding of the feelings of those around you. This is a great time to have a really special moment with someone you love. You may find that bonds are strengthened, and you will feel closer than usual to this person. A great foundation for the future may be built this evening with the one you love.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a great day for your career wise. You may be just the one for the job that is coming available. It is an awesome day of harmony with not only your friends but with your co-workers. Your ideas and input are greatly appreciated today. Stick to your routine and stay true to yourself and you will experience a great sense of admiration from others. Even though today may find you in a very impulsive mood, resist temptation and think long and hard about decisions you make today. You may be facing some life changing decisions. This is not only a great day to organize your thoughts but also work on organizing your affairs and surroundings.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Lights, Camera, Action!

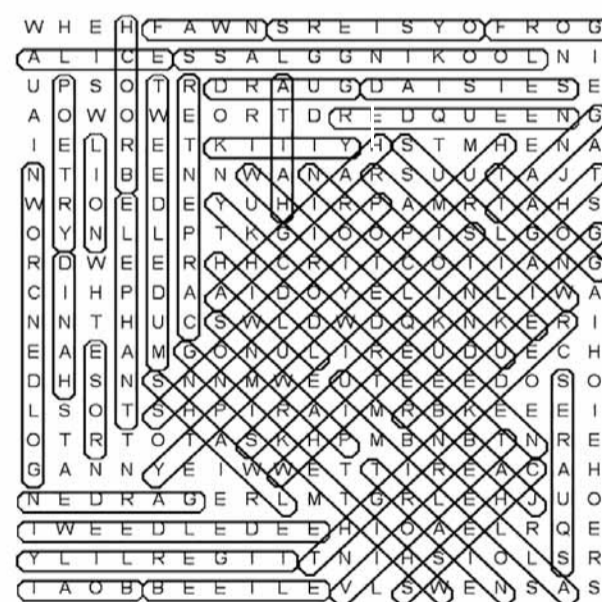
Find and circle all of the movie related terms that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a Roger Ebert quotation.

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

- |                 |             |                 |                    |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ACTOR           | DOCUMENTARY | PREQUEL         | SOUNDTRACK         |
| ADVENTURE       | DRAMA       | PROJECTOR       | SPECIAL EFFECTS    |
| ANIMATION       | ENDING      | PROP            | STAR               |
| BIOGRAPHY       | EPIC        | REEL            | STILL              |
| BLACK AND WHITE | FAMILY      | REMAKE          | STORYLINE          |
| CAMERA          | FANTASY     | RETAKE          | STUDIO             |
| CINEMATOGRAPHY  | FILM        | ROMANCE         | SUPPORTING ACTRESS |
| CLASSIC         | HERO        | SCENERY         | SUSPENSE           |
| CLOSEUP         | HORROR      | SCIENCE FICTION | THEME              |
| COLOR           | MAKEUP      | SCREEN          | THRILLER           |
| COMEDY          | MUSICAL     | SEQUEL          | TWIST              |
| COSTUME         | PLOT        | SILENT          |                    |

Friday's Solution

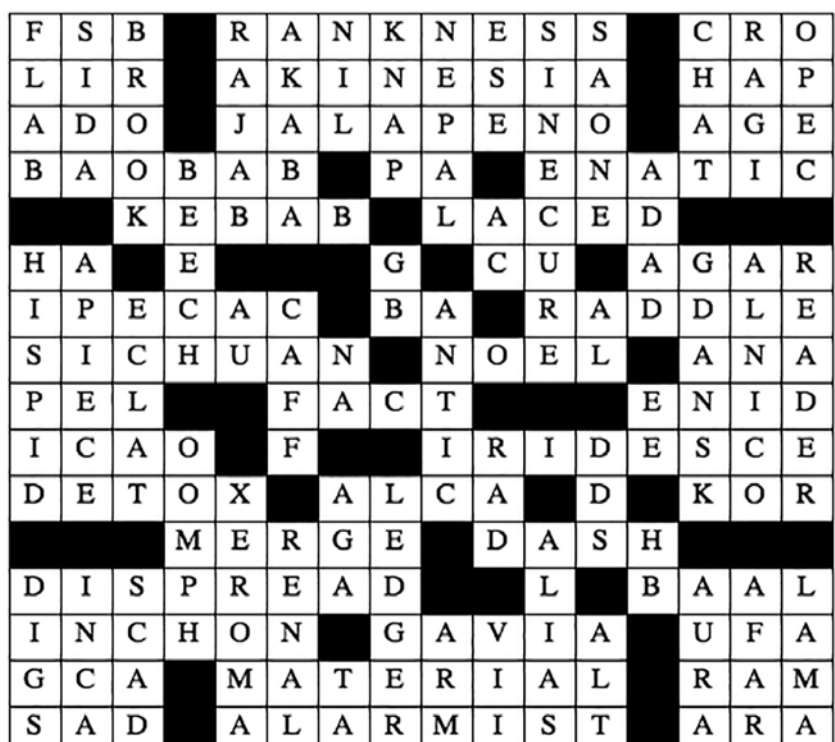
Through the Looking Glass



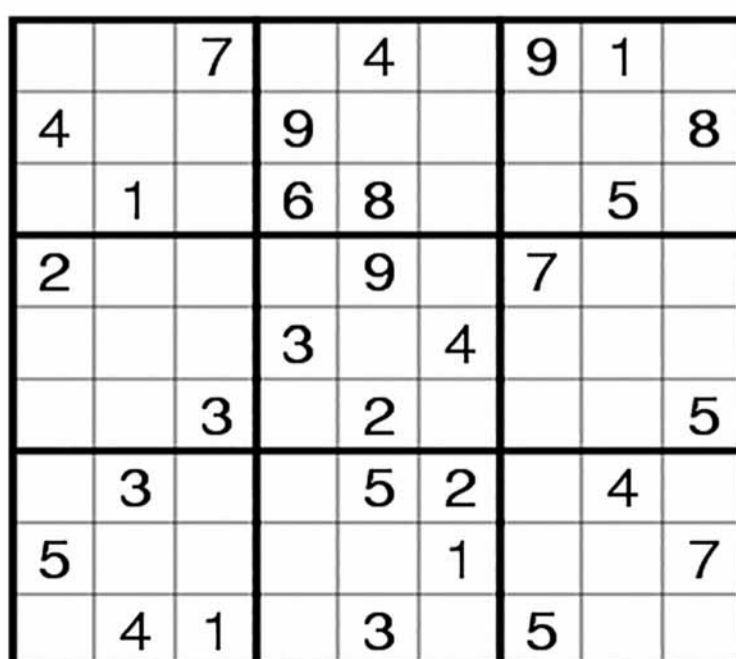
- |           |               |            |              |
|-----------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| ALICE     | GNAT          | OYSTERS    | TIGER-LILY   |
| BEETLE    | GOAT          | PAWNS      | TRAIN        |
| BOAT      | GOLDEN CROWN  | POETRY     | TWEEDLEEE    |
| BROOD     | GUARD         | RATTLE     | TWEEDLEDM    |
| CARPENTER | HAIGHA        | RED KING   | UMBRELLA     |
| CHESS     | HATTA         | RED KNIGHT | UNICORN      |
| DAISIES   | HILL          | RED QUEEN  | VIOLET       |
| DINAH     | HAPPY DUMPTY  | ROSE       | WALRUS       |
| ELEPHANT  | JABBERWOCKY   | SHAWL      | WHITE KING   |
| FAWN      | KITTY         | SNOWDROP   | WHITE KNIGHT |
| FROG      | LION          | SOLDIERS   | WHITE QUEEN  |
| GARDEN    | LOOKING GLASS | SQUARES    |              |

Hidden sentence: WHEN I USE A WORD, IT MEANS JUST WHAT I CHOOSE IT TO MEAN - NEITHER MORE NOR LESS.

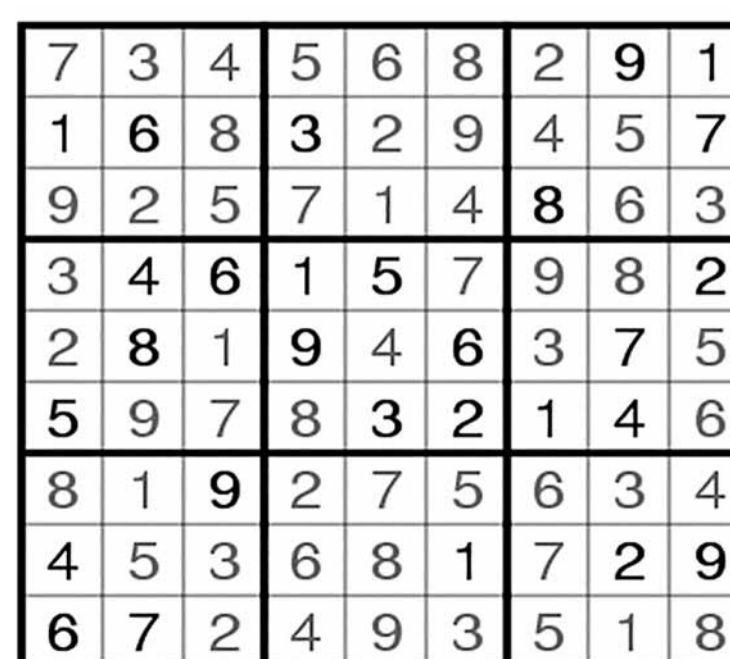
Friday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Friday's Solution



# Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2020



People watch fireworks at a temple on the first day of the Lunar New Year in Medan yesterday. — AFP photos



People wear masks as they pray at Wong Tai Sin temple on the first day of the Lunar New Year of the Rat in Hong Kong.



Members of the Chinese community perform a lion dance as they welcome the Lunar New Year of the rat in Kolkata.

## VIRUS ANXIETIES CAST SHADOW OVER YEAR OF THE RAT FESTIVITIES



People perform a lion dance, referred to as "barongsai" in Indonesia, at a temple on the first day of the Lunar New Year in Pekanbaru.



A lion dance team member wearing a mask prepares to perform outside a Chinese temple on the first day of the Lunar New Year of the Rat in Banda Aceh.



People pray during the Lunar New Year at a temple in Kandal Province in Cambodia.

Chinese communities in Australia and New Zealand were among the first to greet the Year of the Rat yesterday but Lunar New Year celebrations globally were marred by anxieties about the virus outbreak that has disrupted festivities in China. Sydney, home to a large and growing Chinese population, started its Lunar New Year festivities in subdued fashion after China cancelled many large-scale celebrations of the holiday on concerns about the coronavirus, which has also reached Australia.

Australia's largest city welcomed the year with golden rats statues set up at the entrance to its downtown Chinatown precinct. "We don't know if quite as many people will come this year because of the coronavirus and I'd like to especially acknowledge Wuhan city government," Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore said, referring to the central Chinese city considered the epicentre of the virus.

One hundred community Lunar New Year events are billed across Sydney until Feb 11, including dragon boat races and the annual lunar lantern display. The festivities last year attracted 1.5 million people. Australia confirmed its first four cases of the virus on Saturday, joining France, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore and other countries outside of China that have reported infections.

The death toll from the outbreak in China has reached 41 while more than 1,300 people have been infected globally. For China's 1.4 billion people, the holiday is the most important and millions travel thousands of miles back to their hometowns to gather with family and friends. To control the spread of the virus, authorities closed part of the Great Wall and suspended public transport in many cities, stranding millions.

Chinese state television's traditional Lunar New Year extravaganza on Friday paid tribute to the people of Wuhan and to medical staff fighting the coronavirus crisis, urging them on to victory in the battle to defeat the outbreak. Many events, such as making offerings at temples, wandering around at outdoor festival fairs, and even family reunion dinners at restaurants have been cancelled as public gatherings were discouraged.

Young people posted on social media appeals to reduce family gatherings or to at least wear masks when greeting one another with New Year's wishes, which is typically seen as disrespectful in the Chinese culture. In Wuhan, the most affected city, the mood was nervous. "There's so much news, so much data, every 10 minutes there's an update, it's frightening, especially for people like us in a severely hit area," Lily Jin, 30, a resident of the city, told Reuters.



The concerns surrounding the Lunar New Year festivities are not confined to China. Zhao Xiaoli, a tour guide from Eastern China's Anhui province said while visiting Thailand for the celebrations that precautions have been taken. "(We have advised tourists to) avoid crowded places, take care of personal hygiene, and go to see a doctor immediately if they show symptoms of flu, fever and coughs," he said. — Reuters

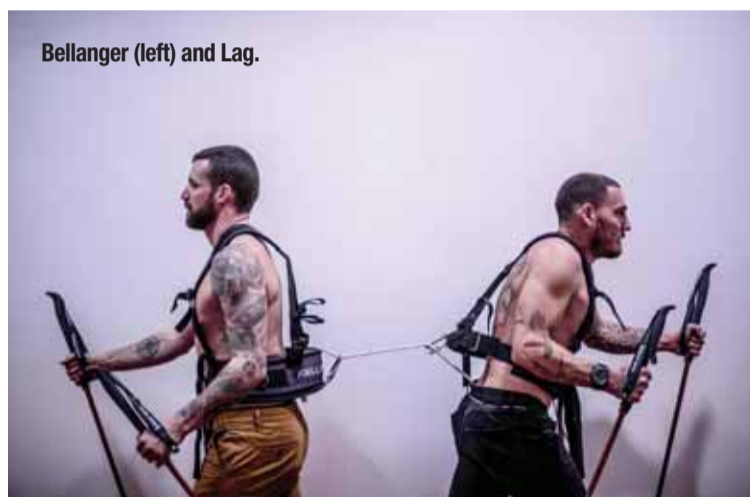
People take photos with young lion dancers performing in Chinatown in Bangkok on the first day of the Lunar New Year.



