

3 Health ministry reveals 363 Kuwaitis infected with HIV



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30 Weird but cute: Japan capsule toys play big in Internet age



16 Returning Bale rescues Real from Jazira upset



Islamic leaders urge recognizing Jerusalem as 'Palestine's capital'

Amir calls for protecting Jerusalem's identity • Erdogan slams 'terror state' Israel



ISTANBUL: Leaders and representatives of member states including HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pose for a group photo during an Extraordinary Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) yesterday. — AFP

ISTANBUL: Islamic leaders yesterday urged the world to recognize occupied East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas warned the United States no longer had any role to play in the peace process. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan convened in Istanbul an emergency summit of the world's main pan-Islamic body, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), seeking a coordinated response to the recognition by US President Donald Trump of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

With the Islamic world itself mired in division, the summit fell well short of agreeing any concrete sanctions against Israel or the United States. But their final statement declared "East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine" and invited "all countries to recognize the State of Palestine and East Jerusalem as its occupied capital". They declared Trump's decision "null and void legally" and "a deliberate undermining of all peace efforts" that would give impetus to "extremism and terrorism".

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah called for efforts to protect the identity of Jerusalem and the sacredness of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Amir reminded participants of the heinous act of setting fire to the Al-Aqsa Mosque some 50 years ago, which led to the formation of the organization. Decades have passed and the threat is now extended to the very identity of the holy city of Jerusalem, Sheikh Sabah said, regarding the US decision to recognize the city as the capital of Israel.

HH the Amir added that the recognition, which involves moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem, will directly threaten the stability of the region, which is already affected by the activities of terror organizations. He deemed the US decision as a step that would hinder efforts of security and add tension to the region.

Continued on Page 11

'Feminism' is US dictionary's 2017 'Word of the Year'

NEW YORK: In the year that Donald Trump's inauguration triggered nationwide women's protests and powerful men were toppled by a firestorm of sexual misconduct allegations, the leading US dictionary named "feminism" its word of 2017. Merriam-Webster bestows the "Word of the Year" honor on the word or term with the sharpest spike in look-ups over the previous year.

This year the dictionary announced a 70 percent increase in online searches for "feminism" compared to 2016, recording multiple spikes corresponding to a string of news reports and events. Searches rose following the Women's March on Washington and other US cities on Jan 21, the day after Trump was sworn in as president, the dictionary said Tuesday. There was another spike when White House adviser Kellyanne Conway, the first woman to run a successful US presidential campaign, said in February that she did not consider herself a feminist.

Interest was also driven by "The Handmaid's Tale," the Hulu series about a dystopian future in which a woman lives as a concubine during a time of dictatorship, and Hollywood blockbuster "Wonder Woman" starring Israel's Gal Gadot. Merriam-Webster said more look-ups followed the outpouring of sexual harassment allegations that have unseated well-known figures in Hollywood, politics, business, and triggered the #MeToo social media campaign by women all over the world.

The dictionary's current definitions of feminism are "the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes" and "organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests". Another top trending word for 2017 was "complicit", connected to Trump's sacking of FBI director James Comey, Russian interference in the 2016 election, and Ivanka Trump's comment that she did not know what the word meant - which was then parodied in a skit for television show "Saturday Night Live". Among the other spikes recorded was one for the word "dotard", which North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un used in a statement about Trump in September. — AFP

Saudi king determined to fight graft

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz said yesterday his government was determined to confront corruption with "justice and decisiveness", signaling continued support for a crackdown on sleaze involving mass arrests of top Saudis including royals. In a televised speech to the country's consultative Shura council, Salman also said the

world's largest oil exporter will work to enable the private sector to become a partner in the kingdom's economic diversification drive away from petroleum.

Saudi security forces rounded up hundreds of members of the political and business elite, including princes and tycoons, in early November. Riyadh said it was a crackdown on corruption but the move was also widely seen as helping Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman tighten his grip on power. The purge has caused concern about damage to the economy, especially among foreign investors the kingdom is seeking to attract. But the government has insisted it is respecting due process and that

Continued on Page 11



RIYADH: Saudi King Salman arrives for the opening of the Shura Council's ordinary session yesterday. — AFP

Saudi filmmakers, businessmen eye return of cinemas

DUBAI: Saudi filmmakers and major cinema chains alike are basking in the news the kingdom will lift its decades-old ban on movie theatres, opening a market of more than 30 million people. At the Dubai International Film Festival on Tuesday, short-film directors talked shop on a seaside veranda, the city's iconic sailboat-shaped hotel in the background. And Saudi Arabia was on everyone's mind.

Director Hajar Alnaim wore her national pride in the form of a green Saudi flag pinned to her black abaya. She gushed as she recounted how she received the big news Monday. "I posted a picture of me on the red carpet on Facebook and someone told me, 'What a coincidence! This is a great picture on a great day' ... I was like, 'what?'" Alnaim took to Twitter to find out the buzz and was "shocked" to see her government had announced the immediate licensing of cinemas, with the first expected to open in March 2018.

The move is part of a modernization drive by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is seeking to balance unpopular subsidy cuts in an era of low oil prices with more entertainment options - despite opposition from religious hardliners. Alnaim admits that she was once susceptible to those hardliners, but

a Saudi government scholarship - one of thousands of annual grants - to study film in Los Angeles changed her world.

"I wasn't accepting. I wasn't even able to convince my family to go to Bahrain and let me watch a movie before I went to the United States to study film. My perspective has changed... my family's perspective has changed," she said. Alnaim says her short-film "Detained" - about a Syrian asylum seeker under interrogation by US Homeland Security over the actions of her father - offers a window into the Muslim perspective, and that of the West.

One decade ago, Saudi filmmaker Abdullah Al-Eyaf captured the longing of his countrymen for the silver screen in a documentary.

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Blow to Trump as Democrat wins Alabama Senate seat

MONTGOMERY, Alabama: Democrat Doug Jones scored a stunning upset victory Tuesday in an intense US Senate race in conservative Alabama, dealing a humiliating blow to President Donald Trump whose chosen candidate failed to overcome damaging accusations of sexual misconduct. The Democratic win, a

political earthquake in the most contentious US election of 2017 and in one of the reddest of Deep South US states, is a stinging blow to the president, who gave his full endorsement to Republican Roy Moore after initial hesitations, despite the serious allegations against him.

With 100 percent of Alabama precincts reporting, Jones won 49.9 percent of the vote compared to Moore's 48.4 percent, a margin of nearly 21,000 votes out of 1.3 million cast, according to figures posted by US media. Jones, 63, is a former federal prosecutor who shot to local prominence when he convicted members of the Ku Klux Klan who bombed a black church in the 1960s, killing four girls.

Continued on Page 11



BIRMINGHAM, Alabama: Democratic US Senator-elect Doug Jones speaks to supporters during his election night gathering at the Sheraton Hotel late Tuesday. — AFP

Local

Crown Prince patronizes Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences 2017 Awards

Held under the auspices of His Highness the Amir



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and top state officials attend the KFAS 2017 Awards ceremony. — KUNA



KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shahab Al-Deen (left) welcomes His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the venue.

KUWAIT: Under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah patronized yesterday the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) 2017 Awards. His Highness the Crown Prince arrived for the ceremony at 10:30 am and was received by KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shahab Al-Deen and board members. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, senior sheikhs, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, ministers, and senior state police and military and national guard officials also attended the ceremony.

The ceremony began with the national anthem, recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by a document on the main achievements made by KFAS. Later, a film was shown highlighting the winners of KFAS Awards 2017, followed by a speech delivered by Maroun Awad on behalf of all the winners. Afterwards, His Highness the Crown Prince handed over the awards to the winners and souvenir picture was taken with all of them. Later, His Highness the Crown Prince was presented with a memorabilia marking the occasion. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah awards a winner during the KFAS 2017 Awards ceremony.



A winner receives his award from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during the KFAS 2017 Awards ceremony.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah poses with members of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE); the winners of Al-Sumait Prize 2017 in the field of education.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah poses with a number of winners during the KFAS 2017 Awards ceremony.

Continuing GCC, UK cooperation important: Envoy

LONDON: It is important to continue the strategic and joint cooperation between the UK and the GCC to achieve the aspirations of both sides, said a Kuwaiti diplomat yesterday. On the sidelines of the GCC-UK meeting hosted by the Kuwaiti embassy, Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UK Khaled Al-Dowaisan stressed the importance of implementing resolutions that came out of the Gulf-UK



LONDON: Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UK Khaled Al-Dowaisan attends the GCC-UK meeting hosted by the Kuwaiti embassy. — KUNA

Summit held in Bahrain last year. Ambassador Dowaisan affirmed that Kuwait, which holds the current Presidency of the GCC, would do its best to bolster relations between the Gulf

and the UK in the upcoming year. The current meeting held at the Kuwaiti embassy was agreed upon during the Bahrain summit held in December 2016. — KUNA

DGCA signs air services contracts at ICAN 2017

COLOMBO: Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has signed several contracts with some countries on the sidelines of the 10th ICAO Air Services Negotiation Event (ICAN2017), the DGCA said yesterday. During the annual ICAO event, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka recently, DGCA's President Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and Sri Lankan Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Nimal Siripala also discussed bolstering bilateral cooperation in the industry, a statement added.

In addition, the Kuwaiti delegation, led by Sheikh Salman, held several bilateral meetings with representatives of other countries attending the conference. The talks led to



COLOMBO: DGCA's President Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and Sri Lankan Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Nimal Siripala sign one of the contracts. — KUNA

signing, and updating, agreements and MoUs with Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Nigeria and the Sultanate of Oman.

ICAN offers a forum for participants to learn about current trends in air services, and to discuss and exchange expertise, as well as providing excellent networking

opportunities. ICAN2017 offered industry stakeholders opportunities for business to business (B2B) meetings and networking with both other business stakeholders or community members, but also aviation regulators and air service negotiators participating in the event. — KUNA

Kuwait donates \$5m to UNICEF

NEW YORK: Kuwait permanent envoy to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi delivered Kuwait's donation of \$5 million to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The donation was delivered to Deputy Executive Director of the UNICEF Omar Abdi in order to support activities of UNICEF and meet the humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees. "This contribution is a con-

tinuation of Kuwait's humanitarian efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Syrian people since the outbreak of the crisis there," said Ambassador Otaibi in a statement late on Tuesday. He stressed the strong partnership in the humanitarian and relief field that links the State of Kuwait with the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Meanwhile, Abdi noted the importance of UNICEF's work to keep a generation of children from being lost because of the lack of opportunities to continue their education. He thanked Kuwaiti government for its generous contributions and continued support for the United Nations humanitarian activities in countries affected by conflicts and natural disasters. — KUNA



NEW YORK: Kuwait permanent envoy to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi (right) delivers Kuwait's donation of \$5 million to the UNICEF. — KUNA

Local

363 Kuwaitis infected with HIV

KUWAIT: There are a total 363 Kuwait nationals who are HIV positive and are currently living in the country while receiving antiretroviral therapy, the Ministry of Health said on Tuesday. The ministry is set to launch a clinic which will provide diagnosis carried out discretely for anyone living in Kuwait, an official told a press conference to announce the launch of a national anti-HIV/AIDS campaign.

The campaign's strategy includes several major goals, its head and the ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for General Health Majda Al-Qattan said. These include facilitating access to healthcare for HIV positive patients, reaching a 50 percent decrease of cases come 2021 while limiting the numbers of

infected children to zero, preventing discrimination against infected people and improving HIV positive case indices and databases.

Kuwait has taken massive strides forward in HIV/AIDS treatment, added Al-Qattan, and is regarded one of the most advanced in the field in the Middle East and North Africa region according to the July report of UNAIDS, the United Nations agency tasked with HIV/AIDS.

In its own report, the national campaign found that 81 percent of HIV positive patients are aware of their infection, including 80 percent currently receiving antiretroviral drugs and 90 percent carrying an Undetectable HIV viral load - which means they cannot pass the virus through unprotected sex.

Kuwait aims to raise all of these numbers to 90 percent respectively by 2021 in accordance with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, said the campaign's rapporteur and World Health Organization Desk Officer for Kuwait Munther Al-Hasawi. If this is achieved Hasawi expects the virus to be completely abolished in Kuwait by 2030. —KUNA

Calls for reconciliation as tougher penalties urged

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Lawmakers and the government yesterday called for national reconciliation in the face of delicate regional developments as the public prosecution urged tougher penalties for those who stormed the national assembly.

Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said that international and regional developments and domestic challenges requires all to overcome differences through dialogue and to preserve national unity. The minister said that all are looking with hope to open a new page of cooperation to achieve stability and a dignified life.

Saleh recalled the speech of the Amir at the opening of the National Assembly

which he said it lays down a roadmap for the government, adding that the two authorities should strengthen relations on the basis of political partnership and constructive cooperation.

MP Faisal Al-Kandari said the current phase requires a comprehensive national dialogue among all political groups to purify the atmosphere and serve the interests of citizens and the country. He said the dialogue is urgently needed in the face of turbulent regional developments.

Kandari said that all have strong faith and trust that the Kuwaiti judiciary will take into consideration the social and employment conditions of those jailed for storming the national assembly amid calls for releasing them until the court of cassation issues its verdict.

The court of appeals last month sentenced 67 opposition activists including three lawmakers to various jail terms for storming the national assembly building in November 2011 following a demonstration. The public prosecution yesterday urged the court of cassation, whose verdicts are final, to issue tougher penalties against the defendants describing their 'crime' as big.

The prosecution said that the appeals court did not apply the law correctly while issuing its verdict and called on the court of cassation to apply the law by increasing the penalties. The prosecution said that some of the defendants resisted the police and this crime entails jail terms of up to 15 years. The court of cassation is expected to look into the case soon amid calls by defense lawyers to free those jailed until the case is completed.

Food Authority inspectors launch first campaign

By Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Farwaniya Food and Nutrition Authority inspectors launched their first inspection campaign targeting various foodstuff stores and outlets in Khaitan, Ardiya industrial area and Rigga. The campaign resulted in filing 30 citations for various violations including hiring unli-

censed workers, having no health certificates and opening unlicensed stores.

Demonstration

A number of legal affairs department employees at Ahmadi educational zone yesterday demonstrated in protest against their superior's practices, declaring their refusal to cooperate with her and demanding her removal from office 'to serve public interest.' The Ahmadi zone had earlier rejected the superior's transfer from Jahra to Ahmadi because she had been responsible for three legal violations, but the ministry insisted. The demonstrating staff members said they met with the Ministry of Education's undersecretary, and that ministerial and parliamentary efforts are in progress to resolve the problem.

Beaten Egyptian not charged with attempted murder

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Judicial sources yesterday denied reports claiming that attempted murder

charges were pressed against an Egyptian man who was hospitalized after he was beaten up badly in a Shuwaikh industrial area shop recently, noting that the case is so far classified as a fight. This came in response to reports circulated on Tuesday and accusing the Egyptian man, identified as Waheed Mahmoud, of starting the fight by insulting the Kuwaiti citizen and hitting him with a screwdriver. "The public prosecutor has not decided yet on this case," stressed the sources, noting that the Capital attorney Fahd Al-Awadh only received the case file yesterday from Shuwaikh industrial area investigators accompanied with medical reports about the injuries. The sources added that the public prosecution will decide the charges against both of them. The citizen will be interrogated by the public prosecutor today, while the Egyptian is

expected to be interrogated on Sunday.

Recruitment conditions

The Manpower Public Authority has set regulations and conditions for recruitment in 20 professions, well-informed sources said. The sources added that an agreement was made with the Ministry of Education (MoE) that it would only hire employees who pass a test set by the authority. The authority stressed that it received job applications from 260 special needs teachers, 110 assistant teachers, 15 special needs social workers and 20 psychiatrists over the past six months and 200 of them were hired. The sources also noted that the authority received 30 applications from mechanics, automobile electricians, painters and cooks, and 15 of them matched the set conditions.

Kuwaiti, Belgian army officials discuss cooperation

KUWAIT: Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lieutenant-General Mohammad Khaled Al-Khodr met yesterday with the visiting Belgian Minister of Defense and Civil Service Steven Vandeput. During the meeting, which was attended by Belgium's army Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Marc Comperol, the officials discussed ways of promoting and bolstering military cooperation. They also focused on the issues of mutual concerns, the Defense Ministry's Public Relations Department said in a statement. The meeting was also attended by the Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait, Piet Heirbaut, in addition to a number of senior officers in

the Kuwaiti army.

In other news, Kuwaiti National Guard (KNG) celebrated the graduation of the Close Quarters Battle (CQB) course that was held in cooperation with the international unit for fighting terrorism in the British Army and the special operations unit 67. The celebration was held under the patronage of the Deputy Head of the National Guard Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in the presence of National Guard Secretary Lt Gen Hashim Al-Rifae. Rifae lauded the outstanding level the participants displayed, and their ability to interact with modern training systems used by advanced armies in fighting terrorism, adding that the final exercise in Failaka Island was successful and showed the efficiency of training.

Separately, Rifai stressed yesterday KNG's interest in developing their units with latest technologies. This came in Rifai's statement yesterday at the Fourth Edition of Gulf Defense and Aerospace Exhibition. The KNG participated with a pavilion displaying their capabilities in the fields of defense and aviation. This is part of the guard's 2020 strategic plan to keep pace with recent technological advancement.



KUWAIT: Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lieutenant-General Mohammad Khaled Al-Khodr meets with Belgium's army Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Marc Comperol.



Kuwait National Guards participate in a Close Quarters Battle (CQB) course.

Kuwait Times

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* This campaign is limited to participants in Kuwait only. Ministries and their departments, companies and NGOs cannot enter the festival.
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Local

Zain awarded with four titles at Advertising Creativity Award 2017

Presented by Arab Media Forum



KUWAIT: Waleed Al-Khashti receives one of Zain's awards.



Waleed Al-Khashti receives another of Zain's awards.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, proudly received four titles as part of the Advertising Creativity Award 2017. The award, organized by the Arab Media Forum, came for the fifth year under the patronage of the Minister of Information Mohammed Al-Jabri and the attendance of the Minister's representative, the Information Ministry's Undersecretary for External Media Faisal Al-Mutlaqim and Director of the Arab Media Forum Madhi Al-Khamees.

During the awarding ceremony, Zain received four titles, including the Influence Category Award for Zain's Ramadan 2017 TVC, the National Campaigns Category Award for Zain's Kuwait National Day 2017 TVC, the Direction Category Award for Zain's Eid 2017 TVC, as well as the Public Relations and Corporate Sustainability Creativity Award for the company's long-list of initiatives and programs launched during 2017.

In the National Campaigns category, Zain won for its Kuwait National Day 2017 TVC, which was released on the occasion of Kuwait's National Day celebrations in

February. In this ad, the company utilized the 360 camera technology, which allowed viewers to enjoy virtual maneuvering while watching the video, as if the viewer is actually living the moment in a revolutionary way.

In the Influence category, Zain won for its huge Ramadan 2017 TVC, which carried an important message that went viral and attained global success: that hate and terrorism has no place in that Islam, and that it is a religion of peace and forgiveness. The TVC reached 11 million views on YouTube, and received unprecedented worldwide media attention.

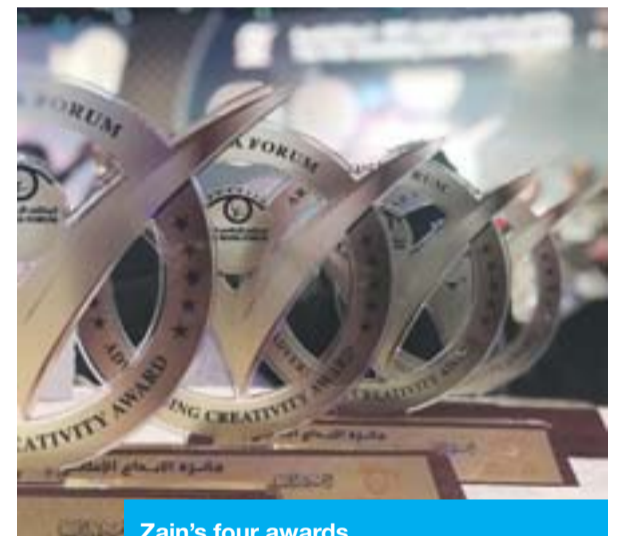
Zain also won in the Direction category for its Eid Al-Fitr 2017 TVC which aimed at spreading a universal message of peace, and reached over 16 million views on YouTube. The company was also awarded with the Public Relations and Corporate Sustainability Creativity Award, which recognized Zain's various social and humanitarian campaigns launched throughout the year 2017 in line with the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy.

It is worth noting that Zain participated in a Public

Relations and Marketing discussion panel that came as part of the Advertising Creativity Award 2017 organized by the Arab Media Forum. The event featured a number of prominent experts, academics, and specialists in the fields of public relations, marketing, and advertising.

This awarding comes in light of Zain's distinguished advertising and media involvement, and it further showcases the company's role as a leading private sector company launching several marketing and advertising campaigns all year round. Zain will continue supporting this very important field which carries significant and informative messaging to the public at large and the communications world as a whole, whether through traditional or modern media tools.

The Advertising Creativity Award 2017 was organized for the fifth year by the Arab Media Forum, which has proven itself to be one of the region's most prominent events that attend to Arab media. The event brought together many ministers, media executives, journalists, academics, authors, actors, businessmen, and social figures from all around the Arab world.



Zain's four awards.

Gulf Bank wins 'Most Influential TV Commercial'

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank announced yesterday that it was awarded the 'Most Influential TV Commercial 2017 Award' at the Fifth Advertising Creativity Awards (ACA) event organized by the Arab Media Forum. The award was received by Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager for Corporate Communications, at a prestigious ceremony, held at Arrayah ballroom on Tuesday. The commercial, which was produced by Joy Productions, aims to promote kinship and strengthen family ties through subtle yet impactful scenes, and was narrated by the prominent Kuwaiti actor, Saad Al-Faraj.

Entitled 'Change Your Thoughts,' the bank's commercial focuses on the importance of keeping the memory of our loved ones alive and communicating with those separated by distance. It also encourages the act of forgiveness and emphasizes the importance of mending broken relationships on all levels, and more importantly caring for one's parents. The commercial was well received locally and regionally due to its impactful message and it was released on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and other social media channels.

The Advertising Creativity Award 2017 was organized for the fifth year by the Arab Media Forum, which has proven to be one of the region's most prominent local industry events. The event brought together many ministers, media and advertising executives, journalists, academics, authors, actors, businessmen, and social figures from all around the Arab world.

Arab Media Forum honors Advertising Creativity Award winners

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Arab Media Forum honored on Tuesday winners of the '2017 Creative Advertisement Award' that was organized by the forum, the Ministry of Information, Kuwait Media Association and the International Advertising Association (IAA). In his opening speech at the ceremony, Madhi Al-Khamis, secretary general of the forum, said the event highlights efforts by Kuwaiti advertising and production institutions and companies, with the aim of encouraging them to develop this key industry. He explained that the jury was keen to choose the best ads that support creative ideas, contents and positive values within the community, and resist negative ones that invade our Arab culture.

Waleed Kanafani, head of the IAA - Kuwait branch, stressed the importance of such events in developing the advertising industry, adding that the partnership between the association and the media forum contributes to achieving this goal. Kanafani pointed out that the association notched up several achievements during the year, most notably gathering public relations and advertising students from various Kuwaiti universities around one table to discuss ways to improve the future of public relations and marketing.

Meanwhile, member of the judging committee and Egyptian radio broadcaster Osama Munir said the committee was keen on the creativity of the idea of advertising and its message. He added that the committee includes in its membership a group of academics and media and executive managers in the field of advertising.

The winners in creative category are National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), KIPCO, Kuwait Finance House, Boubyan Bank and Zain. The award of influential category went to Gulf Bank, Zain and Warba Insurance Company. The winners of the idea category are Dar Al-Tayyeb, Dukkan Bazzah and Hunger Station. The winners of the national campaign category are Ooredoo, Zain and Kuwait Finance House. As for the category of integrated campaigns, Gulf Insurance Company won along with Abyat, Kuwait Airways and Kuwait Finance House. The special award went to Kuwait TV and Local Flavor.



KUWAIT: Madhi Al-Khamis, secretary general of the forum delivers his speech. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



Member of the judging committee and Egyptian radio broadcaster Osama Munir.

Unilever sponsors HORECA culinary competitions

KUWAIT: HORECA Kuwait 2018, an annual exhibition gathering companies from the hospitality and food industries, continues to achieve new successes, most recently by attracting globally renowned multinationals such as Unilever Food Solutions which has joined as a gold sponsor of the culinary competitions held during the exhibition, which takes place at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds from January 15 to 17 of 2018.

The culinary competitions are the highlight of the three-day exhibition, gathering dozens of chefs from Kuwait and internationally in a cook-off judged by international experts, enabling these competitions to achieve high levels in technical standards.

In a statement, Leaders Group for Consulting and Development, the organizers of the annual HORECA exhibition in partnership with Lebanon-based Hospitality Services, said that Unilever Food Solutions is one of the world's largest suppliers of consumer goods with sales across 180 countries, and provides innovative and high-quality food products and value-added services that are developed by 300 professional chefs. These products belong to 50 cuisines from around the world, from which 200 million dishes are prepared daily.

Unilever Food Solutions Arabia Country Manager Fouad Sherine, said: "We reach 800 million consumers worldwide every year and

aim to make a difference in four areas: promoting health, wellbeing and quality of life, increasing food safety, reducing waste of food, and taking care of sustainability resources."

Sherine added: "As people around the world are increasingly eating out, the food they consume must become more and more safe for food service companies. Hence, we focus on working together to provide results that improve the quality of food for all of us, all while ensuring that we provide great taste and reduce the environmental impact of food consumption."

Sherine highlighted: "Consumers and customers of hospitality institutions are searching for authentic tastes and exciting foods, but they also want the right food for a healthy lifestyle. This is where the challenge lies in the food industry in which we build long term partnerships with suppliers, customers and stakeholders."

Unilever Food Solutions is part of the Unilever Group which specializes in food and tea products. The most prominent brands owned by the company are Knorr, Hellman's, Lipton, Brooke Bond, Magnum, CarteD'or. The group also owns other companies specialized in the manufacturing of household chemicals, extractive industries, personal care products, and cosmetics.



Fouad Sherine



Waleed Kanafani, head of International Association for Advertising (IAA) - Kuwait Branch.



Lebanese TV presenter Nishan.

Local

Multiple injuries in two reported accidents

Ministry denies 'inmate on hunger strike' reports

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Farwaniya firemen freed people trapped in a vehicle following an accident on Sixth Ring Road near Ishbelia. A female citizen and her driver were rescued, and they suffered light injuries. Meanwhile, a truck ended up on top of a vehicle on King Fahd Road near Dhafer. The vehicle caught fire and a citizen was trapped in it. Mubarak Al-Kabeer firemen rescued him. He suffered burns on his feet and legs. The fire was put out and the vehicle was removed.

False news

The interior ministry's relations and security information department denied reports circulated on social media and claiming that a central prison inmate had gone on a hunger strike. The department said that the ministry did not receive any complaint from any inmate at the central prison, and that the general health condition of the inmate mentioned in the allegations is good. As for the claim that the inmate is not receiving his medicine, it said this is a lie, as banning or dispensing medicines is not part of the prison department's authorities.



Mock drill at Children's Hospital

Mock drill

The civil defense carried out two mock exercises for evacuating the Children's Hospital in Sabah medical area and at a bank, with the participation of several security sectors from the interior ministry, fire department and medical emergencies. The exercises aim at gauging the readiness of participants to deal directly with emergencies.

Championship

Kuwait international and military airports organized the second championship for firemen, aiming to raise efficiency and physical fitness. Airport Fire Stations' Acting Director Lt Col Mohammad Al-Hajiri said each of the six stations sends a team consisting of a supervisor, vehicle operator and three firemen to compete in sports activities.

Spread of drugs

Director General of the Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry Brig Adel Al-Hashash said it is important to intensify awareness efforts against the spread of drugs amongst all society groups. He said that among the most important duties is to "immunize ourselves as uniformed personnel first, because we are at the forefront of security and the force that supports the society and ensures psychological and social security and safety among the country's citizens".

He said Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah has the fight against drugs as a top priority and ministry undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dossari is following it firsthand. Hashash, who participated

in a campaign to fight drugs in schools, said the security establishment is carrying out an active role with the international community and all international, regional and Arab authorities to fight drugs and international crimes through a general policy to fight drugs by limiting the supply of such poisons and reducing demand for them. It has also fully adopted the Arab strategy to fight the illegal use of drugs and psychoactive substances.

He said there is coordination at the highest level between all concerned security establishments to fight drugs, be it the criminal security sector or the land and

sea borders outlets, in addition to the customs general department, the health ministry represented by the drugs supervision center and the addiction center and the media to bring awareness of the harm of this scourge and publish the cases and legal punishments for drug smuggling, trading and use to deter society members.

Immoral acts

A citizen in his 40s was taken to Hawally police station for urging an Iranian woman to commit immoral acts at a dental clinic by making indecent gestures. The citizen then waited for the woman until she left the clinic and obstruct-

ed her car until she took his number from him. The woman gave police the paper with his mobile number written on it in his handwriting.

Drug possessions

Ahmadi and Farwaniya police sent three people: two citizens and an Egyptian, to the Drugs Control General Department (DCGD) for possession and use of drugs. A traffic violation led to the discovery of a herb suspected of being a drug with the Egyptian man. As for the citizens, they lost consciousness near a restaurant and a KD 10 note was found full of hashish.

Kuwait urges action to curb climate change

PARIS: The State of Kuwait on Tuesday took part in the One Planet Summit in Paris - an alliance of hundreds of global leaders from all sectors, determined to demonstrate the power of collective action in addressing such a global issue as the fight against climate change. Kuwait was represented by Ambassador to France Sami Suleiman and First Secretary of the Embassy in Paris Mishaal Salem Al-Jubail.

Kuwait, under the instructions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, is keen on contributing to the efforts meant to curb the adverse impacts of climate change on environment and human life, Ambassador Suleiman said following the summit.

He called on all public and private stakeholders worldwide to show more solidarity and commitment to the historic Paris Agreement, adopted two years ago, and put forward tangible actions with a view to halting the environment degeneration. The rising rates of greenhouse gas emissions pose grave risks to local communities and the natural ecology of the Earth, he cautioned.

Ambassador Suleiman noted that Kuwait was one of the 150 countries, which adopted the Paris Agreement, on December 12, 2015. The agreement, which entered into force on 4 November 4, 2016, after 170 countries ratified it, charts a new course in the global effort to combat climate change.

The aim of today's summit was to find new means of financing the adaptation of our ways of life to inevitable transformations, of further speeding up the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and of ensuring climate issues are central to the finance sector. —KUNA

'What's the fuss about?'

In my view

By Talal Al-Ghannam

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Today's article focuses on the recent decision adopted then retracted by the Interior Ministry over imposing of strict laws pertinent to traffic, and by which police impounded any vehicle parked on the pavement, or whose driver was caught not wearing the seat belt or using mobile phones while driving.

I do not see anything wrong with the decision as those drivers who adhere to the rules have nothing to worry about; however, those who opposed the said law feel like they own the roads and must not be judged. They break the law without being punished, or end up harming themselves or pedestrians and expect to walk free from a police station. They damage the state's properties by parking on green landscapes and pavements, and expect not to be blamed or fined.

Things have gone beyond moderation, state properties have been damaged, hundreds of lives have been lost just because many drivers pay full attention to their smartphones rather than keeping their eyes on the road, causing unwanted accidents. So many irresponsible people and drivers have specifically uttered strong opposition towards the Interior Ministry's law, saying that impounding the vehicle is not the solution to the problem. Yet, they agree to raise the amount of the citation from KD 5 to 15 for example, although I believe that such measure alone is not enough.

How can you compare the loss of life with KD 15? In US and Europe, traffic laws are strict and apply to everyone. The people there obey the law, besides paying high taxes, because they understand the importance of life in order to maintain safety and order. I am amazed that the Interior Ministry decided to call off its decision soon after it issued it. Why? Was it made without a thorough study? Or was it because the ministry failed to launch an awareness campaign to introduce the law to the public before implementing it?

In Kuwait, we have so many strict rules and laws, but a few are strictly implemented, especially when it comes to expatriates. I can say for sure that 85 percent of reckless drivers are Kuwaitis because expatriates fear deportation and avoid breaking the law; therefore, strict fines should be imposed on all reckless drivers and laws must be respected and followed by everyone. We do not need wasta (connections) as it plays a big role in stripping someone's right, to be given to those who do not deserve it. My suggestion to the Interior Ministry is, go ahead with your decision instead of listening to those who oppose it for personal interests.

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Sirens, doves as China marks 80 years since 'Nanjing massacre'

Israel foils Hamas kidnap plot; suspects nabbed



PYONGYANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un (center) attends the eighth military industry conference at the April 25 House of Culture in Pyongyang. — AFP

US 'ready' to talk to North Korea

Secretary of State says no pre-conditions: 'Let's just meet'

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson offered to begin direct talks with North Korea without pre-conditions, backing away from a key US demand that Pyongyang must first accept that giving up its nuclear arsenal would be part of any negotiations. Tillerson's new diplomatic overture comes nearly two weeks after North Korea said it had successfully tested a breakthrough intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that put the entire United States mainland within range of its nuclear weapons. "Let's just meet," Tillerson said in a speech to Washington's Atlantic Council think tank on Tuesday.

The White House later issued an ambiguous statement that left unclear whether President Donald Trump - who has said Tillerson was wasting his time pursuing dialogue with North Korea - had given his approval for the speech. "The president's views on North Korea have not changed," the White House said. "North Korea is acting in an unsafe way ... North Korea's actions are not good for anyone and certainly not good for North Korea." In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said China welcomed all efforts to

ease tension and promote dialogue to resolve the problem.

China hopes the United States and North Korea can meet each other halfway and take meaningful steps on dialogue and contact, he told reporters. Ahead of Tillerson's speech, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to develop more nuclear weapons while personally decorating scientists and officials who contributed to the development of Pyongyang's most advanced ICBM, state media said yesterday. Kim said on Tuesday the scientists and workers would continue manufacturing "more latest weapons and equipment" to "bolster up the nuclear force in quality and quantity", the KCNA news agency said.

'Period of quiet'

While reiterating Washington's long-standing position that it cannot tolerate a nuclear-armed North Korea, Tillerson said the United States was "ready to talk any time they're ready to talk", but there would first have to be a "period of quiet" without nuclear and missile tests. United Nations political affairs chief Jeffrey Feltman,

who visited Pyongyang last week, said senior North Korean officials did not offer any type of commitment to talks, but he believed he left "the door ajar".

"Time will tell what was the impact of our discussions, but I think we have left the door ajar and I fervently hope that the door to a

negotiated solution will now be opened wide," Feltman told reporters after briefing the UN Security Council on Tuesday. Not everyone is ready for talks. Japan has advocated a strategy of pressuring North Korea through sanctions to give up its nuclear weapons. Tokyo

and Washington are in "100 percent" agreement on that stance, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said yesterday, when asked about Tillerson's comments. A former Japanese diplomat said that, while a diplomatic solution was the "only acceptable solution", now was not the time for talks. "We have to see the effects of sanctions on life in North Korea," the former diplomat, who asked not to be identified said. "I heard that they are having a serious impact on everyday life. Let's wait and see. If we were to hint anything for dialogue, we'd be losing clout." South Korea continued military exercises with the United States to check military readiness, exercises the North describes as preparation for war. The South's army said separately yesterday it conducted a successful air-to-air missile firing drill from Apache helicopters.

US talks to China

Tillerson also disclosed the United States had been talking to China about how to secure North Korea's nuclear weapons in the

event of a collapse of the government in Pyongyang. He said Beijing had been given assurances that if US forces had to cross into North Korea they would pull back across the border into the South. Chinese spokesman Lu would not directly answer a question about those comments, but said China had always clearly told all its interlocutors on the issue that "There can be neither war nor chaos" on the Korean peninsula.

Tillerson made clear that the United States wants to resolve the North Korea standoff through peaceful diplomacy and, in terms far more tempered than Trump's recent threats against Pyongyang, offered to hold exploratory talks. "We can talk about the weather if you want," he said. "We can talk about whether it's going to be a square table or a round table. Then we can begin to lay out a map, a road map, of what we might be willing to work towards." Tillerson - whose influence has appeared to wane within the administration - said Trump "has encouraged our diplomatic efforts". Trump said on Twitter in October that Tillerson was "wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man", using his derisive nickname for Kim. — Reuters



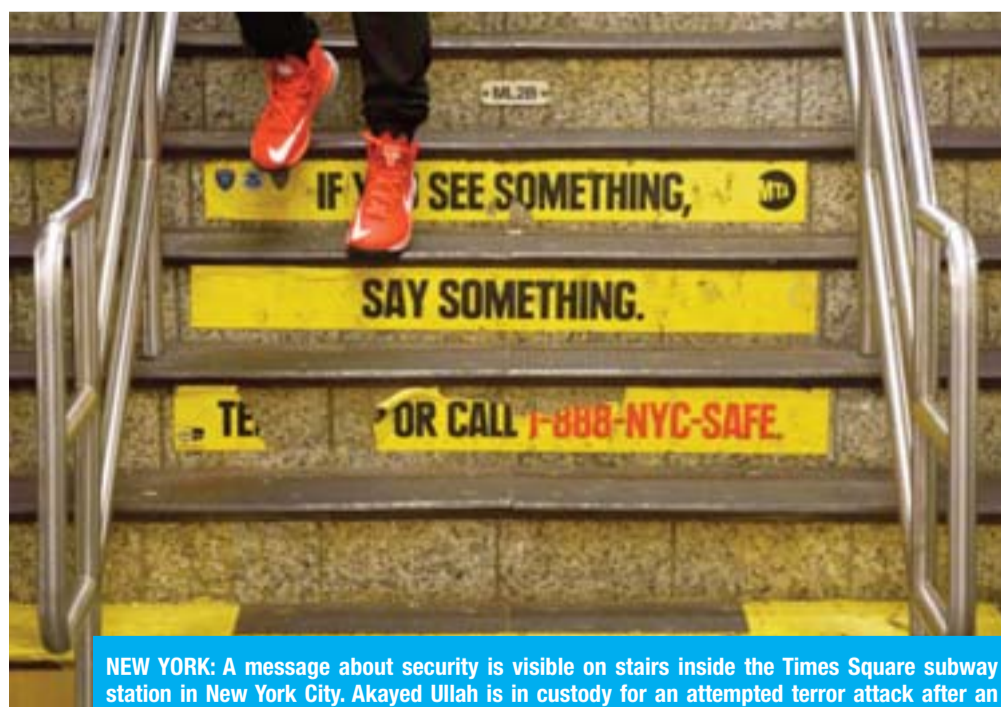
North Korea vows to develop more nuclear weapons

New York bombing heightens fears of holiday attacks

WASHINGTON: The abortive bombing by an Islamic State-inspired Bangladeshi in New York has raised fresh fears of a possible surge in attacks during the year-end holiday season on both sides of the Atlantic. Akayed Ullah, a 27-year-old immigrant who mainly injured himself when he tried to detonate a pipe bomb in a New York subway Monday, reportedly told investigators that he targeted the station based on the Christmas posters on the walls.