This picture taken on Friday shows people walking through decorations for the Chinese Lunar New Year in the southern Thai province of Narathiwat.



Bellanger (left) and Lag.



## FRENCH ADVENTURERS TRAIN FOR ARCTIC EXPLOIT

French explorers at ski Matthieu Bellanger (ahead) and Lorry Lag train in Alta, Finnmark Region, Northern Norway, on Jan 14, 2020, ahead of an expedition of 130 days planned at the end of February, aiming at crossing the continent from East Canada to West Alaska through the North-West route, with 60kgs of survival equipment. — AFP photos

A bluish glow spreads across the snow as far as the eye can see, a few bare trees dotting the windy plateau. In this remote corner of Norway's far north, two French adventurers are training for their next big exploit. Next month, Matthieu Bellanger and Lorry Lag, both in their 30s, will leave eastern Canada for Alaska in a 130-day expedition passing through the famed Northwest Passage in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago.

They also plan to climb Denali, the highest peak in North America known formerly as Mount McKinley. They have come to Alta, located at a latitude of 69.5 North, to seek out conditions similar to the extreme latitudes where they're headed, where temperatures

easily plummet to minus 25 or minus 30 Celsius. Unfortunately, the Norwegian winter is a little mild this year, with the mercury dropping to just minus 5 C during the day and minus 10 C at night. But at least a snowstorm has brought a good dumping of the white stuff.

There are only four hours of daylight at this time of year, in the morning. The sky is whitish-blue, the sun barely managing to creep above the horizon. The tattooed adventurers practice their routines over and over again, so they can do them quickly in case of extreme cold and strong winds. They set up and take down their tent in a few minutes, and pack their sleds meticulously, the same way every time.

The sleds, which they will pull with a harness around their waists, will each weigh around 60 kilos at the start of their journey, carrying everything they need to survive. Their sleeping bags are designed to withstand temperatures as low as minus 60 C, and they will mostly eat freeze-dried food during the expedition. A friend, top chef Armand Arnal, has also prepared a few sous vide (vacuum sealed) dishes for when they need a special pick-me-up. And to drink, they have as much snow to melt as they could ever need. — AFP

French explorers Bellanger and Lag drink a hot beverage under their tent.



A couple of reindeers walk in the highland.



## French sewing fans to the rescue of Aussie kangaroos

The plight of baby kangaroos and koalas orphaned by Australia's bushfires has prompted a sewing frenzy in France, where an appeal for cloth pouches for the animals has reaped thousands of contributions. The call for international help was first issued by Australia's Animal Rescue Collective Craft Guild and promptly shared by the Australian Park, a wildlife reserve in the southwestern French town of Carcassonne.

Within a few days, schools, retirement homes and sewing enthusiasts had begun churning out small bags in which to swaddle the stranded creatures. "We were completely surprised and overwhelmed by the outpouring of generosity that came from all parts of France," Carole Masson, the park's director, told AFP. The apocalyptic wildfires that ravaged vast tracts of southern and eastern Australia over the past five months have killed an estimated one billion animals, an ecological disaster unprecedented in the country's history.



Carole Masson, director of Australian Parc, uses a mobile phone while holding Diego.

Rescue workers have been searching forests strewn with charred animal corpses for creatures that survived. Baby marsupials that lost their mothers to the fires or fell out of the pouches in which they were carried while fleeing the flames are seen as particularly vulnerable. To continue developing they need to be bottle-fed and placed in a surrogate pouch, which needs to be regularly changed because it collects the baby's urine and feces.

"You need thirty per baby kangaroo," said Masson, a biologist who is herself rearing a six-month-old kangaroo joey that fell out of its mother's pouch in the park in Carcassonne. On the day AFP visited the reserve, her assistant Annia Aubry was giving sewing instructions over the phone to a volunteer. "No, you can't use synthetic fabric," she says, adding that a so-called French seam that folds in all extraneous fabric is required to avoid the young marsupials snagging their claws on the stitching. Size also matters, with koalas, possums, wallabies and other marsupials all requiring pouches of different proportions.

### Outpouring of donations

Such has been the reaction to the appeal, which was widely covered by local media, that the park has stopped accepting pouches and is now recruiting volunteers to sort all the donations. Masson attributed the massive public response to a desire by people to act in the face of disaster and "be part of the solution, at their own level." In the northern coastal town of Boulogne-sur-Mer last week, a group of women armed with sewing machines gathered in the social centre to do their bit for Australia's biodiversity. Over the course of five days, they stitched a hundred pouches, using fabric donated by local residents.

Francine, a volunteer in her sixties, told AFP that the initiative had "restored my faith in human nature". "We're living in an individualistic world where everyone is focused on their phone. This was a nice project that brought people together," she said. In Carcassonne, ten women aged 30 to 60 took part in a pouch-making workshop. The French have also dug deep to help ship the wraps to Australia in February, with a crowd-funding campaign raising nearly A\$13,000 (\$14,400) towards the cost. — AFP



Diego, a six-month old kangaroo who prematurely left his mother, sits in a wool bag at the Australian Parc in the French southern city of Carcassonne on Jan 20, 2020. — AFP photos



Masson selects bags for kangaroos she received from different places in France before sending them to Australia.

## In Utah, 'saving lives' with breast milk

In a world where sharing is so popular it has its own economy, women in Utah have a new item to contribute: Breast milk. The Mountain West Mothers' Milk Bank is the first of its kind in Utah, the US state with the highest birth rate and therefore great need, as well as a wealth of potential milk donors. Since the bank began operating late last year in Salt Lake City, more than 550 local women have volunteered.

Annette Thompson began donating in March after giving birth to her third child, spending 10-15 minutes every three hours pumping. "This is my little piece of helping someone else. My body can do it, so I will do it," she said. Thompson had realized she was a prolific milk producer when she had her first two children - she used to pump excess milk and save it in her freezer, before ultimately throwing it out as she ran out of space to store food.

A few years later, when her niece was in the hospital and needed milk, she learned that donating was possible. So when she had her daughter in March, she posted on Facebook to inquire if anyone needed extra. She was connected to the milk bank and after undergoing a health screening, including a blood test, Thompson became a donor.

Nearly 10 percent of babies born in the United States are premature, and the bulk of the milk collected by the bank goes to nourish infants in neonatal intensive care. Often when a baby is born early the mother's body is unable to produce milk, or not able to produce enough, so donor milk is sought. Breast milk is valued above formula for newborns because it contains a range of vitamins, minerals, fatty acids, immune factors, antibodies and stem cells. "It primes the gastro-intestinal tract, so those babies get protections from infections from the get-go," said Mariana Baserga, who runs the University of Utah's neo-natal intensive care unit.

### Saving lives

Once the Utah bank receives milk from donors, it is pooled, pasteurized and packaged in doll-sized three ounce containers to be shipped out to hospitals across Utah and neighboring Idaho. Ken Richardson, its medical director, compares donating mothers to first responders

and the military. "That's what they are doing, saving lives," he said. "It's an act of selfless service to pump and to provide breast milk and to do it for hours and days and months. They do it without any payment. It's an act of pure love."

In the 1980s when the AIDS epidemic hit, it had a devastating impact on milk banks in North America and around the globe. "They closed overnight because peo-



Human milk donor Annette Thompson poses with her baby, Millie, the inspiration for her milk production at their home on Dec 13, 2019 in Payson, Utah. — AFP photos

ple were worried," says Naomi Bar-Yam, formerly on the board of directors of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA).

At the time there were between 50 and 60 milk banks in the United States and Canada, but within a very short time there were only a half dozen left. Those figures have since partially recovered - with 26 accredited milk banks now operating nationwide. That episode was the catalyst for the founding of HMBANA, the professional organization that sets guidelines for the safe collection and dispensing of human milk - and whose standards are now used across the globe. — AFP



Jenny Collins holds her infant son Hayes, born two weeks early in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Intermountain Healthcare's American Fork Hospital on Dec 16, 2019 in American Fork, Utah.

Lifestyle | Music



In this file photo, Recording Academy President and CEO Deborah Dugan speaks during the 62nd Grammy Awards Nominations Conference at CBS Broadcast Center on Nov 20, 2019 in New York City. — AFP photos



Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani attend the Warner Music Group Pre-Grammy Party at Hollywood Athletic Club on Jan 23, 2020 in Hollywood, California.



Wiz Khalifa attends the Warner Music Group Pre-Grammy Party.



Singer Bebe Rexha attends the 11th Annual GRAMMY in the Schools Live! A Celebration of Music & Education presented by Ford Motor Company Fund at The Wilshire Ebell Theatre on Jan 23, 2020 in Los Angeles.

# Grammys set to honor music's best, but scandal overshadows gala

Los Angeles is gearing up for the Grammys, music's marquee night, with Lizzo, Billie Eilish and Lil Nas X leading a pack of young, talented contenders hoping to strike gold today. But revelations of infighting at the Recording Academy, which organizes the awards show, and an explosive allegation of rape has cast a dark shadow over the glitzy gala and rattled the institution's efforts to shed its out-of-touch image.

On Tuesday, Deborah Dugan - the first woman to head the Academy, a move meant to usher in a new era for a body long accused of favoritism and a lack of diversity - filed an explosive discrimination complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. She says she was suspended after raising concerns over sexual harassment, voting irregularities and other misconduct within the Academy, one of music's most influential organizations.

In the complaint, the former CEO - who was put on leave last week days before her filing, accused of bullying behavior - also alleged that her predecessor, Neil Portnow, had raped a foreign female musician, an allegation he has rejected as "ludicrous and untrue". The ongoing tempest is swirling in stark contrast with the Recording Academy's efforts to reinvent itself, and thereby appease critics who long have lambasted the Grammys

as too white, too male - and too generous to music world mainstays.

### Diverse nominee field

This year's diverse slate of nominees - which celebrates a mix of established and budding stars - did appear to be a move in a new direction. Leading the pack is the effervescent 31-year-old Lizzo - beloved by fans for her sassy, body-positive persona and unflinching messages of feminist empowerment, sexual freedom and black pride. She nabbed eight nominations, including in all the top four categories.

The 18-year-old goth-leaning pop iconoclast Billie Eilish and the genre-bending overnight sensation Lil Nas X, 20, both have six chances at Grammy gold, while the enigmatic 22-year-old R&B prodigy H.E.R. has five. The newbie frontrunners will square off against veteran powerhouses including Ariana Grande and Beyonce, as well as alt-leaning acts Lana Del Rey, Bon Iver and Vampire Weekend. The shift follows years of sharp critique from top-tier artists including Frank Ocean, Drake and Jay-Z, who have all slammed the Grammys as irrelevant, especially citing its failure to recognize black artists.

### Diverse wins 'more possible'

For John Vilanova, a professor at Lehigh

University who has extensively researched the intersection of race and gender at the Grammys, this year's field of nominees is evidence of "an environment that feels more possible" for different kinds of artists to have a chance. "It's quite interesting, to see what will happen when you have artists who are really having their first chance at this," he told AFP. "Their work is being appraised by the academy for the first time."

In her first public interview since unveiling her scathing allegations that the Academy is a "boys' club" where powerful men line their pockets and promote a misogynistic culture with impunity, Dugan told ABC's "Good Morning America" on Thursday: "I actually wanted to make change from within." In her complaint, she said that some nominated artists have sat on the voting boards for their prospective categories. But when asked if the Grammys are "rigged", Dugan sidestepped. "I was trying at each step to take a deep breath and say, 'OK, I can make a difference. I can fix this, I can work with this team,'" she told the ABC morning news program.

### 'Old Town Road' all-star show

Though one-time Grammy darling Taylor Swift is up for several awards including Song of the Year, many mainstay artists are not "looming significantly" over the ceremony as

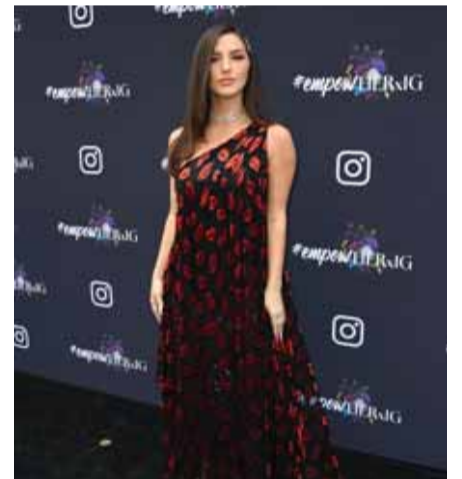
they have in years past, Vilanova said. "They aren't leading the discourse, they're afterthoughts - and when has Taylor Swift been an afterthought?"

Often remembered as much for its performances as its winners, the Grammys will feature Lizzo, Eilish and Grande, along with a genre-blending rendition of Lil Nas X's mega-hit "Old Town Road" that will feature K-pop sensation BTS, country star Billy Ray Cyrus and the eclectic DJ Diplo, among others. Artists including John Legend, Meek Mill and DJ Khaled - all up for Grammys this year - will perform a tribute to the late rapper Nipsey Hussle, who was shot dead last year and is up for three posthumous awards.

Though the Recording Academy drama has threatened to cloud the gala, Vilanova said that in terms of expanding possibilities for artists, the Grammys appear to be taking baby steps toward structural change. "I hesitate to call it a sea change - progress in these areas rarely happens in a straight line," he said. "It's not that one artist should win - what we want to ask is, 'Do the Grammys actually represent what the music industry sounds like and looks like?'" — AFP



Laura Marano attends Instagram's GRAMMY Luncheon.