The explosion, which saw three others lightly injured, came two weeks before Christmas, a period which terror experts says offers potential terrorists a large choice of "soft targets" where many people are gathered, shopping and celebrating, with limited ability to protect them. IS-inspired militants carried out two devastating attacks in Europe during the holiday season last year.

In one, a Tunisian refugee drove a large truck into a crowd at a Christmas market in Berlin, killing 11 and injuring dozens more. A week later, a jihadist militant shot dead 39 people at a New Year's Eve party at an Istanbul nightclub. In November 2016, French police broke up an Islamic extremist ring that



NEW YORK: A message about security is visible on stairs inside the Times Square subway station in New York City. Akayed Ullah is in custody for an attempted terror attack after an explosion in a passageway linking the Port Authority Bus Terminal with the subway. — AFP

was weighing an attack on a Christmas market as well as Paris Disneyland in the weeks before December 25 holiday. This year, such markets around the continent have a heavier police presence and more concrete blocks to prevent possible vehicle attacks.

The US State Department has issued an alert for travelers to Europe during the holiday season, reminding them of both the Berlin and Istanbul attacks. "US citizens should exercise caution at holiday festivals and

events," the State Department warned. "Extremists continue to focus on tourist locations, transportation hubs, markets/shopping malls and local government facilities as viable targets." US authorities have also put out a general domestic warning over possible season-based attacks, according to Christopher Krebs, a senior Department of Homeland Security official. "We're focused on general awareness with the general public, like 'see something, say something,'" he said. —AFP

Rescued child sex workers reveal hidden cells in Indian brothels

NEW DELHI: A ladder propped against a stained wall leads up into a dark passage on the second floor of an Indian brothel, lined by a series of locked doors. Hidden inside are tiny cubicles, stashed with sex workers' clothes, blankets, cosmetics and condoms. The barely-lit passageway meanders along, intersected by many other dank corridors, and arrives at a trap door, which swings open to reveal another secret space, rarely seen by clients or outsiders. "They are actually meant to deceive and hide," one sex worker said quietly. "A person can get lost and then simply disappear."

Trafficked young girls are being "broken into prostitution" and hidden from the law - behind a maze of passages and secret cells in crumbling

brothels across New Delhi and other major cities, campaigners say. Of an estimated 20 million commercial prostitutes in India, 16 million women and girls are victims of sex trafficking, according to campaigners. Thousands of children, largely from poor families, are lured or abducted by traffickers every year, and sold on to pimps and brothels who force them into sexual slavery. "These tehkhanas (hidden cells) harbor minors and have also become an escape route for them when there are raids," said Swati Jai Hind, head of the Delhi Commission for Women, which has rescued 57 girls this year.

"We get specific tip-offs about children being brought here but when we come for rescue, we sometimes find no girls - they vanish." The government has introduced a number of measures to combat sex trafficking - from strengthening laws to boosting social welfare schemes. But reports of young girls being sold for sex and hidden in labyrinths are rising, campaigners say. "There are increasing cases where girls are describing life inside these dark and dirty places," said Rishi Kant of the anti-slavery charity Shakti Vahini. "We were part of a rescue where a seemingly regular cupboard led to a hidden passage from where girls were found. Urgent action is needed." — Reuters

International

Israel authorities foil Hamas kidnap plot; suspects nabbed

Israel hits Gaza after rocket fire, three wounded

JERUSALEM: Israeli authorities said yesterday that they had arrested three members of the Islamist militant group Hamas on suspicion of planning to kidnap an Israeli in the West Bank. A statement from domestic security agency Shin Bet named the men as Muad Ashtayeh, born in 1998, Mohammed Ramadan and Ahmed Ramadan, aged around 19, all from the village of Tell, near the northern West Bank city of Nablus. It did not say if the Ramadans were related.

It alleged that Ashtayeh recruited the other two men and together they acquired a handgun, a taser and tear gas. They carried out surveillance on major junctions and hitchhiking stops used by soldiers and settlers in the occupied West Bank, it charged. "The plan was to disguise themselves as local settlers in order to get an intended victim to get into the assailants' vehicle," the statement alleged. It said the kidnap was planned for the eight-day Jewish festival of Hanukkah, which began on Tuesday evening.

The Shin Bet said it discovered the plot during October and November but did not specify when the suspects were arrested. It said the ultimate aim was to use the hostage as a bargaining chip for the release of Palestinian militants held in Israeli prisons. It alleged that the suspects were directed and funded by Hamas headquarters in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian enclave run by the Islamist movement.



Ultimate aim was to use the hostage as bargaining chip

Israel hits Gaza

Meanwhile, Israeli air force hit the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip yesterday lightly wounding three people, after Palestinians fired at southern Israel, the military and Gaza security officials said. Israel also arrested a number of senior Hamas members in the occupied West Bank overnight, including one of its leaders in the territory. Late on Tuesday, the military said that an undefined "projectile" was fired from Gaza towards southern Israel. A spokeswoman said that it was "very probably" a rocket but that it was not clear where it hit.

Palestinians in the coastal territory have fired both rockets and mortar rounds into Israel over the past week amid anger over US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as its capital. "In response to the projectile fired from the Gaza Strip at Israel earlier, the Israel air force targeted a Hamas military compound in the southern Gaza Strip," the army said yesterday. Gaza security officials said that aircraft hit a Hamas naval base west of the city of Khan Yunis and open land nearby.

Three Palestinians were lightly wounded in the strikes, the health ministry in Gaza said. No casualties were reported on the Israeli side. Those arrested overnight included Hassan Yousef, one of the founders of the Islamist movement. He was arrested in Ramallah, a Hamas statement said. Yousef is a member of the largely defunct Palestinian parliament elected in



BEIT LAHYA: Palestinians attend the funeral of a Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant following a reported Israeli strike in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip. —AFP

2006 and was jailed between 2012 and 2014. A spokeswoman for Israel's Shin Beth domestic security agency told AFP: "He was arrested because of his involvement in encouraging and directing Hamas activity in the West Bank."

Yousef's son, Mosab Hassan Yousef, gained prominence in recent years after a film was released detail-

ing his spying for Israel, called "The Green Prince." Yousef disowned his son after he admitted to spying on Hamas for Israel. Trump's announcement last Wednesday has sparked protests across the Palestinian territories, with four people killed and hundreds wounded in clashes or retaliatory Israeli air strikes so far. —Agencies

Sudan newspapers go online to avoid crackdown, censor

KHARTOUM: Seated in his Khartoum office overlooking the Blue Nile, Sudanese journalist Adil Al-Baz no longer fears a crackdown by security agents over his articles since he launched an online newspaper. "We are free to publish what we want on our online newspaper," Baz, a former print newspaper editor said at the office of Al-Ahdath, the website he launched this year.

In a country of increasing media censorship, Baz is among several independent journalists who have left newspaper jobs and launched online papers or websites. About a dozen internet papers have been launched in the past year alone as agents of the powerful National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) continue to confiscate entire print-runs of newspapers over articles opposed to President Omar Al-Bashir's regime. The authorities use several laws to curb press freedom, editors say, adding that the overall environment of media censorship has only grown since Sudan's north-south divide in 2011.

"A print newspaper faces a new red line almost every day," said Baz, who was jailed in the past for publishing articles critical of government policies in a newspaper he then owned. In 2012, he shut down his paper, also called Al-Ahdath, after NISS agents confiscated its copies. After working in Qatar for four years, Baz returned to Sudan last year to launch Al-Ahdath that now employs nine journalists. The online journal has since run several stories criticizing government policies, which he says would have been difficult to report in his print newspaper.

New curbs expected

Earlier this year, said Baz, it was Al-Ahdath that first reported on Bashir sacking his senior aide Taha Osman, who now resides in Saudi Arabia. Osman's sacking was later hotly debated in the Sudanese media. Media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) ranked Sudan 174th out of 180 countries on its 2017 world press freedom index. The NISS "hounds journalists and censors the print media", RSF said. In November, NISS agents confiscated entire print-



KHARTOUM: A journalist checks the site of online newspaper Al-Ahdath News, at the company's office in downtown Khartoum. —AFP

runs of independent newspapers Al-Tayar, Al-Jadida, Al-Watan and Akhir Lahza.

These journals lost thousands of dollars worth of advertisements, apart from the huge expenses of printing copies that never hit the stands. Curbs on press freedom are expected to grow if the cabinet approves a new press law under which Sudan's press council would be authorized to ban a newspaper for 15 days without any court order. Sudan's existing press law requires the council to file for a court order if it wants to ban a newspaper for any longer than three days. The draft law also permits the council to cancel licenses of journalists and newspapers.

Bright future

Several newspapers are no longer financially viable because of the country's weak economy and the threat from security agents. Sixty percent of newspaper advertising comes from government-controlled organizations, said Ahmed al-Sheikh, editor of Sudan Times, another new internet paper.

Newspapers that are critical of government policies are hit hardest as authorities often cancel promised advertisements. "Several newspapers are simply not in a position to offer good salaries to journalists," Sheikh said. "And readers who previously bought two newspapers are now buying one to cut costs." The average monthly salary of a Sudanese newspaper journalist is about 3,000 Sudanese pounds (\$445).

With the print media in difficulty, more online journals, all of them Arabic-language, are expected to be launched. Sheikh said the censors have so far only been concerned with the print media. "Sudanese authorities are still focusing on print media and have not yet seriously looked at the new online media, which explains why they continue to target newspapers more," he said. Sheikh also said that some of the new online newspapers had their registered offices overseas, making them harder to target. "The response to our online newspaper is very encouraging, with nearly 50,000 hits every day," said Baz, adding that Al-Ahdath had started attracting online advertising. —AFP

Tillerson changes tune on N Korea

SEOUL: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson may have opened the way to negotiations with North Korea over its nuclear program, saying Washington was ready to talk "without preconditions". The apparent olive branch—after a year of mutual threats by US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un, and multiple missile tests by Pyongyang, coupled with its most powerful nuclear blast to date—could help defuse sky-high tensions. But with the two sides engaged in a war of words there is a long way to go before any negotiations—let alone a deal. Here are some questions and answers on the issue.

What has changed?

The US has for years refused to talk unless the North first takes steps towards dismantling its nuclear program. But the North has staged six atomic tests and declared itself a full nuclear state after the ICBM test on November 28, rendering the prospect of nuclear disarmament increas-

ingly unrealistic, according to experts. "We are ready to talk anytime North Korea would like to talk. We are ready to have the first meeting without preconditions. Let's just meet," Tillerson said at a forum in Washington. William Perry, a former US Defense Secretary who helped broker the 1994 Agreed Framework nuclear deal with the North, said it was "very encouraging news". "We must find a way to come to the table in order to de-escalate the volatile situation with North Korea," he tweeted.

What does Trump think?

Trump administration officials have piled pressure on Pyongyang with US-led UN sanctions and talk of a potential pre-emptive attack, with National Security Adviser HR McMaster saying this month the potential for war was "increasing every day". The president has previously dismissed Tillerson's push for talks with the North, tweeting in October that his top diplomat was "wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man" - his favored epithet for Kim. "Save your energy, Rex, we'll do what has to be done!" he added—and rumors have swirled in recent weeks that Trump was about to sack him. Whether Tillerson's words herald a major policy shift by the administration remains to be seen. White House spokesman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump's views on the North "have not changed".

How could N Korea react?

The North has long expressed a willingness to talk without preconditions and is likely to respond positively to any such offer, analysts say. "They have believed that the US would have no choice but to sit down with the North for talks in the end... and they might have been right," said Chung Sung-Yoon, of the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul. "The North's goal is to lay low and endure sanctions until the world will accept the reality that the North has become a nuclear power," he added. The further its weapons programs advance, the stronger its position becomes—and it says it is now able to deliver a nuclear warhead anywhere on the US mainland, although experts believe it still lacks some of the required technology.

What will neighbors say?

China, the North's sole major ally and economic lifeline, and South Korea are likely to welcome Tillerson's comments. Beijing—which is under increasing US pressure to tame its wayward neighbor—has repeatedly pushed for talks, while South Korean President Moon Jae-In is a well-known advocate for dialogue. Japan—Washington's key military ally in Asia—has also called for ways to defuse tensions. Some of the North's rocket tests have overflowed the island nation, sparking alarm.



US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

What has happened?

Decades of Western attempts to persuade Pyongyang to abandon nuclear weapons have failed. The Agreed Framework, which offered the North civilian nuclear reactors and other assistance in exchange for denuclearization, fell apart after the US accused the isolated state of covertly restarting its weapons program and aid delays angered Pyongyang, which eventually stormed out. In 2003 the Beijing-led Six Party Talks began, bringing together the US, both Koreas, Russia, Japan and China in a tortuous process. North Korea pledged to give up its nuclear programs in 2005, but carried out its first atomic blast the following year. It walked out of the talks three years later, detonating its second device soon afterwards. —AFP

Back to square one: Nigerian migrants return from Libya

BENIN CITY: When Bright stepped off the plane from Libya and heard that his home state in southern Nigeria had begun a rehabilitation program for returned migrants, he thought it was another scam. "So many people cheated us in the past few months," he said on the tarmac at Lagos airport, where he arrived earlier this month with nearly 300 other Nigerians. After months of fear, torture and prayers in detention centers in Tripoli or Benghazi, the returnees registered their name, their former address and the telephone number of a loved one.

Bright, who is in his 40s, barely reacted as the Nigerian foreign ministry official, fresh off the plane from Abuja, distributed jollof rice before television cameras. He didn't even see the huge poster of President Muhammadu Buhari's wife, Aisha, welcoming them back to the country. But when he found out the governor of Edo state, Godwin Obaseki, had hired a bus to drive them the 400 kilometers home, he felt goosebumps. "It's the first time in history that this government is doing something for us," the father of three said. "I've always thought I was transparent in my own country."

Bright got on the bus with 42,500 naira (\$120, 100 euros) in his pocket from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and a bag of toiletries, to be reunited with his family. "I thank God that I came back from hell," he said. But he was under no illusions that it would take more than that for him to start a new life. "I was a danfo (minibus) driver but I sold it to go to Europe. My family had to borrow money to bail me out of the detention camp in Libya. I have nothing left. I came back empty," he said.

'Big crisis situation'

Videos shown recently on CNN of Nigerians being sold like slaves by criminal gangs in Libya provoked global outrage and reaction from the international community. During the Europe-Africa summit, nine heads of state pledged to tackle illegal immigration, with Nigeria's Buhari vowing to repatriate all of his compatriots stuck in Libya. According to the authorities, there are more than 5,000 Nigerians stranded in Libya. But those who have come back say there are many more. The back and forth of IOM charter flights between Libya and Nigeria, which began last year, has increased in recent months. Two planes now arrive twice a week from Tripoli. Nearly 1,300 Nigerians were brought back in November. The figure was 826 in October. Buhari has vowed to offer work and a place in society for the returnees' children.

In reality, only Edo state, where some 80 percent of Nigerian migrants come from, has put in place a proper rehabilitation program. Others returnees disappear into the urban sprawl of Lagos, a megacity of 20 million people, where millionaire preacher TB Joshua has also promised to pay returnees. Bright was one of 257 people who made the journey from Lagos to the Edo state capital Benin City. Three days later, another convoy arrived at the hotel where returnees were put up for two nights and where they were offered professional training, particularly in agriculture. It's a far cry from their European dream.

Governor Obaseki has set aside 30 million naira to tackle the problem of illegal migration, which sees thousands of Nigerians risk their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. In September, he set up a special taskforce against human trafficking to take the long-standing problem seriously. "The state is facing a big crisis situation," said Sister Florence, a nun who counsels returned migrants. —AFP

International

Africa, Europe to boost Sahel anti-terror force

Saudi, UAE offer helping hand to West Africa force

PARIS: France's Emmanuel Macron yesterday hosted a group of African and European leaders, including Chancellor Angela Merkel, to drum up support for a new counter-terrorism force in the terror-plagued Sahel. Two years in the planning, the force brings together troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger in a desert region the size of Europe.

Former colonial power France is currently leading counterterrorism operations there through its 4,000-strong Barkhane force, but is keen to share the burden as its military is engaged on various fronts. The ambitious goal is to have 5,000 local troops operational by mid-2018, wresting back border areas from jihadists including a local Al-Qaeda affiliate. But Macron—who has had a busy week of diplomacy after a climate summit on Tuesday—has expressed frustration at delays, with the first mission only taking place last month in the volatile border zone between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

"It's an initiative that's getting more powerful, but speed is a problem," French Defense Minister

Florence Parly said. "We have to go faster," she said. "The objective is to be able to move forward faster on financing and the military structure." The five Sahel countries are among the poorest in the world, and funding will be high on the agenda as their presidents join Macron at a chateau in Celle-Saint-Cloud outside Paris. Officials from oil-rich Saudi Arabia—which may confirm a \$100 million (85 million euro) contribution, according to the French presidency—are notably on the guest list.

UAE officials are also attending along with the Italian and Belgian prime ministers and representatives of the European Union, African Union and United States. Priority number one is to re-establish law and order in the border zone where several hundred soldiers, backed by French troops, carried out last month's debut mission. Militants have mounted repeated attacks in recent months, including an assault in Niger on October 4 which killed four US soldiers and another two weeks later in which 21 Niger troops died. In August, gunmen stormed a restaurant in Burkina Faso's capital Ouagadougou, killing 19 including foreigners.

Strategic region

The G5 force is set to work alongside Barkhane troops and the UN's 12,000-strong MINUSMA peacekeeping operation in Mali—the most dangerous in the world, having lost 90 lives since 2013. The International Crisis Group described the G5 force as a European effort to "bring down the expense of their overseas operations by delegating them partially to their African partners". "The Sahel is

Saudi Arabia pledges 85 million euro

politically and economically strategic, especially for France and Germany, both of which view the region as posing a potential threat to their own security and as a source of migration and terrorism," it added in a report.

Yesterday's talks are the latest effort by Macron to forge an influential role on the world stage, a day after he hosted an international climate summit. They are designed to lay the groundwork for a summit in February, likely in Brussels, focused on raising funds for



YVELINES: (From left) Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, France's President Emmanuel Macron and Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita arrive for a press conference during a conference to support the fight against Jihadist in the African Sahel region at the Chateau de La Celle Saint-Cloud yesterday. —AFP

the G5 force. The EU has so far pledged 50 million euros (\$59 million) for the force and France another eight million, while each of the African countries is putting forward 10 million euros.

The United States has meanwhile promised to contribute a total \$60 million. But this leaves a serious shortfall, with France hoping to raise at least 250 million euros in the short-term, rising eventually to 400 million

euros. The arid Sahel region has become a magnet for Islamic militants since Libya descended into chaos in 2011. In 2012, Al-Qaeda-affiliated jihadists overran the north of neighboring Mali, including the fabled desert city of Timbuktu. France intervened in 2013 to drive the jihadists back but swathes of central and northern Mali remain wracked by violence, which has spilled across its borders. —AFP

UK schools go gender neutral to stop bullying

LONDON: With a push from campaigners and some parent groups, more British schools are allowing pupils to explore their gender identities in a bid to be more inclusive and stop bullying. Cumberland High School, a sprawling establishment with nearly 1,500 pupils in east London, is one of hundreds of schools around the country that is taking steps to break down the binary division between male and female. Cumberland has adopted a more liberal uniform policy that blurs gender boundaries and is adapting its infrastructure—such as gym changing rooms—in an effort to be more accepting.

"Changing is an issue for some pupils so we have gender-neutral changing rooms that anyone can use," said Jake Jones, a sports teacher at the school who is also head of the personal, social and health education department. "I think a lot of our inclusive approach comes down to terminology," Jones told AFP, pointing out that teachers are being encouraged to avoid "boys" and "girls" and use non-gendered terms such as "pupils" or "children".

He, she, 'Zie'?

At the Brindishe Schools in south London, pupils are taught about the possibility of using "Zie" as a gender-neutral option instead of "he" or "she". Education and health administrators say they are finding that more children today are questioning their gender identity. "When you make something more gender neutral... for those children it becomes less of a worry, less of a concern for them that they are different and they don't fit," said Charlotte Dougan, assistant headteacher at Brindishe Manor School. "They can just be themselves," she said.

Lauren Campbell, deputy head at Brindishe Green School said: "It is never too young to start". "I think it is very important that we educate the children the best we can from that very early starting point, in terms of teaching them about gender, about gender stereotypes," she said. Not all British parents agree with this view. The National Health Service this week was forced to remove a gender question from primary school questionnaires in Lancashire in north-west England after a wave of criticism from parents and lawmakers. The question, on a survey aimed at children aged 10 and 11, asked them if they felt "the same inside" as the gender they were born with and offered three gender options "girl", "boy" or "other".

'You can't be who you are'

Whatever parents may feel, there is evidence of a growing number of children and young people grappling with gender identity issues. The Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS), a health agency for youths in London and Leeds, said their consultations have risen from just 95 in 2010 to 2,016 so far this year. "The question is does somebody need to know what your anatomy is to know who you are? Whose choice is it to define oneself?" said Sarah Davidson, consultant clinical psychologist at GIDS.

According to figures from Educate and Celebrate, an association that promotes education that is not gender binary, some 220 schools in Britain have adopted a single uniform for boys and girls. —AFP

Points of contention in German coalition talks

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel and her conservative Bavarian allies meet the leader of the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) yesterday to start exploring the possibility of governing together. The two groups have ruled in a 'grand coalition' for the last four years, but the SPD had vowed to go into opposition after voters rewarded it with its worst-ever post-war election result. The collapse of talks on a three-way coalition forced the SPD to re-consider in the interests of political stability. The conservative bloc and SPD are likely to clash over healthcare, immigration, Europe, work regulations and pensions.

Healthcare

The SPD wants to introduce "citizen insurance," to end the differences between Germany's private and public systems which, it argues, cater for the rich and poor respectively. The SPD wants everyone to be insured in the same way via citizen insurance. However, conservatives, including Merkel, have rejected this, saying switching to one healthcare system would decrease market competition and lead to worse healthcare.

Pensions

The SPD wants to stabilize pensions at 48 percent of the average wage by 2030, to be financed from reserves in the pension fund in the next few years. It aims to raise the contribution rate faster from 2024. The total cost of the SPD's proposal will amount to 19.2 billion euros (\$22.55 billion) in 2030. The conservatives want to first form a commission to debate what is necessary to do.

Europe

The two parties agree in broad terms on a pro-Europe

Russia army pushes into foreign policy

MOSCOW: From Damascus to Doha, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu has been showing up in unexpected places, a sign of the military's growing influence under Vladimir Putin. In the past few months, at times wearing his desert military uniform, Shoigu has held talks with Syria's president in Damascus, met Israel's prime minister in Tel Aviv and been received by the Emir of Qatar in Doha. The defense ministry's forays into areas long regarded as the preserve of the foreign ministry are raising eyebrows in Russia, where strict protocol means ministers usually hold talks only with their direct foreign counterparts.

The military is reaping political dividends from what the Kremlin saw as its big successes in Crimea, annexed from Ukraine after Russian soldiers in unmarked uniforms seized control of the peninsula in 2014, and Syria, where Russian forces helped turn the tide of war in President Bashar Al-Assad's favor. "That has translated into more top-table influence," said a long-serving Russian official who interacts with the defense ministry but declined to be named because he is not authorized to speak to the media.

The Kremlin and the defense and foreign ministries did not respond to detailed requests for comment for this article. The growth of the

military's influence has caused discontent among some Russian diplomats and unease among Western officials about the harder edge it is giving Russia's foreign policy. Foreign policy-making has become more bellicose and more opaque, and this makes new Russian military adventures more likely, some Western officials say.

"If you allow the defense ministry a bigger say in foreign policy it's going to be looking for trouble," said one, who declined to be named because of the subject's sensitivity. Shoigu's high profile has also revived talk of the long-time Putin loyalist as a possible presidential stand-in if Putin, who is seeking a fourth term in an election in March, had to step down suddenly and was unable to serve out a full six-year term. Shoigu, 62, is not involved in party politics but opinion polls often put him among the top five most popular presidential possibilities. His trust rating is also often second only to Putin, with whom he was pictured on a fishing trip this summer.

The military's influence has ebbed and flowed in Russia and, before that, the Soviet Union. It had huge clout at the end of World War Two and in the 1950s after the death of Soviet leader Josef Stalin when Georgy Zhukov, a commander credited with a crucial role in defeating Nazi Germany, was defense minister. But the ignominious Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, completed in 1989, two wars Russia fought in Chechnya after the Soviet Union's collapse, and the sinking of the Kursk nuclear submarine with the loss of all 118 people on board in 2000 left the military's prestige in tatters. —Reuters

US and Israel 'Isolated' at UN meeting on Jerusalem

NEW YORK: In an emergency meeting convened by the United Nations Security Council on the crisis prompted by President Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, the US stood isolated as other members unanimously condemned the decision. The meeting was called by Bolivia, Uruguay, Italy, Senegal, Egypt, France and the United Kingdom on Friday.

Bolivian Ambassador Sacha Llorenti offered the strongest words of condemnation. Llorenti is known for his outspoken support of the Palestinian people, having debated the issue at the UN wearing a Keffiyah: a black-and-white scarf that has become a symbol of Palestinian resistance. "While there are two parties in this conflict, they are not on a level playing field," Llorenti said. "One is an occupying power, the other is an occupied people. Other representatives, including France, Japan, Russia, and Sweden, expressed their dismay at



BERLIN: The leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Martin Schulz and parliamentary group leader of the SPD Andrea Nahles share a laugh as they attend a plenary session at the Bundestag. —AFP

agenda for Germany, but the SPD wants deeper integration than the conservatives. SPD leader Martin Schulz has called for closer EU integration, with the aim of achieving a "United States of Europe" by 2025. This goes too far for Merkel's conservatives.

Immigration

Last October, Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU) agreed with her conservative Bavarian allies, the Christian

Social Union (CSU), to put a number on how many people Germany would accept per year on humanitarian grounds. The SPD rejects such a cap. The two parties also disagree on the suspension of family reunifications for asylum seekers who were granted humanitarian protection in Germany. The SPD is against a conservative plan to extend a suspension for reunifications which will expire in March 2018. The two blocs are also at odds on the repatriation of Syrian refugees accused of crimes. —Reuters

the decision, saying that it would lead to violence and potentially ruin chances at the peace process that President Trump claims to favor. Egyptian Ambassador Amr Aboulatta said he expected the decision to have a "grave" impact on peace.

The UN special coordinator for the peace process, Nickolay Mladenov said: "The United Nations has repeatedly declared that any unilateral decision that seeks to alter the character and status of Jerusalem... could seriously undermine current peace efforts and may have repercussions across the region." Despite resounding criticism from the rest of the international community, US Ambassador Nikki Haley maintained that Trump's move was "simple common sense," and that the president remains "committed to achieving a lasting peace agreement."

She also accused the UN of being "hostile" towards Israel. Israel's ambassador was the only other party who praised the decision, calling it "courageous" and demonstrating a "true understanding of justice." Since Trump's announcement, Palestinians have resolutely condemned the decision and erupted in mass "days of rage" protests. Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has called for a "new intifada," or uprising, against Israeli occupation, a plea backed by Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah.

International

Sirens, doves as China marks 80 years since 'Nanjing massacre'

China, Japan long at odds over wartime history

NANJING: Sirens blared and thousands of doves were released as Chinese President Xi Jinping presided over a somber ceremony in Nanjing marking 80 years since the wartime massacre in the city by Japanese troops. Several thousand black-clad soldiers, civil servants and students with white flowers pinned to their jackets braved chilly temperatures at a monument to a dark World War Two chapter that still divides the two countries. But while vowing never to forget the "great catastrophe" wrought by "Japanese militarism" in a speech to the mourners, a top Chinese official also stressed the need for the two rivals to move forward.

China marked the 80th anniversary with a call to work with Japan for peace, but President Xi Jinping kept a low profile and left the main public remarks to another senior official. China and Japan have long sparred over their painful history. China consistently reminds its people of the 1937 massacre in which it says Japanese troops killed 300,000 people in what was then its capital.

A postwar Allied tribunal put the death toll in the eastern city of Nanjing at 142,000. But some conservative Japanese politicians and scholars deny a massacre took place at all. Ties between China and Japan, the world's second- and third-largest economies, have been plagued by a long-running territorial dispute over a cluster of East China Sea islets and suspicion in China about efforts by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo

Abe to amend Japan's pacifist constitution. However the two countries have sought to get relations back on track, and Abe and Xi met last month on the sidelines of a regional summit in Vietnam.

Speaking at a memorial in Nanjing, Yu Zhengsheng, who heads a high-profile but largely ceremonial advisory body to China's parliament, said China and Japan were neighbors with deep historic ties. China would deepen relations with all its neighbors, including Japan, on the basis of amity, sincerity and friendship, Yu said, in comments carried live on state television. "China and Japan must act on the basis of both their people's basic interests, correctly grasp the broad direction of peaceful and friendly cooperation, take history as a mirror, face the future and pass on friendship down the generations," Yu said.

Beijing, Tokyo seeking to get relations back on track

A somber Xi, wearing a white flower in his lapel to symbolize mourning, stood in the audience but did not speak. Doves to signify peace flew overhead after Yu finished speaking. Xi later met massacre survivors, the official Xinhua news agency said, telling them, "Lessons learned from the past can guide one in the future". South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who arrived in Beijing for a four-day visit, offered condolences to the victims in a speech to businessmen, in what his office called the first such public mention of the massacre by a South Korean leader.



NANJING: Doves are released during a memorial ceremony at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall on the second annual national day of remembrance to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the massacre in Nanjing yesterday. —AFP

In Tokyo, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga spoke of the importance of looking to the future. "The leaders of Japan and China have agreed in past meetings to further improve relations and it is important, while cherishing this trend, to together show a future-oriented stance," Suga told a regular news

conference: It was the second time Xi has attended the event since China marked its first national memorial day for the massacre in 2014. At that time, he called on China and Japan to set aside hatred and not allow the minority who led Japan to war to affect relations now.—Agencies

Bhutto untested son takes up his Pakistani destiny

KARACHI: A decade after Pakistan's first female leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated, her son Bilawal is striving to reclaim his mother's mantle, the latest act in a Shakespearean saga of tragedy and power. But reviving the wilted fortunes of his family's political dynasty ahead of a general election due next year will be a tough ask for the Oxford-educated scion, who at 29 years old has never held political office.

His family once dominated Pakistani politics. Grandfather Zulfikar Ali Bhutto founded the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and ascended to the highest civil office in the land, followed by Benazir, who became prime minister twice and was running a third time when she was killed in a gun and bomb attack on December 27, 2007. Since her death the PPP has seen its fortunes plunge, and few are willing to bet on Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, now the party's chairman, shepherding it back to glory. But there are flickers of life.

When Bilawal took the stage at the PPP's golden jubilee celebrations in Islamabad last week, surprised observers put the crowd at around 25,000, higher than recent rival gatherings. Much like his charismatic mother, Bilawal was forthright at the lectern, confronting militants infesting Pakistan and the powerful military alike. "We have to continue our progressive struggle and defeat the conspiracies of dictatorship," he thundered as the crowd roared. But away from the podium he cuts a shyer persona. "My mother often said that she didn't choose this life, it chose her," he tells AFP at his family home in Karachi. "The same applies to me."

Great expectations

Bilawal's grandfather Zulfikar forged the PPP in southern Sindh province 50 years ago, his slogan of "roti, kapra, makkan" ("bread, clothing, shelter") turning the party founded by a feudal landlord into Pakistan's first populist force. "He gave every Pakistani a sense of pride," beams Bilawal. But Zulfikar was deposed by General Zia-ul-Haq in a coup and hanged in 1979 despite an international outcry. Benazir, as her son would be decades later, was thrust into the spotlight. Following Zia's death in 1988, she was elected prime minister at the age of 35. Her government was undercut by military interference and allegations of cor-



KARACHI: Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari speaks during an interview at his home in Karachi. —AFP

ruption, however, and despite becoming prime minister twice she never completed a term.

Ousted in 1996, she spent most of the military dictatorship years of Pervez Musharraf in self-exile, returning in 2007 to contest another election. But hopes sparked by her return were shattered by her assassination weeks later. Her murder was pinned on jihadists, with a UN investigation accusing Musharraf of failing to provide sufficient security. "It was a bitter blow for those who had hoped for a different Pakistan," says Ayesha Jalal, of the centre for South Asian studies at Tufts University. That includes the Bhuttos. "If they stopped assassinating us then my mother would be in the foreign office and I would still be a student," says Bilawal.

Netflix a 'lifesaver'

Bilawal was named PPP chairman after his mother's death but, still just a student, he returned to Oxford. His father Asif Ali Zardari-nicknamed "Mr 10 Percent" over the many graft claims against him—took control as the party swept the 2008 elections, presiding over its years of

decay, fuelled by allegations of corruption and incompetence. Questions linger over Bilawal's ability to lead the PPP if power still ultimately rests with Zardari. Bilawal argues his youth is an asset: "I have time on my side".

Reports suggest he plans to contest his mother's old seat in Sindh. He dismisses concerns over his own security, saying: "We don't give in to fear". But observers note the protection surrounding Bilawal, his elite status and time abroad could be sequestering him from voters. His task is a lonely one, the bachelor admits. "If I was to say I had a life, that would be a lie," he tells AFP. "Netflix is a lifesaver." Analysts say he faces an uphill battle in 2018, with cricketer-turned-opposition stalwart Imran Khan on the ascent and the ruling party of deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif clawing at support.

Some Pakistanis want more than just another scion. "Under the dynastic politics, democracy has been laid to rest," said Karachi resident Sardar Zulfiqar. But attendees at the golden jubilee have faith, clinging to the PPP's progressiveness as Pakistan remains locked in a tug-of-war between Islamist extremism and democratic moderates.—AFP

Philippines MPs back president on martial law

MANILA: Philippine lawmakers yesterday overwhelmingly backed President Rodrigo Duterte's plan to extend martial law for all of next year in Mindanao, an island he called a "flashpoint for trouble" and atrocities by Islamist and communist rebels. The extension, until Dec 31 next year, would mark the longest period of martial law since the 1970s era of late strongman Ferdinand Marcos, one of the darkest and most oppressive chapters of the country's recent history.

At a joint session of Congress, 240 out of 267 lawmakers agreed with Duterte on the need for tough measures to stop Muslim militants recruiting fighters and preparing a new wave of attacks after occupying Marawi City for five months this year. Duterte thanked Congress for its support and said the communist New People's Army and militants loyal to Islamic State were equally threatening. "There is a need for me to come up with something, otherwise Mindanao will blow apart," he told reporters.

The government worries that mountainous, jungle-clad Mindanao, a region the size of South Korea that is home to the Muslim minority, could attract international extremists. The Marawi City assault was the Philippines' biggest security crisis in decades, killing more than 1,100 people, mostly militants. The armed forces took 154 days to win the battle, and 185 extremists are estimated to still be at large. Duterte enjoys massive public support, but his frequent threats to expand martial law are contentious in a country that suffered nine years of oppression under Marcos before his ouster in 1986.

Authoritarian streak

Marcos was accused of inventing security threats to justify tightening his grip on power and crushing detractors. Duterte has frequently praised the leadership of Marcos. Duterte's opponents lament his authoritarian streak and speculate that his end game is to emulate Marcos by declaring martial law nationwide, as he has often threatened. Asked several times yesterday if he was prepared to go that far, he said, "It depends on the enemies of the state." Minority lawmakers said the extension of martial law was illegal because Duterte had cited security threats, rather than rebellion or invasion, the conditions under which martial law can be invoked.

Duterte scoffed at the notion that the



MANILA: Activists hold a protest at the gate of the House of Representatives denouncing the Congress move to extend Martial Law in Mindanao in Manila yesterday. —AFP

conflict in Mindanao, his home for most of his life, did not constitute rebellion. "There is actually rebellion in Mindanao, it is ongoing, the fighting is going on," he said. Congressman Tom Villarin said martial law would cost a huge amount of money, calling broad support for it a "death blow to our democracy".

"We have made martial law the new

normal, absent of any proof of invasion or rebellion," he said. "Martial law now desensitizes the people to wrongly equate it with good governance and democracy." In his request to Congress on Monday, Duterte had argued that a little-known operative active in Mindanao, Abu Turaife, was "said to be" Islamic State's potential point man in Southeast Asia.—Reuters

News in brief

39 Yemenis killed

DUBAI: Saudi-led coalition aircraft struck a military police camp in the Houthi-controlled Yemeni capital Sanaa yesterday, killing at least 39 people and wounding 90 more, including some prisoners, an official and witnesses said. The strike is part of an air campaign by the Western-backed coalition on the Iran-allied Houthis that has escalated since the Houthis crushed an uprising last week led by former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh and killed him. One official in the camp said the coalition aircraft had launched seven raids on the camp, located in the eastern part of Sanaa, where some 180 prisoners were being held. The official said rescue teams had pulled out 35 bodies from the rubble, while the rest were not accounted for. It was the latest in a string of air raids the coalition has conducted on Sanaa and other parts of the country, sometimes causing multiple casualties among civilians. A spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition could not immediately be reached for comment on the report. The coalition denies that it targets civilians.

Afghan women officers

NEW DELHI: From shooting an AK-47 to dealing with computer-simulated sieges, 20 Afghan women officers are being put through their paces at a military training academy in India. They are the first Afghan women to attend the academy in the south Indian city of Chennai, which has been training men from the country's military for several years. The women receive weapons training and learn tactics and logistical and navigational skills at the academy, the only military training establishment in India for both men and women. This week they were taught how to use an AK-47 and given classroom training in ambush situations. The three-week crash course ends on December 24 and is reported to be a pilot for a full training scheme being planned for next year as part of the Afghan National Army's efforts to recruit more women. Afghanistan has said it wants women to make up 10 percent of the armed forces, an ambitious goal given the current figure is barely three percent.