Njomza attends Instagram's GRAMMY Luncheon on Jan 24, 2020 in Los Angeles

## Celebs join in as Dolly Parton launches meme

Celebrities from Mark Hamill to Miley Cyrus as well as some surprising Twitter users such as the Israel Defense Forces have joined in after US country singer Dolly Parton launched a meme that has gone viral. "Get you a woman who can do it all," the legendary singer tweeted on Tuesday alongside her meme showing four different pictures of herself that she could use on four different social media platforms - LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Tinder.

The photos ranged from a professional-looking Parton for LinkedIn to a Playboy pose for Tinder. The tweet has since gone viral, inspiring the #DollyPartonChallenge that has led to a host of celebrities, companies and individuals taking up the Dolly challenge. "Dolly's setting worldwide trends shouting out platforms she don't even use," Cyrus wrote on Instagram, captioning her four pictures with a string of hashtags including #myfairygodmotherisaqueen.



An editor looks at a monitor showing different memes inspired by #DollyPartonChallenge in Los Angeles on Jan 24, 2020. — AFP

"Where @DollyParton goes, I follow," tweeted former California governor and movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger with his four-picture effort. The British Transport Police also got in on the fun tweeting "We meme business" with its pictures. Parton, 74, is among the most prominent women in country music and one of the Nashville-based industry's most prolific songwriters. Her greatest hits include "Jolene" "9 to 5" and "It's All Wrong, But It's All Right." — AFP



# FIVE THINGS TO WATCH FOR AT THE GRAMMYS

Music's glitterati will sparkle on the red carpet at this today's Grammy awards, which honors the top hits and artists of the year. Scandal at the Recording Academy, which puts on the show, has overwhelmed the lead-up to the glam event, but there are still plenty of musical moments to watch for. Here is our quick guide to the event, which will take place at the Staples Center in Los Angeles:

### Women poised to lead

Women dominated at last year's gala and are leading the pack this year as well, with the twerking flautist Lizzo and the teenage goth-pop phenomenon Billie Eilish expected to battle for the top awards. The Academy has long come under fire for failing to recognize women and people of color. So in recent years, it expanded the nominee field from five to eight in the major four categories: Album of the Year, Song of the Year, Record of the Year and Best New Artist.

Both Lizzo and Eilish are nominated for all of the "big four" prizes. Other female frontrunners vying for Grammys gold include Lana Del Rey - whose 2019 album was considered by many critics as the best of the year - and R&B prodigy H.E.R., who is up for five awards and last year won two. Pop sensation Ariana Grande is also among the top nominees, while flamenco revivalist Rosalia, up for Best New Artist, could become a rare Spanish-language winner in the general categories.

### Generational shift

Lizzo, Eilish and Lil Nas X are the top three contenders of the night with a combined age of 69 - a figure once closer to the average age of just one veteran star that would dominate the night. The generational shift could mark a new era for the Recording Academy, which has long favored older pop and rock mainstays. Eilish, who first gained fame online, was just 17 when the nominations were announced, making her the youngest artist ever to be up for all four top Grammy awards.

Her songwriting partner and brother Finneas, 22, meanwhile has five chances at Grammys glory. Fans are expecting a rager of a performance from Lizzo, who routinely slings back tequila from the bottle onstage. Fashion watchers will also be on red alert

for the boisterous star's latest ensemble - she donned a fluffy, hot pink Marc Jacobs jacket to this year's Met Gala, which she proudly wore as she strutted through a New York airport the morning after.

### 'Old Town Road' all-stars

Lil Nas X, the brain behind the year's ubiquitous earworm "Old Town Road," will take the stage to perform a pumped-up rendition of his country-trap smash. His Grammy co-nominee for Record of the Year, Billy Ray Cyrus - who lent the song country-world street cred when Nashville snubbed it - will join him on stage, as will the eclectic DJ Diplo and K-pop mega stars BTS.

The video-sharing app TikTok propelled the young rapper to fame - his song went viral and ultimately broke the record for the longest stretch atop the Billboard hot songs chart at 19 weeks. The genre-bending mega-hit was removed from Billboard's country music charts early last year - which critics alleged was industry white-washing as the artist is black. Lil Nas X is bound to impress on the red carpet; the rapper is known for his campy Western outfits complete with fringe, vests or hats in garish colors.

### Barring none

Two artists who faced major legal troubles in 2019 - Meek Mill and 21 Savage - are up for Best Rap Album. Mill ended his controversial legal saga in August after pleading guilty to a misdemeanor gun charge dating back more than a decade - a move that lifted the probation he dealt with



for most of his adult life. The plea deal, which saw additional charges against Mill dropped, resolved a case that had become a flashpoint in the national debate over the US criminal justice system's treatment of black people.

21 Savage was meanwhile arrested just before last year's Grammys gala in his hometown Atlanta, with US immigration agents saying he had been living stateside illegally since overstaying a visa that expired in 2006, when he was a minor. The shock arrest surprised fans, who discovered the rapper - strongly associated with the southern capital of hip-hop - was in fact born in Britain.

### Nipsey Hussle tribute

Mill - along with artists including DJ Khaled, John Legend and Roddy Ricch - will perform a tribute to the late rapper Nipsey Hussle, who is posthumously up for three awards after losing out on Best Rap Album to Cardi B in 2019. The Eritrean-American born Ermas Asghedom was shot dead last March at age 33 in broad daylight, triggering an outpouring of grief in Los Angeles and among Hussle's superstar peers, who hailed both his musical talents and tireless community organizing.

Both Legend and Khaled are up for a Grammy with Hussle for "Higher", a collaboration released after the rapper's death. Long part of the underground rap circuit, Hussle struggled to find fame but began selling his own mixtapes. Hip-hop royalty Jay-Z once bought 100 of them - for \$100 each. — AFP





In this file photo taken on Sept 24, 2019, models present creations by Maison Dior during the Women's Spring-Summer 2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show at the Hippodrome de Longchamps in Paris. — AFP

## HOW FASHION USES GREENWASHING TO HIDE DIRTY SECRETS

Paris fashion fortnight began last week with an apocalyptic warning. "Our Mother Earth will not be able to support life, we will not be able to breathe... If we don't open our hearts and our minds, it's the End," a disembodied voice intoned as hot Hollywood label Rhude made its Paris debut. The very next show, Phipps' "Treehugger, Tales of the Forest", was teased on Instagram with pictures of rescued koalas from the Australian wildfires. It was another sign that fashion now sees itself on the climate change frontline.

But when AFP questioned Rhude designer Rhuigi Villaseñor backstage, he admitted there was nothing sustainable about his collection. He had found the stirring speech on the internet the day before, and didn't know who had made it. But he insisted his clothes were "timeless" and would "live through ages and trends".

Campaigners say such "greenwashing" is typical of an industry "that is talking the talk but not walking the walk" on sustainability. While Rhude is a young brand, it has a starry roster of clients from Justin Bieber to rapper ASAP Rocky and Ellen DeGeneres. Yet some of the most fabled luxury houses in fashion - even some whose designers are activists for change - have found themselves caught short.

### Luxury labels in dock

Dior's last women's show played hard on its eco-credentials. Set amid trees that were later used to create urban parks, it went heavy on eco-friendly hemp and raffia with models in Greta Thunberg plaits. Designer Maria Grazia Chiuri told AFP that nature and "humans need to live together if humanity is to survive." "It is not just about image but action," she added.

Weeks later a damning report by the Changing Markets Foundation on toxic pollution caused by viscose production put Dior and a swathe of other luxury labels including Prada, Versace, Fendi, Armani, Miu Miu and Marc

Jacobs in the dock. Dolce & Gabbana came in for particular criticism. The much-vaunted biodegradable fabric - which often is used like silk, has been seen as a silver bullet for fashion's eco woes, a way to wean it off synthetic fibres that come from the petrochemical industry.

While some fast fashion groups like H&M, C&A and ASOS - which luxury labels blame for fashion's pollution and runaway overproduction - were praised for making progress in the in-depth "Dirty Fashion Disrupted" study, designer labels were excoriated. "Three quarters of the luxury brands we looked at were failing to take any meaningful action to clean up their viscose supply chain," its author Urska Trunk told AFP.

Viscose, which comes from wood pulp, is now the third most used fibre in the world and "genuinely has the potential to be a sustainable", Trunk added. "Unfortunately most of it is still produced in a very dirty process," causing water pollution and an alarming array of mental illnesses, strokes and cancer close to factories in India, China and Indonesia. While she lauded British designer Stella McCartney for her transparency and ambition, "with most of the other luxury brands it is lip service, mostly hollow words... And that is a major concern."

### Spin but little change

The report is the foundation's second tracking whether brands were cleaning up their act. With only a handful of firms producing almost all of the world's viscose, Trunk said pressure from brand could make "a massive difference". For Christie Miedema, of the Dutch-based Clean Clothes Campaign, brands have become expert as "eco messaging" with "one-off collections or clever initiatives to make it look like they are doing something" without actually changing the way they operate.

Versace, which came bottom only to Walmart in the Changing Markets table, made the front pages by sending Brazilian super-

model Gisele Bundchen to New York's Met Gala in a "100 percent green eco-dress" while Prada - which is also deep in its "red zone" - got admiring media coverage for their Re-Nylon "eco handbag". Dior is part of LVMH, the world's biggest luxury group. Unlike its main rival Kering and 24 other major clothing companies, LVMH pointedly refused to sign up to "The Fashion Pact" on fighting climate change at the G7 summit last year.

### 'They will be found out'

Owner Bernard Arnault - the world's richest man - later criticized teenage activist Greta Thunberg for "surrendering to total catastrophism" even as he appointed McCartney his personal advisor on sustainability in September. Kering - which controls Gucci and Saint Laurent - has since said it has gone carbon neutral and has vowed to halve greenhouse gas emissions in its supply chain within five years.

Joel Hazan, luxury goods analyst at the Boston Consulting Group, said the industry "had passed a tipping point", and warned those who pretend to embrace sustainability would be found out. "The demographics will make the difference," he told AFP. "Eight out of 10 millennials expect labels to play a strong part socially and environmentally."

Since almost all growth in luxury goods in the next five years "is predicted to come from millennials, brands have no choice" but to change, Hazan argued. Indeed Vetements, the hot youthful rebel brand which has shaken Paris fashion in recent years, used its men's show to pour scorn on its elders with slogans such as "Cutting down the bulls\*\*t", "Fully sustainable show" and "It costs \$0 to be a nice person". — AFP

## Weinstein drew up 'red flag list' of women

Harvey Weinstein told a private investigator to approach women he suspected were detailing sexual misconduct allegations against him to journalists, his rape trial was told Friday, as the court heard from Oscar-nominated actress Rosie Perez. Two months before the #MeToo movement ignited in late 2017, the then Hollywood titan emailed a "red flag list" of people he wanted investigated, prosecutors and a witness said in the high-profile proceedings which began hearing testimony this week.

The list included dozens of names, some of which were highlighted in red to indicate individuals that the now-disgraced movie producer was most concerned about. They included the actress Rose McGowan, who Weinstein claimed was trying to extort him, and "The Sopranos" actress Annabella Sciorra, who accused him of rape in graphic testimony on Thursday. Weinstein, 67, faces life imprisonment if convicted of predatory sexual assault charges related to two women.

He is accused of raping actress Jessica Mann in 2013 and of forcibly performing oral sex on former production assistant Mimi Haley. Investigator Sam Anson told the New York court that he received the email from Weinstein on Aug 17, 2017 but did not carry out his instructions. Anson, who now works for LA-based Guidepost Solutions but then ran his own firm, testified that he also had a telephone conversation with Weinstein around the same time. "He said that there was concern that articles were being written about him that would discuss his sexual conduct in a negative way," Anson recalled.

### 'He'll destroy me'

The New York Times and New Yorker magazine detailed sexual assault allegations against Weinstein in Oct 2017, sparking the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment. More than 80 women, including Hollywood stars Angelina Jolie and Salma Hayek, have since accused him of sexual misconduct. Actress Rosie Perez, nominated for an Academy Award for best supporting actress for 1993 film "Fearless," testified Friday that she spoke to Sciorra on the phone the night of the alleged attack almost 30 years ago.

Weinstein waved at her as Perez was

asked to pick him out in the courtroom. "Annabella said, 'I think something bad happened. I think it was rape,'" Perez, 55, said. Several months later, in 1994, she learned from Sciorra that the perpetrator had been Weinstein, Perez added. "I said, 'Please go the police.' But she said, 'I can't, he'll destroy me.'" Defense attorney Damon Cheronis accused Perez of contradicting the account she gave journalist Ronan Farrow in his New Yorker article when she said she learned of the attack well after it occurred. He said now her story "mirrored" Sciorra's.

The prosecution also called former playboy model Kara Young who told the court that while watching the 1994 Oscars at a friend's house she noticed that Sciorra had cuts on her upper thighs. "She said she was cutting herself," Young, 45, said, bolstering Sciorra's testimony that she started self-harming after the alleged attack.

### Rape 'myths'

Weinstein says all his sexual relationships were consensual. Defense attorneys have presented correspondence between Mann and Weinstein which they say show the pair were "in a loving relationship". Early Friday, the prosecution called forensic psychiatrist Barbara Ziv to dispel several "myths" surrounding rape. Ziv, who testified when comedian Bill Cosby was convicted of sexual assault, said victims of sexual assault commonly remain in contact with their attacker for years after the incident. "That contact can range from text messages to emails to continuing a relationship with them," she said.