Beijing fire kills five

BEIJING: A fire in a southern neighborhood of Beijing yesterday killed five people, the Chinese government said, just weeks after another deadly blaze in the city prompted a crackdown against migrant workers sparking widespread anger. The fire in a house in Baiqiangzi, a migrant village in the Chinese capital, was caused by two electric bikes, a fireman who gave his family name as Qiu told Reuters at the scene. Eight people were injured and had been taken to hospital, the government said. Police detained the house owner who had rented it out, state news agency Xinhua said. A resident in his 30s, who declined to be identified, said he was in the building when the fire broke out just before 1 am. He said that the room where electric bikes are charged was full of flames. He helped carry people out, some of whom were burnt "from head to toe", he said.

Malaysia's Mahathir quizzed

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian police yesterday questioned former leader Mahathir Mohamad, who is seeking to oust the government at looming polls, for allegedly insulting a seafaring ethnic group when he attacked the country's scandal-plagued premier. Political tensions are rising, with Mahathir—who was premier for 22 years—gearing up to take on Prime Minister Najib Razak at elections that must be called by August. At a rally in October against a massive financial scandal embroiling the current government, Mahathir had said Najib was descended from "Bugis pirates". The Bugis are a seafaring ethnic group that come from neighboring Indonesia. Large numbers migrated to Malaysia, and many in the country claim Bugis ancestry. The comments sparked anger among the Bugis community and last month the powerful Sultan of Selangor called for Mahathir to face a sedition probe as the remarks insulted his royal family, who claim descent from the ethnic group. Malaysia has nine state sultans who have no formal power, but are accorded great respect.

Analysis

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India's digital ID sparks debate over human right to personal data

When Parash, an HIV-positive man, went to a government hospital in Delhi a few months ago to get his medication, he was turned away. He did not have an Aadhaar, a biometric identity card with a unique identification number issued by the Indian government. The 27-year-old had earlier showed his driver's license or voter card to get his anti-retroviral therapy (ART) drugs at a charity, but the hospital did not accept these as proof of identity. They insisted on his Aadhaar. "The medications are my lifeline. I have other government IDs - passport, driver's license, a voter ID, but without Aadhaar, I am nothing to the state," said Parash, who declined to give his last name.

India launched Aadhaar, now the world's biggest biometric database, in 2009 to streamline welfare payments and reduce wastage in public spending. Since then, the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been keen to mandate the use of Aadhaar for everything from filing income taxes to the registration of mobile phone numbers and booking railway tickets. Campaigners and technology experts have raised concerns about privacy and the safety of the data, the susceptibility of biometrics to failure, and the misuse of data for profiling or increased surveillance.

Aadhaar is now mandatory for welfare, pension and employment schemes, despite a 2014 Supreme Court ruling that it cannot be a requirement for welfare programs. Parash suspects his experience is not an isolated case. "I have heard of others - sex workers and transgender people - who have been denied ART because they did not have Aadhaar or because they did not want to give (their data) because they are scared of being outed and linked to other databases," he said.

Surveillance State

More than 1 billion people of India's 1.25 billion population have been issued the 12-digit Aadhaar, which uses personal data, fingerprints and iris scans to identify them. "An eco-system is being created where we don't have control of our own data and where a single identifier - the Aadhaar - links all databases and becomes a tool for profiling and surveillance," said Reetika Khera, an associate professor at the Indian Institute of Technology in New Delhi. "There is rampant interlinking of discrete databases without data protection," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

An Aadhaar, which means "foundation" in Hindi, speeds up transactions such as opening bank accounts and getting new mobile phone contracts, doing away with middlemen and potential fraudsters, the government says. Banks, mobile services companies and airlines can access parts of the Aadhaar database to verify identities. Companies could also share information on a person's spending and consumption habits, for example, and link the data to public records like the electoral register. The government can use the data without the consent or knowledge of individuals to profile and monitor them, said Khera.

Some of India's most vulnerable people - including migrants and the elderly - are at risk of being excluded if they are unable to prove their identity, said Usha Ramanathan, a lawyer. "The state is making Aadhaar ubiquitous and putting pressure on people to prove their identity, forcing even those who otherwise have no digital presence to leave a digital footprint," she said. "It is not just a violation of privacy, it is the creation of a surveillance state: everyone is being forced to get this number, and every agency is becoming an agent for the state."

There have been reports of biometrics failing when fingerprints have faded, and of deaths linked to denial of subsidized food when verification failed. There have also been reports of security breaches, but the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), which oversees the program, said Aadhaar is "fully safe and secure and there has been no data leak or breach".

Dystopia

India's top court in August ruled individual privacy is a fundamental right and part of the freedoms guaranteed by the constitution. The court's landmark ruling also recognized "informational privacy" as part of the right to privacy and asked the government to put in place a robust data protection framework. While the ruling was seen as a setback for the rollout of Aadhaar, the information technology minister said it affirmed the government's view that privacy is subject to "reasonable restrictions".

Last month, the ministry for information technology released a draft data protection law to prevent misuse of personal information, which also suggested grounds under which such data can be processed without consent. But in addition to a comprehensive data protection law, Aadhaar must be made voluntary, as it was originally intended, said Mishi Chaudhary, a technology lawyer. "People should not be forced to do this. We need privacy, not just for those of us who understand what it is about, but also for people who don't understand what they are giving up for certain services," she said.

"I don't want to live in a panopticon, where even the FedEx guy can ask for my Aadhaar number," she said, pointing to China's social credit system as an example of the dystopian future that India could be headed towards with Aadhaar. The Chinese system, due to become mandatory in 2020, rates daily activities to create a score of trustworthiness that could determine if a person is eligible for a mortgage or a job. —Reuters

Cartoon for the Soul



Trump loses his big bet on Alabama race

In backing Roy Moore in Alabama's US Senate race even though the candidate faced allegations of sexual misconduct with teenage girls, President Donald Trump made a risky bet - and lost big. The victory by Democrat Doug Jones over the Republican Moore in the Alabama special election on Tuesday was a catastrophe for Trump, portending a Democratic wave next year that could cost Republicans control of one or both houses of Congress.

The stakes in Alabama were that high. Democrats already were confident they had a strong chance to retake the US House of Representatives in next year's congressional elections. Jones' narrow victory increases their once-long odds of retaking control of the Senate as well. If Democrats were to recapture both chambers, they would serve as a check on Trump's agenda and might even initiate impeachment proceedings against him.

"That Republicans lost in one of the most Republican states in the nation is a wake-up call no matter how flawed their candidate was," said Jesse Ferguson, a Democratic strategist and former aide to Democrat Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. Democrats never expected to have a chance in Alabama, where they had not won a US Senate race in 25 years. But the combination of Trump's unpopularity, the sexual misconduct allegations that erupted against Moore in November, and Trump's enthusiastic support of him anyway gave them the opportunity, experts said.

"Trump was the one who got Jones within firing range, and Moore allowed Jones to win," said Kyle Kondik, a political analyst at the University of Virginia. Even as Democrats lost several special congressional elections this year, they consistently showed higher levels of turnout and engagement, which is attributable to Trump, Kondik said.

Trump Referendum?

The Alabama race showed there were limits both to Trump's endorsement power and his judgment. Even as senior Republicans urged Trump to abandon Moore, the president decided instead in the campaign's final days to throw the full weight of his office behind him. In the end,

that was not enough, and early turnout reports suggested that many Republicans stayed home. Moreover, despite the sexual misconduct allegations against Moore, the race near the end increasingly seemed to become about the president. Moore's camp this week

“ He was trying to push a boulder up a hill ”

said the contest was specifically a referendum on Trump and his presidency. "It is Donald Trump on trial in Alabama," Dean Young, a strategist for Moore, told ABC News.

Trump congratulated Jones on Twitter "on a hard fought victory" and added: "Republicans will have another shot at this seat in a very short period of time." The loss was also a body blow to Steve Bannon, Trump's former top strategist, who backed Moore in the primary against the Republican incumbent, Luther Strange, because he viewed Moore as a more reliable ally. Bannon also frequently characterized the race as less about Alabama and more about furthering Trump's economic nationalist agenda.

Bannon is looking to wage an insurgency against the Republican establishment in the 2018 congressional elections, particularly Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who condemned Moore after several women accused him of unwanted sexual contact when they were in their teens and he was in his 30s. Moore, 70, has denied the allegations, and Reuters has not independently verified them.

Anti-Establishment

Beyond Moore, Bannon is supporting anti-establishment candidates such as Kelli Ward in Arizona, Danny Tarkanian in Nevada and Kevin Nicholson in Wisconsin, all of whom oppose McConnell staying on

as Senate leader. Bannon also may ultimately support challenges against sitting Republicans in Mississippi and Wyoming. But Moore's loss seems certain to dampen that effort, and Republicans who fear losing control of Congress may be even less likely to back outsider candidates who may turn off mainstream voters. It is now an open question whether Trump will inject himself into more Republican primaries, given his setback in Alabama. "When you nominate candidates who are unqualified and an embarrassment to the party, you run the risk of ruining your entire brand," said Josh Holmes, a Republican consultant and close ally of McConnell. Bannon's supporters say rank-and-file Republican voters are more likely to blame McConnell, not Bannon, for the loss in Alabama, arguing that McConnell and his well-resourced Senate Leadership Fund did nothing to help Moore.

McConnell "actively opposed the

Republican candidate in Alabama and threatened our Senate majority by helping to put a liberal Democrat in that seat," said Andy Surabian, a former Bannon protégé who now advises a pro-Trump advocacy group, Great America Alliance. Even with the Alabama win, Democrats face a significant challenge next year if they are to take control of the Senate.

They must defend 10 incumbents in states that were won by Trump and they must gain two seats currently held by Republicans. Their best opportunities to secure those seats lie in Arizona and Nevada, and perhaps Tennessee.

Democrats need 24 seats to retake the House, but that is viewed as a more realistic goal because of the number of congressional districts where they are competitive, particularly in suburban areas. Brian Walsh, president of another pro-Trump group, America First Policies, said Trump could not be blamed for Moore's loss, arguing that the president's late endorsement almost won the race for Moore, a deeply flawed candidate. "He was trying to push a boulder up a hill," Walsh said. —Reuters



Republican Senatorial candidate Roy Moore arrives on stage to speak about the race against his Democratic opponent Doug Jones in Montgomery, Alabama. — AFP

Poland's new prime minister: A gamble that could backfire

Poland's new prime minister faces a difficult balancing act trying to repair bruised relations with the European Union without alienating the eurosceptic government's core voters. A Western-educated former banker who is fluent in German and English and was sworn in on Monday, Mateusz Morawiecki boasts the credentials needed to negotiate with Brussels. But any compromises to improve relations with Brussels, which sees the ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party as a threat to democracy, would risk upsetting the traditional, Catholic supporters who propelled it into power two years ago.

It is a gamble that could backfire, and it is not yet clear how far Morawiecki, 49, and his party, dominated by former Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski, are ready to go to please Brussels. "The idea to build up international credibility seems rational," said Jaroslaw Flis, a sociologist at the Jagiellonian University. "But such actions would have to be in complete contrast with what Mateusz Morawiecki would have to do domestically to prevent the PiS from falling apart."

The PiS government has alienated many people at home and abroad with its nationalist rhetoric and changes to state institutions which the EU says subvert the bloc's laws. The European Commission, the EU executive, opened an

inquiry into the rule of law in Poland in January 2016 and the European Parliament has started a process that could deprive Poland of its voting rights in the 28-nation bloc. Any hope in Brussels that Morawiecki's appointment signals a change of course by PiS will have been tempered by Polish parliament approving legal changes to the judiciary in defiance of the EU on Friday - the day after his nomination. The changes give parliament, where PiS has a majority, de facto control over the selection of judges.

Looking For Clues

EU leaders looking for clues about Morawiecki's plans will also have taken little comfort from comments he has made since being nominated, making clear he backs a tough line on the EU and believes in PiS's traditional vision of the Polish state. "We want to transform Europe, this is my dream, to re-christianise it," Morawiecki told the Catholic Radio Maryja broadcaster. "We want Poland to be strong, but also to contain ... Christian values. We will defend them against the background of laicisation and a deepening consumerism." Asked by the radio interviewer about demands by French President Emmanuel Macron for Poland to face sanctions over a subversion of democratic rules, Morawiecki said he would not "bow down to blackmail." In comments to parliament on Tuesday, Morawiecki suggested Poland might relent in a conflict with Brussels over logging in an ancient forest, which an EU court has said contravenes EU laws. But he said Poland's national interests came first in any debate over the future of the EU and that he "wholeheartedly" supported PiS's overhaul of the judiciary.

Like Beata Szydlo, whom he replaced as prime minister, Morawiecki is likely to have to defer to PiS leader and co-founder Jaroslaw Kaczynski. Prime minister from July 2006 to November 2007, Kaczynski is widely seen as the power behind the party and Poland's main decision-maker. How much scope

that will leave Morawiecki to carve out his own path remains to be seen. Former Polish President Lech Walesa, a PiS critic, has suggested that nothing of substance will change. "The circus has stayed the same, only the clowns have changed their roles," Walesa, who led the Solidarity trade union movement that ended communist rule, said on Twitter. The appointment of Morawiecki, whose father founded and led a radical offshoot of Solidarity in the 1980s, appears designed in part to present a new face of Poland to the EU. Szydlo, 54, at times responded angrily to EU criticism and relations with the bloc soured under her government. Underlining PiS opposition to Muslim immigration, she said last month Poland wanted to be sure Christian traditions were not subject to "ideological censorship" in the EU.

Along with Hungary, Poland has refused to take in any of its quota of the wave of refugees from Syria and elsewhere who have come to Europe since 2015, on the grounds that Muslim immigrants are a threat to national security and stability. Such comments appeal to core PiS voters, and Szydlo's government, which promised generous welfare payouts and a dedication to traditional Catholic values, was one of Poland's most popular since communist rule ended in 1989.

A relative newcomer to politics, Morawiecki lacks Szydlo's broad appeal. But he has overseen significant economic achievements since becoming finance minister in 2016, a position he has retained in the new government. Tusk has welcomed what he sees as signs that Morawiecki is a liberal economist who wants better ties with the EU. "There is no doubt that (Morawiecki's) liberal bias and some pro-western gestures could be a sign that there is a lurking desire to improve relations," Tusk said last week. But an economic stimulus plan Morawiecki unveiled in 2016 has been criticised by economists who say it depends heavily on private investment, which is low in Poland despite fast economic growth. —Reuters

News

Saudi filmmakers, businessmen eye...

Continued from Page 1

"Cinema 500 km" is the tale of a Saudi crossing his country's borders for the first time, just to see a film. "It's funny, right?" remarked Hanaa Saleh Alfassi, a Saudi director taking part in the Dubai film fest. "We're ready for a long time for all these bans to be lifted," she told AFP. Alfassi's own film "Lollipop" also tackles restrictions, legal and social. "It's a coming of age story about a girl who gets her period for the first time and decides to hide it from her family in order not to cover her face," she said.

Saudi women are required to wear a black abaya and veil, although the latter is arbitrarily enforced and in recent years some women have started showing their faces. Alfassi's film was inspired by a pamphlet she used to see advising women to "protect" themselves by veiling, with an image of two lollipops. "One is wrapped and has no flies and the other one is unwrapped and has flies." But for her the message is misleading, because "in Saudi, most people are covered and they still get harassed".

When Alfassi's main character starts wearing the veil, she is "sexualized" by society and harassed by a friend's

father. Spoiler alert: the harasser confuses the protagonist and his daughter. One of the young women will eventually remove the covering. Alfassi acknowledges that cinemas may start by screening "uncontroversial" selections, but she foresees the industry blossoming as Saudis become used to theatre-going. "The cool thing about cinema is the film doesn't come to you. You're going to enjoy that film with strangers."

Major cinema chains are clamoring to break into the untapped Saudi market, where the majority of the population is under 25. US giant AMC Entertainment on Monday signed a non-binding agreement with Saudi Arabia's vast Public Investment Fund to build and operate cinemas across the kingdom. It will face stiff competition from regional heavyweights, namely Dubai-based VOX Cinemas, the leading operator in the Middle East.

The CEO of VOX parent company Majid Al Futtaim, Alain Bejjani, told AFP on Monday his company was eager to expand into Saudi Arabia. "We... are committed to developing Vox Cinemas in Saudi Arabia and (to) make sure that every one of our Saudi customers will have a Vox Cinema close to them where they will be able to experience what they have been experiencing outside Saudi Arabia - in Saudi Arabia," he said. Bejjani predicts that cinemas will be "the cornerstone of a whole new economic sector", generating jobs and developing Saudi content and talent. — AFP

Blow to Trump as Democrat...

Continued from Page 1

The result puts an Alabama Democrat in the US Senate for the first time in a quarter century. "I am truly, truly overwhelmed," Jones told ecstatic supporters at his election party in Birmingham, where aides and volunteers cheered and hugged. "We have shown the country the way that we can be unified." Alabama, which Trump won last year by 28 points, has been at a "crossroads" before, and sometimes did not take the correct path forward, Jones said. On Tuesday, "you took the right road."

Trump spoke up on Twitter to congratulate Jones on his "hard fought victory." "A win is a win," Trump said. "The people of Alabama are great, and the Republicans will have another shot at this seat in a very short period of time. It never ends!" Moore however refused to concede, declaring: "When the vote is this close, it is not over."

Moore signaled he wanted a recount, but Alabama law provides for an automatic recount only if the margin is within half a percent. The current margin stands at 1.5 percent. Alabama officials will have between December 26 and January 3 to certify the vote. If no recount is ordered, Jones is expected to be seated in the US Senate in early January. The loss by Moore, a former chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, shrinks the Republicans' Senate majority to 51 in the 100-seat chamber, and reduces Trump's margin for maneuver to the bare minimum.

By all accounts, it is a humiliating setback for Republicans as they struggle to move Trump's legislative agenda through Congress and make the case that they are the responsible stewards in Washington heading into crucial 2018 mid-term elections. Trump yesterday claimed that he was right all along in supporting Moore's rival

Luther Strange in the Alabama Republican Party senate primary. "The reason I endorsed Luther Strange (and his numbers went up mightily) is that I said Roy Moore will not be able to win the General Election. I was right!" Trump tweeted. "Roy worked hard but the deck was stacked against him!"

The Jones victory brought an avalanche of Democratic congratulations. "Tonight, Alabama voters elected a senator who'll make them proud," tweeted Hillary Clinton. Trump's defeated presidential rival. "And if Democrats can win in Alabama, we can - and must - compete everywhere." The Democratic National Committee said Moore's loss in the conservative heartland sends a "loud and clear" message to Trump and his Republicans. "You can't call yourself the party of family values as long as you're willing to accept vile men like Roy Moore as members," DNC chairman Tom Perez said.

The race was seen as a harbinger of whether the Republican Party can retain its slim Senate majority next year. It carries extraordinarily broad implications, and serves as a test of the partisan nature of American politics at a time of acrimonious debate about Trump and his policies. Tuesday's Democratic win is the second dramatic upset by the party in under two months. In November, in a sweeping rebuke to Trump, a Democrat won the governor's race in swing state Virginia.

Moore, 70, had wanted to bring his Christian religious activism to Washington. But the tumultuous election was buffeted for the past month with the shock allegations by several women - first reported by The Washington Post one month ago - that Moore assaulted, molested or pursued several teenage girls, including sexually touching one who was 14 years old at the time. Moore had created a major headache for Republicans. The party's leaders and members of Congress called on him to step down after the allegations first surfaced, to no avail. Had he won, the Republican brand risked being sullied by association with the judge, particularly at a time of national upheaval over sexual harassment and the right of victims to be heard. — AFP

Islamic leaders urge recognizing...

Continued from Page 1

The overall global reaction to the decision reflected the world's rejection of such steps, said Sheikh Sabah, who called for cooperation with various regional partners to pressure the US to back down.

This unilateral decision will have a negative impact on the Mideast peace process, said HH the Amir, who asked the US, the main Middle East peace broker, to reconsider the situation and play a neutral part in the matter. The US should work with the global community to force Israel to implement international resolutions concerning ending the occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands, affirmed the Amir, who stressed that peace will only be achieved by establishing a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as the capital of the country.

He stressed that Kuwait, as a non-permanent member of the UNSC, will work with all Islamic partners to make sure that OIC resolutions concerning the important matter reach the global community. The Amir thanked Erdogan and OIC Secretary General Yousef Al-Othaimen for organizing the urgent summit, affirming that the US decision, if carried out, will have huge ramifications on the legal and political status of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's status is perhaps the most sensitive issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel sees the entire city as its undivided capital, while the Palestinians want the eastern sector, which the international community regards as annexed by Israel as the capital of their future state.

Erdogan - who regards himself a champion of the Palestinian cause - denounced Israel as a state defined by "occupation" and "terror", in a new diatribe against the Israeli leadership. "With this decision, Israel was rewarded for all the terrorist activities it has carried out. It is Trump who bestowed this award even," said Erdogan, who holds the rotating chairmanship of the OIC. He said all countries who "value international law and fairness" should recognize occupied Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, saying Islamic countries would "never give up" on this demand.

Erdogan sought to underline his point with a PowerPoint map presentation, flashing a laser pointer at how Palestinian territory had shrunk since the 1948 creation of Israel. "The real proprietor of these lands is Palestine," he told the final press conference. "Mr Trump wants all this to be Israel. This is the product of an evangelist and Zionist mentality," said Erdogan.

Using unusually strong language and bitterly anti-American rhetoric, Abbas warned that there could be "no peace or stability" in the Middle East until Jerusalem is recognized as the capital of a Palestinian

state. Moreover, he said that with Trump's move the United States had withdrawn itself from a traditional role as the mediator in the search for Mideast peace. "We do not accept any role of the United States in the political process from now on. Because it is completely biased towards Israel," he said.

The final statement from the OIC echoed this sentiment, saying Trump's move was "an announcement of the US administration's withdrawal from its role as sponsor of peace" in the Middle East. Erdogan added that there can no longer be "any question" of the United States being a mediator. "This period is now over," he said bluntly. Successive US administrations have sought unsuccessfully to broker a final peace deal since the 1990s Oslo accords. Trump, too, is working on such an offer through his son-in-law Jared Kushner. Abbas slammed the recognition by Trump of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel as a "gift" to the "Zionist movement" as if he "were giving away an American city," adding that Washington no longer had any role to play in the Middle East peace process.

But bridging the gaps in a Muslim political community that includes archrivals Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran was always a tall order, let alone announcing any concrete measures agreed between the 57 OIC member states. Several key players, like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, were unlikely to want to risk their key relationship with Washington for the sake of an anti-Washington OIC statement.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Jordanian King Abdullah II and Lebanese President Michel Aoun were among the heads of state present, as well as the emirs of Qatar and Kuwait and presidents of Afghanistan and Indonesia. The level of Saudi representation - critical if the final statement is to carry long-term credibility - was only at the level of a senior foreign ministry official.

"Some countries in our region are in cooperation with the United States and the Zionist regime and determining the fate of Palestine," seethed Rouhani, whose country does not recognize Israel and has dire relations with Saudi Arabia. But as the summit was being held, Saudi King Salman in Riyadh echoed the calls over Jerusalem, saying it was the "right" of the Palestinians to establish "their independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital".

Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for genocide and war crimes, was also in attendance and warmly greeted by Erdogan. A surprise guest was Venezuela's leftist President Nicolas Maduro whose country has no significant Muslim population but is a bitter critic of US policy. Trump's announcement last week prompted an outpouring of anger in the Muslim and Arab world, where tens of thousands of people took to the streets to denounce the Jewish state and show solidarity with the Palestinians. The decision sparked protests in Palestinian territories, with four Palestinians killed so far in clashes or Israeli air strikes in response to rocket fire from Gaza and hundreds wounded. — Agencies



RIYADH: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (left) and Saudi Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al-Sheikh attend the opening of the Shura Council's ordinary session yesterday. — AFP

Saudi king determined to fight graft

Continued from Page 1

the companies of detained businessmen will continue operating normally.

In a speech focused on economic issues, Salman said the kingdom was pushing ahead with its "Vision 2030" economic reform plan to find new sources of revenue for the OPEC powerhouse. But he said that corruption was one of the main threats to economic development. "We have decided, with God's help, to confront it (corruption) with justice and decisiveness so that our country can enjoy the renaissance and development that every citizen aspires for," he said.

Signaling his support for the campaign of arrests, he

said that he had ordered the formation of a higher committee against corruption headed by the crown prince. "Thanks be to God that those are a few (people)," he said, referring to the number of arrestees. The public prosecutor said last week that most of those detained in the anti-corruption campaign have agreed to settlements to avoid prosecution, while the rest could be held for months. Salman said the restructuring the kingdom was undertaking did not contradict its Islamic values, which he said were based on moderate Islam. "There is no place among us for an extremist who sees moderation as deviation, or who would exploit our benevolent faith to achieve his goals," he added.

King Salman also reiterated Saudi Arabia's condemnation of President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the US embassy to the city. In an apparent reference to arch-enemy Iran, Salman also said Saudi Arabia was working with its allies to confront any "tendency for external interference in the internal affairs and fan the flames of sectarian sedition, and undermine regional security and stability". He did not elaborate. — Reuters

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Sports

Froome faces tough questions after positive Vuelta test

Rider's urine showed excessive levels of asthma drug

Why Salbutamol, the asthma wonder drug, is banned

PARIS: Asthma drug salbutamol, for which four time Tour de France winner Chris Froome returned a test revealing twice the permissible amount, is widely used in cycling circles.

What is salbutamol?

Widely prescribed as Ventolin in inhaler form to treat asthma as a fast action method of opening airways to and from the lungs at the onset of breathing difficulties. It is banned in sports by the World Anti-doping Agency (WADA).

Why is it banned?

Salbutamol is part of a class of drugs called Beta 2 agonist which can have anabolic, or tissue building, effects. Scientific studies on whether, apart from alleviating asthma, inhaled salbutamol helps athletes are not unanimous: some say there is a tiny benefit, some say there is none.

Froome is asthmatic, what did he do wrong?

WADA accepts that asthmatics should be allowed to use inhalers. It no longer requires sufferers to produce a therapeutic use exemption from a doctor. Instead WADA has set a ceiling for the amount of the drug that can show up in tests.

Froome's problem is that he exceeded the accepted level of salbutamol of 1000ng per millilitre in a urine sample on September 7 in one of around 20 such tests he gave during the Tour of Spain, which would be the equivalent of around four or five puffs on an inhaler. His reported level was 2000ng/ml.

Why did Froome test over the limit?

Froome says his asthma became aggravated during La Vuelta but insisted: "as always, I took the greatest care to ensure that I did not use more than the permissible dose."

His team Sky was quick to point out that Froome had not returned a "positive control". The term that those involved are using is "Adverse Analytical Finding."

What is an "Adverse Analytical Finding"?

Because there are legitimate reasons why an athlete took the substance WADA's rules require further investigations before pronouncing guilt. That means Froome is not automatically banned.

What happens next?

World cycling's governing body, the UCI, said in a statement that it notified Froome on September 20. Sky said that the finding triggered a request from the UCI "aimed at establishing what caused the elevated concentration of Salbutamol." The UCI said "proceedings are being conducted in line with the UCI anti-doping rules." In the past cyclists have attempted to recreate the circumstances of the test to prove that the results were produced by what Sky called the "unpredictable variations in the way Salbutamol is metabolised and excreted." —AFP

Russia's hockey league players to compete as neutrals at Olympics

MOSCOW: The Russia-based Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) said yesterday it was in favour of its players competing at the Pyeongchang winter Olympics after Moscow agreed to let Russian athletes take part as neutrals. The Russian Olympic Committee on Tuesday agreed to support athletes who choose to compete at the winter Olympics in February as neutrals after the Russian team was banned over doping allegations.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) last week announced the ban for what it called "unprecedented systematic manipulation" of the anti-doping system. But it left the door open for Russian athletes with no history of doping to be invited to compete as neutrals.

In comments carried by Russian media last month, KHL President Dmitry Chernyshenko hinted that the league could bar its players from competing at the Olympics in retaliation for doping investigations against Russian athletes. But in a news release on Wednesday, the league said its board of directors supported Russia's decision. It also wished good luck to all KHL players representing their various countries' national teams at the Games.

The absence of KHL players in Pyeongchang could have dealt a serious blow to Olympic hockey given that players from North America's National Hockey League (NHL) will not be taking part. The NHL announced in April that it would not halt its season to accommodate the Olympics, infuriating those wishing to participate and ending a run of five consecutive Winter Games with players from the league. Russian authorities have denied any state support for doping and pledged to cooperate with international sports bodies to counter the use of banned performance-enhancing drugs in the country.

Russia's athletics federation, Paralympic Committee and anti-doping agency RUSADA remain suspended over doping scandals. — Reuters

LONDON: Four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome could potentially be stripped of his Vuelta a Espana title after a urine test he gave during the race in September showed excessive levels of an asthma medication. The 32-year-old Briton, who rides for Team Sky, says he has done nothing wrong and would provide "whatever information" world cycling's governing UCI requires.

Froome became the first British rider to win the Vuelta and the first man to claim a Tour de France/Vuelta double in the same season since the Spanish race was moved to after the Tour.

Regarded as one of the greatest cyclists of all time, Froome has been on a shortlist of favourites to win this month's BBC Sports Personality of the Year award for the first time. His spectacular year is now under a cloud, however, and he and his Sky team will need to convince the UCI that there was nothing sinister about the amount of Salbutamol that showed up in his urine sample.



Vuelta win could be in jeopardy

ple after Stage 18 of the Vuelta on Sept. 7.

Salbutamol is permitted as a legal asthma drug by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), and the UCI said Froome's failed urine test did not necessitate a mandatory provisional suspension.

But riders have been banned for excessive use of it in the past, notably Italian Alessandro Petacchi who was given a 12-month suspension and stripped of his five stage victories in the 2007 Giro d'Italia.

The UCI said in a statement it had notified Froome on Sept. 20 of an "Adverse Analytical Finding" from his sample, which had double the permissible limit of Salbutamol.

'GREATEST CARE'

Team Sky issued a statement in which Froome said he had followed medical advice and taken an increased dosage after his asthma, a lifelong condition, became worse. "As always, I took the greatest care to ensure that I did not use more than the permissible dose," Froome said. "I take my leadership position in my sport very seriously. The UCI is absolutely right to examine test results and, together with the team, I will provide whatever information it requires."

The Kenyan-born rider also took to Twitter, thanking those who had sent messages of support and saying he was confident "we will get to the bottom of this."

Vuelta organisers said they were awaiting official conclusions from the UCI and hoped for a swift conclu-

Nukes, Russia ban leave Olympics reeling

SEOUL: Holding the Winter Olympics in a little-known corner of South Korea was never an easy proposition, but a ban on Russia and the latent threat of nuclear war have left the hosts hoping that things can only get better. With less than two months to go, a flurry of problems beyond their control have created a perfect storm for Pyeongchang Olympics organisers as they gear up for the Games at their mountainside HQ.

Not only has Russia, the top medal-winner at the 2014 Sochi Games, been barred over a major drugs scandal, but North Korea has staged a series of nuclear and missile tests while trading threats of war with the United States.

The Games have also been shorn of stars from the National Hockey League (NHL), which is snubbing the event after the International Olympic Committee refused to pay costs such as travel and insurance.

"Dark clouds are hanging over the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics," the South's own JoongAng Daily said in an editorial this week. Public enthusiasm appears limited in the host country, where Unification Minister Cho Myoung-Gyon warned that another North Korean military provocation could deliver a "fatal blow" to the Games.

But as the problems mount, organisers remain defiant. Lee Hee-Beom, president of the organising committee, told AFP: "Minister Cho has gone beyond his brief. I find it regrettable. Sport must be separated from politics." South Korean President Moon Jae-In lamented that cross-border tensions were "higher than ever" before the Games-but hoped it was like "the darkness before dawn". "It will be resolved in the end and this is only a matter of time," he added according to Yonhap news agency.

PERSONAL INSULTS

Russia's team was barred by the IOC over a "systematic" doping conspiracy culminating at the Sochi Games, where officials are accused of secretly switching urine samples through a "mousehole" in the laboratory wall. President Vladimir Putin protested the ban as "political" but said he had no intention of calling a boycott, leaving clean Russian athletes free to compete under the Olympic flag. Meanwhile, the North's weapons tests and bellicose, sometimes personal, insults between Pyongyang and Washington have sent tensions soaring on the peninsula and the wider region. North Korea-just 80 kilometres (50 miles) away



PARIS: This file photo taken on July 23, 2017 shows Tour de France 2017's winner Britain's Christopher Froome celebrating his overall leader yellow jersey on the podium at the end of the 103 km twenty-first and last stage of the 104th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Montgeron and Paris Champs-Elysees. — AFP

analysis of Froome's sample showed a concentration of 2,000 nanograms per millilitre (ng/ml), compared with the WADA threshold of 1,000ng/ml.

Team Sky said there were a range of "complex medical and physiological issues" that could have led to the result. "I have the utmost confidence that Chris followed the medical guidance in managing his asthma symptoms, staying within the permissible dose for Salbutamol," said Sky team principal Dave Brailsford.

COMPLEX ISSUES

The UCI said analysis of the rider's B sample from the Vuelta test confirmed the results of the A sample and proceedings were being conducted in line with its anti-doping rules.

In Petacchi's case, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) found the Italian rider had not intended to cheat but had not exercised "utmost caution" in the use of his asthma treatment.

Limited levels of Salbutamol are permitted by WADA rules without the need for a TUE. Sky said

analysis of Froome's sample showed a concentration of 2,000 nanograms per millilitre (ng/ml), compared with the WADA threshold of 1,000ng/ml.

Team Sky said there were a range of "complex medical and physiological issues" that could have led to the result. "I have the utmost confidence that Chris followed the medical guidance in managing his asthma symptoms, staying within the permissible dose for Salbutamol," said Sky team principal Dave Brailsford.

"Of course, we will do whatever we can to help address these questions." The revelation comes at the end of a year in which Team Sky has been dogged by allegations of "wrongdoing" over its use of TUE's and its medical record keeping after the "jiffybag" controversy at the Criterium du Dauphine race in 2011.

An investigation by UK Anti-Doping concluded recently, saying it had been unable to prove what was in the package sent to former rider and 2012 Tour de France winner Bradley Wiggins. — Reuters



PYEONGCHANG: This picture taken on Tuesday shows South Korean Defence Minister Song Young-Moo (C) inspecting the overall preparations at the Olympic Stadium, the venue of the opening and closing ceremony for the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympic Games, in Pyeongchang. — AFP

from the venues across a heavily armed border-boycotted the 1988 Seoul Summer Games and is yet to confirm its participation in Pyeongchang.

It has not helped efforts to characterise the Games as a "Peace Olympics". "The double whammy-North Korea and the IOC ban on Russia-dealt telling blows to our efforts to make the Games a success. But these are beyond our control," said Yoo Jong-Sang, a professor of sports studies at Nambu University in Gwangju.

"As to these outside factors, we have nothing to do but cross our fingers," he added. At least the bad news stories have meant increased attention for Pyeongchang, which was previously so obscure that it was unfamiliar even to many Koreans.

Its name can also be confused with Pyongyang, so much so that a Kenyan delegate to a 2014 UN conference in Pyeongchang mistakenly flew to the North's capital, where he was interrogated for five hours before being released.

KEEP CALM AND FOCUS

According to Marcus Luer, CEO of Malaysia-based sports marketing agency Total Sports Asia. "No publicity is the only bad publicity" for Pyeongchang. Any

major sporting event usually has "some controversial thing going on prior to it", he added.

"It comes with the territory. These events are so large, a lot of money is at stake, the world is watching... Once the Games are happening, assuming nothing crazy happens, the focus will be on the Games."

Organisers are also upbeat about ticket sales, which have improved since the Olympic torch relay began traversing South Korea in November.

As of Sunday, 586,300 tickets out of a total 1.18 million had been sold in South Korea and abroad, organisers said, or 49.7 percent. About half of all Olympic tickets are normally sold in the last two months and during the Games, said POCOG spokeswoman Lee Jie-Hye, so "we don't expect any problems with meeting the target". Luer advised POCOG to focus on the job at hand, and not be distracted by events swirling around the Games. "At the moment, they just have to stay calm, focus on what they need to be doing and that is running the perfect Games. That is all they can do," he said. "What happens prior to that around the world is really out of their control," Luer added. "Their job is to host the Games, their job is not to worry about politics." —AFP

Sports

Rohit smashes third ODI double ton in India's big win

India beat Sri Lanka by 141 runs to level series

SCOREBOARD

MOHALI, India: Final scoreboard of the second one-day international between India and Sri Lanka in Mohali yesterday:

India	
R. Sharma not out	208
S. Dhawan c Thirimanne b Pathirana	68
S. Iyer c sub (Chaturanga) b Perera	88
M.S. Dhoni lbw b Perera	7
H. Pandya c Thirimanne b Perera	8
Extras (b1, lb1, w1)	13
Total (4 wickets, 50 overs)	392
Fall of wickets: 1-115 (Dhawan), 2-328 (Iyer), 3-354 (Dhoni), 4-392 (Pandya)	
Did not bat: D. Karthik, M. Pandey, B. Kumar, W. Sundar, J. Bumrah, Y. Chahal	
Bowling: Mathews 4-1-9-0, Lakmal 8-0-71-0 (w1), Perera 8-0-80-3 (w1), Pradeep 10-0-106-0 (w3), Dananjaya 10-0-51-0 (w1), Pathirana 9-0-63-1 (w3), Gunaratne 1-0-10-0 (w2).	

Sri Lanka (target 393)	
D. Gunathilaka c Dhoni b Bumrah	16
U. Tharanga c Karthik b Pandya	7
L. Thirimanne b Sundar	21
A. Mathews not out	111
N. Dickwella c Sundar b Chahal	22
A. Gunaratne st Dhoni b Chahal	34
T. Perera c Dhoni b Chahal	5
S. Pathirana c Dhawan b Kumar	2
A. Dananjaya c Sharma b Bumrah	11
S. Lakmal not out	11
Extras (lb2, w9)	11
Total (8 wickets, 50 overs)	251
Fall of wickets: 1-15 (Tharanga), 2-30 (Gunathilaka), 3-62 (Thirimanne), 4-115 (Dickwella), 5-159 (Gunaratne), 6-166 (Perera), 7-180 (Pathirana), 8-207 (Dananjaya)	
Did not bat: N. Pradeep	
Bowling: Kumar 9-0-40-1 (w2), Pandya 10-0-39-1, Bumrah 10-0-43-2 (w2), Sundar 10-0-65-1, Chahal 10-0-60-3 (w5), Iyer 1-0-2-0.	
Result: India won by 141 runs	
Series: Three-match series level at 1-1	

MUMBAI: Opener Rohit Sharma smashed his third one-day international double century to set up India's comprehensive 141-run win against Sri Lanka in the second match of the series at Mohali yesterday.