The psychiatrist said victims often keep quiet because they possess some sort of affection for the abuser or because the perpetrator may also have the power to wreck their job and other relationships. "I can handle this trauma but God forbid they could ruin the rest of my life and make it impossible for me to go on," victims sometimes think, Ziv said. Cheronis challenged Ziv on whether women ever report a consensual sexual encounter as a rape years later "out of shame". "Anything is possible, (but) it's not usual," she replied. The trial continues. — AFP



Model Kara Young arrives at New York City Criminal Court for the continuation of Harvey Weinstein's trial on Friday in New York City. — AFP

## Richard Mille opens new boutique in Salhia Complex

Richard Mille is pleased to announce the official opening of a new boutique at the Salhia Complex, one of Kuwait's most iconic premium shopping malls that first opened its doors in 1978. The new 74 square meter boutique, operated in partnership with Ali Bin Ali, is the latest addition to Richard Mille's network of retail locations as part of a regional expansion strategy and growth of the brand since its inception in 2001.

Peter Harrison, CEO of Richard Mille Europe, Middle East and Africa comments "We are delighted to open a new boutique in Kuwait as we continue to strengthen our presence in the Middle East region. This is in line with our ongoing program of developing stand-

alone Richard Mille boutiques to cater to our local clients and offer them a truly exceptional brand experience."

Located on the Ground Floor, the new Salhia Complex space includes several of Richard Mille's emblematic boutique features such as Wenge wood parquet floor, black leather walls and engraved glass panels that provide the perfect backdrop to showcase the brand's finest horological creations. Guests can relax and browse through the extensive timepiece collections in two dedicated VIP sections for a fully exclusive and privatized experience.

A combination of precision engineering and technical excellence has made Richard Mille one of the world leaders in fine Swiss watchmaking inno-

vation. The boutique showcases a diverse selection of timepieces, including models from the whole collection: sports, lifestyle watches, high-performance tourbillons as well as limited editions. As the brand continues to expand, this is the third new location for Richard Mille in the Middle East among other scheduled boutique openings in UAE and KSA in the last six months.

The new Richard Mille boutique is located in the Salhia Complex, Ground Floor, Mohammad Thunayan Al-Ghanim Street and is open from Saturday to Thursday 10 am to 10 pm and Friday 5 pm to 10 pm.



# Classifieds

Sunday, January 26, 2020

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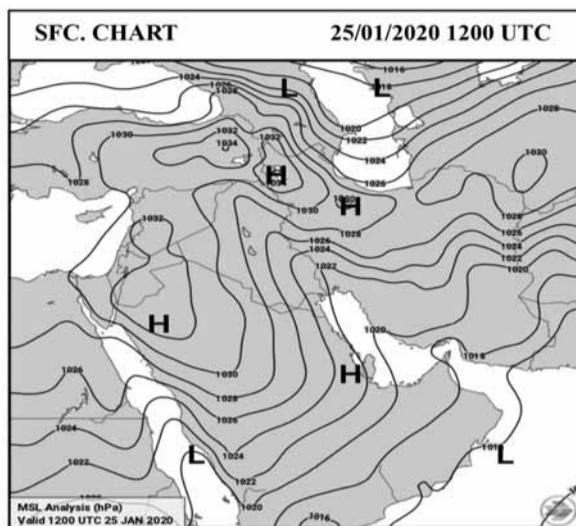
## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY NIGHT:** Cold and Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

**BY DAY:** Rather cold with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 50 km/h with a chance for rising dust.

WEATHER WARNING: No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.
KUWAIT CITY	16 °C	11 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	16 °C	04 °C
ABDALY	15 °C	08 °C
BUBYAN	16 °C	10 °C
JAHRA	17 °C	08 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	16 °C	12 °C
AHMADI	17 °C	12 °C
NUWASIB	18 °C	07 °C
WAFRA	17 °C	08 °C
SALMY	15 °C	05 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	01/26	Rather cold with a chance for rising dust	17 °C	04 °C	NW	20 - 50 km/h
Monday	01/27	Rather cold	17 °C	05 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h
Tuesday	01/28	Cool and Clouds will increase gradually with a chance for scattered light rain later on	19 °C	05 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	01/29	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	21 °C	07 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 35 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:18
Sunrise	06:41
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:00
Sunset	17:21
Isha	18:41

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	19 °C
MIN. Temp.	04 °C
MAX. RH	91 %
MIN. RH	28 %
MAX. Wind	S 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

## CHANGE OF NAME

**Shaikh Baba** Alaudeen S/O Shaikh Baba, holder of Indian Passport No. P1094143, Civil ID No. 274071201684, shall henceforth be known as Shaikh Baba (surname) Shaik Alaudeen (given name). (C 5620) 26-1-2020

**I Ceeyantagath** Mannagadiyan Ashraf, F/O Ahnaf Ceeyantagath Mannagadiyan Ashraf residing at Ceeyam New House, Ayikara, Poovalap, Cannanore 17, Kerala, holder of Passport No: N1900966 issued at Kuwait on 19.08.2015

have changed my minor son's name as Given Name: Ahnaf Ashraf, Surname: Ceeyantagath Mannagadiyan. (C 5619)

**I Ceeyantagath** Mannagadiyan Ashraf, F/O Alameen Ceeyantagath Mannagadiyan Ashraf residing at Ceeyam New House, Ayikara, Poovalap, Cannanore 17, Kerala, holder of Passport No: R2316678 issued at Kuwait on 26.03.2017 have changed my minor son's name as Given Name: Alameen Ashraf, Surname: Ceeyantagath Mannagadiyan. (C 5619) 23-1-2020

## 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](http://www.kuwait-airport.com.kw))

## DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 26/1/2020				Departure Flights on Sunday 26/1/2020			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
AIC	989	Mumbai	00:10	JZR	215	Jeddah	00:05
FEG	241	Alexandria	00:30	QTR	1093	Doha	00:25
JZR	254	Amman	00:45	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
NIA	561	Asyut	00:45	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:45
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	AIC	990	Mumbai	01:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
KAC	102	London	00:55	FEG	342	Sohag	01:30
KAC	504	Beirut	00:55	NIA	364	Alexandria	01:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JZR	119	Dubai	01:55
ETH	3424	Addis Ababa/Bahrain	01:30	KAC	677	Dubai	01:55
DLH	625	Dammam	01:30	JZR	111	Doha	01:55
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:00
PGT	840	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:55	THY	773	Istanbul	02:20
JZR	002	LGW	01:55	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:30
IGO	1759	Delhi	01:55	KAC	417	Manila	02:30
UAE	853	Dubai	02:15	PGT	841	Istanbul	02:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	ETH	3425	Addis Ababa	02:55
RBG	551	Alexandria	02:25	IGO	1765	Delhi	02:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	RBG	552	Alexandria	03:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	UAE	854	Cairo	03:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	621	Doha	03:50
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:05	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	QTR	1087	Doha	04:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	04:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:00	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:25
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	JZR	713	Sohag	04:30
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KKK	1269	Istanbul	04:35
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	JZR	707	Luxor	04:40
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:30	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	04:40	KAC	103	London	05:00
JZR	406	Kochi	04:45	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	358	Kochi	05:10	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:30
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	THY	771	Istanbul	06:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	JZR	121	Dubai	06:35
KAC	382	Delhi	05:20	JZR	113	Doha	06:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:20	JZR	001D	LGW	06:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	RJA	649	Amman	06:55
JZR	112	Doha	05:35	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
QTR	8511	Doha	05:45	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
JZR	216	Jeddah	05:50	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:55	QTR	8512	Doha	07:45
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00
KAC	344	Chennai	06:10	IGO	1767	Mumbai	08:10
JZR	120	Dubai	06:50	KAC	165	Rome	08:15
KAC	544	Cairo	07:00	KAC	161	Geneva	08:20
KAC	678	Dubai	07:05	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	BAW	156	London	09:00
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	163	MXP	09:00
KAC	622	Doha	08:00	JZR	539	KTM	09:05
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	JZR	731	Cairo	09:10
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	691	Muscat	09:20
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	671	Dubai	09:35
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	QTR	1085	Doha	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
KAC	304	Mumbai	09:30	KAC	101	London	09:45
KAC	384	Delhi	09:30	KAC	561	Amman	09:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	KAC	117	New York	10:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	791	Madinah	10:00
JZR	114	Doha	10:20	KAC	613	Bahrain	10:05
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	JZR	301	Istanbul	10:05
JZR	714	Sohag	10:50	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:15
JZR	708	Luxor	10:55	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:20
QTR	122	Dubai	11:15	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	KAC	617	Doha	10:35
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
GFA	209	Bahrain	12:05	JZR	211	Jeddah	10:40
MSR	610	Cairo	12:25	JZR	611	Tbilisi	10:45
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	QTR	1071	Doha	11:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	KAC	741	Dammam	11:05



This aerial Friday photo shows excavators at the construction site of a new hospital being built to treat patients from a deadly virus outbreak in Wuhan in China's central Hubei province. — AFP

## Pompeo loses temper, curses at journalist over Ukraine questions

WASHINGTON: Shouts, glares and unprintable words: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo lost his temper and cursed at a journalist, repeatedly "used the F-word" in a shouted diatribe after she questioned him on the administration's stance on Ukraine, a country at the heart of President Donald Trump's impeachment trial. It began when Pompeo gave an early morning interview to NPR radio. Much of the discussion dealt with Iran, but journalist Mary Louise Kelly closed by asking Pompeo about Ukraine.

Democrats accuse Trump of abusing his office by pressuring Kiev to investigate his potential election challenger Joe Biden, a charge for which Trump has been impeached and is currently facing trial in the US Senate. Pompeo, a close associate of Trump, has been accused of personally failing to defend Marie Yovanovitch, Washington's former ambassador to Ukraine who was abruptly called home last spring after being subjected to a smear campaign led by Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal lawyer. "Do you owe Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch an apology?" Kelly asked Pompeo.

A tense exchange followed, wherein Pompeo said he had "defended every State Department official", while Kelly asked, in vain, when he had publicly defended Yovanovitch. "I've said all I'm going to say today. Thank you," Pompeo said finally, ending the interview. But the story didn't end there, and Kelly related the rest in an NPR broadcast on Friday evening. She said she thanked the secretary, who did not reply but leaned in and glared at her before leaving the room.

A staffer then invited Kelly to Pompeo's private living room, without her recorder. There, Pompeo "was waiting and... he shouted at me for about same amount of time as the interview itself lasted," Kelly said. "He was not happy to have been questioned about Ukraine," Kelly said, adding that the secretary asked her "do you think Americans care about Ukraine?" while saying swear words. Pompeo then asked his advisers to bring out a map of the world without the countries labeled, to prove that Kelly knew where Ukraine was located. "I pointed to Ukraine. He put the map away," Kelly said. "People will hear about this," said Pompeo, who has publicly attacked journalists in the past. — Agencies

## US Space Force logo draws comparisons to 'Star Trek'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump unveiled the logo of Space Force on Friday, attracting critics who said America's newest military branch had boldly gone where Star Trek went before. With a central symbol resembling an arrowhead, ringed by an orbiting object and set to a starry backdrop, many users argued the design was pilfered from the famous science fiction franchise. But a spokesman for the branch hit back, arguing the "Delta" emblem had been used by Air Force space organizations as early as 1961, before the first Star Trek show aired.

"After consultation with our Great Military Leaders, designers, and others, I am pleased to present the new logo for the United States Space Force, the Sixth Branch of our Magnificent Military!" wrote Trump of the branch that he championed and which came into being in Dec 2019. It drew immediate mockery among social media users. "Should've been consulting with Gene Roddenberry's lawyers," said the popular "Pourmecoffee" account, referring to the late screenwriter and producer of Star Trek's original series and its



first spin-off, "The Next Generation."

The logo bears an uncanny resemblance to the insignia of Starfleet - the peacekeeping and exploration force of the United Federation of Planets alliance, which is headquartered on Earth whose adversaries include Klingons and Romulans. It has appeared as a pin on the uniforms of iconic Star Trek characters such as Captain Kirk and Spock ever since the original series debuted in 1966, and continues to feature in the franchise's current shows and movies. — AFP

## Xi warns of 'grave' situation as China...

Continued from Page 1

Late Thursday, a Kuwait ministry of health spokesman said the ministry is following up the outbreak of the coronavirus and has taken all required measures to confront the deadly virus. In a press statement, Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad assured that all sectors of the ministry are ready to deal with any relevant emergency. He clarified that the entire health sector has been equipped with all necessary equipment and devices to confront and stop the spread of the deadly virus.

The ministry has also issued instructions to doctors and health practitioners about how to deal with suspected infected cases, he said. Sanad stressed that the ministry has, in coordination with other state bodies, taken all preventive and precautionary measures to confront the virus. The ministry is also coordinating with relevant international and regional organizations in this regard, he said. "Airport clinics and isolation rooms are well equipped and thermal cameras are added to border crossings," the statement added.

In Wuhan, the epicenter of the emergency, 450 military medics were deployed to help treat patients in Hubei's capital city, where a seafood and live animal market has been identified as the center of the outbreak. Yesterday, when they should have been celebrating the New Year, people waiting at one hospital in the city were angry and frustrated. "It takes at least five hours to see a doctor," one woman, who didn't want to be named, told AFP. One man in his 30s said some people had to queue for two days. Many people had brought their own chairs for the wait.

Wuhan authorities will race to build the second makeshift hospital within a fortnight, state media reported, adding 1,300 new beds. They already started work Friday on a new field hospital, which state media said could be ready in just over a week. The two hospitals would be similar in size to the temporary facility that was built to tackle SARS in Beijing in 2003, when 650 people died from the disease in the mainland and Hong Kong.

The army medics, who arrived on military aircraft late Friday, include doctors with experience combating SARS or Ebola and will be dispatched to hospitals that are reportedly short on beds due to a crush of infected patients and worried locals. The virus has caused global concern because of its similarity to SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). The new virus has now infected people nationwide and in nearly a dozen other countries, with France saying three cases were confirmed there - the first known European infections.

On the eastern outskirts of Wuhan, Hubei's capital, police manning a roadblock turned away a handful of vehicles trying to exit the city. "Nobody can leave," an

officer told AFP. But the police allowed some medical workers who had gone home for the holidays to re-enter the city to help at crowded hospitals. "They need us to go there, otherwise they will be too exhausted," said one of the women, pulling a suitcase.

Trapped residents were stocking up on masks, gloves and disinfectant while car traffic will be severely restricted from today. The city has a shortage of medical supplies including goggles and masks, according to the official Xinhua news agency, which added that the government has shipped 14,000 protective suits and 110,000 pairs of gloves to Wuhan. "Everyone is just trying to protect themselves," said a man in a surgical mask at a busy pharmacy whose staff wore protective suits.

Foreign citizens were set to be evacuated from Wuhan within the next few days. US Coffee chain Starbucks said it would shut all its stores in Hubei during the Lunar New Year festival for the "health safety" of staff and customers. The government says most of the cases have been in Hubei and most of the deaths involved people who already suffered pre-existing health conditions.

Underscoring fears that the virus could spread further, overseas Chinese tour groups will be suspended from tomorrow while domestic trips have already been halted. Beijing will suspend long-distance bus service entering and leaving the capital of 20 million people from today due to "requirements of epidemic prevention and control," the official People's Daily newspaper reported. The National Health Commission also ordered nationwide measures to detect and isolate people carrying the virus on planes, trains and buses across the country. Xinhua said yesterday that temperature screening checkpoints have been set up in 387 railway stations across the country.

Meanwhile, tourists from Hubei in Haikou, capital of the island province of Hainan, were told by the city government they had to spend 14 days in a hotel for centralized medical observation, and were forbidden to leave. Beijing's Forbidden City, Shanghai Disneyland and a section of the Great Wall are among many attractions that have closed as a precaution. China's film box-office earnings for Lunar New Year's Eve on Friday were just one-tenth of last year as people shunned crowds.

Xi chaired the Communist Party leadership meeting which urged regional governments to make "the safety of the masses' lives and their physical health a top priority", state media said. Xinhua said the Standing Committee agreed to set up a working group that would visit Hubei. In Hong Kong, where five people have tested positive for the virus so far, city leader Carrie Lam declared the situation an "emergency" and schools, currently on holiday, will remain closed until Feb 17. The World Health Organization on Thursday stopped short of declaring a global emergency, which would have prompted greater international cooperation, including possible trade and travel restrictions. — Agencies

## Rescuers scramble to find survivors after...

Continued from Page 1

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of condolences to Erdogan. The Amir expressed deepest condolences for the families of the victims and wished speedy recovery for the injured. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also condoled with Erdogan on the victims of the earthquake, which also destroyed public and private properties. HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a similar cable.

The Turkish government's disaster and emergency management agency (AFAD) said 42 people had been rescued alive from collapsed buildings in Elazig. Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said earlier yesterday 22 people were estimated to be trapped under the rubble. Turkish news channels showed live images of people rescued. Among those found alive was a woman called Azize who had contacted emergency authorities and spoken to a rescue worker by telephone, state news agency Anadolu reported.

Nearly 2,000 search and rescue personnel were sent to the region while thousands of beds, blankets and tents have been provided, the presidency said. The rescue efforts have been taking place in freezing temperatures as wood and plastic were burned to keep crowds warm.

Hundreds of people were anxiously waiting on the other side of police barriers including a man who gave his name as Mustafa. "I have three relatives in that building: One man, his wife and her mother. They are still under the rubble," the 40-year-old told AFP. "I was home during the earthquake. It lasted for so long, it was like a nightmare. I froze in the living room when it happened, my wife and our two children were screaming and running around," he said.

He added that some neighbors jumped out of the windows in panic as families including his were forced to spend Friday night on the streets. Some 20 rescuers were on top of the remains of one collapsed building, slowly clearing the rubble one bucket at a time surrounded by

broken wooden beams and concrete.

Sivrice - a town with a population of about 4,000 - is situated south of Elazig city on the shores of Hazar lake - one of the most popular tourist spots in the region and the source of the Tigris river. The lake is home to a "Sunken City", with archaeological traces dating back 4,000 years in its waters. The interior minister said 18 people were killed in Elazig while four died in Malatya. Among the 1,243 people injured were residents in other southeast provinces including Diyarbakir and Sanliurfa. Health minister Fahrettin Koca said no one was in a critical condition.

Tensions were high as one resident accused the government of lying. "They (the government) claim that only four people are trapped under the rubble. It is not true. I have five relatives in that building," Suat, a 45-year-old butcher, said. "There are four floors and three flats per floor. If there were five people per flat, do the math. Why are they lying?" Suat described the moment when the quake struck as he was at home in another neighborhood and his children "were screaming in terror".

The Ankara public prosecutor's office said it had begun an investigation into "provocative" social media posts but did not give further details. Erdogan also told citizens to "ignore gossip and negative propaganda". The tremor was felt in several parts of eastern Turkey near the Iraqi and Syrian borders as well as in Iran, Lebanon and Syria.

Environment and Urbanisation Minister Murat Kurum told reporters in Elazig that five buildings collapsed while others were badly or lightly damaged. The US Geological Survey assessed the magnitude as 6.7, slightly lower than AFAD, adding that it struck near the East Anatolian Fault in an area that has suffered no documented large ruptures since an earthquake in 1875. There have been 401 aftershocks including 14 that were above four in magnitude, AFAD said.

In 1999, a devastating 7.4 magnitude earthquake hit Izmit in western Turkey, leaving more than 17,000 people dead including about 1,000 in Istanbul. Experts have long warned a large quake could devastate the city of 15 million people, which has allowed widespread building without safety precautions. Such fears were acutely awakened in September last year when a 5.7-magnitude earthquake shook Istanbul, causing residents to flee buildings in the economic capital. — Agencies

## Kuwait summons Iran envoy over...

Continued from Page 1

at the claim that one of its air bases had been among those used to carry out the Jan 3 attack, KUNA said. It said he was referring to a statement by Brigadier-General Amirali Hajizadeh, aerospace commander of

Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

"MQ-9 UAVs (drones) were flying in the region (at the time of the attack) that had mostly taken off from Kuwait's Ali Al-Salem" base, Hajizadeh told Iranian state television Thursday. Jarallah told the ambassador, Mohammed Irani, that Kuwait had already denied any role in the deadly attack in Baghdad. He said such a claim "risks damaging relations" between Kuwait and Iran. Soleimani had been at the center of power-broking in the region for two decades as chief of Iran's external operations Quds Force of the elite Revolutionary Guards. — Reuters



## Sports

# Highway to Hell: Mayer wins famed Kitzbuehel downhill

## There were four crashes, but seemingly without any serious injury

**KITZBUHEL:** Austrian Matthias Mayer delighted home fans and achieved "every skier's dream" by streaking to a classy victory in yesterday's fabled downhill in Kitzbuehel, the most prestigious and testing on the World Cup circuit.

Mayer, gold medalist in downhill at the 2014 Sochi Olympics and in the super-G in 2018, clocked 1min 56.59sec down the thigh-trembling 3.3km-long Streif course on the Hahnenkamm mountain, making the most of the absence through injury of three-time downhill champion Dominik Paris of Italy.

Mayer's teammate Vincent Kriechmayr and Switzerland's Beat Feuz, winner of the Wengen downhill last weekend and already three times second-placed in the Austrian resort, tied for second, at 0.22sec.

Norway's reigning world downhill champion Kjetil Jansrud, winner of Friday's super-G (in which Mayer was third) and a downhill champion here in 2015, was sixth behind the French duo of Johan Clarey and Maxence Muzaton.

"It's not even a dream of every Austrian but of every skier in the world to win the race here," said Mayer. "It was amazing, especially here in front of the home crowd. There were so many people in the finish area, cheering for you."

Mayer, 29, insisted he had not been thinking about his time. "I was just focused on my skiing; trying to ski well every turn and ski fast. I wasn't sure at the end because I wasn't thinking whether I could win or not."

"Then I saw the green light! I was so happy and very satisfied with the feeling." It was perhaps telling that the deafening music played over the tannoy for Mayer's run was AC/DC's "Highway to Hell", given the exigencies of a course with a gradient of 85% in parts and where racers hit an eye-watering 100km/h (60mph) within five seconds of leaving the startgate.

The Austrian laid down a near-perfect line to master a course that falls, snakes and rolls, sending competitors barreling through a wide variety of terrain, in

parts propelling them 60 metres in the air, only for them to quickly re-align for icy traverses that severely test technical ability and mastery of well-honed equipment.

### GOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

In a race often dubbed alpine skiing's equivalent to the Monaco Grand Prix, Mayer demonstrated a perfectly weighted "risk management" reminiscent of a successful Formula One driver's: go full tilt into a chicane and you're asking for trouble.

Streaking through the line, having battled creeping exhaustion and a 3.5G centrifugal force to change direction into the final descent, Mayer looked upwards, hands raised, confident of victory to add to his super-G triumph on the same slope back in 2017.

Australian heavy rock was replaced by an Austrian marching song, the 50,000-strong crowd clapping in unison amid flares, flags and fiery alcohol, baying "Mayer" in response to the emcee's "Matthias?".

There have, needless to say, been several gruesome crashes in the white-knuckled downhill over the years.

### SLIDING BODIES

Sliding bodies, flailing skis and helicopter evacuations have become a regular feature and quickly silence the crowd. There were four crashes on Saturday, American Ryan Cochran-Siegle, Austrian Otmar Striedinger, Italian Peter Fill and German Manuel Schmid all bombing out, but seemingly without serious injury.

At each fall, the packed tribune quickly hushes, the music and big screen images cut for an odd silence to fall over the well-lubricated spectators.

Striedinger's slide into the safety netting left onlooking Mayer clutching his head and puffing out his cheeks in sympathy. A raised pole in recognition from a felled skier untangling himself from the nets and gingerly refinding his feet is then greeted by applause followed



**KITZBUHEL:** Second-placed Austria's Vincent Kriechmayr (L), also second-placed Switzerland's Beat Feuz (C) and winner Austria's Matthias Mayer (R) pose on the podium after the men's downhill event at the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup in Kitzbuehel, Austria, yesterday. —AFP

by roars for the next competitor's breath-taking descent in what becomes a gladiatorial insight into the draw of the ultimate alpine skiing test: its inherent danger.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Austrian bodybuilder/actor-cum-California governor was one of those cheering, as was American actor Patrick

Dempsey, who has moved into competing in pro-am auto racing events such as the Le Mans and Daytona endurance races.

"I always wanted to be a ski racer," the former 'Grey's Anatomy' heart-throb said. "I'm really excited to be here." —AFP

## Kuwait loses its final match to Saudi in handball championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait National Handball team lost its match with Saudi Arabia 19-24 during their meeting yesterday in the consolation rounds of the 19th Asian Handball Championship being held in Kuwait. The team continued its unsatisfactory results, committing individual and technical mistakes, as if the coaches did not read the Saudis well.

### Al-Adwani: We provided delegations with all means of comfort

Secretary of Kuwait Handball Federation, Director of the 19th Asian Championship Qayed Al-Adwani said the closing ceremony will be of high standard and will be attended by senior international guests, adding the medals and the cup were specially made in Italy for this championship.

He said "we hope tomorrow will be a good conclusion, and were happy for the arrival of cup and medals for this championship that had been away from Kuwait for 24 years." Al-Adwani was satisfied with the way the championship went, as well as organization which received appreciation from all.

### Al-Dhuwaih: We must learn from the Asian participation

Kuwait handball player Saudi Al-Dhuwaih said the team did not appear as required in the main draw due to difference in readiness with other teams. He said the players exerted good effort during the preparation period and during actual competition, in order to make fans happy, who backed the team in all matches but things did not go as wanted.

He said "we must be realistic, other teams are better prepared as we were away from competition for more than four years," he added "we are not looking for excuses, but this is reality and we should be positive for future events."

## Shiffrin fourth as Curtoni leads Italian sweep

**BANSKO:** Late starter Elena Curtoni led an Italian podium sweep of the second women's World Cup downhill in Bansko yesterday, with American Mikaela Shiffrin fourth. Shiffrin, winner of Friday's first downhill, finished behind Curtoni, who started with bib number 28 for her maiden World Cup victory, Marta Bassino and Federica Brignone.

Curtoni clocked 1min 29.31sec, with Bassino at 0.10sec and Brignone — who finished second on Friday — a further four-hundredths of a second adrift. "It's special and even more special to share with my teammates," said Curtoni.

"I was just thinking to push every turn. "It's a technical slope, turny and bumpy and you have to attack the whole way down." The Italian sweep, the fourth in the 53-year history of the World Cup, ensured no podium spot for Shiffrin, 0.35sec off Curtoni, who hit speeds of 112km/h (70mph).