Leading the hosts in the absence of rested skipper Virat Kohli, Rohit laid waste to the Sri Lankan bowling with an unbeaten 208 off 153 deliveries to help India post 392 for four in their 50 overs.

India leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal then took three for 60 as the hosts restricted Sri Lanka to 251 for eight in their 50 overs to square the three-match series at 1-1. Former Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews remained unbeaten after a dogged 111 for his second ODI century but the touring side never had a realistic chance in their steep chase. Sri Lanka, who lost the three-test series 1-



Final match to be played on Sunday

0 against India, had been hoping for a repeat of the series opener in Dharamsala on Sunday, when India were bundled out for 112 in a seven-wicket defeat.

With India slumping to 29 for seven in their previous game while batting first, Sri Lanka captain Thisara Perera had no hesitation in putting the hosts in after winning the toss.

But Rohit, who notched up his 16th hundred in the 50-over format, and fellow opener Shikhar Dhawan denied them any early success with a watchful start. The 30-year-old added 115 with Dhawan, who made 68, to build a solid base for India and then added 213 for the second with fellow Mumbai batsman Shreyas Iyer, who scored 88 in what was his second ODI.

The right-handed batsman hit 13 fours and 12 sixes with his first 100 coming off 115 deliveries in the 40th over. Rohit then tore into Sri Lanka's bowlers and India scored 147 in their last 10 overs. It was the seventh time a batsman had scored 200 or more in ODIs with Rohit's 264 against the same opponents in Kolkata in 2014 being the highest individual score in



MOHALI: Indian team captain Rohit Sharma plays a shot during the second One Day International (ODI) cricket match between India and Sri Lanka at The Punjab Cricket Association Stadium in Mohali yesterday. — AFP

the 50-over format. Sri Lanka paceman Nuwan Pradeep went for 106 runs off his 10 overs, while Perera gave away 80 off his eight overs of seam bowl-

ing. The third and final ODI will be played at Visakhapatnam on Sunday before the two teams meet in a three-match Twenty20 series. — Reuters

World changed for English cricket after Stokes incident

PERTH: Senior batsman Alastair Cook says the world has changed for English cricket in the wake of the damaging Ben Stokes affair, and warned the team cannot afford any more "mistakes". The star all-rounder is currently banned from the international game while authorities probe his alleged involvement in a late-night fight outside a nightclub.

Cook, a former captain who will become the first Englishman to play 150 Tests when he appears against Australia in today's crucial third Ashes clash in Perth, admits his side has been slow to learn from the fall-out. Dubbed a "behavioural cleanskin", Cook senses England should have learnt their lesson months ago that standards would be intensely scrutinised in the wake of the Stokes scandal.

"It has been a very strange thing," he told reporters in Perth late Tuesday. "The world has obviously changed for the English cricket team from September. We

have taken a couple of months to really realise that. "These last two incidents have proved that. I've seen words written down, 'trivial misdemeanour at best', but since the Stokes incident times have changed for the English cricket team." Cook was referring to further off-field alcohol-related scandals involving Jonny Bairstow and Ben Duckett on the tour of Australia. "It's sad in some ways because we have always been a bit different to football and been able to go under the radar a bit and enjoy playing cricket for England and enjoy seeing the country outside that," Cook said. But the spotlight was now firmly on England and its off-field antics and "it's now down to us to adjust to it quickly and we can't afford any more mistakes".

'TAKING THE MICKEY'

Experienced fast bowler James Anderson said while the Duckett incident was not malicious and a "bit of a non event", the tourists had to understand the current situation and act smarter. Duckett was fined and will play no further part in the remaining matches for the England Lions in Australia after he poured a beer over Anderson in a Perth bar. "The frustrating thing is that what was a pretty silly incident would have gone unnoticed before but now puts an unfair question mark over our (team's) culture," Anderson wrote in a column for Britain's Telegraph newspaper. "We are all aware that from now on even a



Ben Stokes

minor incident will be seized upon.

"I know Australia will use the Duckett incident as a way of goading us, or taking the mickey. Fine. The players have moved on already. Our main focus is getting back in the series. That is all everyone is talking about." With batsman Steve Smith shaping up as Australia's danger man in Perth, Anderson said he would again try to get inside his "bubble", suggesting the

Australia skipper can expect some serious sledging. "In the first innings (in Adelaide) I sensed he was more bothered about what Stuart (Broad) and I were saying to him, which was not very interesting," Anderson said of Smith. "As a bowler, once you get him out a couple of times you realise he is not superhuman," he added. "You realise 'I can bowl to this guy' and that makes a big difference." —AFP

Root wants focus on England's cricket, not culture

PERTH: England captain Joe Root sought to draw a line under the litany of off-field incidents that have dogged the team throughout the Ashes yesterday, even as a senior player admitted they would continue to haunt the side during the third test in Perth.

Two-nil down to Australia after defeats in Brisbane and Adelaide, England must at least cobble a draw at the WACA to keep the five-match series alive, at a venue where they have lost their last seven matches.

On the eve of the Perth test, however, the tourists' hopes of focusing on the cricket continued to be tested with queries about the team's off-field culture. Former England captain Michael Vaughan criticised the side for behaving like "students" on tour in the wake of the suspension handed to England Lions squad member Ben Duckett for pouring a drink over the head of pace bowler James Anderson.

British media, meanwhile, reported that England coach Trevor Bayliss had threatened players that careers would be on the line if another off-field distraction arose following the Ben Stokes suspension and Jonny Bairstow's 'head-butt' incident. Having already been quizzed repeatedly about team discipline, Root hoped that his players could put the focus back on cricket and away from the bar with a

good WACA performance. "You've got to take it in your stride, you've got to move on and as you're fully aware from our point of view, it's very disappointing how things have turned out so far," he told reporters at the venue.

"It's about putting that right now, this week. We had an excellent attitude around practice yesterday and it has to be the same today. It's obviously been a big learner (in terms of captaincy)," Root added.

"I think the thing that for me is that we're so close to getting it right. We've shown that we're in this series, it's just pulling that all together." The off-field incidents have been used as ammunition on the field by Australia. Captain Steve Smith claimed his team had unsettled Bairstow in the series-opener at the Gabba by sledging him about his head-butt 'greeting' of Australia's opening batsman Cameron Bancroft during a boozy night out in Perth last month. Anderson said Duckett's gaffe was certain to be raised out on the field at the WACA. "Fine," he wrote in his column for British newspaper, the Daily Telegraph. "It will probably be funnier than what they have spouted at me so far in this series."

Anderson also took a swipe at England's coaching staff over their strategy during the second test defeat, saying he and his fellow pacemen had not bowled full enough at Adelaide Oval. "It was an oversight from the players on the field but also from the coaches who could have had an input too, which is frustrating," he wrote.

Root moved quickly to play down any hint of disharmony, however, and said the team had trained with an "excellent attitude". "I think the relationship (with the staff) has been really good," he said.

"It's probably slightly harsh to put the blame onto the coaches... Ultimately, us guys on the field, we're the ones



PERTH: England captain Joe Root speaks to the media on the eve of the third Ashes cricket Test match in Perth yesterday. — AFP

that are responsible for what we're doing out there," England named an unchanged team later on Wednesday, but with a minor change to their batting order. Wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow has been promoted to six in place of all-rounder Moeen Ali who drops to seven.

Team

Alastair Cook, Mark Stoneman, James Vince, Joe Root (captain), Dawid Malan, Jonny Bairstow, Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes, Craig Overton, Stuart Broad, James Anderson. — Reuters

All-rounder Marsh in line for Test recall

PERTH: Skipper Steve Smith says he is leaning towards playing all-rounder Mitchell Marsh as Australia's fifth bowler in today's potentially Ashes-deciding third Test against England in Perth. Smith declined to finalise an Australian XI at his Test-eve media conference yesterday as selectors mull over the merits of struggling batsman Peter Handscomb and local star Marsh.

Handscomb's place is under threat after a total of 62 runs in three innings in the series after a difficult Adelaide second Test in which his batting technique came under the microscope. If recalled, it would be the first appearance for Marsh since a shoulder injury mid-way through Australia's Test series in India earlier this year.

His chances have improved through his ability to provide a fifth bowling option to support Australia's pace attack on what is expected to be a flat WACA wicket. "If we do go down that route it's purely for the reasons we think we need an extra bowler on this wicket—nothing to do with anyone's batting," Smith said. "The stats suggest over the past couple of years that bowlers have had a pretty heavy workload out on this wicket. We're probably leaning down that way at the moment. "It will depend on what we think the wicket's like tomorrow and if it is going to be hard and fast and bouncy, that might change our thinking."

England, rattled by off-field booze-related incidents, face the prospect of losing the series in Perth where they have not beaten Australia since 1978. They were heavily defeated in the opening two Tests in Brisbane and Adelaide. Smith admitted that changing a winning team while leading 2-0 in the five-Test series would be a tough call on Handscomb, who averages 47.35 in his 12 Test appearances.

Despite criticism of Marsh's consistency at Test level where he averages just 21.74 in 21 Tests, Smith said he has seen signs in his recent batting to suggest he's a changed player. "He's tightened up his defence quite a lot," Smith said.

"I know speaking to him when he was back in the team a little while ago, we spoke about softening your hands up in defence and those good length balls—not going so hard at them. "I've seen that watching him the last couple of days in the nets and watching some of the Sheffield Shield games, that in defence he has actually softened his hands up.

"He's still putting away the bad ball. He hits the ball as hard as anyone I've ever seen. He's a strong lad." Smith said the groundsman had been working to get more pace into the WACA wicket ahead of the Test. "I think he's got more grass on it than he previously has to try and get that pace on the wicket," he said. — AFP

Sports

New Jersey Devils shut down Los Angeles Kings, win 5-1

McDavid scores as Oilers hammer Blue Jackets

LOS ANGELES: Taylor Hall scored twice and Cory Schneider made 16 saves as New Jersey beat Los Angeles 5-1 on Tuesday night. The win snapped New Jersey's two-game skid and halted the Kings' eight-game winning streak, the longest in the NHL this season and one shy of the longest in franchise history. Hall recorded his second multi-goal game of the season, while Travis Zajac, Brian Boyle and Brian Gibbons also scored for the Devils. Torrey Mitchell scored a third-period goal for the Kings.

LIGHTNING 3, BLUES 0

Brayden Point and Nikita Kucherov each scored and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 32 saves to lead Tampa Bay to its fifth consecutive win. The Lightning moved into sole possession of the top spot in the NHL standings, breaking a tie with the Blues, who had won four straight. Tyler Johnson added an empty-net goal with 22 seconds to play.



Flyers' first win at Wells Fargo Center

FLYERS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 2

Claude Giroux scored one goal and set up Sean Couturier's game-winner with a spectacular between-the-skates pass in the closing minutes of regulation to give Philadelphia a victory over Toronto. Taylor Leier and Scott Laughton also scored for the Flyers, who won for the fourth straight time following a 10-game losing streak. It was the Flyers' first win at Wells Fargo Center since Nov 9, snapping an 0-4-2 streak. Brian Elliott earned the win with 20 saves. Patrick Marleau and James van Riemsdyk scored for the Maple Leafs, who had their three-game winning streak snapped. Frederik Andersen stopped 35 shots in the loss.

OILERS 7, BLUE JACKETS 2

Mark Letestu scored a short-handed goal and had an assist, and Connor McDavid tallied a goal and three assists to lead Edmonton over Columbus. Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Milan Lucic, Matt Benning, Zack Kassian and Jesse Puljujarvi also scored for the Oilers and Puljujarvi, Anton Slepyshev, Michael Cammalleri, Leon Draisaitl and Darnell Nurse each contributed an assist. Oliver Bjorkstrand and Jack Johnson scored for the Blue Jackets.

CAPITALS 5, AVALANCHE 2

Evgeny Kuznetsov had three assists, Braden Holtby stopped 22 shots as Washington defeated Colorado. Jakub Vrana, John Carlson, Matt Niskanen, Brett Connolly

and Devante Smith-Pelly scored for the Capitals, and Madison Bowey had two assists. Colin Wilson and Tyson Jost scored for the Avalanche, and Semyon Varlamov made 22 saves against his former team.

SABRES 3, SENATORS 2

Evander Kane, Kyle Okposo and Benoit Pouliot scored to lead Buffalo over Ottawa. Buffalo has points in its last four games (2-0-2) after losing 11 of 12 games (1-9-2). Robin Lehner made 24 saves. Cody Ceci and Derick Brassard scored for the Senators, who have lost 12 of their past 13 games. Mike Condon made 23 saves. Blackhawks 3, Panthers 2 (OT) Patrick Kane scored at 2:24 of overtime, and Brandon Saad tallied a goal and an assist as Chicago defeated Florida for its third straight victory. Corey Crawford made 35 saves to help preserve the victory. Jonathan Toews' goal with 6:02 remaining drew the Blackhawks even when he beat Panthers goalie John Reimer, who finished with 25 saves. Jamie McGinn and Nick Bjugstad scored for the Panthers.

WILD 2, FLAMES 1 (SO)

Chris Stewart and Mikael Granlund scored in a shootout, lifting Minnesota over Calgary. The Wild got a regulation goal from Matt Cullen and 16 saves from goalie Alex Stalock en route to their third consecutive win. Devan Dubnyk started the game in goal for Minnesota but left with an injury. The Flames got a regulation goal from Micheal Ferland and 21 saves from goalie Mike Smith but saw their two-game winning streak snapped. Johnny Gaudreau had Calgary's only shootout goal.

HURRICANES 3, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2 (SO)

Phil Di Giuseppe scored the decisive goal in a shootout to give Carolina the win over Vegas, snapping the home side's four-game winning streak. Cam Ward, who notched his 300th career win, finished with 22 saves. Marcus Kruger and Trevor van Riemsdyk scored in regulation for the Hurricanes. Both were traded by Vegas to the Hurricanes during the summer for draft picks. The goals were the first of the season for each player. Deryk Engelland and Reilly Smith lit the lamp for the Golden Knights. The game marked the return of Vegas goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury, who had missed 25 games since Oct. 13 with a concussion. Fleury, a 14-year veteran, made 35 saves. — Reuters



NEWARK: Jonathan Quick #32 of the Los Angeles Kings makes the first period save as Jimmy Hayes #10 of the New Jersey Devils looks for the rebound at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey. — AFP

NHL results/standings

Carolina 3, Las Vegas 2 (SO); Chicago 3, Florida 2 (OT); Tampa Bay 3, St. Louis 0; Minnesota 2, Calgary 1 (SO); Buffalo 3, Ottawa 2; New Jersey 5, Los Angeles 1; Philadelphia 4, Toronto 2; Washington 5, Colorado 2; Edmonton 7, Columbus 2.

Western Conference						Eastern Conference							
Central Division						Atlantic Division							
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
St. Louis	21	9	2	104	81	44	Tampa Bay	22	6	2	113	74	46
Winnipeg	18	8	5	107	87	41	Toronto	20	11	1	108	92	41
Nashville	18	7	4	95	84	40	Boston	14	9	4	78	75	32
Minnesota	16	11	3	89	88	35	Montreal	13	14	4	85	99	30
Dallas	17	13	1	91	90	35	Florida	12	14	5	92	108	29
Chicago	15	11	5	93	84	35	Detroit	11	13	6	81	99	28
Colorado	14	14	2	94	100	30	Ottawa	9	13	7	79	101	25
							Buffalo	8	17	6	67	104	22
Pacific Division						Metropolitan Division							
Los Angeles	20	9	3	98	73	43	Columbus	19	11	1	88	80	39
Las Vegas	19	9	2	105	94	40	Washington	19	12	1	100	93	39
San Jose	16	10	3	79	69	35	New Jersey	17	9	4	94	92	38
Calgary	16	12	3	89	96	35	NY Islanders	17	10	3	108	100	37
Anaheim	13	11	7	83	91	33	NY Rangers	16	11	3	99	89	35
Vancouver	14	13	4	82	90	32	Pittsburgh	16	13	3	94	104	35
Edmonton	13	16	2	93	101	28	Philadelphia	12	11	7	87	88	31
Arizona	7	21	5	75	114	19	Carolina	12	11	7	83	93	31

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).

British board to review Fury licence

LONDON: Tyson Fury could have his boxing licence reinstated when the British Boxing Board of Control (BBBofC) meets next month, a move that would allow the controversial fighter to make a dramatic return to the ring.

UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) has cleared the 29-year-old former world heavyweight champion to return, after an absence of over two years, following his acceptance of a backdated two-year ban over a positive test for a banned steroid.

Fury, who has denied any wrongdoing, has spoken of his desire to "reclaim the world titles which are rightfully mine" but can only box again with the permission of the BBBofC.

"Tyson Fury's boxing licence suspension will be considered by the stewards of the board in January," the board said yesterday. Fury, who has not fought since his shock win against Wladimir Klitschko in November 2015 to become the undisputed heavyweight world champion, said he was looking forward to getting back into the ring.

"I'm a fighting man through and through and I've never backed down from anyone in my life and I was certainly not going to back down from fighting this dispute," he said. Fury immediately laid down a challenge to British compatriot Anthony Joshua, who successfully defended his IBF and WBA titles against Carlos Takam in October.

Fury tweeted: "@anthonyfjoshua where you at boy? I'm coming for you punk ent no1 blocking my path now!" The boxer had been charged along with his cousin Hughie, who also failed a test for nandrolone in February 2015.

Both have strongly denied the nandrolone charges, saying the positive tests were a result of eating wild boar that had not been castrated. The British board in a statement said fellow heavyweight Hughie "has no outstanding matters with the BBBofC at this time", but general secretary Robert Smith said they were yet to hear from the Fury camp.

Before he makes any return, Fury will need to appear before the board so that he can be assessed both physically and mentally. "We have to be satisfied about Tyson's physical wellbeing, that he is fit to fight, and that's not just medically, that's physically as well," Smith told Britain's Press Association.

"It's well reported he's not in physical condition to return straight away, so he's got a bit of work to do." Tyson Fury also failed a test for cocaine in September 2016 and later admitted using the recreational drug to deal with depression related to his injury and UKAD problems. — AFP

Leonard returns but Spurs stumble, James leads Cavs rout

LOS ANGELES: Kawhi Leonard made his long-anticipated season debut Tuesday and looked to be in mid-season form, although his San Antonio Spurs fell apart in the fourth quarter without him and lost to the Dallas Mavericks 95-89. The Spurs' All-Star forward missed the first 27 games of the season because of a quad injury. He quickly displayed his all-around excellence, producing 13 points on 6-of-12 shooting and adding six rebounds, one assist, one steal and a block. Leonard did it all in 16 minutes as coach Gregg Popovich promised a gradual reintroduction. Leonard's lone offensive rebound was a tip-out to himself that led to a bucket for a 55-50 San Antonio lead, and Popovich pulled him for good soon after. The Mavericks, sparked by guard J.J. Barea's aggressive drives to the basket, opened the fourth quarter on an 8-0 run, went up 91-80 with 4:01 to go and held on to snap the Spurs' four-game winning streak as well as end their own three-game skid.

76ERS 118, TIMBERWOLVES 112 (OT)

Joel Embiid had 28 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists, and J.J. Redick scored 26 points as Philadelphia pulled out an overtime victory over Minnesota. Ben Simmons was held scoreless until 1:17 remained in regulation, but he ended up with seven points and eight assists for Philadelphia. The 76ers snapped a four-game losing streak by scoring the first six points of overtime and holding on in the back-and-forth game. Jimmy Butler scored a season-high 38 points for Timberwolves, who shot only 40.7 percent from the field. Karl-Anthony Towns had his league-leading 22nd double-double with 19 points and 16 rebounds, and Andrew Wiggins scored 20 points for Minnesota.

KNICKS 113, LAKERS 109 (OT)

Kristaps Porzingis scored 37 points as New York emerged with an overtime victory over Los Angeles. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope paced the Lakers with 24 points. Los Angeles rookies Lonzo Ball (17 points, eight rebounds, six assists) and Kyle Kuzma (19 points) played well in their Madison Square Garden debuts. Kuzma hit a 3-pointer with 23.9 seconds left to tie the game at 99, but New York's Michael Beasley had two baskets and an assist on a Doug McDermott layup during a 69-second run in overtime to give the Knicks a six-point lead they would not relinquish.

CAVALIERS 123, HAWKS 114

Setting a season high with 20 3-pointers, Cleveland topped Atlanta. LeBron James scored 25 points and



NEW YORK: Michael Beasley #8 of the New York Knicks and Julius Randle #30 of the Los Angeles Lakers reach for the ball in the third quarter during their game at Madison Square Garden in New York City. — AFP

led a career high with 17 assists. He made two 3-pointers. Kyle Korver (19 points) drained six 3-pointers, and Kevin Love (17 points, 12 rebounds) added four treys, as did Jose Calderon (14 points, tying a season high). Taurean Prince paced the Hawks with 24 points, and Kent Bazemore added 20.

NUGGETS 103, PISTONS 84

Jamal Murray fired in 28 points and reserve Trey Lyles tossed in 20, leading Denver to the easy victory over slumping Detroit. Detroit Pistons coach Stan Van Gundy lamented his team's "embarrassing" performance after they slid to a seventh straight defeat in a 103-84 rout against the Denver Nuggets on Tuesday. The Pistons have tumbled down the Eastern Conference standings after a losing streak that has left them with 14-13 record for the season. Van Gundy described the blowout as one of the worst losses he had experienced as a coach — but took responsibility for the loss. "As a unit, no chemistry, no energy, they took us out of everything," Van Gundy told the post-game news conference. "I've coached around 850 regular season games and playoffs and that's one of the worst ones I've ever had." Wilson Chandler scored 18 points for the Nuggets while Mason Plumlee had 10

points and a season-high 13 rebounds.

NETS 103, WIZARDS 98

Allen Crabbe shook off a rough shooting night to hit the go-ahead 3-pointer with 44 seconds left as Brooklyn beat Washington. Crabbe was among seven Nets in double figures, finishing with 13 points. He shot 3 of 15 overall, 3 of 14 from 3-point range on a night when Brooklyn made 23.3 percent from long range. Bradley Beal led Washington with 28 points but only scored three points in the fourth quarter. He shot 11 of 33 and missed all seven of his 3-point attempts.

KINGS 99, SUNS 92

Zach Randolph scored 11 of his 17 points during the final five minutes, and his three-point play with 44.9 seconds left helped lift Sacramento past Phoenix. George Hill scored 18 points, and Buddy Hield contributed 14 points off the bench as Sacramento ended a three-game home losing streak. TJ Warren scored 18 points to lead the Suns, who have dropped four in a row and nine of their past 11. Reserve Mike James scored 17 points in 20 minutes. Tyler Ulis added 10 points, and Tyson Chandler had seven points and 10 rebounds for Phoenix. — Reuters

Sports

Chelsea give coach Conte cheer, Burnley go fourth

Captain Gary Cahill and Cesc Fabregas dropped to the bench

HUDDERSFIELD: Chelsea responded perfectly to head coach Antonio Conte's claim their Premier League title hopes are over with a convincing 3-1 win at Huddersfield Town on Tuesday. Tiemoue Bakayoko opened the scoring midway through the first half with a deft clipped finish, offering an answer to supporters who have criticised him for a series of poor performances following his July move from Monaco.

Willian headed in a second goal shortly before half-time and Pedro made it three to leave Chelsea level on points with second-place Manchester United, who host Bournemouth. Upwardly mobile Burnley are one place below Chelsea in fourth after edging Stoke City 1-0, while Crystal Palace hauled themselves off the foot of the table with two late goals in a dramatic 2-1 defeat of Watford.

Conte, who has cut an increasingly grumpy figure this season, said after Chelsea's surprise 1-0 defeat at West Ham United that his side had no chance of catching leaders Manchester City in the title race.

The Italian has complained lately of a demanding fixture schedule, player fatigue and a lack of investment in the squad by the club's board. For his side's fourth game of nine in a packed December, Conte was without his 10-goal top scorer Alvaro Morata because of a bad back, with Eden Hazard deployed as a false nine in front of Willian and Pedro.

Captain Gary Cahill and playmaker Cesc Fabregas dropped to the bench, while wing-back Davide Zappacosta was omitted from the squad altogether. The

visitors thought they had made the breakthrough in the sixth minute, but Pedro was just offside as he ran clear to slot in Willian's pass through the middle.

But Chelsea made their superiority count as they took the lead midway through the first half. Goalkeeper Jonas Lossl slipped as he cleared the ball and Victor Moses's header was touched on stylishly by Hazard to Willian.

MCARTHUR WINNER

He fed a pass left for Bakayoko to chip over the advancing goalkeeper, despite Chris Lowe's attempt to clear off the line. The champions got their second goal with just over two minutes to go to half-time.

Stand-in captain Cesar Azpilicueta's long diagonal pass from inside his own half found Marcos Alonso in space

on the left and he had time to cross for Willian to bounce in a header at the far post.

A third Chelsea goal took less than five minutes of the second half to arrive and again it came from an Alonso cross.

Willian held off Mathias Jorgensen and teed up Pedro to hammer into the top-right corner from 18 yards. Huddersfield claimed a stoppage-time consolation when Laurent Depoitre glanced a header into the net from fellow substitute Florent Hadergionaj's left-wing cross.

Burnley provisionally climbed to the dizzy heights of fourth place after Ashley Barnes drilled home in the 89th minute to snatch a gritty win over Stoke at Turf



HUDDERSFIELD: Huddersfield Town's Belgian striker Laurent Depoitre (2L) heads the ball to score past Chelsea's Belgian goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois during the English Premier League football match between Huddersfield Town and Chelsea at the John Smith's stadium in Huddersfield, northern England. — AFP

Moor. The modest Lancashire club climb above Liverpool, Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur, all of whom are in action. There was an extraordinary finale at Selhurst Park, where Palace scored twice in the dying stages to beat Watford and leap out of the relegation

zone. Daryl Janmaat put Watford in front in the third minute, but after Tom Cleverley was sent off, Bakary Sako bundled in an 89th-minute equaliser and Wilfried Zaha teed up James McArthur for a stoppage-time winner. — AFP



Third Chelsea goal took less than five minutes

Bayern maintain iron-grip as Leipzig falter

BERLIN: RB Leipzig risk falling off the pace in the pack chasing run-away Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich with their coach Ralph Hasenhuettl admitting his side is flagging. "We're running close to empty and you can see the team is torturing itself," said Hasenhuettl after his team scraped a 1-1 draw on Tuesday to just hold onto second place in the table.

The Austrian's youthful squad have struggled to meet the demands of having to play virtually every three days in recent weeks, but now have just one game left before the Bundesliga breaks for winter.

Last week's 2-1 home defeat against Besiktas meant they bowed out of the Champions League in the group stages and will face Napoli in the last 32 of the Europa League in February. "It is especially difficult for our younger players. In this three-day rhythm, which goes on and on, you lose your power at some point," admitted midfielder Kevin Kampl. Leipzig are at risk of being caught by their league chasing rivals. They have taken only five points in as many games while Bayern have tightened their iron-grip on first place by winning seven of their last eight Bundesliga games.

Jupp Heynckes' Bavarians could open a ten-point gap if they beat bottom side Cologne and third-placed Schalke fail to beat Augsburg yesterday. Leipzig are currently on 28 points, but Schalke, Dortmund, Eintracht Frankfurt and Borussia Moenchengladbach are all within three points behind.

In Wolfsburg on Tuesday, Leipzig struggled to get back on level terms after Paul Verhaegh slotted an early penalty for the hosts. Hasenhuettl's side finally got the break when Marcel Halstenburg equalised on 52 minutes. However in the closing stages, goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi pulled off a string of saves as Divock Origi, on loan from Liverpool, nearly restored Wolfsburg's lead. Leipzig then had defender Dayot Upamecano sent off in injury time for a second yellow card and the French teenager is suspended for Sunday's visit of Hertha Berlin in Leipzig's final Bundesliga game of 2017. "Against Hertha, we want to show some of our old strength again," said Kampl. — AFP



WOLFSBURG: Leipzig's Danish forward Yussuf Poulsen (R) vies with Wolfsburg's US defender John Anthony Brooks (L) during the German first division Bundesliga football match between VfL Wolfsburg and RB Leipzig on Tuesday. — AFP

Kuwaiti team ready for 23rd Gulf Cup

KUWAIT: A number of Kuwaiti footballers said that the national team was ready to take part in the 23rd Gulf Cup to be held in Kuwait between December 22 and January 5. In remarks to KUNA yesterday, the footballers affirmed they would do their best to entertain the Kuwaiti fans and perform well during the competition. Despite the suspension of Kuwaiti sports activities for two years, the players vow to offer their best during the prestigious competition. Kuwaiti footballer Fahad Al-Enezi said. The 23rd Gulf Cup of Nations will have eight countries participating including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Bahrain, Oman, Iraq, Yemen, and Kuwait.

The Gulf Cup kicked off in Bahrain in 1970, and Kuwait won the tournament for ten times, while Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Iraq won it three times each. Oman has one title. — KUNA

Palace still have a mountain to climb: Hodgson

LONDON: Crystal Palace escaped the Premier League relegation zone for the first time this season with a last-gasp 2-1 home win over Watford on Tuesday but still have a mountain to climb to avoid relegation, according to manager Roy Hodgson.

Trailing to Daryl Janmaat's third-minute goal Palace looked set for a damaging defeat that would have left them bottom, but Bakary Sako scored a fortunate equaliser after 89 minutes before Wilfried Zaha set up James McArthur for a stoppage-time winner.

The victory, Palace's third of the season after they lost their opening seven games without scoring, moved them up to 17th place with 14 points, one more than West Bromwich Albion and West Ham United, and two above basement side Swansea City.

"That trio all have tough games on Wednesday so there is every chance Palace will stay out of the bottom three. Hodgson, whose side wasted a chance to beat Bournemouth on Saturday when Christian Benteke had a stoppage-time penalty saved when he was not even supposed to have taken it, has been around too long to start counting his chickens though.

"We got a late winner against Stoke as well and had disappointment on Saturday, so we've gone through the full range of emotions," the 70-year-old said.

"We've done well in the late stages of games, so I've got to commend the players' attitude and determination to keep going even when things don't look like they're going our way. "It is a huge three points. But the moment we think our problems are over is the moment our problems will begin. "We have a mountain to climb and it's wonderful to win but we're still very close to the bottom of the table because we haven't quite made up from getting zero points from the first seven games," he added.

All three of Palace's wins this season have come since Hodgson replaced the sacked Frank de Boer and they have now gone six matches unbeaten, albeit drawing four of them. Late goals have become something of a theme, one coming in the 97th minute against West Ham United in a 2-2 home draw. — Reuters

Halilhodzic urges China to trust 'best coach' Lippi

TOKYO: Japan coach Vahid Halilhodzic has backed World Cup-winning manager Marcello Lippi to transform China into a team capable of qualifying for the 2022 finals in Qatar. Halilhodzic's side handed an inexperienced China side a 2-1 defeat in the second round of matches in this year's East Asian Championship on Tuesday to leave Lippi's side with no hope of claiming the regional title for a third time. However, with Lippi building for the future, the quality of the work being done by the former Juventus

coach, who led his native Italy to glory at the 2006 World Cup, has not been lost on Halilhodzic.

"He's preparing for 2022 and all the players trust Lippi a lot," the former Algeria coach told reporters. "He's the best coach in the world. He has won everything, every title he wanted. He has chosen a team that is growing up and is very promising for the future.

"Results don't come in a few months, so to make a competitive group you need to have some years until you achieve that." China's national team has only qualified for the World Cup once, when Bora Milutinovic took the country to the finals in South Korea and Japan in 2002. Since then, the representative side has struggled, missing out on the final round of Asia's qualifying tournament for the next three World Cups before scrapping into the last phase for 2018.

A poor start to that campaign under former coach Gao Hongbo led to the hiring of Lippi, the Italian taking over with

China's hopes all but gone despite renewed interest and investment in the sport thanks to President Xi Jinping's support.

Six points from six games under the 69-year-old, however, saw China narrowly lose out to Syria for a place in a regional playoff against Australia. But with huge sums of money flowing into the game to lure the likes of Lippi to the country, hopes are high the nation can finally end that disappointing run.

"I don't know what's going in the Chinese league because I didn't study the details, but they have players with quality who will improve under the coaching of Lippi," said Halilhodzic, who will lead Japan at the World Cup in Russia next year. "They need to have ambition to go to the Qatar World Cup. You could see this ambition in China tonight. If China trust Lippi more they will get better." Japan have been drawn in Group H in Russia, alongside Poland, Senegal and Colombia. — Reuters



Marcello Lippi

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13 Rohit smashes third ODI double ton in India's big win

15 Halilhodzic urges China to trust 'best coach' Lippi



ABU DHABI: Al-Jazira's Emirati goalkeeper Mohammed al-Nuqbi (C) saves the ball during the FIFA Club World Cup semi-final match in the Emirati capital Abu Dhabi yesterday. — AFP

Bale rescues Real from Jazira upset

Video assistant referee rules out a goal for both sides

ABU DHABI: Gareth Bale came off the bench to book Real Madrid's place in the Club World Cup final as the European champions recovered from the shock of going behind to beat Emirati champions Al Jazira 2-1 yesterday. Despite dominating throughout, Madrid trailed at half-time to Romarinho's opener in a match also marred by use of the video assistant referee (VAR) that ruled out a goal for both sides. Madrid's pressure finally paid off 10 minutes into the second half when Cristiano Ronaldo levelled before Bale broke Al Jazira's resistance with his first touch eight

minutes from time. Real will go for their fifth trophy of the year when they face Brazilian side Gremio on Saturday. Al Jazira, only invited to the competition as champions of the host country, enjoyed their 15 minutes of fame at the break after a remarkable first 45 minutes. Madrid scored five in the first half against Sevilla on Saturday and could easily have had another handful but for some exceptional goalkeeping from Ali Khaseif. The Al Jazira captain made an incredible stop to turn a deflected Ronaldo header onto the bar then got down well to parry

efforts from Luka Modric and Karim Benzema. Benzema also had a goal ruled out for a push by Ronaldo in the build-up, but Madrid thought they had finally gone ahead when Casemiro's header deflected off an Al Jazira head and looped over Khaseif. However, after a four-minute delay for the VAR referral, Brazilian referee Sandro Ricci disallowed the goal due to Benzema being in an offside position despite the fact the Frenchman was arguably not interfering with play. In total Madrid had 18 shots on goal in the first half, but were shocked four minutes

before the break when the hosts caught the Real defense cold on the counterattack. A poor clearance from Nacho gifted away possession inside the Madrid half and Romarinho showed great composure to cut inside and curl his shot inside Keylor Navas' far post. A monumental upset looked on when Al Jazira had the ball in the net for a second time two minutes into the second half. However, this time VAR came to Madrid's rescue as Mbark Boussoufa was offside by the finest of margins before slotting home. Zinedine Zidane's men grabbed that let-

off gratefully and were level eight minutes later when Ronaldo was played in by Modric and smashed a shot past Khaled Al-Senaani, who had replaced the injured Khaseif moments earlier. Madrid continued to lay siege to the Al Jazira goal, but the misfiring Benzema shot straight at Senaani then hit the post with two other glorious chances. Benzema was eventually replaced by Bale, who had only played 28 minutes since September due to a series of injuries. The Welshman made an instant impact, though, as he slotted home Lucas Vazquez's cutback to Real's relief. — AFP

Dyche's method is behind the madness of Burnley's rise

BURNLEY: Burnley's unlikely rise to fourth place in the Premier League is this season's 'Cinderella' story but the stereotype of the mill town Lancashire club led by a gruff 'old-school' manager disguises the very effective method behind their rise. The 1-0 win over Stoke City on Tuesday propelled Burnley into the Champions League places, at least until Liverpool, Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur play and led Dyche to encourage the club's fans to "dream". A return to European football for the Claretts, who featured as English champions in the European Cup in 1961 and reached the quarter-finals of the Fairs Cup, the forerunner of the modern-day Europa League, in 1967, is probably in the realms of dreamland. But the league table does not lie and the numbers

tell the story of a team that is certainly achieving well above any reasonable expectations. A solid defence has been the foundation of Dyche's team throughout his five years at Turf Moor and currently only leaders Manchester City and Manchester United have conceded less than Burnley's 12 goals from 17 games this season. In two-and-a-half seasons with Dyche in the top flight, Burnley have picked up 27 Premier League victories, 15 of them have been 1-0, a total of 55 percent. Indeed, taking into account Championship wins, a total 33 of Dyche's 92 league victories with Burnley have been by that scoreline. "Brian Clough used to love a 1-0 and he was a genius and everything. He used to tell the players. Clean sheet, score a goal," said Dyche, who began his playing career under Clough at Nottingham Forest. "I love them 1-0s, absolutely love them. Every manager does," he added. **LIMITED RESOURCES** The last two wins, both by that scoreline, over Watford and Stoke, reveal another aspect of Dyche's success - improving players and getting the very best out of relatively limited resources. Watford were beaten

by a goal from Scott Arfield, a midfielder picked up on a free transfer in 2013 from then Championship side Huddersfield Town. The 89th minute winner against Stoke came from Ashley Barnes, signed for the modest fee of around 750,000 pounds (\$1 million) from Brighton and Hove Albion nearly four years ago. Burnley aren't quite a team of a bargain basement signings though - centre-forward Chris Wood cost 15 million pounds when bought from Leeds United earlier this season and midfielders Jack Cork, Robbie Brady and Jeff Hendrick were all bought for fees between 10-15 million pounds. But, along with excellent organisation, Dyche's ability to improve talent has been the key to the rise of his team. Indeed during his time at the club, three players have won England caps while playing for the Claretts - goalkeeper Tom Heaton, defender Michael Keane (now with Everton) and midfielder Cork. Reports suggest England manager Gareth Southgate is currently keeping close tabs on centre-halves Ben Mee and James Tarkowski, too. Such a record suggests Dyche and his coaching staff, which includes former Nottingham Forest winger Ian Woan, are able to focus on areas of improvement

for individuals as well as incorporate them into an effective team structure. **EVOLVING STYLE** Burnley's style of play is often described as 'direct' with credit given purely for their defensive organisation and while that is a fair description of their successful battle against relegation last season, it fails to do credit to their improvement this campaign. A greater emphasis on possession and passing and movement was evident even in pre-season games, helped by the arrival of the talented but often undervalued Cork from Swansea City. Cork has formed a valuable central midfield partnership with Belgian Steven Defour who, after struggling initially to cope with the Dyche mantra of "maximum effort is the minimum demand", has also become an essential part of the team's success. The pair have ensured that Burnley are able to control games with possession much more effectively than they did in previous Premier League efforts. Dyche described the style as "mixed football" and sees nothing wrong with a pragmatic approach to tactics, saying he is bemused that is considered a negative. — Reuters

Business

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LONDON: A protester holds European Union flags as he demonstrates outside the Houses of Parliament, in central London yesterday.—AFP

EU warns UK airlines post-Brexit

Britons feeling the pinch as real wages fall: Expert

BRUSSELS: British airlines will lose all flying rights the European Union has negotiated with third countries as well as those negotiated by individual EU states after Britain quits the bloc, the EU executive said in a note. In a notice to all airlines, a stark reminder of the risks facing the sector if there is no Brexit deal, the European Commission said UK air carriers would no longer enjoy traffic rights under any air transport agreement to which the EU is a party, such as the US-EU Open Skies agreement. They would also lose flying rights under agreements between individual EU member states and third countries as they would no longer be considered EU airlines.