The victory was 28-year-old Curtoni's first of her career, having previously made the podium just three



### Khalid bin Hamad instructed to pay rewards for Bahrain players

HH Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Higher Youth and Sport Council, President of Bahrain Olympic Committee ordered payments for the handball team on the occasion of qualifying for the World Cup finals to be held in Egypt 2021 for the fifth time in its history.

Meanwhile, Bahrain's Olympic Committee Secretary

General Mohammad Al-Nisf thanked HH Sheikh Khalid for his support of the national teams and his encouragement. On the other hand Iraq ended ninth in the tournament after its 4th consecutive win against Hong Kong with the score of 42-25 in the fourth round yesterday, Iraq had eight points, while Hong Kong had four, losing its first match in this round.

Australia defeated New Zealand 37-24, following a good performance by the Aussies.

times. A fourth place on the back of her downhill win, just the second of her storied career, further consolidated Shiffrin's spot on top of the overall World Cup standings.

Shiffrin, a technical specialist who has proven increasingly adept at the speed events, said the 2.4km-long course in the Bulgarian resort had differed slightly from 24 hours earlier. "I felt like in some parts the speed was a bit higher than yesterday," said Shiffrin.

"I wasn't taking any crazy risk. "My skiing felt good. I'm proud of how I have skied over the last couple of days." Shiffrin's rival in the technical events, Petra Vlhova, threatened from start number 31, the Slovak leading the early interim timings before falling away on the bottom section to finish 11th.

Switzerland's Lara Gut-Behrami made a costly mistake towards the bottom of the course that cost her a podium spot. She eventually finished 10th, behind American Breezy Johnson, Germany's Kira Weidle, the Austrian duo of Elisabeth Reisinger and Nina Ortlieb, and Swiss teammate Corinne Suter, the current world silver medalist. World champion Ilha Stuehec could only manage 18th spot, the Slovenian more than 2sec off Bassino's pace, while Olympic super-G gold medalist Ester Ledecka of the Czech Republic was well down the field at more than 3sec. Swiss Joana Haehlen, who claimed her first podium finish in third on Friday, slid out in a dramatic crash. —AFP



**BANSKO:** First placed Elena Curtoni of Italy celebrates as she arrives on the podium after winning the ladies' downhill event at the FIS ski alpine World Cup in Bansko, yesterday. —AFP

## New Zealand, Fiji, England command sevens attention

**HAMILTON:** New Zealand, Fiji and England emerged as the unbeaten sides in the new cut-throat version of the World Rugby Sevens series in Hamilton yesterday. Under the format, introduced for the New Zealand round and for Australia next weekend, quarter-finals have been scrapped, pool winners progress direct to the semi-finals and there is no longer a second chance for teams who slip up in pool play.

South Africa, who went into the tournament as co-leaders in the series with New Zealand, did slip up when they missed a conversion with seconds remaining against England and lost 21-19. It meant England kept their unblemished record after they also beat Kenya 24-19 and have only Japan to play in their final Pool B match on Sunday while South Africa, who beat Japan 31-5, will play Kenya.

New Zealand, who opened their campaign with a 47-0 romp against Wales, finished the day with a 26-5 victory over the highly rated USA side in Pool A.

Co-captain Tim Mikkelsen said that with no quarter-final safety net they knew they could not afford to take the USA lightly. "We circled this one. We said if we lose the game we won't be playing tomorrow, so a massive effort from the boys," he said.

New Zealand's final pool game is against Scotland whose sole win was a narrow 24-19 victory over Wales. Reigning series champions Fiji, whose best placing this season is a fourth in Cape Town, secured pole position in Pool D with a hard-earned 19-12 victory over Australia which put them on track for a likely semi-final showdown with New Zealand.

Pool C will boil down to who performs best when Canada play Spain and France face Ireland in their final matches before the play-offs.

Canada produced a surprise 26-21 win over Ireland and then battled to a 12-12 draw with France who had finished third in the Cape Town tournament six weeks ago.

In the women's competition, New Zealand emerged as the only unbeaten side in Pool A after China upset a six-woman Fiji 17-12 with Yang Feifei scoring the match decider right on full-time.

New Zealand, who face Fiji on Sunday, were untroubled on day one as they thrashed China 40-7 before producing an equally comprehensive 40-7 victory over England.

There are two unbeaten teams in the two other women's pools who are destined to meet early Sunday to determine who go through to the play-offs.

In Pool B the showdown is between Australia and the USA who are second and third in the standings after three rounds of the women's world series, while the match between France and Canada will decide who goes through from Pool C. —AFP

## Sports

# Pakistan thump sloppy Bangladesh for Twenty20 international series win

## Pakistan skipper Babar puts victory down to 'team work'

LAHORE: Skipper Babar Azam and senior batsman Mohammad Hafeez stroked masterful half-centuries to steer Pakistan to a convincing nine-wicket win over a hapless Bangladesh in the second Twenty20 international in Lahore yesterday.

Babar scored a 44-ball 66 not out for his 13th half-century and Hafeez made an undefeated 49-ball 67 to guide Pakistan to a modest 137-run target in 16.4 overs at Gaddafi stadium, taking an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Bangladesh again failed to put up a challenging total despite opener Tamim Iqbal's 53-ball 65, managing 136-6 in their 20 overs after winning the toss and batting for a second consecutive match.

Pakistan skipper Babar put the victory down to "team work". "Credit for my captaincy goes to the players," said Babar, who now has two wins in five matches as captain. "The seniors and bowlers make it easy for me. The series win was much-needed, we played a lot of youngsters, the idea was to increase our talent pool to give us more options going into the World Cup."

Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah said defeats were disappointing. "Definitely, disappointed to lose," said the Bangladesh skipper. "We didn't apply ourselves with the bat, except for Tamim. Should've scored 150-160. Intent was there, credit to Pakistan's bowlers."

"We didn't finish off well. Not sure yet how we'll go for the last game, maybe we'll try to play some reserves, but we need to come hard at them and win the game." Pakistan won the first match, also in Lahore on Friday, by five wickets. The final match is at the same venue tomorrow.

Pakistan were never in trouble despite losing opener Ahsan Ali in the second over, caught by Mahmudullah Riyad off pacer-



LAHORE: Pakistan's Mohammad Hafeez (L) plays a shot as Bangladesh's Liton Das (R) looks on during the second T20 international cricket match of a three-match series between Pakistan and Bangladesh, at the Gaddafi Cricket Stadium in Lahore yesterday. — AFP

man Shafiqul Islam in the second over. World number one Twenty20 batsman Babar, who was out without scoring on Friday, was in a punishing mood right from the outset, hitting seven boundaries and a six in his knock.

Hafeez, recalled after 14 months in the Twenty20 side, stroked nine boundaries and a six in his 11th T20 fifty as the two added 131 for the unbroken second wickets stand. Earlier, Bangladesh failed to better

their unimpressive total of 141-5 on Friday as they found Pakistan bowling led by paceman Mohammad Hasnain's 2-20 hard to get off.

Opener Mohammad Naim fell off the very first ball he faced, caught behind by wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan off lanky left-arm paceman Shaheen Shah Afridi who finished with 1-22.

It could have been worse had Rizwan hang on to an inside edge off Iqbal's bat

off a luckless Hasnan when the batsman was 16. Iqbal took full advantage of the lapse, hitting seven boundaries and a six during his laborious knock.

Bangladesh's highest partnership was 31 for the fourth wicket as Afif Hossain knocked a six and a boundary in his 20-ball 21 before he holed out off Hasnain. Skipper Mahmudullah scored run-a-ball 12 as Bangladesh managed 48 in the last five overs. — AFP

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second Twenty20 international between Pakistan and Bangladesh played in Lahore yesterday:

Bangladesh	
Tamim Iqbal run out	65
Mohammad Naim c Rizwan b Shaheen	0
Mahedi Hasan c Rizwan b Hasnain	9
Liton Das lbw b Shadab	8
Afif Hossain c Rauf b Hasnain	21
Mahmudullah Riyad b Rauf	12
Soumya Sarkar not out	5
Aminul Islam not out	8
Extras: (lb 2, nb 1, w 5)	8
Total: (six wkts: 20 overs)	136

Did not bat: Shafiqul Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Al-Amin Hossain

Fall of wickets: 1-5 (Naim), 2-22 (Mahedi), 3-41 (Das), 4-86 (Afif), 5-117 (Iqbal), 6-126 (Mahmudullah)

Bowling: Imad 2-0-16-0 (1w), Shaheen 4-0-22-1 (1w), Hasnain 4-0-20-2 (1w), Rauf 4-0-27-1 (2w), Shadab Khan 3-0-28-1, Malik 2-0-9-0, Iftikhar 1-0-12-0.

Pakistan	
Babar Azam not out	66
Ahsan Ali c Mahmudullah b Shafiqul	0
Mohammad Hafeez not out	67
Extras: (lb 1, w 3)	4
Total: (for one wkt: 16.4 overs)	137

Did not bat: Shoaib Malik, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Rizwan, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain

Fall of wickets: 1-6 (Ahsan)

Bowling: Mahedi 4-0-28-0, Shafiqul 3-0-27-0 (1w), Al-Amin 3-0-17-0 (1w), Rahman 3-0-29-0 (1w), Aminul 2-0-16-0, Afif 1-0-16-0, Mahmudullah 0.4-0-3-0.

Result: Pakistan won by nine wickets

## Stokes fined by ICC after foul language rant at spectator

JOHANNESBURG: England all-rounder Ben Stokes was fined and given a demerit point by the International Cricket Council (ICC) yesterday after a foul-mouthed row with a spectator on Friday in the test against South Africa.

Stokes was shown on television exchanging insults with a spectator as he walked off the field after being caught cheaply for two runs in England's first innings on the opening day of the fourth test at The Wanderers, known as 'the bullying' for its often hostile atmosphere.

He was fined 15 percent of his match fee and given a demerit point after being charged by the ICC with a level one offence of "use of an audible obscenity". Stokes admitted the offence and accepted the sanction, the ICC said.



Ben Stokes

He apologised several hours after the incident, while Ashley Giles, Managing Director for England Men's Cricket said other England personnel had been abused and issued a strong condemnation.

"I wish to apologise for my language that was heard on the live broadcast today after my dismissal. I should not have reacted in that way," said Stokes. "As I was leaving the playing area, I was subjected to repeated abuse from the crowd."

"I admit that my reaction was unprofessional and I sincerely apologise for the language I used, especially to the many young fans watching the live telecast around the world. Throughout the Tests so far, the support from both sets of fans (England and South Africa) has been brilliant. One incident will not ruin such a competitive series, which we are determined to win," he added.

Giles said Stokes was not the only one to suffer abuse and made a request for the stadium to beef up security around the England team. "In addition to this incident, members of our support staff were subjected to personal abuse during and after the day's play," he said.

"We have requested to the venue to ensure that security and stewarding are enhanced for the remainder of the match so that players and staff members can go about their duties without provocation," Giles added.

Stokes is the latest in a long list of players to have spats with spectators at The Wanderers, where there is a long walk from the dressing rooms to the pitch, alongside a grassy bank often filled with boozy spectators.

Television pictures did not show Stokes being insulted but did show him swearing in response to obvious provocation. — Reuters

## England on top with bat as SA struggle

JOHANNESBURG: England proved devastating with both bat and ball yesterday as they scored 400 runs in their first innings and then reduced sorry South Africa to 88 for six wickets at the close of play on the second day of the fourth test at The Wanderers.

A record 10th-wicket partnership saw England amass a formidable first-innings total before ram-paging through the home's team batting order to take a stranglehold on the game and move closer to a series victory.

Quinton de Kock was 32 not out at the close after Anrich Nortje was caught in the slips on the last ball of the day, heightening the possibility of South Africa following on for a second successive test.

The home side's confidence had already taken a hefty knock when their bowlers were subjected to a bashing from tailenders Stuart Broad and Mark Wood, whose 82-run partnership was a record for the last wicket at the Johannesburg venue.

South Africa, 2-1 down in the series, would still have held out hopes of a fightback when they had England 318-9 but after leaking runs and then being tumbled out by the touring bowlers, they again have their backs to the wall.

Wood led the way in the evening session with 3-21 as England removed Pieter Malan (15), Rassie van der Dussen (0), Dean Elgar (26), Faf du Plessis (3) and Temba Bavuma (6) with their five-man seam attack generating real pace off the quick wicket.

Ben Stokes took two catches after a series of dropped efforts in the third test last weekend.

In contrast, South Africa's bowlers were punished as Broad, who made 43 off 28 balls, and Wood, not out on 35, thrashed the ball to all parts, forcing South Africa into the seldom-seen scenario of eight boundary fielders trying to defend against No. 10 and No. 11 batsmen.

There were also half centuries for captain Joe Root and Ollie Pope and a valuable 32 from Chris Woakes in his first appearance on the tour. Nortje (5-110) took a maiden test five-wicket haul.

England were 192-4 overnight when play began 45 minutes late because of a rain delay and steadily moved the scoreboard along as Pope, first, and then Root got to 50.

Pope (56) continued to build on his growing reputation and looked the senior batsman at times as he and Root (59) put on 101 runs for the fifth wicket. — Reuters

## Jackson, Ravens making best of AFC's Pro Bowl clash with NFC

BALTIMORE: Admittedly, Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson would rather be preparing for the Super Bowl. But the talented 23-year-old has embraced this weekend despite his team's disappointing playoff exit. He will be one of a league-high 12 Ravens who are expected to play in the Pro Bowl today afternoon in Orlando, Fla.

It will mark Jackson's first Pro Bowl appearance as he represents the AFC in its annual contest against the NFC. "He's just a special player, a special dude," said Ravens running back Mark Ingram II, who also will play in the game.