In addition, all operating licenses granted by the British civil aviation authority will no longer be valid for the EU, the notice said, which means the airlines would be cut off from the intra-EU market.

"In order to continue benefiting from the freedoms of establishment and to provide air services within the EU internal market as of the withdrawal date, air carriers are advised to consider any measure required to ensure that the conditions for holding an EU operating license are complied with in all circumstances," the notice said. Airlines based in the EU have the right to fly to, from and within any country in the bloc thanks to the single aviation market that was created in the 1990s, but Britain now has less than two years to renegotiate access or come up with an

alternative system. British carriers include easyJet, IAG's British Airways, Flybe, Jet2 and Virgin Atlantic. Budget airline easyJet has already moved to establish a new airline in Austria to protect its flying rights within the EU once Britain leaves the bloc.

Both airlines and airports have been vocal about the risks posed by the no-deal scenario and have urged London and Brussels to quickly provide certainty for the industry.

Airport operators' association Airports Council International has pointed out that more than one in every two passengers handled by UK airports is flying to or from the rest of the EU, making the British market heavily dependent on the EU.

Restrictions

Without a deal airlines would have to rely on a decades-old traffic rights accord between the UK and EU states. These are typically more restrictive and many observers have doubts as to their

validity. Britain and the EU clinched a divorce deal last Friday, paving the way for them to start talks on future trade ties and a two-year Brexit transition period that will start when Britain leaves the EU on March 29, 2019.

However, Brussels has ruled out a separate deal just for aviation on the grounds that it would be tantamount to cherry-picking. A Commission spokesman said the notice did not cover the situation of UK traffic rights to and from EU member states that "will be determined in due course".

Young Britons

Meanwhile, stagnant wages and Brexit-spiked inflation are hitting young Britons hard, an expert who resigned in protest from a government body last month told AFP as new data showed the country was feeling the pinch. Workers' average weekly earnings adjusted for inflation fell 0.4 percent year-on-year from August to October 2017 — an erosion of purchasing power. "The

impact of falling real wages is that young people are staying longer in their family home, delaying childbirth and renting rather than buying housing," Paul Gregg, head of the University of Bath's social policy research unit, told AFP. Gregg resigned from the National Social Mobility Commission last month along with its leader Alan Milburn and two others, citing a lack of government action to improve the living standards of the poorest. "For the first time there's generations coming through that haven't got higher living standards than the previous generation and in terms of home ownership are way behind," he said.

The Social Mobility Commission last month released a report highlighting the "coldspots" around Britain where children from disadvantaged backgrounds are least likely to do well in future life. "Coldspots have lower wages because of the general absence of larger firms and reliance on lower wage industries such as tourism, retail, hospitality." Many of them also suffer from poor transport links and education and low occupational mobility. All 30 of the worst zones for social mobility in the UK voted in favour of Brexit in last year's referendum, and many of them also suffer from poor transport links and education provision.

Gregg said the government should focus investment on these areas, by developing "transport connections, access to high speed internet and a regional development strategy that addresses remote areas not just cities." — Agencies



A stark reminder of the risks

WTO struggles to hone global trade vision after US turnabout

BUENOS AIRES: Trade ministers looked set to wrap up their biennial World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting without having reached a single agreement yesterday, still reeling from criticism brought by the United States, once the WTO's driving force. The ministers gathered in Buenos Aires were never expected to agree great reforms, with relatively minor and unrelated proposals on the table, including discussions on fishing subsidies and e-commerce.

But a discordant intervention by US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer on the first morning effectively left the conference

adrift, since the WTO requires consensus-unanimity among all 164 members-to reach any agreement. Even the perfunctory joint ministerial statement looked uncertain.

Driven by President Donald Trump's "America First" strategy and a preference for bilateral deals, the United States had already blocked ambassadors from drafting a text in Geneva, rejecting references to the WTO's central role in the global trading system and to trade as a driver of development. WTO spokesman Keith Rockwell told reporters that the chairwoman of the conference, Argentina's former foreign minister Susana Malcorra, was still hoping to get ministers to agree on one text later yesterday. "There still seems to be significant gaps. Whether they can find wording that can bridge those gaps I don't know," Rockwell said.

The failure to reach any major deals means that negotiations on the same topics will continue into 2018, with no deadline and no heavyweight ministerial momentum to get agreement.

"It's very appropriate to stay at this stage

that we are in a forward-looking mode," Rockwell said. "The focus of most of the work here is on work programs, and while there is disappointment that we couldn't get a little further in terms of concrete outcomes, being able to nail down an effective work program is very important."

Lighthizer told the WTO ministers on Monday that it was impossible to negotiate new rules while many of the current rules were not being followed, and that the WTO was losing its focus and becoming too litigation-focused.

He said the WTO should make markets more efficient, reducing overcapacity and the influence of state-owned enterprises, widely seen as a swipe at China. Many trade experts disagree with parts of his analysis and are dismayed that the United States is vetoing new judicial appointments at the WTO, which has plunged the settlement of trade disputes into crisis.

Ministers who followed Lighthizer onto the podium offered widespread support for the global trading system, with the WTO at its heart. — Reuters

OPEC now sees oil market in balance within a year

PARIS: Supply and demand in the global oil market are likely to balance out by the end of 2018 thanks to a pick-up in demand, notably from the transport sector, OPEC said yesterday.

Demand is projected to grow by 1.51 million barrels per day (mb/d) next year, compared to an already higher-than-expected 1.26 million increase this year, to reach 98.45 mb/d, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said in a monthly report. "Expansion in the transportation sector is expected to provide the bulk of oil demand growth," the report said.

Expected strong economic expansion across the world will also underpin industrial and construction fuel demand, the cartel said. OPEC's own crude output is likely to edge up to 33.2 mb/d next year from 32.8 this year, a smaller increase than previously thought.

Falling output in Angola, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and the United Arab Emirates meant that OPEC pumped 133,000 barrels per day less in November than the previous month, according to secondary sources. OPEC and some non-members of the cartel, including Russia, last month extended an output cut agreement until the end of 2018 in the hope of re-balancing the oil market and underpinning the price of crude. Non-OPEC oil producers will pump around 990,000 barrels of crude per day more next year than this year as US shale oil producers ramp up output, the report predicted.

OPEC nevertheless believes that an overhang of global stocks will dwindle next year, "arriving at a balanced market by late 2018". — AFP

Business

NBK Economic Report

Turkey's stellar economic growth masks looming risks

Country projected to grow around 7.5% in 2017

ANKARA: For President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, it was proof that Turkey is the world's fastest growing economy and a warning to 'agitators' who wish the country ill. But economists warn that Turkey's stunning 11.1 percent growth in the third quarter—its best reading in six years and well ahead of India and China in the same period—masks potential risks ahead. Inflation hit its highest annual rate last month at 12.98 percent, the Turkish lira has lost 11 percent of its value since September and the country's current account deficit is worsening.

With construction booming thanks to cheap credit and high government spending, the economy risks overheating in a classic boom to bust scenario. A full blown crisis, however, is far from inevitable and the central bank today has the chance to restore confidence in the lira with a critical interest rate decision. "The economy is growing beyond its long run potential. That is the definition of overheating. The 13 percent inflation rate is another sign for overheating," Selva Demiralp, associate professor of economics at Koc University, said.

'Very resilient'

Erdogan said this week Turkey would likely grow around 7.5 percent in 2017, an estimate echoed by most economists. The president's popularity since his ruling party was first elected in 2002 has been largely based on efficient economic management that pulled Turkey out of its 1999-2000 economic crisis.

Deniz Cicek, an economist at QNB Finansbank Research,

said thanks to inflation likely to remain above 10 percent next year and the current account widening "uncertainties over the economy will prevail". But Erdogan's senior economic advisor Hatice Karahan Tuesday described the economy as "very resilient" having come through the 2016 failed coup with growth driven by domestic demand.

But she acknowledged growth had to "deal with the unemployment problem" while inflation was "definitely higher than the target", during a foreign media briefing.

'Drifting' off target

"Unfortunately, the inflation rate is settling at two digit levels and the Central Bank is drifting away from inflation targeting," said Demiralp. "An economy cannot grow at the expense of inflation. Because uncontrolled inflation eventually causes higher market rates and hits the economy back," Demiralp said. There have even been rumors over whether the risk of looming bad economic news could encourage the government to bring forward elections scheduled for November 2019.

William Jackson of Capital Economics said the eco-

nom ic indicator that could possibly sway the decision to hold an early election is the unemployment rate which, at 10.6 percent in August, is "still high by the standards of the past few years".

The US trial

Another big concern for Ankara is the New York trial of a Turkish banker accused of violating US sanctions against Iran. Economists say a guilty verdict could see one or more Turkish banks fined.

A former government ally turned prosecution star witness, Turkish-Iranian gold trader Reza Zarrab implicated Erdogan in a multibillion-dollar gold-for-oil scheme to subvert US sanctions.

Erdogan calls the trial a "plot" against Turkey. "There are likely to be fines but unless there are investigations in Turkey, which there will not be, this looks like another storm that Erdogan and the (ruling party) will eventually brush aside," Nigel Rendell, director of EMEA at Medley

Global Advisors, said. According to Cicek, "an adverse outcome in the trial could further strain the diplomatic tensions with the US, which would in turn increase financial market volatility". But Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek has assured markets that Ankara would stand by Turkish banks and would not allow the burden to threaten the financial sector.

Crisis in 2018?

In the run-up to the central bank's monetary policy committee meeting today presidential advisors have indicated there will be a rate hike. A 100bp rise is expected but analysts warned it would take 400bp to convince markets Ankara is serious about tackling inflation and supporting the lira.

"If the (bank) only raises rates by 100bp... we can be sure of further currency weakness, if not a full blown crisis, in the next year," Rendell of Medley Global Advisors said. Economists argue the central bank is not independent and Erdogan has repeatedly railed against the "interest rate lobby" who press for a rise in rates to counter inflation. Contrary to conventional economic wisdom, Erdogan calls for lower rates to contain inflation. Cicek said Turkey was "at risk of slowdown should the global liquidity conditions deteriorate or the country risks increase", but that QNB Finansbank Research did not expect the country to slide into crisis in 2018. —AFP



Unemployment still remains a major problem

tries, it is scarce in the United States. Federal legislation adopted in 1993 provides 12 weeks of unpaid leave to American workers, but does not apply to companies with fewer than 50 employees.

And with rare exceptions, such as universal pre-kindergarten offered in New York and Washington, American public education generally does not begin before age five. Private preschool and daycare is costly, with tuition sometimes running more than \$30,000 a year. And even some women who can afford such steep bills sometimes throw in the towel and simply stay home.

'I loved my job'

"Employers have become very demanding. They expect employees to work 60 hours a week," sociologist Pamela Stone told AFP. "They have to be reachable around the clock." These working conditions are simply incompatible with family life, said Stone, author of "Opting Out," a study of women who left the career track to care for their children.

"It has nothing to do with motherhood ideology," she said. "They quit their jobs, but because the conditions of work are so demanding." Tess Finnegan, a 44-year-old mother of three children aged 11, nine and six, learned the hard way. She left her position as a federal trial attorney months after the birth of her first child. "Before having children, I used to work 50-60 hours per



WASHINGTON, DC: Tess Finnegan poses with her family on Tuesday in Washington, DC. The US economy is nearing full employment, with its jobless rate the lowest in almost 20 years, but women in the workforce don't fully benefit. — AFP

week, traveling across the country," she said. "When I had my first child, I was lucky because I had some months off and then I went back to work part-time." Soon, however, she was asked to return to her position full-time, with little chance to find daycare. So she left. "It was a very difficult decision to leave my job. I loved my job," Finnegan said. She started a floral design

business in 2014. Economists say under-employing women or seeing them leave the workforce altogether represents a steep cost to the economy. "If women entered and stayed in the workforce at a pace in line with, say, Norway, the US economy would be \$1.6 trillion larger than it is today," according to research by S&P Global Ratings. —AFP

Strong interest as UAE oil giant lists retail arm

ABU DHABI: Investor interest was strong yesterday as Abu Dhabi's state energy company listed a stake in its retail distribution arm, the first time the emirate has sold shares in one of its oil firms.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company said it had raised \$845 million by floating 10 percent of its subsidiary ADNOC Distribution, a landmark share offering as Gulf energy firms open up to outside investors. The initial public offering price for the shares was at 2.5 dirhams (68 US cents) and by 0915 GMT they were trading at 73 cents.

ADNOC said the IPO brought the subsidiary's market capitalization to \$8.5 billion, making it the fourth-largest firm on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange. The statement said the IPO was oversubscribed several times and that 90 percent of the shares were sold to institutional investors, a third of them international, and the rest to individual investors. Abu Dhabi, the UAE capital which holds more than 90 percent of the country's 98 billion barrels of crude reserves, has never before offered public shares in one of its oil companies.

Hit hard by the sharp drop in oil prices, energy-dependent Gulf states have resorted to a string of reforms including hiking fuel and power prices, imposing taxes and selling off part of their strategic assets to raise funds. Neighboring oil kingpin Saudi Arabia is planning to eventually float up to five percent of its national oil company Aramco, in what many expect would be the biggest IPO in history.

With 360 fuel stations and more than 235 stores, ADNOC Distribution is the UAE's largest operator of petrol stations and the sole retail fuel operator in the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Sharjah.

"We were extremely pleased with the demand for this landmark IPO. We received substantial interest from the international investment community, as well as an overwhelming response from investors in the UAE," ADNOC CEO Sultan Al-Jaber said in the statement. Established in 1973, ADNOC Distribution posted net profits of \$485 million in 2016. ADNOC has recently renewed concession rights and offered new joint ventures to a number of international oil companies as it bids to raise UAE output to 3.5 million barrels per day next year, from the current 3.2 million bpd. —AFP

Full employment in the US? Not for many women

WASHINGTON: With jobless rates at a two decade low, the United States is nearing full employment—but women are not reaping the full benefit, due to a lack of childcare options.

Because of a lack of widely available and affordable childcare and preschool programs—as well as the lack of paid parental leave—many women fall out of the US labor market when they become mothers. "The US has the most inhospitable family policy of any country in the developed world," said Caitlyn Collins, a sociologist who has studied family leave policies in the US, Germany, Sweden and Italy. Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Democrat from Massachusetts, raised the subject last month with the incoming US central bank chief, Federal Reserve Governor Jerome Powell—asking him how policymakers could get women with caregiving duties back to work.

The Fed in fact has studied the issue, but has no authority to implement policy changes. Paid maternity leave is a key factor. Though widely available in Europe and particularly generous in the Nordic coun-

Google opens AI center in China as competition heats up

BEIJING: Google announced yesterday that it will open a new artificial intelligence research center in Beijing, tapping China's talent pool in the promising technology despite the US search giant's exclusion from the country's internet. Artificial intelligence, especially machine learning, has been an area of intense focus for American tech stalwarts Google, Microsoft and Facebook, and their Chinese

competitors Alibaba, Tencent and Baidu as they bid to master what many consider the future of computing.

AI research has the potential to boost developments in self-driving cars and automated factories, translation products and facial recognition software, among other innovations. Google's move to open a Beijing office focused on fundamental research is an indication of China's AI talent, widely seen as being neck-and-neck with the United States in research capability. "Chinese authors contributed 43 percent of all content in the top 100 AI journals in 2015," Li Feifei, a researcher leading the new center, wrote in a blog post on Google's website.

"We've already hired some top experts, and will be working to build the team in the months ahead."

Li noted that Chinese engineers formed the backbones of the winning teams in the past three ImageNet

Challenges, an international AI competition to test which computing technology is better at recognizing and categorizing pictures.

Chinese search engine Baidu's team was banned for a year for breaking the rules during the 2015 competition. The country's large population and strong mathematics and sciences education has nurtured a slew of engineering talent. Many land in Beijing's burgeoning AI tech startup scene, supported by universities and government-affiliated institutes. It is not hard to find AI talent in China, said Yuan Jirui of SeetaTech, one of the start-up's core team of founders from the Institute of Computer Technology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"There's a trend of AI talent in China being quite young," she said. "AI education is expanding to high schools and middle schools." —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.670
Indian Rupees	4.700
Pakistani Rupees	2.877
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.977
Nepali Rupees	2.950
Singapore Dollar	225.450
Hongkong Dollar	38.806
Bangladesh Taka	3.647
Philippine Peso	6.009
Thai Baht	9.317

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.854
Qatari Riyal	83.276
Omani Riyal	787.422
Bahraini Dinar	805.100
UAE Dirham	82.550

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.160
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.015
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.217
Tunisian Dinar	123.670
Jordanian Dinar	427.300
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.020
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.581

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	303.000
Euro	358.600
Sterling Pound	406.020

Canadian dollar	236.900
Turkish lira	80.050
Swiss Franc	307.610
Australian Dollar	230.130
US Dollar Buying	301.800

GOLD

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer

US Dollar	302.650
Canadian Dollar	236.180
Sterling Pound	404.815
Euro	357.315
Swiss Frank	301.305
Bahrain Dinar	803.260
UAE Dirhams	82.790
Qatari Riyals	83.615
Saudi Riyals	81.565
Jordanian Dinar	428.150
Egyptian Pound	17.101
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.977
Indian Rupees	4.700
Pakistani Rupees	2.802
Bangladesh Taka	3.671
Philippines Peso	5.998
Cyprus pound	18.010
Japanese Yen	3.670
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.939

Malaysian Ringgit	75.265
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.160
Thai Bhat	10.280
Turkish Lira	79.215

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.397815	0.405315
Czech Korune	0.005887	0.017887
Danish Krone	0.043785	0.048785
Euro	0.350354	0.357854
Georgian Lari	0.134955	0.134955
Norwegian Krone	0.032314	0.037514
Romanian Leu	0.064853	0.081703
Russian ruble	0.005124	0.005124
Slovakia	0.009034	0.019034
Swedish Krona	0.031963	0.036963
Swiss Franc	0.299230	0.310230
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.220902	0.232902
New Zealand Dollar	0.204219	0.213719
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.230125	0.239125
US Dollars	0.298900	0.303320
US Dollars Mint	0.299400	0.303320
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003301	0.003885

Chinese Yuan	0.044234	0.047734
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036856	0.039606
Indian Rupee	0.004119	0.004760
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002593	0.002773
Korean Won	0.000267	0.000282
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070230	0.076230
Nepalese Rupee	0.003023	0.003193
Pakistan Rupee	0.002612	0.002902
Philippine Peso	0.005937	0.006237
Singapore Dollar	0.218893	0.228893
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001699	0.002279
Taiwan	0.010010	0.010190
Thai Baht	0.008956	0.009506

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.796825	0.805325
Egyptian Pound	0.014525	0.020243
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000186	0.000246
Jordanian Dinar	0.422755	0.431755
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021777	0.045777
Omani Riyal	0.0780695	0.786375
Qatar Riyal	0.078937	0.083877
Saudi Riyal	0.079713	0.081013
Syrian Pound	0.001284	0.001504
Tunisian Dinar	0.117141	0.125141
Turkish Lira	0.073753	0.084053
UAE Dirhams	0.081026	0.082726
Yemeni Riyal	0.000985	0.001065

Business

Ooredoo Kuwait takes home 2 'Creativity Awards' trophies

Awards in categories of Best National Day TVC and PR and CSR



KUWAIT: Ooredoo is proud to announce that it has recently received two trophies in the fifth 'Creativity Awards' night by the Arab Media Forum. The ceremony was conducted by the General Secretary of the Arab Media Forum Madi Al-Khamees and is held annually on the 12th of December.

The event held Tuesday evening in Alraya

Ballroom was attended by the Ministry of Information's Assistant Undersecretary for News Sector Affairs Faisal Al-Mutlakem.

The event was attended by a number of distinguished media personalities and celebrities from Kuwait and the region. Representing Ooredoo at the event were Fatima Dashti: Public Relations and Internal Communications Senior Manager and

Fatima Al-Mukhaizeem: Branding Senior Manager.

Ooredoo won in the categories of best National advert and Public Relations and CSR. The awards shed light on Ooredoo's great efforts to engage with the local community in creative and innovative ways and in areas and matters of their interest. Commenting on this, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior

Director Mijbil Al-Ayoub said: "We are proud of winning such a distinguished award for the fourth consecutive year, and we dedicate this to our beloved customers for believing in us. We at Ooredoo are always striving to connect better with our customers, which reflects from our deep rooted values of caring, connecting and challenging. We're honored to see our efforts awarded

tonight, and we promise to deliver and engage even more with our customers.

The Arab Media Forum awards ceremony is considered as one of the renowned events that take place in the region, which brings together representatives from the different industries in one place to celebrate their tremendous revolutionary efforts in innovation and creativity.

ISC holds courses on leadership development

KUWAIT: Investment Studies Center at the Union of Investment Companies, organized an event on leading a transformation of an organization on 11 and 12 Dec 2017 and leadership development courses on 13 Dec at the UIC premises. Dr Steven D'Souza presented two programs on the occasions. The event was organized with the support of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science in cooperation with the American University in Cairo.

Director of Technical Support at the Union, Acting Director Fadwa Darweesh said the trainees learned a new form of how to adapt to the structure and culture as the case is in the social environment to support strategies of their companies and also see new organization systems such as Holocracy and Teal. The new forms were supported by the study of a case from INSEAD on Zappos that was bought by Amazon for \$1.2 billion.

As for the condensed program for executive and higher administration, time was given to participants to shed light on their method of leadership. The program covered the methods of developing leadership qualities and ideas were exchanged about the book Dr D'Souza co-authored.

Darweesh said the program showed leaders the recent challenges they faced and in turn enabled them to use the best circumstances to enable them to make profits for their companies.

Boursa Kuwait hosts second market maker workshop

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait has successfully hosted its second Market Maker Workshop in collaboration with global provider of financial technology solutions, FIS and was attended by listed companies and brokers based in Kuwait. The half-day workshop, held at Boursa Kuwait premises, saw FIS present a background on market making, the objectives behind it, the essential instruments and tools needed to apply it, and shed the light on a model of a developed market.

The workshop also included a segment on regional market making review, followed by a session on market making in Kuwait, highlighting key initiatives, rules and guidelines.

Market making in practice was a key portion of the workshop, explaining useful strategies, providing input on revenue model, and risk management in relation to it. This was followed by a Q&A session in which attendees had the opportunity to interact with FIS and Boursa



Kuwait representatives. Since the launch of Market Maker earlier this year, Boursa Kuwait has been highlighting its benefits to local market in general, raising key considerations in establishing a market maker scheme, and increasing awareness through sharing case studies from other markets. With market making, Boursa Kuwait have a crucial tool that serves in boosting liquidity of securities listed in the stock market, as well as improving productivity in the market. Boursa Kuwait's aim is to maintain

transparency, provide world class services and products that will position Boursa Kuwait as a leading stock market in the region. To achieve this, they have conducted a series of trainings and awareness workshops providing full details on each to further educate stakeholders on Boursa Kuwait's products and services. Earlier in November, Boursa Kuwait has successfully hosted its first Market Maker Workshop in collaboration with global management consulting firm, Oliver Wyman.

Westfield shares soar after Unibail-Rodamco takeover

SYDNEY: Shares in Australian shopping center giant Westfield soared yesterday after French property firm Unibail-Rodamco agreed to buy the group, with founder Frank Lowy congratulated on his "impeccable timing". In a deal valuing Westfield at US\$24.7 billion, shareholders will receive the equivalent of Aus\$10.01 in cash and stock for each share they hold.

That represents a huge premium to the Aus\$8.50 they were trading at before the deal was announced on Tuesday. The market responded with the stock soaring 13.65 percent to close at Aus\$9.66 yesterday. The biggest-ever corporate takeover in Australia will create a combined portfolio of the merged companies including key centers such as Westfield London and Westfield World Trade Center in New York. The deal has the backing of both boards and once finalized, the well-recognized Westfield brand will be rolled out in the enlarged group's flagship shopping destinations.

Chairman Lowy, who launched the company in 1960, said he had mixed emotions but was comfortable with the deal. His decision comes with the retail sector globally being battered by the rise of internet shopping, led by Amazon, fuelling concerns about the future of bricks and mortar malls, the backbone of Westfield. The business media in Australia said selling now was "impeccable timing". "Retail

malls are by no means dead, but the economics of running them is changing hands thanks to growth in online shopping," the Sydney Morning Herald said in a comment piece. "Ultimately the power continues to shift to the customer, who gets to choose whether they shop in a physical store or with plenty of internet-enabled transparency which gives them the ability to minimize the price they pay.

"This is a style of business that wouldn't suit Lowy." The Australian newspaper echoed similar sentiments. "From where Frank sits, the world is undergoing a technological revolution and just where that goes no one really knows. That makes it as good a time to sell as any," it said. Westfield started out with one shopping center in Sydney and now has interests in dozens of malls and airport retail spaces globally.

Lowy, who was knighted by the Queen this week, embarked on a restructuring in 2014, spinning off the group's Australia and New Zealand business from its international operations into a separate entity, Scentre, whose shares finished 1.61 percent higher yesterday. The Australian Financial Review said Lowy, a well-known figure who used to run Football Federation Australia, was "checking out with a bang". "When the deal is done, Lowy will have the rare accomplishment of creating and closing a top 20 ASX-listed company in one generation and walking away with billions," it said. "It's neat, it's tidy and little is left to chance." — AFP

US consumer prices increase, but core CPI moderates

WASHINGTON: US consumer prices accelerated in November amid a rebound in gasoline prices, but declining healthcare and apparel costs curbed underlying inflation pressures. The Labor Department said yesterday its Consumer Price Index increased 0.4 percent last month after edging up 0.1 percent in October. That raised the year-on-year increase in the CPI back to 2.2 percent from 2.0 percent in October. Last month's increase in the CPI was in line with economists' expectations. Excluding the volatile food and energy components, consumer prices ticked up 0.1 percent as prices for airline fares and household furnishing fell.

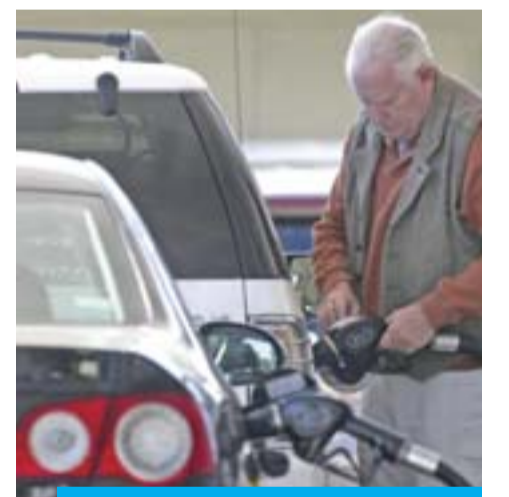
The so-called core CPI advanced 0.2 percent in October. As a result, the annual increase in the core CPI slowed to 1.7 percent in November from 1.8 percent in October.

The moderation in the core CPI will likely attract the attention of Federal Reserve officials when they resume a two-day policy meeting yesterday. Some Fed officials worry

that factors that held down inflation in recent months could prove more persistent. But they could draw some comfort from a report on Tuesday showing a broad increase in producer prices in November.

The Fed's preferred inflation measure, the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index excluding food and energy, has consistently undershot the US central bank's 2 percent target for almost 5-1/2 years.

The Fed is expected to raise interest rates yesterday, encouraged by a tightening labor market and strengthening economy, which policymakers believe will boost inflation over time. The central bank has increased borrowing costs twice this year and has forecast three rate hikes in 2018. Last month, gasoline prices rebounded 7.3 percent after falling 2.4 percent in October. Food prices were unchanged for a second straight month. The cost of rental accommodation rose 0.3 percent, matching the increase in October. Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence



This file photo shows a customer pumping gasoline into his car at a gas station in Mill Valley, California. — AFP

gained 0.2 percent after rising 0.3 percent in October. The cost of healthcare services slipped 0.1 percent, with prices for doctor visits falling 0.8 percent. Apparel prices dropped 1.3 percent, the largest drop since September 1998. — Reuters

Sterling edges higher as UK wage growth picks up speed

LONDON: Sterling edged up just a touch yesterday as data showed British pay had picked up a little speed in the three months to October, but employment fell again, suggesting employers are turning more cautious as Brexit nears. The numbers showed workers' total earnings, excluding bonuses, rose by an annual 2.3 percent during that period, compared with 2.2 percent in the three months to September. That beat economists' expectations for no improvement, but was still well below the inflation rate.

The pound got only a temporary lift on Tuesday after numbers showed British consumer price growth unexpectedly rose to 3.1 percent in October, the highest level in nearly six years in November, tightening a post-

Brexit vote squeeze on households whose spending is the main driver of the country's economy. This week's data was seen as unlikely to affect how soon the Bank will raise interest rates due to lagging wages and also because a key reason for the spike in inflation is the temporary effect from the plunge in the pound since the vote for Brexit.

"The real wage squeeze continues, and that has a dampening impact on the economy and growth, given the UK economy's dependence on consumption," said Societe Generale currency strategist Alvin Tan.

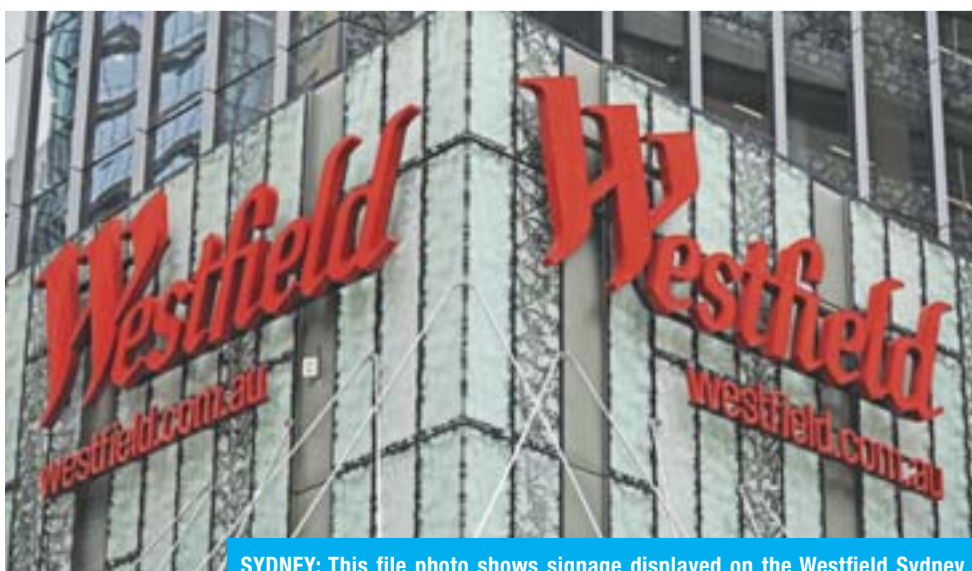
Sterling traded 0.3 percent up on the day at \$1.3350, off a two-week low of \$1.3303 hit on Tuesday. Against the euro, the pound climbed a quarter of a percent to trade at

87.98 pence. Yesterday's data also showed the unemployment rate held unexpectedly at its four-decade low of 4.3 percent, against expectations for a further decrease to 4.2 percent in a Reuters poll of economists.

"Britain's once mighty rate of job creation is waning fast. The number of unemployed people is still falling, but that can hardly be considered a win as many of them are leaving the workforce rather than entering work," said Mariano Mamertino, an economist at job site Indeed. The BoE meets on Thursday and is widely expected to keep rates unchanged at 0.5 percent.

Investors are watching mostly for signals from the central bank about how soon rates will rise again. Traders are also watching out for any Brexit developments.

Prime Minister Theresa May's control of the exit process will undergo its stiffest parliamentary test yet on Wednesday, when she faces a showdown with rebels in her own Conservative Party over the laws that will take Britain out of the EU. — Reuters



SYDNEY: This file photo shows signage displayed on the Westfield Sydney Shopping Centre in central Sydney. — AFP

Business

Shares jump as Fed heads for 2017 hat-trick

LONDON: Global shares were within a whisker of another record high yesterday as markets traded on expectations of a third US interest rate hike this year and waited to hear from the Federal Reserve on how many more are likely in 2018.

Solid gains in Asia overnight had inched MSCI's 47-country world index up for a fifth day running and while the pre-Fed anticipation meant Europe's main bourses were barely budged, there was action elsewhere. A technical glitch on futures markets made for a stuttering start to European government bond trading, while the dollar was down against the yen, pound and euro after President Donald Trump saw his already-wafer thin US Senate majority cut further.

It fell as far as 113.12 yen as Democrat Doug Jones won a bitter fight for a Senate seat in deeply conservative Alabama, in a race marked by sexual misconduct accusations against Republican candidate Roy Moore. The upset makes Jones the first Democratic senator from Alabama in a quarter of a century and will trim the Republicans' majority to just 51-49, meaning it could be harder for Trump to advance his policy agenda.

"The big issue now is whether Republicans will push

through their tax bill before Christmas," said Sue Trinh, head of Asia foreign-exchange strategy at RBC Capital Markets in Hong Kong.

"And more broadly, US dollar bulls will be more worried that this marks a Democratic revival into 2018 mid-term Congressional elections."

S&P e-mini futures were down as much as 0.1 percent after the election outcome, though they clawed their way back to flat in European trading to be broadly in line with the region's STOXX 600 index.

The Alabama vote temporarily took the spotlight away from the Fed, which is widely expected to raise rates later to between 1.25 and 1.50 percent, which will be its third hike of the year and fifth since the financial crisis. OppenheimerFunds strategist Brian Levitt suspects the Fed will also revise up its growth forecast, adding upside risk to the "dot plot" forecasts on interest rates, though he does not expect as many hikes next year as some economists.

"We are going to see a Fed that continues to attempt to tighten policy next year," he said.

"But fortunately with inflation low in the US the Fed has the cover to go slowly... I know people have hopes

for the tax cuts (planned by Trump), but I don't think they will be able to push ahead with 3-4 rate hikes." The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against a basket of six major rival currencies, was down 0.1 percent at 94.01, pulling away a high of 94.219 touched on Tuesday, which was its highest since Nov. 14.

Against the euro it was flat at \$1.1740, while the 10-year Treasury yield stood at 2.41 percent after falling to a session low of 2.389 percent after the Alabama election news.

Fed up

Divergence between Fed and ECB policy was supposed to be bullish for the dollar, given it had widened the premium offered by US two-year yields over German yields to 256 basis points from 188 basis points this time last year.

The last time the spread was that stretched was in 1999.

Yet the euro is currently up 12 percent on the dollar this year while the dollar is down 8 percent on a basket of currencies - an indication interest rate differentials aren't everything in forex.

"Everyone is standing on the sidelines," DZ Bank rate strategist Rene Albrecht said as German 10-year Bund yields hovered around 3-month lows. In Asia overnight, MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan climbed 0.4 percent, while South Korean shares gained 0.8 percent and Hong Kong jumped 1.5 percent.

Japan's Nikkei stock index finished 0.5 percent lower however, pressured by the stronger yen and shuffling off upbeat economic data that showed Japanese core machinery orders rose a more-than-expected 5 percent in October. In commodity markets, oil was nudging back towards two-year highs hit in the previous session on an unplanned closure of the pipeline that carries the largest volume of North Sea crude oil.

Brent crude added 0.6 percent, or 37 cents, to \$63.70 a barrel, after shedding 2 percent on Tuesday. US crude added 0.6 percent, or 33 cents, to \$57.47, after slipping 1.4 percent overnight. Gold was near its weakest level in almost five months at \$1,242.18 an ounce. It is often seen as a safe-haven play and can perform poorly when central bank's like the Fed feel confident enough to raise interest rates. —Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report									
Wednesday 13 December 2017									
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing						
Price Index	▲ 40.29	6,237.87	6,197.58						
Weighted Index	▲ 2.19	356.33	394.14						
KBX 15	▲ 6.48	901.23	894.77						
Global									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change		
IFPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	372	▲ 0.0		
NAPESCO	818	768	802	641	2	818	▲ 18.0		
ENERGYH	29.7	29.7	505	15	2	29.7	▲ 0.2		
GPI	29.6	29.0	11,440	332	6	29.5	▲ 0.1		
ABAR	80	74	155,500	11,510	4	80	▲ 6.0		
Oil & Gas	166,247	12,498	14	962.42	▲ 11.70				
KFOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	268	▲ 0.0		
BPCC	638	628	78,700	49,846	7	628	▲ 3.0		
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	596	▲ 0.0		
ALQURAIN	320	317	25,753	8,172	7	318	▲ 1.0		
Basic Materials	104,453	58,017	14	1229.75	▲ 2.80				
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	474	▲ 0.0		
CABLE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	423	▲ 0.0		
SHIP	222	215	151,321	32,759	16	222	▲ 7.0		
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	905	▲ 0.0		
PAPER	298	250	181,000	45,256	2	298	▲ 2.0		
MRC	75	60	1,106	81	7	60	▲ 14.9		
ADICO	250	248	16,000	3,978	4	250	▲ 5.0		
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	170	▲ 0.0		
NOCM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	212	▲ 0.0		
EQUIPMENT	32.5	32.0	90,000	2,885	3	32.0	▲ 1.0		
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0		
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	▲ 0.0		
SALBOOKH	50	44.1	25,112	1,206	6	50	▲ 2.1		
ADITY	789	778	282,781	221,804	40	787	▲ 11.0		
EDU	303	270	3,046	920	6	301	▲ 3.0		
CLEANING	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	81	▲ 0.0		
KDL	89	86	1,009	67	2	86	▲ 0.3		
KPCP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	145	▲ 0.0		
HUMANSOFT	3,700	3,499	21,201	78,080	12	3,680	▲ 190.0		
NAFAS	700	560	38	22	2	700	▲ 0.0		
GFC	80	80	1,600	80	1	80	▲ 6.6		
SHOOTING	20.0	17.5	4	0	4	19.4	▲ 0.0		
CCG	478	478	70	33	1	478	▲ 0.0		
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	▲ 0.0		
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	585	▲ 0.0		
ALAFCCO	380	375	119,341	45,338	9	375	▲ 5.0		
MUBARRAD	73	69	5,100	352	2	69	▲ 0.0		
LOGISTICS	48.0	47.6	686,000	32,127	53	48.9	▲ 1.8		
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	92	▲ 0.0		
GCIM	80	78	41,149	3,234	5	80	▲ 0.0		
QIC	80	80	27,511	2,201	1	80	▲ 0.0		
FCM	78	75	45,000	3,389	2	76	▲ 0.5		
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	▲ 0.0		
SPCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	73	▲ 0.0		
Industrials	1,677,767	472,370	178	1776.52	▲ 21.30				
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	▲ 0.0		
CATTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	345	▲ 0.0		
DANAH	67	66	767,610	51,012	27	67	▲ 0.5		
FOCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,139	▲ 0.0		
Consumer Goods	767,610	51,012	27	840.49	▲ 0.50				
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▲ 0		
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	175	▲ 0		
Health Care	0	0	0	0	0	1510.51	▲ 0.00		
KCN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,300	▲ 0		
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	175	▲ 0		
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	▲ 0		
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	18.3	▲ 0		
IFAIH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	299	▲ 0		
QUSAFUEL	112	109	57,698	6,358	15	112	▲ 2		
MUNTAZAHAT	78	74	30,800	2,295	4	74	▲ 1		
JAZEERA	654	645	49,822	33,178	22	654	▲ 3		
SOOR	111	108	20,456	2,212	14	111	▲ 0		
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	▲ 0		
ALRAI	110	110	4,843	533	1	110	▲ 3		
Jyad	71	68	4,223,216	290,601	180	71	▲ 0		
Mezzan	768	762	348,800	266,869	40	768	▲ 3		
Consumer Services	4,735,435	600,814	276	918.36	▲ 1.00				
ZAIN	441	439	2,325,230	1,022,786	108	440	▲ 2		
OOREDOO	1,096	1,049	1,153	1,213	4	1,056	▲ 4		
AAAN	29.0	27.0	10,101	293	5	29.0	▲ 0		
VIVA	736	710	275,252	200,363	47	735	▲ 23		
Telecommunications	2,811,738	1,224,656	164	537.41	▲ 8.80				
NBK	716	711	637,615	598,412	99	716	▲ 4		
GBK	239	238	194,965	46,597	2	238	▲ 0		
CBK	400	400	127,562	51,025	4	400	▲ 0		
ABK	305	295	605	180	4	297	▲ 8		
ALMUTAHED	350	341	2,786	963	2	350	▲ 0		
KIB	223	219	1,938,094	427,474	49	223	▲ 3		
BURG	304	301	233,723	70,387	31	301	▲ 1		
KFIN	568	564	1,228,227	695,431	88	568	▲ 4		
BOUBAYAN	419	416	70,611	29,469	21	419	▲ 2		
AUB	201	200	1,373,954	275,211	58	201	▲ 1		
ITHMH	34.5	30.5	8,228,383	268,361	171	33.5	▲ 3		
WARBABANK	225	221	297,814	66,676	77	225	▲ 1		
Banks	14,534,339	2,530,155	606	883.36	▲ 8.20				
KNS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	274	▲ 0		
GNS	696	650	454	336	3	696	▲ 2.0		
ANS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	▲ 0.0		
WNS	60	60	309	22	1	60	▲ 0.1		
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	187	▲ 0.0		
FTI	62	61	6,900	422	2	61	▲ 0.7		
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	44.0	▲ 0.0		
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0		
Insurance	7,753	781	6	1023.01	▲ 17.60				
Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change		
SOKOUC	47.7	46.5	32,000	1,505	4	47.7	▲ 0.2		
KRE	56	56	97,000	5,401	7	56	▲ 18.0		
URC	73	68	80,834	5,513	4	73	▲ 1.0		
NRE	124	123	119,002	14,715	9	124	▲ 0.0		
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	358	▲ 0.0		
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	▲ 0.0		
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	176	▲ 0.0		
MASSALEH	38.5	38.5	50	2	1	38.5	▲ 2.0		
ARABREC	28.1	27.5	245,000	6,824	10	28.1	▲ 0.2		
ERESCO	33.0	32.5	255,995	8,382	14	33.0	▲ 0.6		
MABANEE	702	695	36,781	25,736	8	702	▲ 8.0		
INJAZZAT	83	78	1,139,600	86,821	57	78	▲ 5.0		
INVESTORS	17.2	16.6	2,654,412	44,925	82	17.1	▲ 0.4		
IRC	28.8	28.0	10,000	282	2	28.0	▲ 1.2		
ALTUARIA	95	92	567,040	51,412	43	95	▲ 2.6		
SANAM	34.0	34.0	1	0	1	34.0	▲ 4.2		
AAYANRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	77	▲ 0.0		
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	69	▲ 0.0		
ALAGARIA	30.0	25.1	16,205	423	9	29.9	▲ 2.9		
MAZAYA	109	106	363,681	30,301	6	109	▲ 1.0		
TUARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	58	▲ 0.0		
TAAEER	26.0	26.0	8,000	206	2	26.0	▲ 0.0		
ARKAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	94	▲ 0.0		

Business

Warba Bank launches 'Bank Express' banking system

Five-year strategy to make bank a leader in digital banking



By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Warba Bank launched a new banking system 'Bank Express' yesterday at Sanabel complex in Kuwait City. Based on its five-year strategy to be recognized as a leader in the digital banking industry, the Bank released the "Bank Express" which is an interactive electronic branch to help the clients finish their business directly and easily.

The Bank's strategic initiative aims to develop its service channels through this banking system. It is an extension of the traditional branches, characterized by modernity and flexibility and provides high quality service to clients according to time and effort criteria. Warba is committed to creating quality banking solutions which are designed to add value to clients' banking and enhance the Islamic banking industry in Kuwait with unprecedented services.

Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanim, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, stated "We are keen to diversify our services to clients and give them a unique experience by using developed banking services as part of our efforts to adopt and apply the latest technological developments." He added that the interactive banking system allows the clients to conduct their banking transactions in a modern manner and advanced technical tools,

adding "They are also allowed to communicate around the clock with a professional team from Bank Warba through the video call service by the device to answer all their inquiries and help them in completing their transactions with full Privacy." Bank Express

is characterized by the benefits of receiving value added to the operations of retail banking. For example, a scan can be carried out verbatim bank accounts and if they are intact in addition to scanning documents and papers and the possibility of retrieval of these papers.

It is worth mentioning that the new system enables clients to carry out most of the banking transactions, which will save time of going to the branch, including the possibility of applying for bank financing and obtaining a formal and stamped bank statement by Warba Bank.

In addition, the banking process is highly protected. Every time a new banking transaction is performed, the device requests any of the fol-

lowing to approve the process: Personal ID or smart card, PIN, signature and face recognition.

He added that the bank can open a new account for old costumers and apply for new one for the bank's clients. Also, printing the debit card and identifying or re-identifying the pin; in addition to cash deposit and withdrawal, deposit of bank checks, transfer from account to another and report stolen or lost bank cards and get a printed copy of the bank account or credit card statement, as well as a statement of account balance; clients can also update their personal data.

Ghanim added that Warba Bank's strategic plan is to increase the spread of Express Bank to include vital areas to allow all clients to access easily and 24 hours a day.

The new banking system came to support the vision and strategy of the bank to provide customers with a range of instant banking services, called Express, which guarantees the customer direct banking operations in record time. The bank recently launched a number of



real-time and flexible services through Warba Online, which was keen to safe effort and the time of customers, including: "Bill Express," which allows the customer to pay their mobile phone bills in advance, and open an account Express, Express paying, Express Finance, Check Express, Express chat and Express Share, Express cheque and Eidia express.

Al-Ghanim concluded that the Islamic banking industry today is witnessing a growing in digital development, which necessitates the development

of banking services, keeping abreast of technological developments and realizing customers' desires through providing a highly interactive and high-quality banking communication that provides high speed banking services.

The service will be located at Al-Sanabel Tower in the capital city of Kuwait, where it has been launched to serve customers. In the near future, Bank Express is expected to be deployed in a number of other strategic locations to facilitate customer banking.

Alghanim Industries wins 'Corporate Treasury Team of the Year' award

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region, was recently awarded the 2017 Corporate Treasury Team of the Year Award at the Association of Corporate Treasurers (ACT) Middle East Annual Summit, which was held at the Conrad Hotel in Dubai, UAE on 20 November 2017. Earning this award recognizes the company's high standards in managing corporate finance and funding, governance, risk management, as well as cash management.

Over the years, the Alghanim Industries treasury department has implemented several strategic initiatives focused on automation and risk mitigation. The company was one of the first private sector companies in the region to implement Straight Through Processing, a digital payment mechanism on SWIFTNet that automates payments and reduces risk. Other initiatives implemented include working capital financing through Islamic finance products, supply chain financing solutions and the introduction of prepaid debit cards to minimize cash transactions. Chief Operating Officer at Alghanim Industries, Samir Kasem, congratulated the team in winning this prestigious award and thanked them for continuously delivering high quality services.

In his comment, Chief Support Services and Chief Financial Officer at Alghanim Industries, Robert Etman said: "We are delighted to receive the Corporate Treasury Team of the Year Award from ACT. This is a recognition of the excellence displayed by our treasury team and the contribution it makes to our businesses."

Receiving the award, Corporate Treasurer at Alghanim Industries, Sonal Gupta said: "We thank the ACT for rec-



ognizing the efforts of our team. The Alghanim Industries treasury team has been taking on bold initiatives to make sure the company is at the forefront in implementing the best treasury practices, and this award is a testament to what we have achieved, and a reminder that we must aspire to continue setting the bar in our field."

The ACT award further cements the company's position as an "Employer of Choice" for candidates interested in jobs within the field of Finance. Earlier this year, the company was awarded the Gold Approved Employer status by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). Alghanim Industries has a proven track record of supporting the training of its talents in the fields of Finance and Accounting, and helping them to earn their own certifications.

Alghanim Industries is one of the oldest and largest, privately-owned companies in the MENA region. Founded at the turn of the century, in Kuwait, the company today employs more than 15,000 people in 30 businesses across 40 countries in the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia.

S Korea mulls tax on digital currency

SEOUL: South Korea said yesterday it may tax capital gains from cryptocurrency trading as global regulators worried about a bubble, with Australia's central bank chief warning of a "speculative mania" that has seen the digital asset making rip-roaring gains.

As bitcoin futures made their world debut on a US stock exchange this week, policy makers have been forced to contend with cryptocurrencies becoming more of a mainstream play

and the need to regulate them. The world's biggest and best known cryptocurrency, bitcoin, surged past \$17,000 to new all-time highs this week, marking an almost dizzying 20-fold rise this year and feeding fears of a bubble.

Australia's central bank governor Philip Lowe warned yesterday the fascination with the assets felt like a "speculative mania." The comments come days after his New Zealand counterpart said bitcoin appeared to be a "classic case" of a bubble, and cast doubt on its future. The chairman of the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on Monday warned trading and public offerings in the emerging asset class may be in violation of federal securities law.

Digital currencies are very popular

across Asia, with many retail investors giving up their daily jobs to trade them full time in countries such as Japan and South Korea, which together make up for more than half the global trading volumes by some estimates.

But the possibility of major losses if the bubble bursts and wild gyrations of 10-30 percent in a single day have instilled a sense of urgency among policymakers to come up with a regulatory response.

In Seoul, after an emergency meeting on Wednesday, South Korea's government said it will consider taxing capital gains from trading of virtual coins and will also ban minors from opening accounts on exchanges, according to a statement obtained by Reuters ahead of its official release. —Reuters

Ithmaar Bank's subsidiary in Pakistan, Faysal Bank Limited, reports net profit of \$36.3 million

KUWAIT: Ithmaar Bank, a Bahrain-based Islamic retail bank, announced yesterday that its retail banking subsidiary in Pakistan, Faysal Bank Limited (FBL), has maintained growth momentum and reported increased net profits.

Ithmaar Bank owns 66.6 percent of FBL which is listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange and is mainly engaged in corporate, commercial, retail and consumer banking activities. Ithmaar Bank is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ithmaar Holding (Ithmaar Group).

The announcement, by Ithmaar Group Chief Executive Officer and FBL Vice Chairman, Ahmed Abdul Rahim, follows the review and approval by the FBL Board of Directors of the financial results for the nine months ending September 30, 2017.

"I am pleased to announce that FBL registered a profit after tax of \$36.3 million (PKR 3.83 billion) during the first nine months of 2017, compared to a profit of \$35.5 million (PKR 3.75 billion) during the corresponding period in 2016," said Abdul Rahim. "I am pleased, also, to note that in October, Ithmaar Bank through Faysal Bank Limited marked thirty years of operations in Pakistan. This is a significant milestone in our history," he said.

Ithmaar Bank first commenced its operations in Pakistan in October 1987 under its initial predecessor,

Faysal Islamic Bank of Bahrain. "As a monetary measure, the Government of Pakistan has, for many years, deliberately kept benchmark rates at low levels. This has significantly affected returns on financing and investments, and restricted the earning capacity of banks due to margin compression. The Bank has realigned its strategy to these economic realities, and is focusing on mobilizing low-cost deposits and rationalizing administrative expenses," he said.

"Strict credit monitoring and aggressive follow up on delinquent clients led to major recoveries," said Abdul Rahim. "The Bank intends to maintain growth momentum through Human Resource development, enhancing products line and upgrading core banking software. FBL continues to increase its core deposit base and enhance its financing book with primary focus on SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) and Consumer Finance. The Bank is also actively pursuing syndicated financing and advisory business and has undertaken several major projects independently and jointly during the said period," he said.

"FBL has been making steady growth for years and has now consolidated its position in the Pakistan's banking sector," said Abdul Rahim. "The Bank's footprint now extends to 376 branches in more than 100 cities across Pakistan after having added almost 30 branches during the year. The Bank aims to have expanded its retail banking network by 50 during 2017 to reach 404 branches by the end of 2017. The Bank's deposits have reached \$3.4 billion and assets have crossed the \$4.5 billion mark with a capital base of more than \$310 million," he said.

FBL's financial performance has earned the Bank "AA" and "A1+" ratings for the long and short terms respectively, with stable outlook from JCR-VIS Credit Rating Company Limited and Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited.



Abdul Rahim (fifth from right), with members of the FBL Board of Directors at a ceremony marking thirty years of operations in Pakistan.

Technology

Shark-spotting drones on patrol at Australian beaches

Drones to identify underwater predators, deliver safety devices to swimmers

SYDNEY: High-tech shark-spotting drones are patrolling dozens of Australian beaches this summer to quickly identify underwater predators and deliver safety devices to swimmers and surfers faster than traditional lifesavers.

As hundreds of people lined up in early morning sun to take part in a recent ocean swimming race at Bilgola beach north of Sydney, they did so in the knowledge the ocean had been scanned to keep them safe. "I think it is really awesome," 20-year-old competitor Ali Smith told AFP. "It is cool to see technology and ocean swimming getting together, and hopefully more people will feel safer and get involved." The drones being used are top notch.

Artificial intelligence is built using thousands of images captured by a drone camera to develop an algorithm that can identify different ocean objects.

The software can differentiate between sea creatures, like sharks which it can recognise with more than 90 percent accuracy, compared to about 16 percent with the naked eye.

"We can identify 16 different objects, like sharks, whales, dolphins, surfers, different kinds of boats and many other objects of interest," software designer Nabin Sharma from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) told AFP.

"We are spotting sharks and we can alert swimmers and surfers in real time, so we can get them back to the

beach," he added. "In short, we are trying to make beach recreation more safe."

Surf lifesaving clubs are Australian institutions dotted along the country's coastline—where the majority of the population live. They ordinarily rely on the naked eye to spot sharks, and launch surfboards or rubber dinghies from shore to rescue anyone in trouble.

The drone is a welcomed technical intervention that can also drop safety devices to distressed swimmers, just moments after they have been identified.

"The reason the drone is so important is sometimes we can't see over the waves, so having the drone is that little piece of extra prevention for us," Bilgola Surf Lifesaving Club president Romilly Madew said. "It gives us that line of sight that we can't see—both for the surfers, and really for our patrols."

Spotting other hazards, like jellyfish or strong currents, via the drone gives swimmers greater confidence in the sea, she added.

Some beaches in Australia have shark nets, but a government report this week called for their phasing out in favor of exploring a range of alternatives, including sonar technology and aerial patrols.

The inquiry found that nets did not guarantee public safety any more than any other deterrents but caused significant damage to marine life. There have been several shark attacks off the nation's vast coastline this year.

“
I think it is really awesome”



SYDNEY: Photo taken on December 10, 2017 shows a shark-spotting drone (center) on Bilgola beach north of Sydney. —AFP

Experts say incidents are increasing as water sports become more popular and baitfish move closer to shore, but fatalities remain rare with just 47 in the past 50 years.

UTS are also adapting the emerging technology to spot crocodiles for a program in northern Australia. —AFP

Ariane 5 rocket puts European GPS satellites into orbit



This handout picture released by the European Space Agency (ESA) yesterday shows an Ariane 5 rocket blasting off from the Kourou Space Centre (European spaceport) carrying four Galileo satellites. —AFP

KOUROU: An Ariane 5 rocket put four GPS satellites into orbit on Tuesday for Europe's Galileo navigation project, Arianespace said. The European space workhorse took off at 1836 GMT and deployed the satellites four hours after launch. The Galileo program, when complete, will have 30 satellites in three orbital planes by 2020.

If all goes according to plan the system will be able to pinpoint a location on Earth to within a meter—compared to several meters for the United States' GPS and the Russian GLONASS systems. The civilian-controlled Galileo system, seen as strategically important to Europe, went live in December last year, providing initial services with a weak signal, having taken 17 years at more than triple the original budget to get there.

"With this sixth successful launch of an Ariane 5 in 2017, marking the second mission of the year for the benefit of the European Commission and the European Space Agency (ESA), Arianespace is proud to guarantee Europe reliable and independent access to space," said Stephane Israel, Arianespace's executive chairman.

The satellites launched Tuesday, each one weighing 715 kilograms (1,590 pounds), were placed into orbit 23,000 kilometers (14,000 miles) from Earth. The Galileo program is funded and owned by the EU. The European Commission has overall responsibility for the program, managing and overseeing the implementation of all activities, but the deployment, design and development of the infrastructure is entrusted to the ESA. The European Commission announced in July that investigators had uncovered the problems behind the failure of atomic clocks onboard satellites already launched as part of the Galileo satnav system.

For months, the ESA had been investigating the reasons behind failing clocks onboard some of the 18 navigation satellites it had already launched for Galileo.

The ESA found after an investigation that its rubidium clocks had a faulty component that could cause a short circuit, according to European sources. —AFP

Make your loved ones happy this season with these amazing gift ideas!

With the holiday season just around the corner, gift-giving is all about showing your loved ones how much you love and appreciate them. And what better than a luxurious yet thoughtful gift to show how much you care? If you are short of ideas, here are some options that are guaranteed to please your loved ones and make their year!

The Porsche Design Huawei Mate 10: The perfect gift for the elite in your life

Never has it been harder to gift a discerning person who has it all. However, the new HUAWEI Mate 10 Porsche Design is sure to please people who appreciate the finer things in life. Inspired by speed and featuring a luxurious, lavish design, it is the ultimate choice for the luxury aficionado and elite trend-setters with impeccable taste. Best of all, the Porsche Design Huawei Mate 10 is embedded with artificial intelligence to offer an unmatched speed, incomparable performance, ultra-sophisticated design, and groundbreaking camera: it's also the most powerful Mate Series smartphone, with a 6GB RAM and 256GB ROM storage solution that enhances performance. The Porsche Design Huawei Mate 10 is available in limited edition, in Diamond Black, so hurry up and grab it before it's too late!

The HUAWEI Mate 10 Pro: It can do all the business!

If the person on your list is a tech enthusiast who appreciates elegant things, then this is the perfect gift for them. The HUAWEI Mate 10 Pro was meticulously crafted with fine materials to look impressive in a person's hand, during meetings or business trips. Packing the world's first processor powered by artificial intelligence, Kirin 970, the phone delivers a spectacular performance, incredible battery life and amazing photography experience. Businessmen can drop their laptops and carry this phone everywhere as it can act as a desktop; besides, its screen can split into two allowing users to check emails and work on other things at the same time. Best of all, users can feel safe taking it to the pool or under the rain because it is water resistant. The phone also offers a real-time translation feature that can immediately translate texts or voice conversations in more than 50 languages, so wherever your loved ones are doing business, language can't be an obstacle anymore. The HUAWEI Mate 10 Pro is available in Titanium Grey, Midnight Blue and Mocha Brown. With the HUAWEI Mate 10 Pro, you can't be wrong, the businessmen on your list will be well pampered!

The HUAWEI Mate 10: A picture is worth a thousand words

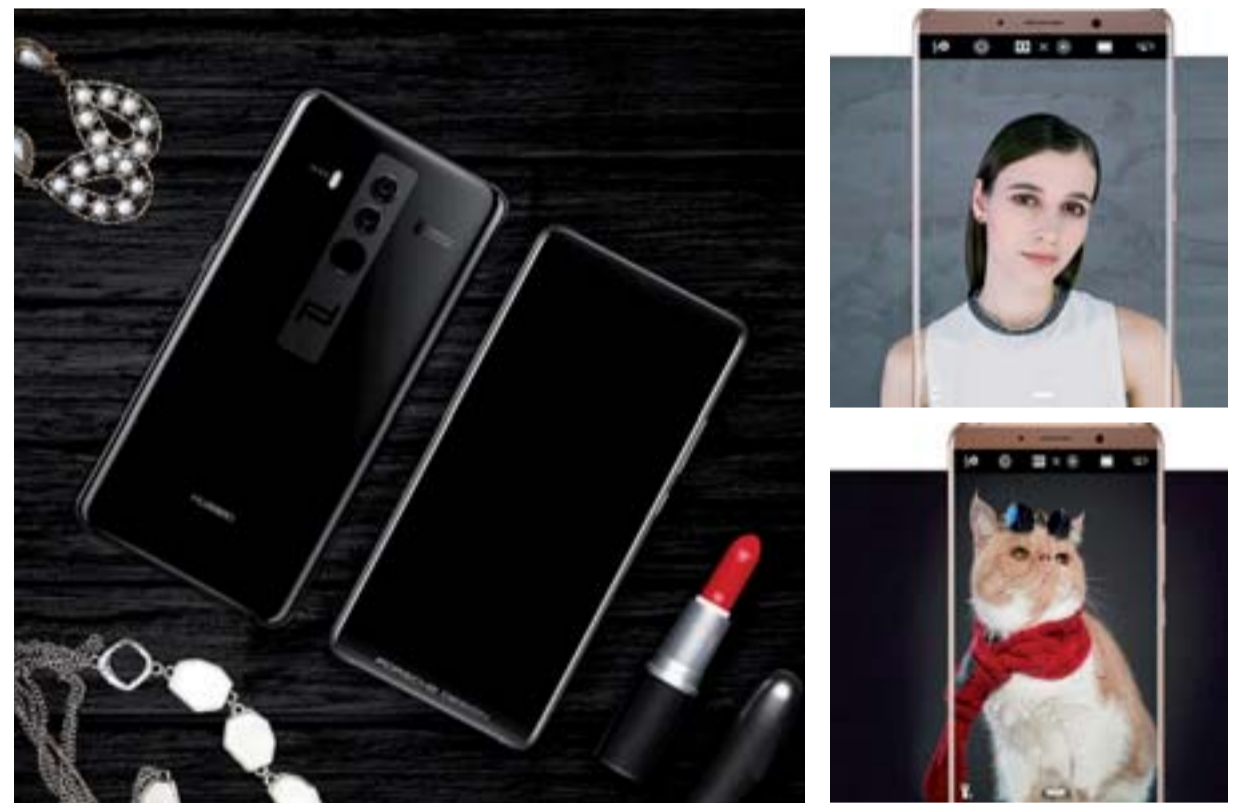
This phone hits the sweet spot between design, camera and performance. Any adventurer, fashionista, blogger, or

New island offers clues in search for life on Mars: NASA

WELLINGTON: The world's newest island—formed during a volcanic eruption in the remote Pacific four years ago—may offer clues to how life potentially developed on Mars, NASA said yesterday.

The island of Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai rose from the seabed about 65 kilometers (40 miles) northwest of the Tongan capital Nuku'alofa in late 2014—early 2015.

Scientists initially expected the island—created when vast quantities of rock and dense ash spewed from the Earth's crust—to wash away within a few months. But NASA said it



gamer in your life will be happy to have it. Featuring a large screen, the HUAWEI Mate 10 offers users an immersive viewing experience: your loved ones can comfortably write their articles, check their pictures or play their favorite games without worrying about their battery running out. The battery life is just amazing: with a 30-minute charge, the phone can take them through a day or two of heavy usage thanks to Huawei's SuperCharge technology. Bonus: The HUAWEI Mate 10 offers an intelligent Leica camera that has been trained to recognize 100 million pictures, whether pets, beach, flowers, texts, etc. Not only does the camera deliver amazing pictures; it also captures night shots with clear details and bright colors, so blurred and hazy shots are out of the picture! An ideal gift for a traveler or adventurer, the HUAWEI Mate 10 Pro can also capture motion to deliver amazing action pictures of trips and travels. The HUAWEI Mate 10 is available in Black, Mocha Brown and Champagne Gold. Do not miss it!

The HUAWEI Mate 10 lite: The freedom of expression

If you have teenagers, young adults or students in your life, then the HUAWEI Mate 10 lite will put a smile on their faces. Sporting 4 cameras, 2 at the front and 2 at the back, the phone is an ideal tool to capture studio-like pictures for university projects or social media pictures. Equipped with a toning flash at the front, this phone will deliver amazing selfies that will get tons and tons of likes. And whether the person on your list has a funky or casual style, the HUAWEI Mate 10 lite will be a great match as it comes in a sleek curved body and in the following colors: Graphite Black, Aurora Blue and Prestige Gold. Cherry on top: The HUAWEI Mate 10 lite battery can take your loved ones through two days of usage: they can play your favorite games, tweet or chat all the time without worrying about the battery life. Users can also rest comfortably in a couch and enjoy reading magazines, watching videos or playing games knowing that the HUAWEI Mate 10 lite offers an amazing viewing experience thanks to its large FullView screen. So what are you waiting for to grab it?

had proved more resilient than expected, possibly because warm sea water combined with ash during the volcanic explosion to create a concrete-like substance known as "tuff".

While the island—which initially measured one kilometer wide, two kilometers long and about 100 meters high—has undergone significant erosion, it is now expected to last anywhere from six to 30 years. Jim Garvin, the chief scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, said it was a rare chance to study the life cycle of a newly created island.

He said Mars had many similar volcanic islands that appeared to have been surrounded by water when they were created. Garvin said such spots may be prime locations to look for evidence of past life because they combined a wet environment with heat from volcanic processes.

Examining how life gained a foothold on the Tongan island could help scientists pinpoint where to look for evidence of life on Mars, he said. "Islands like this might have worked on Mars two or three billion years ago lakes and small seas filling depressions, persistent surface waters," he said. "(It's) stuff we really strive to understand because it could have produced the conditions necessary for microbial life." —AFP



The picture received from NASA yesterday shows a view of a recently-formed Tongan island, unofficially known as Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai, which had formed from a Pacific Ocean submarine volcano which erupted in late December 2014. —AFP

Health

East Africa's healthcare 'Avon ladies' help to keep children alive

'It's a real African thing, people looking after their own neighbors'

LONDON: Imagine living so far from a doctor that getting medication for your feverish child involved a day's travel and countless hours of waiting, only to be told the drugs aren't available. A social enterprise in Africa is tackling this problem by getting an army of well stocked healthcare workers to go to the sick. In doing so, Living Goods has reduced the number of deaths of children under five by more than a quarter in areas where it works in Uganda, according to a 2014 study. The Living Goods model overcomes travel barriers that hinder healthcare delivery, ensures medication is available and its low costs make it an attractively affordable investment for African governments, said the enterprise's president, Shaun Church.

"It's a real African thing, people looking after their own neighbors - that's the juice that makes so much of this work," Church told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "And every dollar spent on community health gets a ten to one return for a country through increasing productivity." Living Goods employs 7,200 people as community health promoters in Uganda and Kenya who offer health checks and sell medication for common ailments, such as malaria and diarrhea. They also offer products that improve living standards and cut household costs, such as solar lights and clean cook stoves, and supply contraceptives.

The workers register pregnant women and record details of consultations on smartphones which alert the healthcare worker by text of regular checkup dates for the expectant mother. No salaries are on offer: the promoters earn by buying medicines and products from Living Goods and keeping the profits. Because every visit is logged on a smartphone, random checks ensure no opportunistic profiteering takes place.

From the community

In 2014 a survey by three universities of 8,000 families in 200 villages in Uganda found that Living Goods had reduced child mortality by 27 percent. Such an impact is much needed. Uganda's population is growing by more than a million a year, with 66,000 under fives dying each year, according to the United Nations. The workers are chosen carefully. Only around 20 percent of applicants are accepted, often after consultation with local chiefs and church leaders about their reputation within the communities - which often number up to 800 people.

Nakakande Ritah, 48, has been working as a community health worker for three years in Kabanyoro village, a half hour drive from the capital Kampala. She advises 300 people. Ritah says her major challenge is getting people to

accept the idea of paying for medication, which they can get free from the government hospital - if it is in stock after a six km walk. "If they don't pay me, I don't have the money to go and restock again. The challenge is that some clients cannot afford to pay," Ritah told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

As well as serving her community, Ritah is also a farmer with two cows and 15 pigs. She works for Living Goods for two hours a day, which contributes about a fifth of her weekly wage and goes to educating her three children and growing her farm. "We ask our workers to be 100 percent in stock all the time with essential medicines for malaria, diarrhea and pneumonia - those three are major killers of children under five," said Gerald Alireki, Ritah's regional manager. Ritah is popular with her customers. "She does good work for us. The drugs are not too expensive compared to other clinics. Everyone is happy because of her and her work," Ritah's customer Susan Nabanja, who is about to have her fourth child, said by phone.

The 'Avon' factor

Living Goods was started in 2007 by American businessman Chuck Slaughter. After making his fortune selling easy-to-pack travel gear, Slaughter volunteered to try and

turn around a struggling chain of drug stores in Kenya. Noticing that shop owners were idle for much of the day, he encouraged them to get out and start knocking on doors and visiting schools.

Business improved as a result, which encouraged him to consider shutting the shops and selling directly on the doorstep. It made him think of Avon, the cosmetics company that uses "Avon ladies" to sell make up in people's homes. Living Goods now has 6,000 health workers in Uganda, covering some 6 million people. There are another 1,200 in Kenya taking care of a million more.

With partnerships in place with charities operating healthcare in Myanmar and Zambia, there is potential for the model to expand to other countries in Africa and beyond. Funds to source the goods come from donors such as Omidyar Network that funds social enterprises, and US development agency USAID, said Church. Living Goods' president. In Kabanyoro village, despite the challenge of finding paying customers, Ritah is happy with her work.

"I feel good when I work with children. When they are sick, I can treat them and teach their parents to look after them," she said. "There are still some clients who can afford to pay so I can make a small profit. Best of all I have changed my community and I'm proud of that."—Reuters

Baby penguin 'Maru' takes first public waddle in Singapore

SINGAPORE: A baby king penguin waddled into view in Singapore's bird park yesterday, the first of its kind to be born there in close to a decade. Maru, which means "round" in Japanese, came from parents Zoro and Sora, part of the king penguin herd in the Jurong Bird Park's penguin exhibit. To maximize survival chances, keepers retrieved the egg and incubated it until it hatched in October. Weighing

just 200g at birth, the hatchling was raised by keepers away from the colony on a blended fish diet and has now progressed to eating herring fillets and capelin. At 6kg, it is now 30 times its original weight.

At two months old, keepers decided it was time to introduce it to the adult group, which curiously surrounded the baby's pen as it flapped its flippers and called out to the group. The youngster will lose its brown down in about nine months for its adult plumage. With a collection of nearly 5,000 birds, the Jurong Bird Park is Asia's largest avian park. In the wild, rising temperatures as a result of climate change has forced king penguins to travel further for food, which researchers say could cut their breeding season and hamper repopulation.—AFP



SINGAPORE: This handout photo released by Wildlife Reserves Singapore yesterday shows Maru the penguin hatching on October 10, 2017 after two-month of incubation at the Jurong Bird Park in Singapore.—AFP

The vengeful sea devouring Albania's coast

QERRET, Albania: Asim Krasniqi watches anxiously as the Adriatic Sea creeps ever closer to his beach bar in Albania, a country faced with an alarming pace of coastal erosion. "I'm nostalgic for how this place used to be," the septuagenarian told AFP wistfully, remembering when this beach in Qerret, to the west of the capital Tirana, was bigger and "many more" foreign tourists came. "Today everything is degraded," he said. Environmentalists say a dangerous mix of climate change and rampant, unregulated urban development are behind the rapid disappearance of the shoreline in the impoverished

Balkan country. "The sea has swallowed the coast. She is taking revenge on man, who has destroyed nature," said Sherif Lushaj, an environmental specialist at Polis University in Tirana. The initially "inconspicuous" phenomenon has become far more serious in recent years, Lushaj told AFP. Further north along the coast, near the concrete constructions in the beach resort town of Shengjin, dozens of tree trunks are decaying in water, a reminder that there used to be a forest between the sea and Kune lagoon. The lagoon is now threatened, less and less protected by a thin strip of land that is fast disappearing.

Once perched on sand dunes, nuclear bunkers built during the communist era of dictator Enver Hoxha also now barely emerge above the water. Others have been engulfed by the sea. Of the 427 kilometers (265 miles) of Albania's coast, "154 are affected by erosion", Environment Minister Blendi Klosi told AFP.—AFP

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What's On

Safir hotel - Fintas holds customer appreciation night



On December 7, 2017, Safir Kuwait Hotel and Residence Kuwait - Fintas held the customer appreciation night 2017 in the Royal Tent at the beach garden overlooking the Arabian Gulf with the presence of more than 500 invitees from embassies, ministries, corporates of both private and public sectors, local press and media, in addition to Safir Fintas Hotel friends.

This remarkable evening is considered a symbol of admire and appreciation to all the business partners who contribute to the hotel success and support in providing excellent services to the guests and visitors of Kuwait from all segmentations in addition to the active role in the hospitality business in Kuwait.

Condor International Group, one of the leading

events management company in the Kuwait and the region, sponsored the event and put all their experience, efforts and great artistic and audio visual effects, which impacted on the success of the event. The event included various live entertainments such as Saxophone, Guitar and Harp, as well as other live performance by the talented staff of Safir Hotel and Residences Kuwait - Fintas.

The hotel offered wide range of valuable gifts, invitations of hotel stay, invitations to enjoy the hotel restaurants including Al-Roshinah Kuwaiti Traditional Restaurant in addition to hotel stays invitations from Safir sister hotels in the region (Marina Hotel Kuwait, Safir Cairo Hotel, Salalah and Doha). Valuable prizes and gifts have been offered by our sponsors such as Airline tickets

offered by Turkish Airlines, Timeless for Laser Medical Clinic, Seba Med, Sama Dental Center, Armani Casa, Beidoun, Lavazza, OSN, Grand Cinema, Al Yaqaza Magazine, Brigit Ladies Salon, GulfNet, Trzi, and Taiba Clinic.

Saif Eddin Mohammed, the General Manager and Wassim Mahdi, the Director of Sales and Marketing, extended their gratitude and appreciation to all customers, guests and sponsors for their efforts as business partners.

Unique and exclusive Trophies (one of the Greek remarkable ruins at Failaka island, Kuwait) were presented to all partner with sincere appreciation and gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of Safir Hotel and Residences Kuwait - Fintas during the previous years.



Festive season in full swing at Symphony Style



The festive season is now in full bloom at Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait with the occasion marked with a special tree lighting and carol singing evening. The Quorvos Collection's flagship hotel in Kuwait assembled a choir to sing traditional festive songs and carols during the festive gathering with members of the in-house team joining in with guests round the large, stunningly decorated golden trees in the hotel's lobby area. The festive cheer was raised a few more decibels when the lights were officially switched on during an engaging ceremony. Guests at the friendly, fun event tucked into festive

cakes and cookies plus many more festive treats.

The food and drinks team meanwhile is ensuring all festive tastes are catered for this season by offering an extensive Festive Goodies menu to order from for your upcoming festive event you are planning to have. The menu includes specially prepared made-to-order roast turkeys with all the trimmings in addition to a range of sweet treats, some specialty cakes, Yule-logs, cookies, mince pies, homemade chocolate bells, snowmen, and gingerbread houses, perfect for gifts or to enjoy with the family.

Wembley officially opened at BSK

The British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport visited The British School of Kuwait (BSK) to officially open 'Wembley', the landmark covered sports area at the North of the BSK campus. Welcomed by Head Boy, Yousef Mahmoud, Head Girl, Rodina Gad, Principal Paul Shropshire and members of the Strategic Management Team, the crisp morning air was ideal weather for the visit.

For many years a desert car park, Wembley is now the venue for PE lessons, Sports Days and break times, as well as the daily morning gathering of students in Years 1 and 2 prior to going to their classes at the start of the day. Always busy, always bright and dry, this is the perfect place for students to expend energy. Accompanied by his wife, Dr Lavinia Davenport, the Ambassador was given a tour of the campus, taking in familiar places including the Marble Arch sports and games area, Chequers which accommodates the Sixth Form Center and the Euston Art Gallery where the Ambassador was duly impressed by the work on display.

On to Wembley, the party were joined by students from Reception and Year 1 who acted as hosts for the official part of the visit: Omar Qasim of Year 1 assisted the Ambassador with unveiling the plaque and cutting the ribbon, the ceremony taking place in Wembley Way in the familiar surroundings of a Georgian street scene and London Underground tube-station. There is definitely a corner of BSK that will forever be London.

Heather Holsgrove, Principal of The Sunshine Kindergarten (TSK) greeted the Ambassador for the tour of the Creche and KG. Holsgrove explained the importance of play as part of learning, exemplified by the bright classrooms and variety of activities ranging from role play, building with blocks and experimenting with sand. In teaching children of this age, it is important that they enjoy what they do, with discovery, cooperation and play integral to the learning journey for the very youngest students. Made to feel welcome by children of all ages, both in BSK and TSK, the Ambassador and his wife talked at length with



students about their experiences at school in Kuwait. The visit concluded in the company of Madam Vera Al-Mutawa, the Founder and Director of BSK. Now in its 40th year, BSK's Ruby Anniversary is another milestone in the history of Kuwait's premier school.

TIES hosts session tonight

You are cordially invited to another session of our series about some prophets and messengers of Allah (SWT) today at 7:00 pm. We will examine how Hagar could stay in Makkah with her infant son without fear or worries, how the Jurhum tribe discovered the well in

Makkah, and the conditions Hagar gave them if they wanted to live there.

We will also discuss why Ishmael divorced his first wife and kept his second, what happens if a father tells his son to divorce his wife, the lessons deduced from that, and the power of supplications to Allah (duaa). Finally, we will examine various opinions about the frequency of Ibrahim's visit to Makkah to check on his small beautiful family, and the beginning of the Kaaba construction.

KIB sponsors football tournament

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that it has offered its gold sponsorship to the students' football tournament at the University of Arizona, which was recently held in the United States. The student's football club comprises a group of Kuwaiti youth studying in Arizona, whose active engagement sees them participate in a diverse number of extracurricular activities throughout the academic year.

This sponsorship comes as part of KIB's ongoing strategy of supporting activities and initiatives for youth and students, both locally and abroad. The Bank believes that these activities play a significant role in a student's personal development, as well as the development of necessary skills needed to boost the younger generation's contribution to the nation's growth.

On this occasion, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB,

Nawaf Najia said: "Over the years, KIB has been a devoted supporter of youth and student activities - and still continues to play this significant role in the community today. Our efforts also prioritize sports-related activities that include the participation of our students abroad. We continuously strive to support these students studying in prestigious universities abroad, as their education empowers them with the knowledge and tools needed to better serve their country in the future."

Najia added that KIB's sponsorship of youth-based activities reflects its dedication to supporting all segments of the local community, as well as its ongoing efforts to support them in various important aspects of their lives. Additionally, the Bank offers its comprehensive banking solutions with a wide range of sharia-compliant services that aim at catering to the diverse needs of all its customers. KIB devotes special attention to student-based activities throughout different stages of students' academic journey by sponsoring and organizing a variety of sports events, exhibitions, field visits and much more. By doing so, the Bank reinforces the significant contribution made by its leading social responsibility program across all segments of the community.



Burgan Bank Youth Account holders watch 'Jumanji' for free

Burgan Bank, in collaboration with Grand Cinemas, announced yesterday that its Youth Account Holders will be offered the exclusivity to watch the first screening of the new movie 'Jumanji' - Welcome to the Jungle' for free at the luxurious movie theatre of Grand Cinemas located in Al-Hamma Luxury Centre.

The movie screening will be held on Thursday December 21, 2017, wherein each Youth account holder is entitled to 2

free tickets on one of the two shows, at 6:00 pm or 8:00 pm. To book the free seats, Youth Account Holders are required to visit Grand Cinemas box office in Al-Hamma Luxury Centre and present their Youth ATM card.

The bank strives to reward its Youth account holders with exclusive offers that fits their lifestyle. The Youth Account is dedicated for young individuals, between the ages of 15 to 25, and who seek to attain a successful future. There is no KD limit to open an account, and no minimum balance required to maintain it. Furthermore, account holders receive free prepaid MasterCard and an ATM card which entitles them to discounts at selective merchants along with an exclusive discount at Grand Cinemas Theatres, Al-Hamma Luxury Centre and The Gate Mall.

TV



00:25 The Night Crew
02:00 Eagle Eye
03:55 Age Of Tomorrow
05:25 Thor
07:20 The 5th Wave
09:15 Eagle Eye
11:15 The Darkest Hour
12:50 Thor
14:50 Being Evel
16:35 Avengers Grimm
18:05 Twister
20:00 Star Wars: The Force Awakens
22:20 Bloodsport



00:00 Doctors
00:30 EastEnders
01:00 Bad Move
01:35 Poldark
02:30 The Durrells
03:20 Top Of The Lake
04:10 Doctors
04:40 EastEnders
05:10 The Durrells
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Death In Paradise
07:25 I Want My Wife Back
08:00 Doctor Who
08:45 Doctors
09:20 EastEnders
09:50 Death In Paradise
10:45 New Tricks
11:40 Doctor Who
12:30 Stella
13:20 Doctors
13:50 EastEnders
14:20 Death In Paradise
15:20 Doctor Who
16:10 Stella
17:00 New Tricks
18:00 Doctors
18:30 EastEnders
19:05 Death In Paradise
20:00 Holly City
21:00 The Detectivists: Christmas Special 2015
21:30 Uncle
22:00 Line Of Duty
22:55 Last Tango In Halifax
23:45 Doctors



00:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
01:00 The Haunting Of...
02:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
03:00 I Escaped My Killer
04:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
05:00 The Haunting Of...
06:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
07:00 Homicide Hunter
08:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
09:00 It Takes A Killer
09:30 It Takes A Killer
10:00 Homicide Hunter
11:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
12:00 Escaping Polygamy
13:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
14:00 It Takes A Killer
14:30 It Takes A Killer
15:00 Homicide Hunter
16:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
17:00 The First 48
18:00 It Takes A Killer
18:30 It Takes A Killer
19:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
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21:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
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22:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
23:00 It Takes A Killer
23:30 It Takes A Killer



00:05 Workaholics
00:30 Broad City
00:55 Another Period
01:20 Another Period
01:45 Teachers
02:10 Chappelle's Show
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Tosh.0
03:50 Chappelle's Show
04:15 Kroll Show
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Important Things With Demitri Martin
05:30 Impractical Jokers
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:50 The Dude Perfect Show
07:15 The Dude Perfect Show
07:40 I Live With Models
08:05 Impractical Jokers
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Kroll Show
09:45 Key And Peele
10:10 Important Things With Demitri Martin
10:35 I Live With Models
11:00 Impractical Jokers
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Impractical Jokers
12:40 Punk'd (Bet)
13:05 Punk'd (Bet)
13:30 Important Things With

Demitri Martin
13:55 Friends
14:20 Friends
14:45 Workaholics
15:10 Key And Peele
15:30 Kroll Show
15:55 Comedy Central Presents
Comedy Salwagel
16:30 Impractical Jokers
16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 The Dude Perfect Show
19:00 The Dude Perfect Show
19:25 Impractical Jokers
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends
20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Nightcap
21:55 Graves
22:25 Broad City
22:50 South Park
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
01:55 Destroyed In Seconds
01:20 Head Games
02:10 The Big Brain Theory
03:00 Ultimate Survival
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds
04:35 Destroyed In Seconds
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 North America
06:20 Nextworld
07:00 Destroyed In Seconds
07:25 Destroyed In Seconds
07:50 North America
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Nextworld
10:20 Ultimate Survival
11:10 Weather Gone Viral
12:00 Bermuda Triangle Exposed
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Nextworld
14:30 Destroyed In Seconds
14:55 Destroyed In Seconds
15:20 North America
16:10 Ultimate Survival
17:00 NASA'S Unexplained Files
17:50 Curiosity: Nefertiti - Mummy Queen Mystery
18:40 Nextworld
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Destroyed In Seconds
20:45 Destroyed In Seconds
21:10 NASA'S Unexplained Files
22:00 Curiosity: Nefertiti - Mummy Queen Mystery
22:50 Ultimate Survival
23:40 North America



00:50 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
01:45 Chandra Levy: A Mistress Murdered
02:40 Killing Richard Glossip
03:35 Murder By Numbers
04:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
05:25 The Locator
05:50 The Locator
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It
07:10 Evil Online
08:00 The Locator
08:25 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
09:15 The Locator
09:40 The Locator
10:10 Evil Online
11:05 I Am Homicide
12:00 Murder Chose Me
12:55 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 Evil Online
15:40 I Am Homicide
16:35 Evil Stepmothers
17:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
18:25 The Locator
18:50 The Locator
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
20:15 Evil Online
21:10 I Am Homicide
22:05 The Perfect Murderer
23:00 Murder By Numbers
23:55 Reasonable Doubt



00:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:20 Hank Zipzer
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:10 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
07:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 Elena Of Avalor
08:20 K.C. Undercover
08:45 Bunk'd
09:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
09:35 Tangled: The Series
10:05 Disney's Descendants
11:55 The Zhuzhus
12:05 That's So Raven
12:30 That's So Raven
12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
13:00 Bunk'd
13:25 Tangled: The Series
13:50 Jessie
14:15 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
14:40 K.C. Undercover
15:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
15:30 Bizaardvark
15:55 Elena Of Avalor
16:20 Stuck In The Middle
16:45 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
17:00 Tangled: The Series
17:25 K.C. Undercover
17:50 K.C. Undercover
18:15 Descendants Wicked World

18:20 Bunk'd
18:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
19:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
19:15 Liv And Maddie
19:40 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
20:05 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
20:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
20:35 Disney The Lodge
21:00 Alex & Co.
21:25 Alex & Co.
21:50 Lollipop
22:15 Lollipop
22:40 Evermoor Chronicles
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
23:45 Lollipop



00:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
00:25 Unbungalievable
00:35 Loopedidoo
00:55 Henry Hugglemonster
01:15 Calimero
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopedidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopedidoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopedidoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:20 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopedidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 Loopedidoo
07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
08:00 P-King Duckling
08:30 Puppy Dog Pals
09:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:30 Sofia The First
10:00 Jake's Never Land Rescue
10:45 Minnie's Bow-Toons
11:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
11:30 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
12:00 The Lion Guard
12:30 The Lion Guard
13:00 Sofia The First
13:30 Sofia The First
14:00 PJ Masks
14:30 PJ Masks
15:00 P-King Duckling
15:30 Goldie & Bear And The Magic Map
15:35 Sofia The First
16:00 PJ Masks
16:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
17:00 Doc McStuffins
17:30 Vampirina
18:00 Mickey's Monster Musical
19:00 Sofia The First
19:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
20:00 The Lion Guard
20:30 P-King Duckling
21:00 Doc McStuffins
21:30 PJ Masks
22:00 Jake's Never Land Rescue
22:45 Minnie's Bow-Toons
23:00 P-King Duckling
23:30 Puppy Dog Pals



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:05 Sean Conway: On The Edge
01:45 X-Ray Megaw Airport
02:35 Breaking Magic
03:20 Diesel Brothers
04:05 Deadliest Catch
04:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Gold Divers: Under The Ice
06:45 Street Outlaws
07:30 Diesel Brothers
08:15 Deadliest Catch
09:00 Container Wars
09:25 How Do They Do It?
09:55 Sean Conway: On The Edge
10:35 X-Ray Megaw Airport
11:42 Breaking Magic
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:48 Storage Hunters UK
13:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier (Season Specials)
13:55 Deadliest Catch
14:40 Gold Divers: Under The Ice
15:25 Misfit Garage
16:10 Street Outlaws
17:00 How Do They Do It?
17:50 Storage Hunters UK
18:20 Container Wars
18:50 Deadliest Catch
19:40 How Do They Do It?
21:00 Finding Escobar's Millions
21:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
22:40 The Wheel: Survival Games
23:45 Misfit Garage
06:00 Disney II
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Marvel's Spider-Man
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Walk The Prank



08:10 Phineas And Ferb
08:35 Mech-X4
09:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
09:25 Lab Rats Elite Force
09:50 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
10:20 Gravity Falls
10:40 Kid vs Kat
11:10 Milo Murphy's Law
11:35 Right Now Kapow
12:00 Mighty Med: There Is Astorm Coming
12:55 Pair Of Kings
13:45 Phineas And Ferb
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Phineas And Ferb
14:40 The Suite Life Of Zack & Cody
15:30 Gravity Falls
16:20 Two More Eggs
16:25 Lab Rats
17:15 Kirby Buckets
17:40 Kirby Buckets
18:05 Supa Strikas
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man
18:35 Disney II
19:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Walk The Prank
20:20 Walk The Prank
20:40 Supa Strikas
21:45 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats Elite Force
22:40 Lab Rats Elite Force
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am



00:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:50 El News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
04:40 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
06:55 El News
07:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
08:10 El News: Daily Pop
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:00 El News
12:15 Botched
13:10 Botched
14:05 Botched
15:00 El News
15:15 El News: Daily Pop
16:15 The Platinum Life
17:10 The Platinum Life
18:05 The Platinum Life
19:00 El News
20:00 WAGs La
21:00 WAGs La
22:00 WAGs La
23:00 El News
23:15 The Platinum Life



00:00 Chopped
01:00 Bakers vs. Fake
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped Junior
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa
06:25 Barefoot Contessa
06:50 Bake With Anna Olson
07:15 The Kitchen
07:45 The Pioneer Woman
08:30 The Pioneer Woman
08:55 Siba's Table
09:25 Siba's Table
09:55 Bake With Anna Olson
10:25 Bake With Anna Olson
10:55 The Kitchen
11:45 Cooking For Real
12:10 The Pioneer Woman
12:35 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Bake With Anna Olson
17:30 Bake With Anna Olson
18:00 Chopped Junior
19:00 Holiday Baking Championship
20:00 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food.Academy
20:30 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food.Academy
21:00 Private Chef
21:30 Private Chef
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
04:30 Little Boy Blue
05:20 Murdoch Mysteries
06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
07:05 The Chase
08:00 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
09:05 Little Boy Blue
10:00 Murdoch Mysteries
10:55 Who's Doing The Dishes?
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?
15:10 The Chase
16:00 The Family Chase
16:55 Tonight At The London Palladium
17:50 Murdoch Mysteries
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 The Family Chase
21:55 Tonight At The London Palladium
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Million Dollar Genius
01:00 What Really Happened
02:00 Clash Of Warriors
03:00 Missing In Alaska
04:40 How The States Got Their Shapes
05:05 How The States Got Their Shapes
05:30 Million Dollar Genius
06:20 What Really Happened
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Clash Of Warriors
09:00 Missing In Alaska
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 How The States Got Their Shapes
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16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 How The States Got Their Shapes
17:30 How The States Got Their Shapes
18:00 The Universe
19:00 What Really Happened
20:00 Clash Of Warriors
21:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color



00:21 Ultimate Wheels
01:11 American Pickers
02:00 Swamp People
02:50 Counting Cars
03:15 American Pickers

04:05 Time Team
05:00 Counting Cars
05:25 Counting Cars
06:00 Ultimate Wheels
06:50 American Pickers
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Aussie Pickers
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Ultimate Wheels
11:50 American Pickers
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 Counting Cars
13:30 Time Team
14:20 Swamp People
15:10 Alone
16:00 American Pickers
16:50 Counting Cars
17:15 Counting Cars
17:40 Swamp People
18:30 Alone
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 Pawn Stars
20:35 Pawn Stars
21:00 WW2 Treasure Hunters
21:40 Billion Dollar Wreck
22:50 Time Team
23:30 Alone



00:45 David Rocco's Dolce India
01:10 Rustic Adventures Argentina
01:40 David Rocco's Dolce India
02:05 Sinful Sweets
02:35 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
03:00 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
03:30 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
04:25 Places We Go
04:50 Miguel's Feasts
05:20 Miguel's Feasts
05:45 Sara's Australia Unveiled
06:15 Fusion Forager
07:10 David Rocco's Dolce India
07:35 Sinful Sweets
08:05 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
08:30 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
09:00 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
09:25 Places We Go
09:55 Places We Go
10:20 Miguel's Feasts
10:50 Miguel's Feasts
11:15 Sara's Australia Unveiled
11:45 Fusion Forager
12:40 David Rocco's Dolce India
13:05 Sinful Sweets
13:35 Chef On The Road
14:30 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
14:55 Places We Go
15:25 Places We Go
15:50 Miguel's Feasts
16:20 Miguel's Feasts
16:45 Sara's Australia Unveiled
17:15 Jose Andres: Dinner In Haiti
18:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
18:35 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
19:05 Places We Go
19:30 Miguel's Feasts
20:00 Miguel's Feasts
20:30 Sara's Australia Unveiled
21:00 Jose Andres: Dinner In Haiti
22:00 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
22:25 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
22:55 David Rocco's Dolce India
23:20 Sinful Sweets
23:50 Chef On The Road



00:10 No Man Left Behind
01:00 Dian Fossey: Secrets In The Mist
02:00 Classified: Secret Service Files
03:00 The Long Road Home
04:00 No Man Left Behind
05:00 Family Guns
06:00 Live Free Or Die
07:00 Science Of Stupid
07:30 Science Of Stupid
08:00 Route Awakening
08:30 Route Awakening
09:00 Family Guns
10:00 Straits Dreams
11:00 Supercar Megabuild
12:00 Brain Games
13:00 How To Win At Everything
13:00 Live Free Or Die
14:00 Fish Tank Kings
15:00 Science Of Stupid
15:30 Science Of Stupid
16:00 Machine Impossible
17:00 Supercar Megabuild
18:00 Airport Security: Colombia
2.5
19:00 Science Of Stupid
19:30 Science Of Stupid
20:00 Machine Impossible
20:50 Supercar Megabuild
21:40 Airport Security: Colombia
2.5
22:30 Science Of Stupid
22:55 Science Of Stupid
23:20 Brain Games
23:50 How To Win At Everything



00:20 Dangerous Encounters
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Hyena Queen
02:50 Jobs That Bite!
03:45 World's Weirdest
04:40 Baby Animals In The Wild
05:35 Hyena Queen
06:30 Jobs That Bite!
07:25 World's Weirdest
08:20 Baby Animals In The Wild
09:15 Animal ER
10:10 Philly Undercover
11:05 Secret Brazil
12:00 Shark Men
12:55 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
13:50 Jobs That Bite!
14:45 Incredible Insects
15:40 Clan Of The Meerkat
16:35 Animal ER
17:30 Cameramen Who Dare
18:25 Incredible Insects
19:20 Clan Of The Meerkat
20:10 Animal ER
21:00 Animal ER
21:50 Cameramen Who Dare
22:40 Secret Brazil
23:30 Shark Men

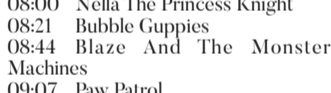


00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House

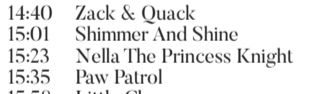
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig
09:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
09:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
09:48 Henry Danger
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbids Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Sanjay And Craig
13:48 Hunter Street
14:12 I Am Frankie
14:36 The Thundermans
15:00 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
15:24 School Of Rock
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Sanjay And Craig
17:24 I Am Frankie
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbids Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:10 Team Umizoomi
00:33 Shimmer And Shine
00:56 Shimmer And Shine
01:18 Max & Ruby
01:41 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:52 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
02:03 The Day Henry Met
02:08 The Day Henry Met
02:14 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:37 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:58 Zack & Quack
03:20 Shimmer And Shine
03:43 Nella The Princess Knight
03:55 Paw Patrol
04:18 Little Charmers
04:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
04:42 Dora The Explorer
05:06 Max & Ruby
05:28 The Day Henry Met
05:34 Nella The Princess Knight
05:56 Shimmer And Shine
06:07 Shimmer And Shine
06:19 Wallykazam!
06:43 Zack & Quack
06:54 The Day Henry Met
07:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:22 Rusty Rivets
07:34 Paw Patrol
07:58 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight
08:21 Bubble Guppies
08:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:07 Paw Patrol
09:30 Shimmer And Shine
09:39 Shimmer And Shine
09:53 Nella The Princess Knight
10:15 The Day Henry Met
10:25 Paw Patrol
10:45 Rusty Rivets
11:05 Wallykazam!
11:28 Bubble Guppies
11:52 Team Umizoomi
12:15 Shimmer And Shine
12:39 Shimmer And Shine
13:01 Max & Ruby
13:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:47 The Day Henry Met
13:52 The Day Henry Met
13:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:40 Zack & Quack
15:01 Shimmer And Shine
15:23 Nella The Princess Knight
15:35 Paw Patrol
15:58 Little Charmers
16:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
16:22 Dora The Explorer
16:44 Max & Ruby
17:06 The Day Henry Met
17:11 Nella The Princess Knight
17:35 Shimmer And Shine
17:45 Shimmer And Shine
17:59 Wallykazam!
18:21 Zack & Quack
18:32 The Day Henry Met
18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
19:00 Rusty Rivets
19:13 Paw Patrol
19:37 Dora The Explorer
20:00 Nella The Princess Knight
20:21 Bubble Guppies
20:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
21:07 Paw Patrol
21:30 Shimmer And Shine
21:53 Nella The Princess Knight
22:15 The Day Henry Met
22:22 Paw Patrol
22:45 Rusty Rivets
23:05 Wallykazam!
23:28 Bubble Guppies
23:52 Team Umizoomi



00:00 Cedar Cove
01:00 Cedar Cove
02:00 Cedar Cove
03:00 Fashion StartUp
04:00 Project Accessory
05:00 House Of DVF
06:00 Cedar Cove
07:00 Cedar Cove
08:00 Cedar Cove
09:00 Fashion StartUp
10:00 Project Accessory
11:00 House Of DVF
12:00 Cedar Cove
13:00 Fashion StartUp
14:00 Project Accessory
17:00 House Of DVF
18:00 Married At First Sight
20:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
21:00 Fashion StartUp
22:00 Project Accessory
23:00 House Of DVF



00:20 Dr Christian Will See You Now
01:05 Botched Up Bodies
01:50 Body Bizarre
02:35 First Lady Michelle Obama Says Farewell
03:20 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 Designer Darlings
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress UK
06:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
06:45 Outdaughtered: Susby Quints
07:30 Say Yes To The Dress UK
08:15 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
09:00 Cake Boss
09:25 Toddlers & Tiaras
10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
10:55 Too Ugly For Love?
11:40 First Lady Michelle Obama Says Farewell
12:25 Say Yes To The Dress UK
13:10 Say Yes To The Dress
13:55 Toddlers & Tiaras
14:40 Little People, Big World
15:25 Too Ugly For Love?
16:10 Love, Lust Or Run
16:35 Cake Boss
17:00 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
17:50 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
18:50 Designer Darlings
19:40 Say Yes To The Dress UK
20:10 Cake Boss
20:35 Cake Boss
21:00 Say Yes To The Dress UK
21:50 90 Day Fianc?: Happily Ever After?
22:40 The Spouse House
23:30 90 Days To Wed



01:00 Hit By Lightning
02:35 The Boss
04:15 Hearts Of Spring
05:00 Big
07:40 Almost Christmas
08:35 Summer Villa
11:05 Hearts Of Spring
12:35 Big
14:20 Almost Christmas
16:15 Yoga Hosers
17:45 Hard Promises
19:25 The Bucket List
21:05 Gentlemen Broncos
22:35 Mean Machine



01:45 Rushmore
03:20 Infinitely Polar Bear
05:00 Not Without My Daughter
07:05 Alex Of Venice
08:35 Rushmore
10:10 Infinitely Polar Bear
11:50 Alex Of Venice
13:20 Hoosiers
15:20 The Last King

17:10 The End Of The Tour
19:00 James White
20:35 A Few Good Men
22:55 Summer In February



02:00 Norbit
03:45 The Boxtrolls
05:25 Rocky IV
07:00 Before We Go
08:40 The Finest Hours
10:40 The Invention Of Lying
12:25 The Boxtrolls
14:05 Norbit
15:50 Rocky v
17:35 The Invention Of Lying
19:20 Joy
21:25 The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
23:30 Last Chance Harvey



00:40 Mythbusters
01:30 How Do They Do It?
01:55 Food Factory USA
02:20 Future Firepower
03:10 Space Voyages
04:00 Prototype This
04:48 Mythbusters
05:36 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Food Factory USA
06:24 Future Firepower
07:12 Space Voyages
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 Prototype This
09:14 Mythbusters
10:02 Space Voyages
10:50 How Do They Do It?
11:14 Food Factory USA
11:38 Future Firepower
12:26 Prototype This
13:14 Mythbusters
14:02 How Do They Do It?
14:26 Food Factory USA
14:50 Space Voyages
15:38 Prototype This
16:26 Future Firepower
17:14 Mythbusters
18:02 Space Voyages
18:50 Prototype This
19:40 Mythbusters
20:30 Street Science
20:55 Street Science
21:20 How Do They Do It?
21:45 Food Factory USA
22:10 Space Voyages
23:00 Street Science
23:25 Street Science
23:50 Prototype This



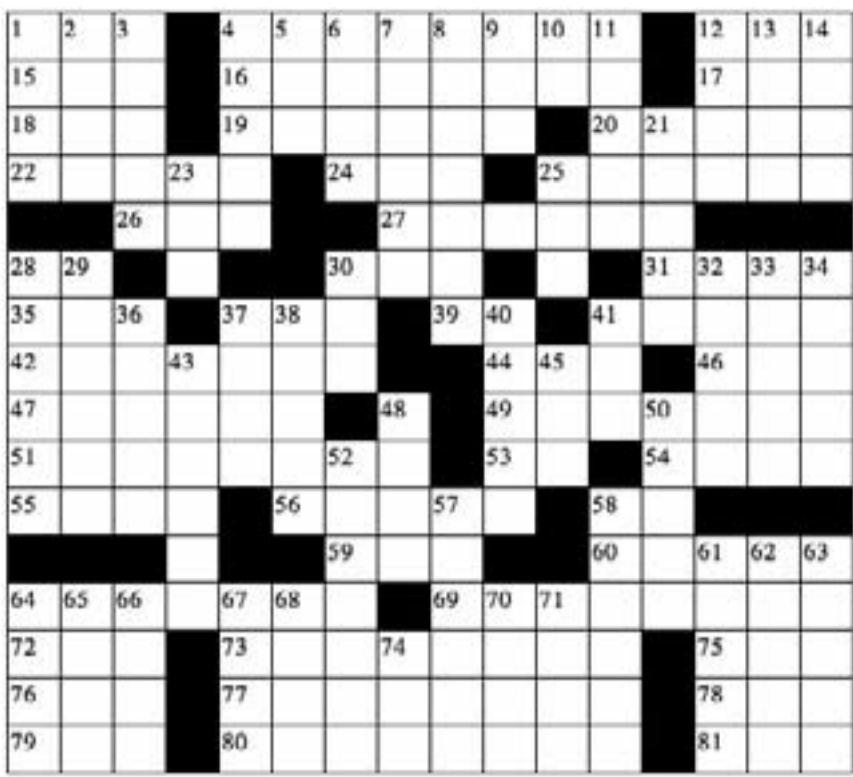
00:15 Man To Man
02:15 We Gotta Get Out Of This Place
03:45 Half Light
05:30 Haven
07:05 Wicker Park
09:00 The Human Stain
10:45 Laws Of Attraction
12:15 Ali
14:45 We Gotta Get Out Of This Place
16:15 First Snow
18:00 Man To Man
20:40 Grace Of Monaco
21:45 The Machinist
23:30 25th Hour



00:00 Cedar Cove
01:00 Cedar Cove
02:00 Cedar Cove
03:00 Fashion StartUp
04:00 Project Accessory
05:00 House Of DVF
06:00 Cedar Cove
07:00 Cedar Cove
08:00 Cedar Cove
09:00 Fashion StartUp
10:00 Project Accessory
11:00 House Of DVF
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17:00 House Of DVF
18:00 Married At First Sight
20:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
21:00 Fashion StartUp
22:00 Project Accessory
23:00 House Of DVF

Stars

CROSSWORD 1784



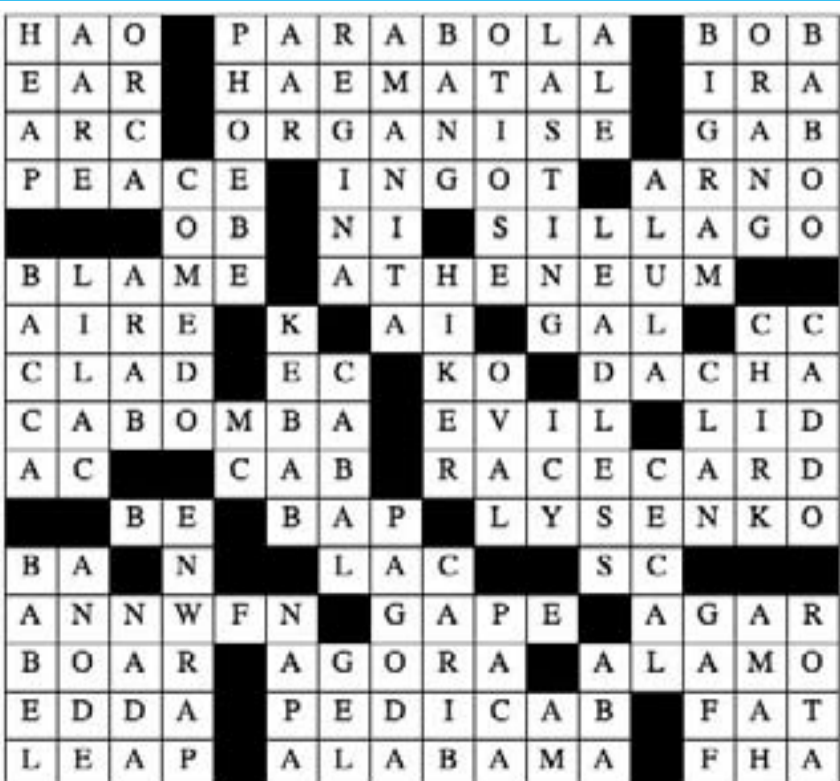
ACROSS

- 1. A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
4. Chop cut from a hog.
12. An accountant certified by the state.
15. The syllable naming the sixth (submediant) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
16. A house for storing ice.
17. A resource.
18. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
19. An appetizer consisting usually of a thin slice of bread or toast spread with caviar or cheese or other savory food.
20. Deciduous shrub of North America.
22. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
24. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
26. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
27. The capital and largest city of Rwanda.
28. A note appended to a letter after the signature.
31. A short labored intake of breath with the mouth open.
35. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
39. An associate degree in nursing.
42. Reception room in an inn or club where visitors can be received.
44. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
46. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
47. On a ship, train, plane or other vehicle.
49. Someone who travels about selling his wares (as on the streets or at carnivals).
51. A mountain peak in the Andes in Peru (21,709 feet high).
53. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
54. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
55. Chief port of Yemen.
56. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
59. Primitive predaceous North American fish covered with hard scales and having long jaws with needle-like teeth.
60. The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
64. God of wisdom or prophesy.
69. Feed excessively.
72. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
73. A commercial browser.
75. A master's degree in business.
76. A bachelor's degree in theology.
77. Presence of abnormally large amounts of uric acid in the urine.
78. An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
79. The 19th letter of the Greek alphabet.
80. A small suitcase.
81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- 1. English essayist (1775-1834).
2. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
3. God of wealth and love.
4. A genus of temperate and arctic evergreen trees (see spruce).
5. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
6. A city in western Nevada at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.
7. The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
8. An oleoresin used in varnishes and ointments.
9. The quality of a color as determined by its dominant wavelength.
10. A mouth or mouthlike opening.
11. Of or relating to the feet.
12. One of a set of small pieces of stiff paper marked in various ways and used for playing games or for telling fortunes.
13. A linear unit (1/16 inch) used in printing.
14. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
21. Any of a group of heavenly spirits under the god Anu.
23. Used of a single unit or thing.
25. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
29. The bottom of a sea or ocean.
30. 32nd President of the United States.
32. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
33. Big-eyed scad.
34. Having a horizontal surface in which no part is higher or lower than another.
36. (in Indian English) The number that is represented as a one followed by 7 zeros.
37. A business whose articles of incorporation have been approved in some state.
38. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
40. Greek mythology.
41. A mature blood cell that contains hemoglobin to carry oxygen to the bodily tissues.
43. Very small silvery eel-like schooling fishes that burrow into sandy beaches.
45. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
48. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
50. Valuable fiber plant of East Indies now widespread in cultivation.
52. A literary language of Chinese Turkestan (named for one of the sons of Genghis Khan).
57. Any of numerous low-growing plants of the genus Crocus having slender grasslike leaves and white or yellow or purple flowers.
58. Make a high-pitched, screeching noise, as of a door.
61. A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
62. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
63. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
65. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
66. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
67. Offering safety.
68. A German man.
70. A Spanish unit of length (about a yard) having different values in different localities.
71. Surpassing the ordinary especially in size or scale.
74. Standard temperature and pressure.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today could find you wanting to talk, talk, and talk, as your mind should be full of exciting ideas to put to use in the workplace or at home. Taking care of business is most likely your number one priority. You desire organization and practicality and you simply want to get things accomplished. Work objectives and good health take on more importance now. Those around you may find you especially witty and a bit on the eccentric side. You will be valued for your independence and unique qualities and could find important breakthroughs regarding your living situation or life conditions. This evening is an excellent time for taking part in social activities. You may talk a friend into teaching you some new dance steps!



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your very capable ability to manage and direct others will be in high focus. You should find it an exceptionally good time to be with others and to work together. There is a need for your knowledge and you get pleasant results as you volunteer your time. This is a good day for making decisions, carrying out plans and communicating to others. Make sure the dialogue goes both ways, however—others have good ideas too. If you stick to the main subjects and do not become hung up on trivialities, you should accomplish a lot in a group meeting. You are empowered with a clear and inquisitive mind. At this time, working with and discussing ideas with friends can be most rewarding. You enjoy time with your family this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may find enjoyment in probing your inner workings or some good solid gossip. You find value in your darker, more secretive areas and don't mind working through some sensitive problems. You set all of the chatter aside when new business becomes a rush to finish. People that do not usually work with you want to be on your team to help. It is a great time to be with others and to work together. Those around you should have no problem in following your lead, as you are most eloquent in speech and communication and can be very persuasive. Things seem to be very natural for self-expression and you are very creative, write, draw and enjoy your creative self. Expect a most interesting conversation with someone you love this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may have an emotional conflict with someone younger than you. Your feelings, or the feelings of someone who supports you, may need your attention. Your ideas and thoughts may help to soothe a situation and minds can be changed in an instant. Taking the difficult and creating a positive end result is something you are known to accomplish, over and over again. There may be times that you wonder why you are put in a position of anxiousness but it is obvious that you have the moxie and the organized mind to put things right. This afternoon is yours to do with as you please and most of your free time is spent in catching up with unfinished business. You have a craving for soups and breads, and new recipes and hidden ingredients make this evening fun.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Now is the time for you to receive recognition. Peers and superiors give you credit for your hard work. You have more animation in your thought process than you might realize—start using it and surprise yourself. Now is a good time to resolve any long-standing disputes as well as a good day for work. Get out-of-doors for exercise at the lunch break. Work will seem easier and you should feel more relaxed once you engage in some sort of health-related activity. Also, love is in full bloom during this time—it's a good time to fully demonstrate the depth of affection to loved ones. This is a good day—a time when your powers of creativity are great. You are able to solve problems easily, should they occur. Music plays a big part of a romantic evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Work objectives are very important to you at this time. Discipline may be where your concentration is focused. Maintain your spirit of enthusiasm—it will help you to stay on target with your goals. Your mind may feel as though it is on a racetrack. Activities are fast moving and insights easily appear. If it seems that things are moving too fast, step back for a bit. If you do not allow yourself a break from time to time, all of this creativeness could be of little value. Working with partners in an open, natural, creative environment can only bring good fortune at this time. You accomplish a variety of projects this day. While you are with friends and family this evening, use your energy constructively. Perhaps you could create an amazing dessert.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

A hobby you have perfected recently may be turning into a very profitable enterprise. Even if you have a day job, the hobby you have could be an attraction to others during your lunch break. You may find your time is spent in teaching or selling your creative works or invention. This inventiveness of yours could also come in the form of children's stories, candles, mixes of coffees or teas for particular tastes, herbal or scent concoctions all done up in beautiful packaging. Good conversation and enjoyable, non-stress situations make for a great avenue to introduce your private label and earn some extra money. This evening you enjoy long conversations with family members while you prop up your feet and take long sips of that herbal tea you made earlier today.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Something may help you discover a few good and new ways to go forward with a plan regarding your life situation. You may find yourself serving to guide someone younger than you in matters of importance. This is a vital day with lots of energy and action. You may feel focused and even a bit radiant. This afternoon presents a great opportunity to keep your promise to a family member. Be careful, you may have more fun than you thought possible! Announce early in the day that the evening will require everyone's attendance. Perhaps you have a meal or movie together, or you decide to invite the family to come along for a ride in the family vehicle through the many decorated neighborhoods. Early to bed this evening will help to balance your energies.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Having figured out new ways to communicate will make interactions with strangers go fairly well. You may have been training to conduct new business. There is an opportunity to escort visitors to your company or school with the hopes of widening your scope of real estate or political opportunities. In turn you will introduce some interesting people to your favorite places around town. Who knows, you may even find some new places to add to your list of favorites. You find yourself more expressive and proficient than usual. You are pleased that others seem to appreciate your actions—you are pleased to achieve many things. Tonight you may reflect on the day, your new friends and you add to your knowledge of the city in which you live.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Today you may decide to do some technical or scientific work that may have been previously neglected. This could include a hobby as well as subjects that are work related. Your imagination is in full swing—you are able to lighten everyone's spirit without even trying. You long for new experiences. Your emotional nourishment and feeling of protection comes from integrity, friendships and social interaction. Having someone flatter you on anything is always nice. Some form of compliment on your tastes or belongings will find a way to you this evening. You could be working exceptionally hard to become better organized and to keep everything in its place. Health and work goals are considered for this upcoming year.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Now is the time to concentrate on practical matters. Your energy and optimism go together in helping you to grasp the overall picture. Do not forget, however, that the whole is made up of many parts. Each part must be considered and none can be missing or out of place. In other words, a balance is important and as you learn to keep a balance in your life you will become more relaxed and will probably notice laughter bubbles up more often. This is a good day for long-range planning. You are flexible and this is something you may want to teach the young people in your business or home. Flexibility will keep things moving. Community activities that take place at this time should be both well-attended and successful.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a good time to foster a sense of togetherness and team play during group work activity. Do not try to force a particular issue during this time. If you are depending on several different people or the upswing of the dollar to save some business project, you will not have long to wait. There are positive outcomes. If your own expertise has been the guide to a particular project, you have nothing to fear. A very important relationship, perhaps with an older person or someone in authority, may come into focus this afternoon. You may feel a bit of tension or sense of opposition that will require compromise or negotiation on your part. A big opportunity for understanding and growth is at hand. You are able to give some good advice.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Delicious Desserts

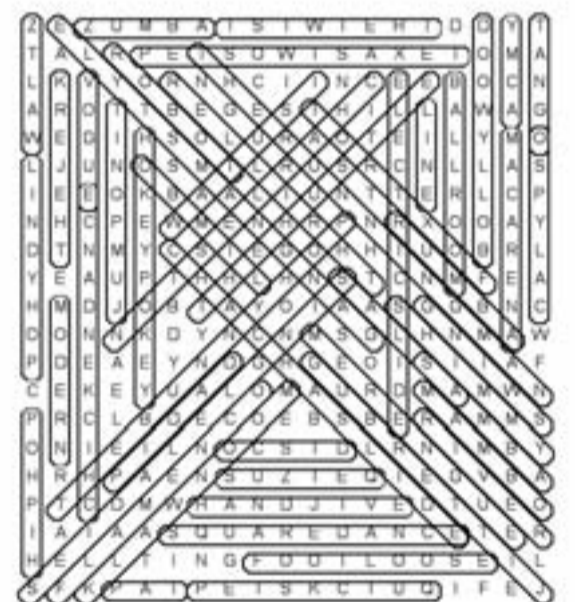
Find and circle all of the desserts that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- AMBROSIA, CINNAMON ROLLS, JELLY ROLLS, PINEAPPLE DELIGHT, APPLE CRISP, CREME BRULEE, LEMON BARS, PLUM SQUARES, APPLE PIE, CHOCOLATE CAKE, MACAROONS, RAISIN PUDDING, MERINGUES, RUM BALLS, BANANA SPLIT, HONEY BREAD, SOBBIT, STRAWBERRY SHORT CAKE, BREAD PUDDING, FLAN, HOUSE, STRUDEL, FUDGE, PARFAIT, SUAGAE, BROWNIES, BUTTER TARTS, GELATO, PASTRIES, CARROT CAKE, GINGERBREAD, ICE CREAM, PAVLOVA, TRIFLES, CHOCOLATE CAKE

Yesterday's Solution

Dance crazes



- BALLROOM, HAND JIVE, QUICKSTEP, TEXAS TWO-STEP, BOLLYWOOD, HIP HOP, RIVER, THE SUNNY HOP, CALYPSO, HOKEY POKEY, RIVER, THE HUSTLE, CHA CHA SLIDE, JITTERBUG, RUMBA, THE SERP, CHARLESTON, JUMP ON IT, SALSA, THE RUNNING MAN, CHICKEN DANCE, LIMBO, SAMBA, THE TWIST, DA DOP, LINDY HOP, SHIMMY, THRILLER, DISCO, LINE, SINGLE LADIES, VOGUE, ELECTRIC SLIDE, MACARENA MAMBO, SQUARE DANCE, WALTZ, FLAMENCO, MERENGO, SUZIE Q, WATUSI, FOOTLOOSE, MOEREN, SWING, YMCA, FOXTROT, MOONWALK, TANGO, ZUMBA, GANGNAM STYLE, TAP

The hidden message is: DANCING IS THE BODY'S WAY OF CELEBRATING LIFE

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Kuwait Times Classifieds

Thursday, December 14, 2017



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STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

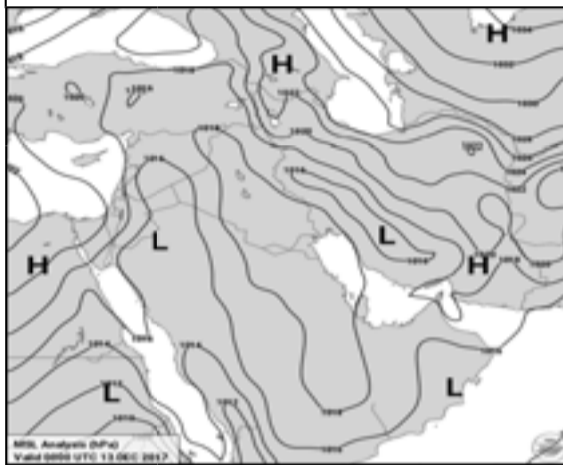
BY DAY: Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southerly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
-----------------	---------------------

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	21 °C	12 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20 °C	05 °C
ABDALY	22 °C	06 °C
BUBYAN	22 °C	05 °C
JAHRRA	21 °C	09 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	21 °C	10 °C
SALMIYAH	20 °C	13 °C
AHMADI	21 °C	11 °C
NUWAISIB	22 °C	08 °C
WAFRA	21 °C	08 °C
SALMY	18 °C	05 °C

SFC. CHART 13/12/2017 0000 UTC



4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	12/14	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	22 °C	07 °C	S-SE	12 - 35 km/h
Friday	12/15	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	21 °C	09 °C	SE-NW	10 - 32 km/h
Saturday	12/16	Warm and some high clouds will appear	21 °C	07 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Sunday	12/17	Warm	22 °C	08 °C	VRB-NE	06 - 26 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	05:09
Sunrise	06:34
Zuhr	11:42
Asr	14:32
Sunset	16:51
Isha	18:13

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	21 °C
MIN. Temp.	07 °C
MAX. RH	49 %
MIN. RH	16 %
MAX. Wind	NW 50 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

AIRLINES

American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Air Slovakia	22434940
Olympic Airways	22420002/9
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
Reservation	22433388
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Alitalia	22414427
Balkan Airlines	22416474
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Czech Airlines	22417901/2433141
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Dias Lily Roney D/o Peter Stephen holder of Indian Passport No. L3462505 & Civil ID No: 267121103885 has changed my name to Lily Eugin hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5369) 11-12-2017

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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Thursday 14/12/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 14/12/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
KAC	102	London	00:50	PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	JZR	502	Luxor	01:30
WAN	416	Beirut	01:05	JZR	142	Doha	01:45
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KAC	351	Kochi	03:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	MSR	607	Istanbul	04:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:05
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	DHX	172	Bahrain	06:50
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	JZR	902	Baku	07:50
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	KAC	413	Bangkok	08:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:30	KAC	791	Madinah	08:35
WAN	342	Sohag	06:35	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	BAW	156	London	08:55
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	WAN	133	Doha	09:00
QTR	8511	Doha	07:35	KAC	117	New York	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	QTR	8512	Doha	09:05
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
WAN	332	Alexandria	08:00	KAC	741	Dammam	09:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	101	London	09:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	RSB	7867	IQA	11:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
NIA	161	Cairo	11:35	FDK	804	Damascus	11:00
WAN	134	Doha	11:45	IRA	672	Ahwaz	11:10
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	JZR	786	Riyadh	12:00
FEG	933	Sohag	12:40	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
JZ	R561	Sohag	12:45	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
FD	B075	Dubai	12:45	MSC	404	Asyut	12:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	VIZ	202	Doha	12:30
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	QTR	1075	Doha	12:30
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	NIA	362	Alexandria	12:35
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
KAC	792	Madinah	13:20	FDB	071	Dubai	13:40

Lifestyle | Awards

Princes William and Harry attend 'Star Wars' London premiere

Princes William and Harry attended the European premiere of "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" on Tuesday, joining the all-star cast in London for the latest installment of the sci-fi saga. The British royals walked the red carpet dressed in tuxedos for the screening at London's Royal Albert Hall, where they were greeted by the rolling droid character BB-8 who dutifully bowed to the princes. The two reportedly have cameo roles as stormtroopers in the film, after visiting the set in April 2016 when they were rumoured to have shot the scene.

William and Harry—who recently announced his engagement to US actress Meghan Markle—also met the cast of "The Last Jedi" and were presented with stormtrooper helmets. Filmed at Pinewood Studios near London and on the west coast of Ireland, "The Last Jedi" is the eighth film in the space series and runs to a lengthy 153 minutes. Mark Hamill, who plays Luke Skywalker in the films, said the longevity of "Star Wars" had seen his character make way for new stars. "It's like

a bunch of kids rifling through my old toy box, playing with my toys... I love it!" he told AFP at the premiere.

Despite 40 years passing since the intergalactic saga first hit cinemas, the cast members of Rian Johnson's "Last Jedi" are convinced it still has contemporary relevance. "I think it really deals with issues the world is facing at the moment, about politics which splits people apart and the spark of hope which is going to bring people back together again," Andy Serkis, who stars as Supreme Leader Snoke, told AFP.

Lupita Nyong'o, who plays the motion-captured character Maz Kanata, said the film was also important as a form of escapism. "I think the importance of fantasy is that it allows us to first of all, escape from the world we're in for a second and it brings us all together and unifies us in a way, on a subject, in a way that other things don't," she said. "And for a moment we get to forget our own worries and worry about the galaxy far, far away." —AFP



Britain's Prince William (left), Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry are greeted by droid BB-8 as they arrive for the European Premiere of Star Wars: The Last Jedi at the Royal Albert Hall in London on December 12, 2017. — AFP

The 14th Dubai International Film Festival



Attendees pose for a group photo during the closing ceremony of the Dubai International Film Festival, in Dubai yesterday. — AFP photos



Palestinian Director Annemarie Jacir (center) reacts after receiving an award.



Danish film director Mahdi Fleifel (center) receives an award from Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (left) and from the director of the Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF), Masoud Amralla Al Ali (right).



Nujoom al-Ghanem poses for a picture with an award.



Lebanese writer and director Lucien Bourjeily poses for a picture with an award.



Filmmaker Mahdi Fleifel poses for a picture with an award.



Film director Mohammad Bakri (center) receives an award from Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (left) and from the director of the Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF), Masoud Amralla Al Ali (right).



Lebanese film director Cyril Aris receives an award from Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.



Palestinian film director Annemarie Jacir (second left).



Lebanese cinematographer Talal Khoury (second left) reacts with his award.



Emirati film director Nujoom al-Ghanem (center) receives an award from Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

Lifestyle | Awards



Actress Farah Shaer poses for a picture with an award.



Emirati director Abdallah Juncidi (right) and producer Faisal Ali arrives on the red carpet of the Madinat Theatre for the closing ceremony.



Indian actor Irrfan Khan (second left) is presented with an Honorary Award by Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (right).



Egyptian writer Wahid Hamed (left) is presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award.



Abdul Hamid Juma (center left), chairman of the Dubai International Film Festival, arrives on the red carpet with Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (center) to attend the screening of the US film Hostiles at the opening of the 14th edition of DIFF.



US actor Cate Blanchett (left) is presented with an honorary award.



English actor Sir Patrick Stewart is presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award.



Lebanese writer and director Lucien Bourjeily.



Lebanese actress Caroline Hatem, actor Makdi Machmouchi (center) and director Marwan Khneisser (right) pose on the red carpet.



Moroccan Iraqi actress Mariam Hussein.



US actress and singer Vanessa Williams.



Actor Ahmed Badraoui (left), Lebanese actress Razane Maghrabi (center), and Egyptian actor Ahmed Fahmi (right) arrive on the red carpet.



Ukrainian actress and model Olga Kurylenko.



Turkish actress Tuba Buyukustun (left) and Indian actress Sonam Kapoor (right).



Lebanese TV presenter Raya Abirached arrives on the red carpet.



Tunisian actress HEND Sabri.



Egyptian actress Yousra.



Saudi actress Ahd Kamel arrives for the closing ceremony.



Lebanese singer Walid Toufic.



US actor David Harbour.

‘Three Billboards’ leads 2018 Screen Actors Guild nominations



Presenter Niecy Nash (left) and actress Olivia Munn (right) on stage during the 24th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards Nominations Announcement at the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood, California yesterday. —AFP

Small-town dramedy “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” led the 2018 Screen Actors Guild (SAG) nominations yesterday with four nods, including the top prize for best movie ensemble. Interracial romance “The Big Sick,” racial thriller “Get Out,” mother-daughter comedy “Lady Bird” and period race drama “Mudbound” were also nominated for best ensemble, the top prize at the SAG awards. The winners will be announced at ceremony in Los Angeles on Jan 21.

Steven Spielberg’s critically-acclaimed movie “The Post,” about press freedom, was shut out of the SAG awards along with its lead actors Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks. Instead, SAG members recognized performers in small, independent films. Best actor nominees included Timothee Chalamet for gay romance “Call Me By Your Name,” James Franco for “The Disaster Artist,” Daniel Kaluuya for “Get Out,” Gary Oldman for British war drama “Darkest Hour” and Denzel Washington for “Roman. J. Israel, Esq.”

The actress lineup comprised Judi Dench for “Victoria and Abdul,” Sally Hawkins for fantasy romance “The Shape of Water,” Frances McDormand for “Three Billboards,” Margot Robbie for ice-skating movie “I, Tonya,” and Saoirse Ronan for “Lady Bird.” The SAG awards are seen as one of the best indicators of likely Oscar success because actors form the largest voting body in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Oscar nominations will be announced on Jan 23. — Reuters



(From left) SAG Awards Committee Member, Woody Schultz, SAG Awards Executive Producer, Kathy Connell, SAG Awards Committee Member, Elizabeth McLaughlin, SAG-AFTRA President, Gabrielle Carteris, actors Niecy Nash, Olivia Munn, SAG Awards Committee Vice Chair, Daryl Anderson, SAG Awards Committee Member, Jason George and SAG Awards Committee Chair & SAG-AFTRA Foundation President, JoBeth Williams at the 24th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards Nominations Announcement at Silver Screen Theater yesterday in West Hollywood, California. —AFP



A man on the hunt for capsule toys dispenses an item from a vending machine at a store in Tokyo's Akihabara district. — AFP photos



Figurines of women wearing typical office clothes, whose arms or legs are designed to hang over the edge of a glass, displayed at Tokyo-based manufacturer Kitan Club.

Weird but cute: Japan's capsule toys play big in Internet age

Cheap and Instagram-worthy



A woman looks at her newly-dispensed item in her hunt for capsule toys.



Tokyo-based manufacturer Kitan Club spokesman Seita Shiki displaying figurines of women wearing a typical office worker's clothes, whose arms or legs are designed to hang over the edge of a glass.



Hanging figurines in various poses at Tokyo-based manufacturer Kitan Club.

A tiny replica of an ancient Egyptian sarcophagus and a plastic cat squatting on sushi: just two of the weird-and-wonderful capsule toys that have become a multi-million-dollar craze in cute-obsessed Japan. The industry is now worth an estimated 30 billion yen (\$265 million), with the fastidious

attention to detail in the toys appealing to the Japanese sense of precision along with a well-documented love of all things "kawaii" or cute. One store, in Tokyo's famous Akihabara electronics district, is crammed with around 500 capsule toy vending machines stretching out as far as the eye can see.

"When I see something I want, I keep on turning the crank until I get it," said Shota Makita, a 23-year-old careworker on the hunt for a fun toy. "There's a sense of excitement about not knowing what I'll get," said Makita, one of a growing number of adult consumers of capsule toys, known as "gachagacha" or "gachapon" in Japanese after the cranking sound. Store manager Yo Kono says the customer base has changed in the 16 years the shop has been open. "At the beginning, visitors were mainly male anime fans... but recently the number of customers is growing with more female visitors and foreign tourists," Kono said.

'Cheap and Instagram-worthy'

Capsule toys have been around for more than 40 years but the craze really took off in 2012 when Tokyo-based manufacturer Kitan Club launched its "Koppu no Fuchico" ("Fuchico at the edge of a glass") product. This figurine of a woman wearing a typical office worker's clothes, whose arms or legs were designed to hang over the edge of a glass, became an instant hit with adults. "We never thought of targeting children. Their

numbers are dwindling and adults have more money," said spokesman Seita Shiki. Shiki chalks up the Fuchico capsule's success to the fact it is "cheap and Instagram-worthy." Fans have been sharing photos of Fuchico on social media, which helped boost its popularity without the company even needing to advertise, he boasted. "Fuchico was launched just as social media started to be used widely. It fitted with the times." Kitan Club, which makes various kinds of capsule toys, saw its sales grow from

800 million yen to 1.2 billion yen after the launch of the Fuchico series. The capsule toy became so popular that the company was asked to create a pop-up shop at the cult Paris concept store Colette and to hold an exhibition in Taiwan.

'Very Japanese'

Now many manufacturers are making capsule toys to appeal to adult consumers, helping to expand the market to around 100 new items

each month. Manufacturer Bandai, which occupies around 70 percent of the capsule toy market, said the products sell well because they are expertly made and they come in huge varieties. When Bandai began making capsule toys exactly 40 years ago in 1977, the majority of them were cheap, sold mostly at 20 yen, and were of poor quality, general manager Toshikazu Saita said.

"A wide variety of quality products are available at only 200 or 300 yen. I think that's a reason why they're so popular now," said Saita. He said the quality of the products was down to specialists who "hand-carve prototypes by paying attention to angles and colors." "The attention to detail is very Japanese," he said. But to keep costs down, the actual toys are manufactured in China using the Japanese design as a prototype.

Shiki of Kitan Club agreed that attention to detail was what set Japanese capsule toys apart. "For example, Fuchico's knees and elbows are slightly sprayed with red paint to make them look real," he explained. "This adds one extra step but we feel we have to do this" even if it adds to the cost, he added. It certainly appeals to Nana Sakuma, 26, who snapped up four capsule toys in the shape of Japanese food stalls from machines in the Akihabara store. She said: "I'm really happy to find toys that are so real. When I see real things turned into miniatures, I find them irresistibly cute. I cannot help but buy them." — AFP



Figurines of women wearing typical office clothes, whose arms are designed to hang over the edge of a glass, displayed at Tokyo-based manufacturer Kitan Club.



Capsule toys displayed at Tokyo-based manufacturer Kitan Club.



A series of capsule toys at a store in Tokyo's Akihabara district.



Various series of capsule toys at a store in Tokyo's Akihabara district.

DS Action Diver Chronograph 'Deeply extreme, uniquely automatic'

The marine world carries its own special challenges for timepieces. Only a handful are ever truly fit enough to deserve the proud label "diving watch". Like its predecessors, the latest version of the popular DS Action Diver Chronograph has fully met all ISO 6425 requirements with flying colours and officially boasts a water resistance up to 300 meters. Its ultra-sporty design asserts its place among the greats in nautical timekeeping, a true descendant of the famous CERTINA DS-3, chosen in 1970 by the Australian Navy.

The dynamic character of the new DS Action Diver Chronograph makes no compromises: it is pure extreme sports - above and below the waterline. The ISO 6425 standard imposes stringent requirements on every timepiece candidate, such as the possibility

to pre-set a given span of time, great readability in darkness, excellent accuracy and outstanding shock resistance. This new CERTINA chronograph fulfilled these, and many additional strict requirements.

The new DS Action Diver Chronograph features a case with an imposing 45.7mm diameter to maximize underwater clarity. Its impressive unidirectional rotatable bezel, fastened by six screwed-on protective brackets, is made of blue anodized aluminium and used to set the diving time. Its large triangular teeth, to ensure optimal handling even with gloves underwater, is one of the design themes fondly remembered from its forefather, the famous DS-3 of the 1970s. At the time, CERTINA was involved in a number of major scientific underwater expeditions, adding to its great reputation for precision and durability.



The CERTINA DS Action Diver Chronograph beautifully blends functionality and style. Inside, the COL211 automatic movement keeps perfect time, and

reliability is assured thanks to screw-in pushbuttons and crown, and a screw-down case back, all of which have been individually finished. The pushbuttons show black PVD coated details and the initials "DS" on the tip of the crown act as a reminder of the timepiece's dependability, thanks to the well-known DS Concept (Double Security). The case back features the historical turtle-shell, trusted symbol of the brand. Red design elements and a generous amount of Super-LumiNova ensure excellent underwater readability against the royal blue dial surface. This chronograph is available with a polished and brushed stainless-steel bracelet with adjustable diving extension. An alternative model is also available, with rubber or stainless-steel bracelet, black bezel and black dial with red or green coloured accents.

Lifestyle | Features

Shoemaker Robert Clergerie finally puts his feet up

Robert Clergerie, the maker of the luxury French shoes worn by Rihanna, Bella Hadid and Madonna, was never one to sit around kicking his heels. When the brand that bears his name almost went bust four years after he had sold up and retired, he dumped his golf clubs and repurchased the company, pumping in two million euros (\$2.3 million) of his own money to put it back on its feet. "I was 70, but I was bored stiff," Clergerie recalled. He had toured the Greek islands, taken up gardening and golf, but he was "bored to death, particularly by the golf." "It killed me to see the company go like that. I knew almost all the workers." "The day I returned to the factory the women were in tears," he said, the emotion welling up in his voice.

"I found a second youth," he told AFP, and so did his brand, its trademark flat and wedged shoes and boots again becoming a must-have for fashionistas. While other brands have been forced to go abroad for cheaper labor, Clergerie has bucked the trend.

Its factory is the last in Romans-sur-Isere, once the capital of French shoemaking. Yet its founder, now 83, came very late to the business. The son of a grocer, "my father brought me up

the hard way, working in his shop until I was 24.

Late bloomer

"I went to America but was called up to fight in Algeria (during its war of independence). Then I did lots of jobs, none of which made me happy," Clergerie admitted. It was only at 37

“

I was 70, but I was bored stiff

”

that he discovered his passion after replying to a small ad in a newspaper: "Wanted-someone strong enough to fill the shoes of manager of a factory in the Rhone valley, close to the mountains and the sea." "It was the revelation of my life," Clergerie recalls in a new book, "Robert

Clegerie, the Man Who Shod Women". In 1978 he struck out on his own, taking over a factory in Romans and launching the first collection in his own name three years later.

His first three styles-Paris, Paco and Palma-were an instant hit, wowing the women's market with flat slightly boyish shoes which caught the spirit of the times. "The 1980s were a golden age of disco, partying and real excitement," he said, with Bianca Jagger, Hollywood legend Lauren Bacall and Madonna beating a path to his Paris shop, which sold 11,000 pairs a year.

'I cried and vomited'

But the company grew too quickly, and needed more cash to keep up with demand. In 1996 Clergerie sold his controlling stake to investors, though he still held 10 percent of the shares and stayed on until 2001 as artistic director. "Signing it over killed me," he said. "I went home and cried and vomited." In a few short years his two main rivals in Romans went to the wall and by 2005 his own brand was also on its uppers. That was when Clergerie returned to save the day. The brand prospered and seven years later he finally retired, passing the company and its 17 shops around the world



French shoe maker Robert Clergerie poses during a photo session in Paris. — AFP

on to French and Hong Kong investors, who had promised to keep making the shoes in Romans. "It is now five years since I really retired," said Clergerie, and "I am starting to detach myself,

though not totally," he added with a note of warning. Because the Clergerie is "like a woman I loved madly-and now there is someone else in her bed." — AFP

HOTLINE FOR ATTACKS ON FUR WEARERS SPARKS ANIMAL RIGHTS FURY

The French fur industry and animal rights activists have clashed over a new hotline for people who are insulted or attacked in the street for wearing fur. The French Fur Federation went on the attack this week against what it called the "misinformation of animal activists." "Every week fur lovers are attacked in the street verbally or physically by radical militants," it said in a statement to AFP. It announced plans for a new information centre in Paris and a hotline, SOS Animal Activist Attacks, offering "support and legal help" for anyone who had been harassed. The federation also lambasted the "hypocrisy" of some fashion houses who have "suddenly started denigrating fur to improve their image but who still use other animal products."

It warned that labels that this strategy was short-sighted. "Tomorrow silk, wool and leather will be the target for animal activist attacks," the federation claimed. But the main anti-fur group, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), hit back late Tuesday saying the "real victims" of violence were the animals. "In this cruel industry minks, foxes, chinchillas, raccoon,

cats and lots of other creatures live confined in cages and then are gassed, electrocuted or beaten to death," it said in a statement. It said that there were plenty of alternatives to fur and leather.

Many major fashion labels no longer use animal pelts, including Gucci, the latest to say that it was going fur-free. British designer Stella McCartney, a vegetarian, has never used fur and has banned leather from her collections, developing instead "vegetarian leather" which she claims is as good as the real thing. But the French Fur Federation warned of the environmental dangers of animal rights groups promoting "synthetic materials to make fake fur from non-biodegradable substances often derived from petrol, which will benefit the petrochemical industry."

It said that 90 percent of its members used suppliers "certified by the WellFur label for minks and foxes farmed in Europe" aims by 2020 to have all certified. Rather than being on the decline, the federation said the French fur industry was growing with a turnover of 300 million euros, and employing nearly 2,500 people. — AFP



Bon Jovi, Nina Simone enter Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Arena-packing anthem rockers Bon Jovi, soul legend Nina Simone and gritty English pub band Dire Straits yesterday won spots in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. New Wave pop songwriters The Cars, R&B-infused progressive rockers The Moody Blues and Sister Rosetta Tharpe, the gospel inspiration for early rockers, rounded up spots in the 2018 class that will enter the shrine to rock culture. The Hall of Fame, which surveyed some 1,000 historians and music industry players to select the new inductees, will welcome the six artists in a gala concert on April 14 in its home base of Cleveland.

Bon Jovi, the hard rockers from New Jersey led by namesake Jon Bon Jovi, came out on top in a survey that drew 6.8 million fans, whose preferences were taken into account to give an extra vote to five acts. With a string of quickly memorable hits such as "Livin' on a Prayer," "You Give Love a Bad Name" and "Wanted Dead or Alive," Bon Jovi became kings in the 1980s, packing arenas on their exhaustive tours full of pyrotechnics. Unlike the hair metal bands that were their contemporaries, Bon Jovi preserved a family-friendly image, helping the band win a following in diverse corners of the world.

Bon Jovi was notably the first Western rock group approved to tour the then Soviet Union when the communist system opened up under Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost reforms. Fans will watch closely to see if the Hall of Fame concert will see the band reunite with its longtime guitarist Richie Sambora, who quit in 2013 citing a desire for more personal time.

Simone, who won induction on her first nomination, was widely considered one of the most influential singers of the 20th century who brought the sensibilities of classical music to gospel and jazz. Raised in segregated North

Carolina, Simone became a passionate advocate for racial equality, with her best-known song perhaps the civil rights anthem "To Be Young, Gifted and Black." Simone died in self-exile in France in 2003. She has enjoyed renewed attention following a 2015 Netflix documentary, "What Happened, Miss Simone?" Simone's induction comes as the Hall of Fame increasingly broadens its definition. It honored rappers the last two years, describing rock 'n' roll as more attitude than musical genre. Tharpe, who died in 1973, was chosen for her early influence on rock. With her confident stage presence and distortion on her guitar, Tharpe took gospel music to new audiences in the 1930s and 1940s, helping set the stage for rock 'n' roll after World War II. She was especially influential to Little Richard, the rock pioneer who was in the Hall of Fame's first class in 1986, with Tharpe discovering the future star's voice when he was selling soft drinks at her concert.

Different takes on MTV era

The induction will raise fans' hopes for a reunion of Dire Straits, who broke up in 1995. Led by Mark Knopfler, the group emerged from Britain's so-called pub rock scene of the 1970s, which emphasized blues roots and no-frills musicianship in an era of angry punks and flamboyant glam bands. Dire Straits paradoxically won a following on newborn MTV with tracks such as "Money for Nothing," a muscular song, originally with a homophobic slur, from the point of view of working-class men who resent wealthy rockers seen on the music channel. In its citation, the Hall of Fame credited the London band with its revival of Americana, saying, "Dire Straits dragged rock kicking and screaming back to its gritty, country roots using beefy guitar licks and bluesy vocals." — AFP

Gwyneth Paltrow brings The Go-Gos to Broadway

The Go-Gos, the pioneering all-woman rock band, are heading to Broadway, with an assist by Gwyneth Paltrow. The Hollywood star was announced Tuesday as a producer for "Head Over Heels," an upcoming musical that will trace the story of the rockers known for infectious pop-rock songs such as "Vacation." "If you told us 30 years ago that our songs were going to be in a musical, we'd have said, 'Of course they'll be on Broadway!' None of us would have really believed it, though," The Go-Gos said in a statement.

The Curran Theatre in San Francisco announced Tuesday that "Head Over Heels" would premiere there on April 24 before heading to New York, with the Broadway details not yet revealed. A statement described the musical on The Go-Gos as "a tantalizing odyssey wrought with mistaken identities, jealous lovers, romance and scandal." It marks the first pro-



This file photo shows academy award-winning actress Gwyneth Paltrow in Washington, DC.



This file photo taken on August 11, 2011 shows The Go-Gos posing beside their star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame in Hollywood. Group members (from left to right) Kathy Valentine, Charlotte Caffey, Belinda Carlisle, Gina Schock and Jane Wiedlin received the 2,444th star at The Masque nightclub where they played their first show in 1978. — AFP

duction on Broadway for the "Shakespeare in Love" actress. The musical will be directed by Michael Mayer, the force behind rock musicals such as Green Day's "American Idiot" and "Spring Awakening."

The New York Post, quoting unnamed sources, reported earlier this year that Paltrow refused an offer to invest in "Head Over Heels" from Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein, who

soon afterward was disgraced by wide accusations of sexual abuse. The Go-Gos are one of the most successful all-women bands in a rock scene dominated by men. They emerged in Los Angeles in the 1970s, around the time Paltrow was growing up in the city. Go-Gos frontwoman Belinda Carlisle went on to a successful solo career with hits such as "Mad About You" and "Heaven Is a Place on Earth." — AFP

Johnny Hallyday most Googled topic in France

Rocker Johnny Hallyday was the person most searched for on Google in France in 2017, the US internet giant said yesterday. The singer, known as the French Elvis, was buried on the Caribbean island of Saint Barts on Monday two days after hundreds of thousands of fans lined the streets of Paris for his funeral. And the most searched for song lyrics of the year was Hallyday's 1986 hit "Je te promets" (I Promise You). The second most researched topic overall on Google was Maelys de Araujo, the eight-year-old girl who disappeared during a wedding reception in the foothills of the French Alps in August.

She has still not been found. The UEFA Euro 2016 football championship was the most Googled subject the previous year, followed by

the smartphone game Pokemon Go. "How to make slime" came out top of the list of "how to" questions internet users put to the search engine in 2017 followed by how to register your protest at all the candidates in May's French presidential election with an empty ballot called a "vote blanc". Brazilian footballer Neymar came top of the sports personality league after his record-breaking 222-million-euro (\$260-million) transfer from Barcelona to Paris Saint-Germain in August.

"Fifty Shades of Grey" was the most searched film on Google, while "Game of Thrones" came top of the television table. The most searched for recipe by French gourmands was for tartiflette, an unctuous heart-warming and calorie-rich alpine dish from



This file photo taken on January 10, 2016 shows French singer Johnny Hallyday (center) performing with French army choir (back) during a remembrance rally at Place de la Republique (Republic square) in Paris. — AFP

Savoy which combines potatoes, reblochon cheese, bacon, creme fraiche, onions and white wine. Two other traditional favorites, beef bourguignon and creamy gratin dauphinois, came second and third. — AFP



Mexican actress Kate del Castillo poses for pictures at the unveiling of her new holiday shopping campaign for PETA, that proclaims, "I'd Rather Go Naked Than Wear Fur," outside Macy's flagship store in Herald Square in New York. — AFP

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2017



This picture shows the house of Rahlfs family, decorated with hundreds of lights and Christmas figures in Barnitz, northern Germany. — AFP

Bello-issima! Soprano's success gets Nigerians into opera

EGYPTIAN SINGER JAILED OVER VIDEO INCITING DEBAUCHERY

An Egyptian court jailed a little-known singer for two years on Tuesday for inciting debauchery, judicial sources said, after she appeared in a music video in her underwear and suggestively eating a banana. Shyma's song, titled "I have issues", sparked controversy on social media in the conservative country. The singer, who was fined 10,000 Egyptian pounds (\$560), can appeal the verdict to a higher court. The director of the video was also fined and sentenced to two years in prison, but in absentia. Both defendants were accused of inciting debauchery and producing a video harming public morality.

Shyma, whose real name is Shaimaa Ahmed, was arrested on Nov. 18 before being referred to the prosecution for investigation. She denied the accusations, saying the director included the controversial scenes without her consent. Tens of young Egyptians were arrested in September for attending a concert in Cairo where a rainbow flag was raised. They were also accused of debauchery, harming public morality and other accusations. — Reuters

A live performance of an aria from an Italian opera, sung by a professional soprano, isn't a common sound in Nigeria's bustling commercial and entertainment capital, Lagos. But it's not the most surprising thing for the performer, Omo Bello. News of her appearance at the MUSON School of Music has attracted a crowd, even when it's only for a short rehearsal. "I didn't realize to what extent I was recognized in Nigeria," the 33-year-old admitted after singing "O mio babbino caro", from Giacomo Puccini's 1918 opera "Gianni Schicchi". "I've been away for over a decade and I guess things have changed and I didn't realize how much. When I was told that lots of people were coming, I was a little surprised. "It's a pleasant surprise though, but still a surprise," she told AFP.

Wider audiences

Bello's story is becoming well-known in her native Nigeria and her adopted country, France. She's the Lagos science student whose talent was spotted to win her a scholarship to study at the Paris Conservatoire, whose alumni include Georges Bizet, Claude Debussy and Jean Michel Jarre. Tours have followed, with an album and awards, including one from the foundation of the late legendary tenor Luciano Pavarotti, and a repertoire that now ranges from Bellini to Verdi. Back in Nigeria for Christmas before a return to Europe and concerts in Britain, Bello, like many long-term expatriates, reflects on changes back home.

In a country associated more with Afrobeats and Highlife than Albinoni or Haydn, she said the internet has created new audiences for different musical styles from abroad. "I know that lots of people discovered me on YouTube in Nigeria and social media, so it's a good thing, as people see and hear this music (opera) and are surprised that it's very beautiful," she said. "The fact that it's open to everyone creates a wider audience, so I'm very happy to discover that the public is growing for this music in Nigeria."

'Music is music'

Nigerian success internationally, whether in sports, science or the arts, has often involved young talent being nurtured overseas because of more limited opportunities back home. South Africa, in contrast, has produced a number of opera singers and has its own professional opera companies. But Marion Akpata, the director of the School of Music run by the Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON), said there is potential for more performers like Bello because of the country's rich tradition of music, particularly in churches.

"Music is an integral part of the Nigerian culture," said Akpata, a New Yorker who studied at the Crane School of Music and first moved to Nigeria in the 1960s. "Everything is done with music. A baby is born, music. People die, music. And of course, all the activities in between birth and death (are) accompanied by music..."



Nigerian soprano Omo Bello rehearses in Lagos. — AFP

“Music is an integral part of the Nigerian culture”

“Music is music. When Bach was composing, somebody was doing music here in Nigeria. And maybe he didn't write it down but people were performing.” The MUSON School of Music, founded in 1989, is Nigeria's leading-if not only-institution for teaching Western classical music. Sixty students are

currently on a two-year diploma course that covers performance and theory. Opera is part of the syllabus. Akpata sees no reason why opera cannot thrive in Nigeria because of its universal themes, regardless of differences in language. "Just think of the world's most popular opera, (Bizet's) 'Carmen'. The story of Carmen can be transposed into every country and every kind of culture," she said. "It's just a matter of doing it."

The school's opera teacher, Joseph Oparamanuik, said students have now performed three operas, including Mozart's "The Magic Flute", in initiatives that have spurred greater interest from audiences. "People are asking for more and more."

There are many people who are really wanting this high level of performance," said Oparamanuik, an alumnus of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Bello said she wants to share "how wonderful music is... like flowers that I picked in the garden", bringing to the stage her unique background and experiences as a young African woman.

But as an increasingly established performer, she also recognizes the need to help develop the genre and would like to see Nigeria with its own conservatoire and opera house.

Using recent graduates of Europe's top music academies to help develop performers in places like Nigeria could help identify and nurture the next generation of talent, she suggested. "African music has gone to the West and why should the opposite be impossible?" she said. — AFP

Bizarre news

Emu escapes from owners



An emu has been spotted racing down a snow-covered road in Essex. A group of onlookers were flabbergasted when they saw the large feathered bird, named Farage, being chased down the streets and through a church yard in Tollesbury in Essex by three men, on behalf of Farage's owner. According to the Metro Online, passersby were baffled by what they saw because of the speed the emu was running at in such hazardous conditions, and because the bird is endemic to Australia and not the UK. Speaking about the incident, Matthew Devonport said: "One of the men managed to get it in a head lock by its neck and took it back home. "It left a trail of feathers all around the churchyard. "The lady owner was grateful and shook their hands. I was flabbergasted! Nothing like this ever happens in Tollesbury."

Star Wars fans spend more than two days watching franchise



The study also found that 'Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back' was the most watched film in the series.

'Star Wars' fans spend almost 70 hours watching the popular franchise. New research conducted by Vue Cinemas have found the average lover of the science fiction production has spent 3,828 minutes tuning into the film series, which equates to over five days. The study has also found people consider Han Solo - played by Harrison Ford - as the favorite character in productions. The cinema chain also found that 'Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back' was the most watched film in the series.

Monkey captured straddling pig



A group of holidaymakers were gobsmacked when they saw a monkey straddling a pig's back. Paulina Jawor captured the moment the primate was being ferried around by the farm animal in Jaipur in India, on camera, which swiftly attracted a lot more public attention. And the moment continued to amaze onlookers because after 10 minutes the monkey leapt off of the black spotted pig and onto a bin, where it grabbed some food and proceeded to feed its four-legged pal, the Mirror Online has reported. Speaking about the sighting, the 31-year-old witness said: "We were having a great day out sighting in Jaipur when we walked up to a beauty spot overlooking the town. "There were loads of monkeys and wild pigs there, it was incredible. The monkeys were just messing around and the pigs were snuffling about. "Then, all of a

sudden, one of the monkeys jumped on a pig and started riding him. The pig didn't seem bothered really, and the monkey was making loads of happy noises. "After about ten minutes they went up to a bin and the monkey hopped off. "I couldn't believe what he did next - he got some food out of the bin and started sharing it with the pig. "They look like best friends." — Bang Showbiz

Office teabags contain more germs than a toilet seat

A study has found office teabags contain more germs than a toilet seat. According to new research, which has been conducted by Initial Washroom Hygiene, boxes or tins containing the item have bacterial readings of 3,785, which is 17 times more than the amount of harmful organisms living on the sanitation facility that have a reading of just over 200. And the results have sparked fear among office workers who are worried they are exposing themselves to more harmful viruses, the Metro newspaper has reported.