"An elite athlete on the field, a great person off the field. Humble. Hard worker. Leadership. Everything you need in a franchise quarterback, he has it, I'm glad to be with him." The Ravens had a 13th player named to the Pro Bowl, but cornerback Marcus Peters declined to take part in the game because of an unspecified injury. The 13 selections overall matched the 2007 Dallas Cowboys for the all-time record.

Others joining Jackson and Ingram include offensive linemen Marshal Yanda, Ronnie Stanley and Orlando Brown, as well as tight end Mark Andrews and fullback Patrick Ricard. The Ravens' defensive contingent in the Pro Bowl includes safety Earl Thomas III, cornerback Marlon Humphrey and linebacker Matthew Judon.

Kicker Justin Tucker and long snapper Morgan Cox round out the Ravens who spent the week in Orlando. "It'll be fun, and it'll be a chance for us to

kind of maybe heal up a little bit in a great environment," Ravens coach John Harbaugh told reporters. "I don't know how many of these guys really like roller coasters, but I know for me and my family, we will be at the roller coasters at Universal (Studios) a lot."

As the Ravens' offense leads the AFC, the Minnesota Vikings' defense will lead the NFC. The Vikings have eight players in the Pro Bowl, including five on defense. That group includes defensive linemen Danielle Hunter and Everson Griffen up front, linebacker Eric Kendricks patrolling the middle, and safety Harrison Smith and cornerback Xavier Rhodes assisting the secondary.

Kendricks led the Vikings with 110 tackles during a career-best season. He added two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries in the regular season and intercepted San Francisco 49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo in the playoffs, and he was rewarded with his first Pro Bowl selection.

"I've always known I can do it," Kendricks told reporters after being named a first-team All-Pro. "There's just more that I want and more that I'm after. It's definitely nice to get the validation. At the same time, that's not what I'm focused on."

The game will not include any players from the 49ers or the Kansas City Chiefs as they get ready for the Super Bowl one week later. But plenty of star playmakers fill both the AFC and NFC rosters.

Besides Jackson, the AFC's quarterback contingent includes Deshaun Watson of the Houston Texans and Ryan Tannehill of the Tennessee Titans. Tannehill replaced the Chiefs' Patrick Mahomes. The NFC's signal-callers include Russell Wilson of the Seattle Seahawks, Drew Brees of the New Orleans Saints and Kirk Cousins of the Vikings. Cousins replaced injured rival Aaron Rodgers of the Green Bay Packers.

The AFC has won the last three Pro Bowls since the format returned to a traditional conference matchup. — Reuters

## NZ's double shot-put champ Adams qualifies for fifth Olympic Games

WELLINGTON: Double shot-put champion Valerie Adams qualified for her fifth Olympic Games yesterday after the New Zealander spent almost two years out of competition. The 35-year-old gave birth to a son last March and had not competed since July 2018. She only returned to competition in early 2018 after having her first child, a daughter named Kimoana, in 2017.

"These are Games I'm really excited about attending, especially going as a mum of two now," Adams told TVNZ after qualifying for the July 24-Aug. 9 Tokyo Games with throws of 18.55 and 18.65 metres at a meeting in New Zealand.

The qualifying mark was 18.50m. "The last time I competed was 20 months ago so it has been a long road but quite an exciting journey." Adams finished seventh as a teenager at Athens in 2004 and won gold at Beijing and London before being pipped in Rio by American Michelle Carter's massive final throw.

She took time off after Rio to have her first child and made her international return at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, where she clinched silver. Adams announced her second pregnancy in October 2018, just weeks after she had opened up about problems with infertility. She had been told if she wanted more children she would probably need to do so before the Tokyo Games.

Adams has kept a low profile since her son Kepaleli was born last year and said her biggest battle in her return to training and competition had been mental.

"I am in pretty good shape and I just wanted to come out and have a stable competition, get my nerves under control and have a good technical competition, which I did," she added. "There is always a lot of pressure put on myself, by myself ... and I want to go to the Olympics and be competitive." — Reuters



Valerie Adams

Sports

# Barca beaten by Valencia in early blow for Setien

## Real Madrid move three points clear of champions at the top of the table

**VALENCIA:** Quique Setien's honeymoon period lasted less than a fortnight as he tasted his first Barcelona defeat yesterday in his second La Liga game in charge after a 2-0 loss to Valencia.

Maxi Gomez's strike and a Jordi Alba own goal at Mestalla handed Barca their fourth league defeat of the campaign, giving Real Madrid the chance to move three points clear of the champions at the top of the table when they visit Real Valladolid today.

Barcelona had most of the ball but their opponents had the best chances as Gomez missed a penalty and also hit the crossbar in the first half. Gabriel Paulista saw a third goal ruled out late on.

While performances under previous coach Ernesto Valverde were stodgy, he left a team that sat top of the table. Setien promised a new style but despite dominating possession, Barcelona went nowhere with it and as Valencia grew in confidence, they ceded control.

"It should not take us long," Setien had said on Friday, when asked how quickly his players could adapt to his methods. Valencia climb to fifth and continue to improve under Albert Celades. This success came without their captain Dani Parejo and, largely, without star striker Rodrigo Moreno, who has been linked with a January move to Barcelona.

The hosts hardly touched the ball for the first six minutes, their fans whistling as they urged a more aggressive approach. But the plan was to sit and absorb and it worked, with Barcelona unable to cut through or create a single clear chance.

**VALENCIA DANGEROUS**

And when Valencia did intervene, they were more dan-

gerous too. With their first attack they won a penalty as Jose Gaya slipped past Gerard Pique and would surely have scored from eight yards before being brought down.

Pique was booked and, with Parejo absent, Gomez stepped up, only for his driven shot to be well saved by Marc-Andre ter Stegen, albeit with the help of half a yard's headstart off his line. Barca were riding their luck. Sergi Roberto's header cannoned off Pique but fell just close enough for Ter Stegen, who parried a Gomez shot onto the crossbar and almost spilled another to Kevin Gameiro.

Referee Gil Manzano puts his hands together as if to apologise after failing to play advantage when Ferran Torres was clear but the frustration of Valencia's fans turned to ecstasy shortly after half-time.

Pique's flicked header landed at the feet of Gomez, whose driven effort took a cruel deflection off Alba and flew in. Setien traded the patience of Arthur Melo for the physicality of Arturo Vidal and Rodrigo came on to a rousing reception.

Barcelona exerted some pressure and Lionel Messi led the way, hauled to the ground by Francis Coquelin and then denied by a brilliant Gabriel tackle. He fired past the post, headed wide and saw a curling free-kick saved.

Yet just as a Barcelona equaliser began to feel inevitable, Valencia struck again. A quick throw caught Alba out of position and Torres did well to cut inside and switch to Gomez. He took a touch and curled into the corner.

Gabriel thought he had a third after volleying in from a corner but VAR persuaded Manzano there had been a push. When Messi ballooned a late free-kick into the stands, Valencia knew their win was secure. — AFP



**VALENCIA:** Valencia's Central African Republic-French midfielder Geoffrey Kondogbia (L) challenges Barcelona's Argentine forward Lionel Messi during the Spanish league football match Valencia CF against FC Barcelona at the Mestalla stadium in Valencia yesterday. — AFP

## Giannis, Bucks light up Paris

**PARIS:** Giannis Antetokounmpo put on a show with 30 points, 16 rebounds and six assists, lifting the Milwaukee Bucks to a 116-103 win over the Charlotte Hornets on Friday in the NBA's first regular-season game in Paris. After the teams battled to a tie at 78 through three quarters, the Bucks pulled away with an 11-2 burst that featured an Antetokounmpo three-point play, three free throws from Kyle Korver after he was fouled on a 3-point shot attempt, and a 3-point jumper from Khris Middleton. Eric Bledsoe backed Antetokounmpo with 20 points for the Bucks, and George Hill chipped in with 16 points. Superior bench play kept Charlotte in the game, with reserve Malik Monk leading all scorers with 31 points while Marvin Williams added 18. Devonte' Graham finished with 19 points to go with a team-high seven rebounds.

**LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS 122 - MIAMI HEAT 117**

Kawhi Leonard scored 17 of his game-high 33 points in the crucial third quarter and had his first career triple-double as Los Angeles beat host Miami, which lost for only the second time in 22 home games. The Heat were led by Jimmy Butler, who had 20 points, eight rebounds and seven assists before going out with a right-ankle injury in the fourth quarter. Miami was without three rotation players: guard Goran Dragic (calf injury), Kendrick Nunn (Achilles) and Justise Winslow (back). Leonard, who rested in Los Angeles' previous game, a loss to the Hawks in Atlanta, also had 10 rebounds and 10 assists. Clippers shooting guard Landry Shamet had 22 points.

**DENVER NUGGETS 113 - NEW ORLEANS PELICANS 106**

Nikola Jokic, Michael Porter Jr. and Torrey Craig had double-doubles as Denver won at New Orleans. Zion Williamson had his second straight strong performance in a losing effort for the Pelicans. The No. 1 overall draft choice had 15 points (on 7-of-9 shooting) and six rebounds in 20 minutes two nights after scoring 22 points in 18 minutes of a loss to San Antonio in his long-awaited NBA debut. Jokic had 27 points and 12 rebounds, Porter had 15 points and 10 rebounds and Craig had 15 points and 10 rebounds. Josh Hart matched Williamson by scoring 15 for New Orleans.

**BOSTON CELTICS 109 - ORLANDO MAGIC 98**

Kemba Walker scored 37 points, Gordon Hayward added 22 and short-handed Boston surged past host Orlando for its third straight win. Hayward also had 14 rebounds, and Daniel Theis chipped in 16 points. Boston played without two of its three top scorers in Jayson Tatum (right groin strain) and Jaylen Brown (right ankle sprain), and key reserve Enes Kanter also was out with a right hip contusion. Evan Fournier had a team-high 30 points, Nikola Vucevic added 17 and 12 rebounds and Aaron Gordon scored 12 for the Magic, who lost for the fourth time in their last five.

**MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES 125 - DETROIT PISTONS 112**

Jaren Jackson Jr. had 29 points, Dillon Brooks supplied 27 and visiting Memphis pulled away from Detroit, which was missing center Andre Drummond (lip) and starting wings Bruce Brown and Tony Snell (flu). Rookie Ja Morant contributed 16 points and 12 assists, Brandon Clarke had 15 points and 11 rebounds off the bench and De'Anthony

Melton added 14 points and five assists for Memphis. Derrick Rose led Detroit with 22 points and eight assists. Christian Wood contributed 20 points and six rebounds off the bench while Reggie Jackson, Svi Mykhailiuk and Langston Galloway scored 14 points apiece. Thon Maker chipped in 11 points and eight rebounds.

**TORONTO RAPTORS 118 - NEW YORK KNICKS 112**

Kyle Lowry scored a game-high 26 points as Toronto held off a furious fourth-quarter rally by host New York to get its sixth straight win. Pascal Siakam had 23 points and combined with Lowry to score the final 12 points — seven for Siakam and five for Lowry. Fred VanVleet scored 16 points while Norman Powell (16 points) and Serge Ibaka (14 points) reached double digits off the bench for Toronto. Marcus Morris Sr. (21 points, 10 rebounds), Julius Randle (20 points, 11 rebounds) and Elfrid Payton (13 points, 11 assists) had double-doubles for the Knicks, who led by as many as 13 points in the first quarter and made up all of a 12-point fourth-quarter deficit but could not take the lead.

**SACRAMENTO KINGS 98 - CHICAGO BULLS 91**

Buddy Hield scored 21 points on 7-of-12 shooting off the bench and Sacramento pulled away in the fourth quarter to defeat host Chicago. Harrison Barnes added 19 points for the Kings and De'Aaron Fox finished with 18. Sacramento snapped a six-game losing streak and posted its first victory since Jan. 7 against the Phoenix Suns. Zach LaVine scored 21 points to lead the Bulls. Chandler Hutchison had 11 points off the bench and Thaddeus Young and Kris Dunn both finished with 10 for Chicago, which lost for the second time in the past three games.

**HOUSTON ROCKETS 131 - MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES 124**

Russell Westbrook paired a season-high 45 points with 10 assists in Minneapolis and Houston extended Minnesota's losing skid to eight games. Westbrook scored 27 second-half points and dominated down the stretch to help the Rockets fend off the Timberwolves, who attempted to rally behind Karl-Anthony Towns (30 points, 12 rebounds) and Andrew Wiggins (28 points). With James Harden scoring a season-low 12 points on 3-of-13 shooting, including 0-of-6 from 3-point range, the Rockets turned to reserve guards Eric Gordon and Austin Rivers to



**PARIS:** Malik Monk #1 of the Charlotte Hornets drives to the basket against the Milwaukee Bucks as part of NBA Paris Games 2020 in Paris, France at the AccorHotels Arena. — AFP

Saudi Arabia through illness earlier this month and the game against Unionistas was his first match back. "When he is available, which is the most important thing, he is fine," Zidane said in a press conference yesterday. "The pity is that the other day he hurt his ankle and he is now unavailable. "He is as unhappy about it as anyone, he would like to be with us, to train and play, but it's a small thing. I hope to see him back with us on Monday."

Bale's relationship with Zidane has been tense in the past and he came close to leaving Real Madrid last summer, before a move to China fell through. The 30-year-old is not expected to be sold mid-season but a departure could suit everyone in the summer. Asked if he was tired of defending Bale, Zidane said: "The other day he scored. I will always defend my players. They are my players, they train every day, they fight for each other. "There is a good dynamic, all the players are desperate to wear the badge of Real Madrid. They all have their own history but I don't see that as a

provide support for Westbrook. Gordon added a season-high 27 points and Rivers tallied 16 points. Westbrook also grabbed six rebounds and finished 13 of 13 from the free-throw line.

**OKLAHOMA CITY 140 - ATLANTA HAWKS 111**

Danilo Gallinari scored 25 points to lead host Oklahoma City to a season-high point total during a victory over Atlanta. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander finished with 24 points as the Thunder won their fourth straight game. Dennis Schroder added 21 points and Mike Muscala had 14 to help Oklahoma City's subs score 58 points. John Collins shot 13 of 16 overall and scored 28 points for the Hawks, who have lost three of four and seven of 10.

**PHOENIX SUNS 103 - SAN ANTONIO SPURS 99**

Devin Booker racked up 35 points and distributed 10 assists as Phoenix rode a definitive second-quarter run and timely baskets down the stretch to end host San Antonio's three-game winning streak. The Suns led by six points heading to the fourth quarter and never relinquished the advantage. San Antonio was within one point five times over the final 12 minutes but could never break through. It was Booker's sixth double-double of the year and his 18th game of the season with 30 or more points. Dario Saric scored 20 points for Phoenix, with Kelly Oubre Jr. adding 16, Ricky Rubio hitting 11, and Deandre Ayton pumping in 10 points and grabbing 11 rebounds. DeMar DeRozan led the Spurs with 30 points on 10-of-15 shooting. LaMarcus Aldridge added 16 points, and Derrick White tallied 13 for San Antonio.

**INDIANA PACERS 129 - GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS 118**

T.J. Warren finished with a team-high 33 points as Indiana overcame a slow start to beat Golden State in San Francisco. The Pacers earned their third victory in four games on a western swing. Indiana led by as many as 19 in the first half but found itself up just 112-106 after three throws by the Warriors' Jordan Poole with 6:20 left in the game. The Pacers then pulled away with a 6-0 burst. Doug McDermott scored 24 points for Indiana on 9-of-10 shooting, including 6-of-7 success from 3-point range. Golden State's D'Angelo Russell led all scorers with 37 points. — ReutersV

## Iheanacho fires Leicester into FA Cup fifth round

**LONDON:** Leicester edged into the FA Cup fifth round as Kelechi Iheanacho's early goal sealed a 1-0 win at second tier Brentford yesterday. Brendan Rodgers' side are chasing a trip to Wembley on two fronts and they took the next step in the FA Cup after surviving a hard-fought fourth round clash in west London. Flying high in the Premier League, third placed Leicester could be set for a memorable end to the season.

Leicester, who have never won the FA Cup, are hoping to reach the final for the first time since 1969. In the League Cup, they are through to the semi-finals and head to Aston Villa in the second leg on Tuesday after being held to a 1-1 draw in the first match at the King Power Stadium. Rodgers made nine changes from Wednesday's Premier League win over West Ham, with only Caglar Soyuncu and Ayoze Perez remaining in the starting line-up for Leicester's first meeting with Brentford since 1993. Kasper Schmeichel, Youri Tielemans and James Maddison were on the bench, while Jamie Vardy was sidelined by a glute injury suffered against West Ham.

Despite Vardy's absence, it took Leicester just four minutes to go ahead when Nigerian striker Iheanacho met James Justin's cross with a clinical close-range finish.

It was Iheanacho's seventh goal in 12 appearances this season — and his ninth in nine FA Cup starts — proving he can be an able deputy for Vardy while the 17-goal star is sidelined. — AFP

Live		Matches on TV	
		(Local Timings)	
<b>SPANISH LEAGUE</b>			
Atletico de Madrid v CD Leganes	beIN Sports	14:00	
Celta de Vigo v SD Eibar	beIN Sports	16:00	
Getafe CF v Real Betis	beIN Sports	18:00	
Real Sociedad v Real Mallorca	beIN Sports	20:30	
Real Valladolid v Real Madrid CF	beIN Sports	23:00	
<b>ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE</b>			
Internazionale Milano v Cagliari Calcio	beIN Sports	14:30	
Parma Calcio 1913 v Udinese Calcio	beIN Sports	17:00	
Hellas Verona FC v US Lecce	beIN Sports	17:00	
UC Sampdoria v US Sassuolo Calcio	beIN Sports	17:00	
AS Roma v SS Lazio	beIN Sports HD 4	20:00	
SSC Napoli v Juventus FC	beIN Sports HD 4	22:45	
<b>GERMAN BUNDESLIGA</b>			
SV Werder Bremen v TSG 1899 Hoffenheim	beIN Sports	17:30	
Bayer 04 Leverkusen v Fortuna Dusseldorf	beIN Sports	20:00	
<b>FRENCH LEAGUE</b>			
Olympique Lyonnais v Toulouse FC	beIN Sports	17:00	
FC Nantes v FC Girondins de Bordeaux	beIN Sports	19:00	
LOSC Lille v Paris Saint-Germain	beIN Sports	23:00	

## Zidane defends Bale after latest injury set-back

**MADRID:** Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane defended Gareth Bale yesterday after the Welshman picking up another injury and also said Eden Hazard is close to a return. Bale will miss Madrid's La Liga game against Real Valladolid today after he sprained his ankle during Madrid's Copa del Rey win over Unionistas de Salamanca on Wednesday. Bale had opened the scoring in a 3-1 victory.

It is his third injury this season. Bale spent just over a month out before Christmas with calf and thigh problems. He missed Real Madrid's Spanish Super Cup triumph in

bad thing. It is true Gareth has had some injuries and you can't do anything about that.

"You can think what you want but when I am with him, what he wants is to be available, to be with the team." Bale's recovery could coincide with a return for Hazard, who has also endured an injury-interrupted season since his move from Chelsea last summer.

The Belgian sustained a fracture in his foot in November but has begun light training, meaning he could feature in the derby against Atletico Madrid on February 1. "I cannot say when he will be back but he has started to touch the ball again," Zidane said. "His progress is good, he no longer feels pain. Starting Monday, he will start working individually with more ballwork."

Hazard missed almost a month at the start of the season with a hamstring strain before injuring his foot on November 26 against Paris Saint-Germain. Real Madrid are unbeaten in 18 games and sit second in La Liga, behind Barcelona on goal difference. — AFP

## 25 Shiffrin fourth as Curtoni leads Italian sweep



## 26 Pakistan thump Bangladesh for Twenty20 series win



## 27 Barca beaten by Valencia in early blow for Setien



LONDON: West Ham United's French striker Sebastien Haller (C) is tackled by West Bromwich Albion's Egyptian defender Ahmed Hegazy during the English FA Cup fourth round football match between West Ham United and West Bromwich Albion at The London Stadium, in east London yesterday. —AFP

# Spurs held at Southampton

## West Ham suffer FA Cup misery

LONDON: West Ham crashed out of the FA Cup as their former manager Slaven Bilic led West Bromwich Albion to a surprise 1-0 win, while Tottenham were held to a 1-1 draw by Southampton in yesterday's fourth round action. Albion boss Bilic, sacked by the Hammers in 2017, made eight changes as he prioritised the Championship leaders' push to return to the Premier League.

But Albion took a shock lead at the London Stadium when Conor Townsend drilled in his first goal for the club after nine minutes. West Ham, struggling in the top-flight under new boss David Moyes and now without a win in four games, were given a lifeline when West Brom's Semi Ajayi was sent off in the 72nd minute after his push earned a second yellow card.

Sebastien Haller should have equalised with

a headed chance and Manuel Lanzini then dragged his shot wide, but Albion held on. West Ham were jeered off by their furious fans, while Croatian Bilic, who also played for the east Londoners, celebrated a sweet success with his Albion players. "We put a strong team out. I was well aware it was a home tie so I wanted to try to make it work, but on the day we did not play well enough," Moyes said. "We gave up opportunities in the early part of the game and they got their goal. Too many poor passes and not enough good play."

At St Mary's, Christian Eriksen was left out amid reports in Italy suggesting the Tottenham midfielder has agreed a move to Inter Milan, while Gedson Fernandes made his full debut for Jose Mourinho's men.

Tottenham's last visit to Southampton was a

painful one, with Harry Kane suffering a torn hamstring in a Premier League defeat on New Year's Day, a clash that saw Mourinho embroiled in a touchline row with a member of the Saints' coaching staff. Mourinho's side struck in the 58th minute on their return to the south-coast.

South Korea forward Son Heung-min fired home from Erik Lamela's pass for his 12th goal of the season. But Southampton hit back to equalise through Sofiane Boufal's powerful strike from Danny Ings' cross in the 87th minute.

"They are a good team. They put some pressure on us in the last minutes and scored. But we are alive," Mourinho said. "We don't need one more match but we have it so we are going to fix it. It's better to draw than to be out."

### NEWCASTLE FRUSTRATED

Newcastle had to settle for an embarrassing 0-0 draw with third tier Oxford at St James' Park as their wretched FA Cup form haunted them again. Steve Bruce's side are looking to make the fifth round for the first time since 2006, but they needed a replay to beat minnows Rochdale in the previous round and they will have to go the distance again after this limp display.

Burnley and Norwich made a combined total of 12 changes at Turf Moor, with the Canaries running out 2-1 winners. Grant Hanley's 53rd minute goal and a 57th minute strike from Josip Drmic put Norwich in control before Erik Pieters reduced the deficit in the 74th minute. Cardiff fans were warned not to sing "racist or homophobic songs" after two

incidents were reported during their 1-1 draw at fellow Championship side Reading. Sheffield United won 2-0 at second tier Millwall through Muhamed Besic's 62nd minute goal and Oliver Norwood's 84th minute strike. Kelechi Iheanacho's early goal sealed a 1-0 win for Leicester at Championship side Brentford. Brendan Rodgers' team are chasing a trip to Wembley on two fronts and the League Cup semi-finalists took the next step in the FA Cup.

Leicester, who have never won the FA Cup, are hoping to reach the final for the first time since 1969. Despite Jamie Vardy's absence with a glute injury, it took Leicester just four minutes to go ahead when Nigerian striker Iheanacho met James Justin's cross with a clinical close-range finish. Chelsea travel to second tier Hull in Saturday's late game. —AFP

## Kyrgios into Nadal grudge match as shocks rattle Australian Open

MELBOURNE: Home favourite Nick Kyrgios went five sets to ensure an Australian Open showdown with Rafael Nadal yesterday as a series of shocks caused carnage in the women's draw. Kyrgios survived the longest match of his career to beat Russia's Karen Khachanov 6-2, 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (6/8), 6-7 (7/9), 7-6 (10/8), collapsing on his back after the fifth-set tie-breaker.

"That was insane — I've got no words to how I'm feeling right now," he said, after the 4hr 26min marathon marked by his trademark tweeners and exchanges with the umpire. "This is just epic man, I don't even know what's going on. My legs feel about 40 kilos each."

The outspoken Aussie now heads into a last-16 clash with Nadal, with whom he has history after calling him

"super salty" following criticism from the Spaniard last year. "Whatever happens between us, he's an amazing player, he's arguably the greatest of all time," said Kyrgios. Top seed Nadal had a comparatively easy ride against his Davis Cup team-mate Pablo Carreno Busta, racing through 6-1, 6-2, 6-4 in what he called his "best match of the tournament so far".

While the men's Big Three of Nadal, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic are all still alive, it's a different story in the women's competition where six of the top 10 seeds crashed out in the third round. After Serena Williams and title-holder Naomi Osaka fell by the wayside on Friday, second seed Karolina Pliskova bombed on Saturday with a 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/3) defeat to Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. "I was about 40 percent today of my game," lamented the Czech.

### RESURGENT MUGURUZA

Switzerland's Belinda Bencic, the sixth seed, won only one game against Estonia's Anett Kontaveit, the world number 31, as she went down 6-0, 6-1. And a resurgent Garbine Muguruza, a two-time Major-winner, thrashed fifth seed Elina Svitolina 6-1, 6-2. Tenth seed Madison Keys lost to Maria Sakkari on Friday.

"I was very concentrated and focused on what I wanted to do, it all went fast my way," said Muguruza, who raced

through the first set in just 23 minutes. Croatian 19th seed Donna Vekic also crumbled to lower-ranked opposition when she lost 7-5, 6-3 to Poland's Iga Swiatek, who is returning from a stress fracture in her foot.

However, Wimbledon champion Simona Halep stayed on course with a 6-1, 6-4 victory over Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva. "I'm sure that for you guys (media) it's a little bit of shock when the top-10 players are losing," said Halep, shrugging off the exodus of top seeds. "But it's life and we cannot be 100 percent every day." The Romanian fourth seed will now play Belgium's Elise Mertens, who won in three sets against CiCi Bellis — ending the American's Grand Slam return from long-term injury.

Angelique Kerber, the 2016 champion, beat Camila Giorgi 6-2, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 to set up a meeting with Pavlyuchenkova, the Russian 30th seed. Elsewhere, Germany's Alexander Zverev dismissed Fernando Verdasco 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 to set up a last-16 clash with Russia's Andrey Rublev, who remained unbeaten this year with his 2-6, 7-6 (7/3), 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) win over David Goffin.

Austrian fifth seed Dominic Thiem came through 6-2, 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4 against Taylor Fritz, Gael Monfils beat Ernests Gulbis 7-6 (7/2), 6-4, 6-3 and Stanislas Wawrinka, the 2014 champion, progressed when John Isner retired in the second set. —AFP



MELBOURNE: Australia's Nick Kyrgios hits a return against Russia's Karen Khachanov during their men's singles match on day six of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP