



20 Alghanim Auto reveals future expansion plans



11 Blinded in one eye, Syrian baby new symbol of siege



22 Uber suffers new blow as EU court rules it's a taxi service



15 Gulf 23 continues legacy of prestigious football tourney



Govt probes alleged graft in French helicopter deal

MPs hail Kuwait's stance on Jerusalem, discuss reconciliation

By B Izzak and Agencies

'Know your place': Erdogan rebukes minister over tweet

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hit back yesterday at the United Arab Emirates' foreign minister over a social media post that accused "Erdogan's ancestors" of kidnapping people of Madinah in the early 20th century. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan retweeted a post on Twitter this week, in which a user claimed Fahreddin Pasha - Madinah governor from 1916 to 1919 - was a thief.



Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Continued on Page 11

KUWAIT: The government has ordered an investigation into a \$1.1 billion deal to buy 30 military helicopters from France, a minister said yesterday, after reports of alleged kickbacks. Kuwait agreed to buy the Airbus Caracal helicopters for one billion euros (\$1.1 billion) in Aug 2016 as part of a package of deals between the two countries worth €2.5 billion.

"It was decided to refer the Caracal helicopters deal to the Public Anti-Corruption Authority to investigate it and take all relevant measures," said Anas Al-Saleh, the government spokesman and state minister for Cabinet affairs. The probe was ordered by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Sabah, the minister said, quoted by the official KUNA news agency. "With regards to what has been raised in a local daily today... about the Caracal deal, it was also decided to refer the same issue to the Audit Bureau to scrutinize all data, documents and procedures of the deal," he added.

The Audit Bureau was told to submit its findings to the Cabinet as soon as possible. The government move came after opposition lawmaker Mubarak Al-Hajraf raised the issue in parliament yesterday and demanded

Continued on Page 11



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem bangs the gavel during a session yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

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Amir receives Sheikha Dr Suad Al-Sabah



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives two books from Kuwaiti author Sheikha Dr Suad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



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



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Sheikha Dr Suad Mohammad Al-Sabah. Sheikha Dr Suad presented to His Highness the Amir a couple of books that she authored.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the

Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad.

In other news, His Highness the Amir congratulated the Kuwait Association on winning second place in the Saudi Arabia's Award for Environmental Management and earning the UN recognition as Kuwait's foremost public benefit society. His Highness the Amir wished the association further regional and international success. —KUNA

Kuwait donated \$144 million for Syrian children: UNICEF

AMMAN: Kuwait has been one of UNICEF's largest donors to help children affected by the Syria crisis as its contributions to the fund since 2013 has reached \$144 million, the UN children's organization has said. "Generous contributions from the State of Kuwait have helped UNICEF expand its assistance to children affected by the crisis in Syria," Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF's Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, said in a press statement Tuesday. Thanks to this funding, UNICEF will continue providing children inside Syria and refugee host countries with essential support for water, sanitation, hygiene, education, health and nutrition, he added. The current conflict in Syria that entered its seventh year continues to hit children the hardest inside Syria and in neighboring countries, where millions are living as refugees.

With Kuwait's backing, UNICEF and partners have reached 15.5 million people with essential humanitarian assistance this year in Syria, he said. The UNICEF official noted that nearly two million children were enrolled in formal education and nearly one million nursing and pregnant mothers were counselled on appropriate nutrition for their young children and babies. He indicated that between 2014 and 2017, UNICEF was able to rehabilitate water supply systems, provide water treatment disinfectants and water purification tablets. UNICEF praises Kuwait and its people for leveraging global support for children impacted by the crisis in Syria, he pointed out. UNICEF continues to depend on Kuwait and its people as a major donor for humanitarian and development aid for the world's most vulnerable children, he concluded. —KUNA

Event honors moderate, patriotic Kuwaiti icons



KUWAIT: A group photo showing organizers of a conference dedicated to the principles of patriotism and moderation, and several local icons who were honored during the event. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Organizers of a conference dedicated to the principles of patriotism and moderation, which honored several local icons on Tuesday, said the event aims to shed light on influential role models throughout Kuwait's history. It also encourages noble deeds and personal initiatives which benefit the community, particularly among the youth, chief organizer Yousef Al-Yaseen said in remarks at the event held in the privately-owned cultural body, Al-Babtain Library for Arabic Poetry theatre.

In its 15th edition, the event comes to supplement the wise policies of the Kuwaiti leadership, which have made security, stability, justice and equality prevalent in the Gulf country, Yaseen added. In separate remarks, head of the Women's Institute for Development and Peace Kawthar Al-Jowaan underlined that one's sense of belonging to the state should not contradict with one's faith. Educational and media institutions in the country have a huge responsibility in bolstering the



Chief organizer Yousef Al-Yaseen



Head of the Women's Institute for Development and Peace Kawthar Al-Jowaan

concepts of patriotism, peace and harmony amongst the society whilst doing their best to free the minds

of some from the shackles of intolerance and prejudice, Jowaan said. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Ambassador of Bhutan to Kuwait Tshering Gyaltsen Penjor hosted a reception recently to celebrate his country's national day. State officials, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

Local

KD 4 billion paid to public sector staff in eight months

Typist fired for photographing sleeping client

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The total salaries of state employees reached KD 4 billion for the period covering the start of the current fiscal year in April 1, 2017 to the end of November 2017, said the finance ministry, noting that the sum total was only 58.5 percent of the estimated payroll of KD 6.79 billion for the entire year. The ministry added that the Future Generations Reserve Fund (FRF) for the same period was KD 983.11 million and that the government's overdue debts were KD 1.47 billion. Finance ministry statistics also showed that the budget deficit for the same period was KD 2.4 billion with total revenues of KD 9.831 billion and expenditure of KD 9.976 billion. Oil revenues for the same period were KD 9 billion while non-oil revenues were KD 1.6 billion.

Typist fired

The Civil Service Commission (CSC)

recently expelled an Egyptian typist for disciplinary reasons after he engaged in a fight with a client. The quarrel reportedly started after the employee snapped a cell-phone picture of the client when he fell asleep while waiting for his transaction to

working for government bodies to be appointed as employment affairs directors.

95 percent

The Environment Public Authority's (EPA) administrative affairs department and the special committee formed to interview new applicants seeking EPA jobs recently finished interviewing 1,500 citizens who applied for different jobs and matched EPA's advertised conditions. The committees are currently assessing interviewees to select the best within a plan to 'Kuwaitize' 95 percent of EPA positions after advertising 100 vacancies for citizens. Separately, EPA will tour ideal fish farms in Sulabiya to make sure no environmental laws are violated. EPA also announced its intention to distribute wild plant saplings to campers.

Small businesses

Three ministries will soon be housed in the small and medium projects center's building in Al-Siddiq, which already houses eight bodies who serve entrepreneurs. Al-



EPA to 'Kuwaitize' 95 percent of its jobs

be completed. CSC formed an investigation committee that recommended expelling the typist for violating his job duties' regulations. CSC also announced the launch of a training program for law graduates registered in the system and those already



Siddiq center supports owners of small businesses and provides them with all sorts of assistance including recruitment of four laborers per four square meters of the premises area and 10 workers on launching the project. The center opened in November 2016.

No scholarships

Responding to applicants' inquiries, the official account of the private universities council announced that there will be no domestic scholarships in the second semester as the same was done last year due to budget reasons.

Commitment to output reduction at 122% in Nov

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Oil Minister and Chairman of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMJC) Bakheet Al-Rasheedi announced that OPEC and Non-OPEC countries' commitment to the output reduction level reached 122 percent for November, the highest percentage since January 2017. This statement came after the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) held its 11th meeting in Vienna yesterday. The JTC is a sub-committee of the JMJC. The JMJC and JTC are chaired by the State of Kuwait until the end of 2017, after which the Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia will assume chairmanship of both committees in January 2018.

Rasheedi expressed his great satisfaction with the historic and unprecedented level of conformity achieved by the 24 participating countries, noting that this effort supports restoring the oil market balance and it is in favor of the oil industry at large.

"I received the JTC report today and I am pleased to announce that November conformity is the highest ever since the beginning of the implementation of the agreement in January; it has reached 122 percent. This is a strong signal to the oil market that OPEC and non-OPEC participating are committed to the success of this agreement and are willing to do everything necessary to restore the oil market balance," Rasheedi said.

Rasheedi explained that in the past couple of months several encouraging indicators have emerged: the overhang in OECD commercial stocks relative to the five-year average has dropped by 200 million barrels compared to the beginning of this year, and also floating storage globally has declined significantly with the changing price structure as it has become less attractive to store oil.

"We expect oil demand in 2018 to increase by 1.51 million barrels per day compared to this year," Rasheedi added. He also commended JTC and JMJC on their role in monitoring and improving the process during this year, and praised the participating countries for their high commitment and urged them to continue with the same spirit next year. — KUNA



Bakheet Al-Rasheedi

New diwan officials named

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Decrees were issued yesterday to appoint former defense minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah as an advisor at the Amiri Diwan, Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah as Minister of the Amiri Diwan and former cabinet affairs minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-

Mubarak Al-Sabah as his deputy.

Labor market

The Public Manpower Authority took part in a meeting organized by Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the embassy of Vietnam in Kuwait under the title of 'Manpower Cooperation between Vietnam and Kuwait in Constructions'. The authority was represented by deputy director for manpower protection Abdullah Al-Motoutah and manager of international relations Jaber Al-Ali. Motoutah explained the manpower authority's role in organizing the labor market, supervising recruitment and providing legal protection for both employers and employees.

Crimes

Woman admits to killing 'troublemaking' daughter

KUWAIT: A woman confessed to killing her daughter in a case reported nearly two years ago, a local daily reported yesterday. The confession came after detectives who have been investigating the girl's death case found evidence implicating the woman of beating her daughter to death. The Kuwaiti woman had reported to police on January 2, 2016 that her daughter fell unconscious in the bathroom of their house, and paramedics pronounced the girl dead on the scene. Detectives eventually launched a homicide investigation in the case based on the forensics' report which indicated that the victim had died due to injuries caused by repeated physical abuse. Detectives also gathered neighbors' testimonies, and they confronted the mother with all the information collected. Eventually, the woman admitted that the girl was still conscious when she first fell in the bathroom, but she dragged her outside and beat her up until she lost consciousness, at which point she made the emergency call. She also admitted that she used to regularly beat her daughter up because she was a 'troublemaker' and used to 'damage' furniture at the house 'all the time.' The woman was sent to public prosecution for further legal action, Al-Rai reported.

Father assaulted

Detectives are looking for a citizen who attacked his father with a knife, physically assaulted him and damaged his car in Qairawan. The middle-aged man immediately called police, but the suspect managed to escape before officers arrived to the scene.

KD 2,090 theft

Two people were robbed of KD 2,090 and passports that they had left in their car. The two men left for prayers and returned to find that one window was smashed, while passports and cash they had left inside were missing. The money belonged to the company they worked for and were entrusted with them to pay for flight reservations. A complaint was lodged at Nugra police station.

Farwaniya arrest

Two Syrians defended a Kuwaiti citizen and helped him avoid arrest by pulling a knife and threatening police who came to apprehend him. Farwaniya police stopped the suspects at a checkpoint in the area, and after checking their IDs, they discovered that one of them was wanted to serve a four-year jail sentence. All three were ultimately arrested following fierce resistance and charged accordingly.

Municipality removes unlicensed camps

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations Department continued its coverage of campaigns to

remove violating camps whose owners failed to produce licenses or have set up their tents in undesignated areas. Thirty four camps were removed from locations south of the country. These campaigns are conducted to stop law violations and have so far resulted in removing 98 tents, the department said in a statement.

Traffic light removed

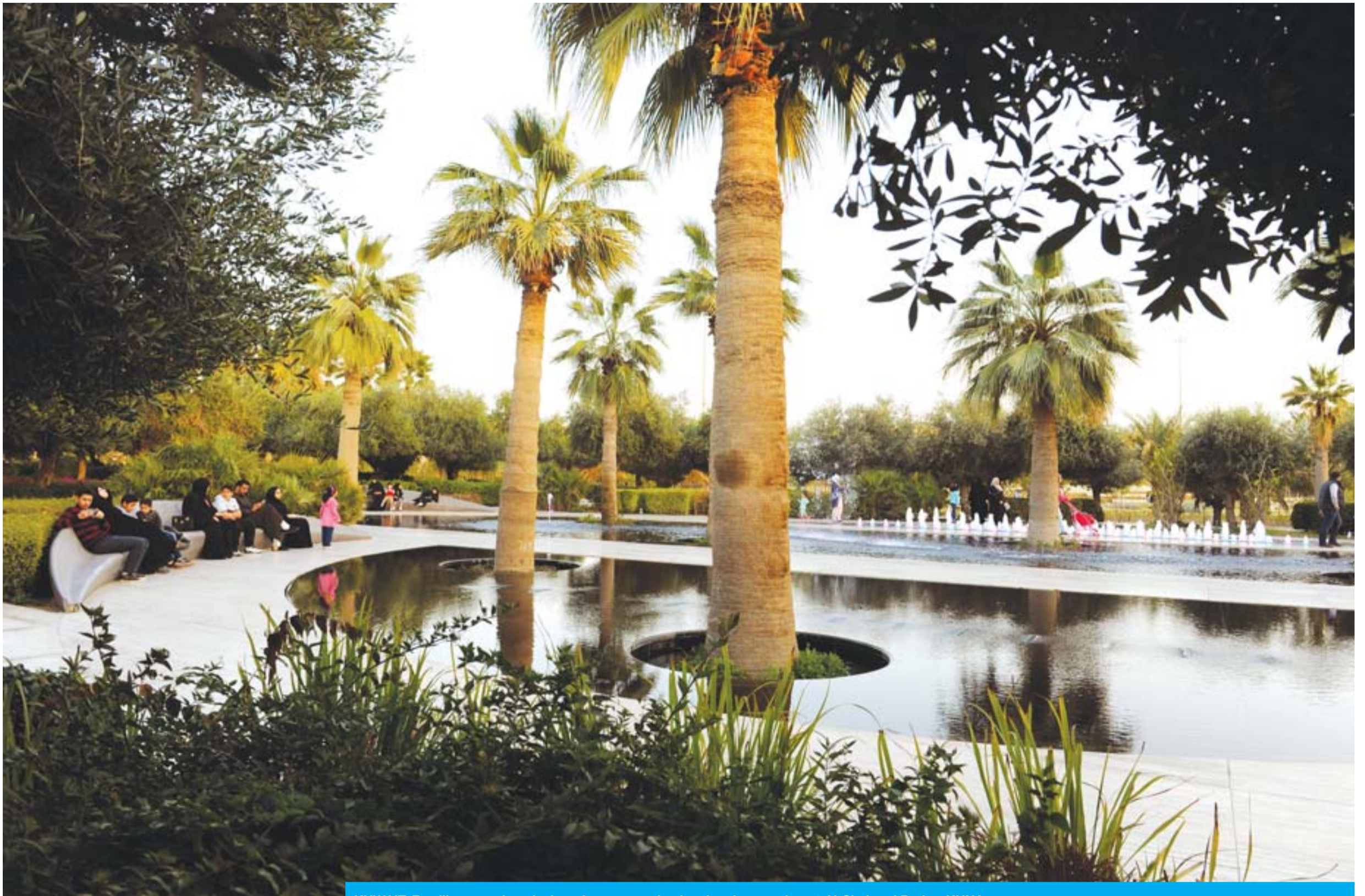
The Interior Ministry's Traffic Department said the traffic light at the intersection of Jahra Road with Jabez Roads will be removed, and a roundabout will be opened instead tomorrow.



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Fire Service Directorate conducted successful fire drills at the Amiri Hospital and Al-Raya Tower in Sharq yesterday in order to check firemen's level of preparedness to handle cases of emergency. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Families spend a relaxing afternoon and enjoy the nice weather at Al-Shaheed Park. —KUNA

Art key for cultural exchange between Kuwait, Turkey: Bunashi

Artist opens gallery in Ankara



The 'Kuwait I Panorama' painting; a depiction of Kuwait in 1760.



Paintings by Kuwaiti artist Asad Bunashi of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.



Kuwaiti artist Asad Bunashi

ANKARA: Kuwaiti artist Asad Bunashi has emphasized the prime role of art for cultural exchange among countries. "Art reflects the culture of the society," Bunashi said yesterday on the sidelines of a gallery organized by the Kuwaiti embassy in Ankara under the theme 'Mankind and wisdom of creation.'

Bunashi and plastic artist Mariam Al-Mullah are displaying their works in the seven-day event. Art is the main language for human beings, he said. Only civilized nations pay prime attention to arts. Bunashi stressed the significance of enhancing cultural exchange between Kuwait and Turkey.

The gallery features 20 oil paintings by Bunashi and Al-Mullah, among them two for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. This is Bunashi's first official gallery overseas.

Among the works on display is Bunashi's 'Kuwait I Panorama,' a depiction of Kuwait in 1760. The gallery is one of a series of activities the Kuwaiti embassy organizes in the Turkish capital, together with programs on Kuwaiti music, food and clothes, as well as political and economic seminars. —KUNA



ANKARA: Paintings by Kuwaiti artist Asad Bunashi displayed at his gallery in Ankara, Turkey. —KUNA

Kuwaiti academic leads int'l initiative to help female ministers

KUWAIT: Dr Haila Al-Mukaimi, a political sciences professor at Kuwait University (KU), will be leading an international initiative to provide best practices for female ministers from around the globe to deal with challenges they face when they assume their portfolios.

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) selected Mukaimi last June to be Chair and Executive Director of 'women in leadership and government' initiative, primarily backed by UCLA's Anderson School of Management, as well as the International Development Studies faculty.

Female ministers, particularly those taking over portfolios for the first time, have no networks of contacts, no support, no resources and no forum to exchange expertise regarding a ministerial job. Vijitha Eyango, Resident Executive Director of the initiative in UCLA, said.

Therefore, the initiative will provide knowledge on how to create a network, who is doing what in the ministry and, for example, how to present a budget for the Prime Minister or head of state at end of the year. Eyango said in an interview. The main objectives of the initiative, endorsed during a World Bank Forum held in Washington DC in April 2016, is to provide for female ministers more professional training, networking, exchange of best practices and exposure to state-of-art methods in the sectors they work in, said Eyango. The initiative, officially launched last June, is specially targeting first time ministers around the world, she added. Eyango said the idea of the initiative was developing in her mind for some years. She discussed the initiative with Dr Mukaimi when they met in Cambodia in June 2016. Both were attending a forum on women CEOs

organized by the German government and the Asian Development Bank.

Dr Mukaimi, the only person from the Gulf, was invited by the World Bank to talk about how to deal with leadership and gender. Dr Mukaimi, showing keen interest, was the right selection to lead the initiative considering her academic background and as one of the activists who worked on women suffrage in Kuwait in early 2000 until women got political rights in 2005, said Eyango. The initiative, linked with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, "is a demand-driven need, it is an opportunity for her to move this forward in partnership with us," she said.

The initiative will be driven by the Gulf, said Eyango, and Kuwait, acting as a neutral ground, is driven by its mediation role, humanitarian response and strategic engagement. "We have a nurturing environment in Kuwait, she added. Eyango said the initiative's structure consists of: virtual data base for information and research that would steer the agenda, forming a global advisory committee, and organizing a three-day meeting for 20 female min-

isters to talk about important issues like education. Dr Mukaimi will be managing the structure and she is in the process of identifying global advisory committee members.

Meanwhile, Dr Mukaimi said Kuwait has become a major contributor to human development. She said the initiative could serve women at the academic level, as well as promoting awareness about women empowerment. "The initiative is in the implementation phase. We need time to reach out to people about the initiative," she said. She set a timeframe of 2-3 years to get the support of the political leadership of Kuwait "which was highly interactive with us since we launched the initiative last June."

Dr Mukaimi said she "like to work in this global space, and this is where Kuwait lies. It is a blessing, makes me productive. We can come up with new ideas to improve women," and push them from participation to engagement. Dr Mukaimi gave Kuwait the credit for her selection. "Definitely I am giving Kuwait the credit. Kuwait is a democratic country, it is open, and women have rights, the country known for its mediating role. We are in a good position to select Kuwait as a starting point." —KUNA

Local

Zain main sponsor of third 'Dal Talks' conference, held at Shaheed Park

Company keen on highlighting creative efforts of ambitious Kuwaiti youth



KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its main sponsorship of the third edition of 'Dal Talks' conference. The event, organized by Kuwait's International Law Society, was held at Shaheed Park with the presence of many creative and ambitious Kuwaiti youth.

Zain's support to this conference came as part of the company's continuous efforts to highlight the creativity and achievements of Kuwait's youth in all fields. Zain is committed to contribute to the further development of the youth sector, reflecting its social responsibility towards the community's most vibrant segment.

'Dal Talks' was held for the third consecutive year with the aim of providing a space for effective discussion and dialogue between Kuwaiti and Arab speakers from across all fields and professions. Each speaker

shared their unique stories and experiences with the attending crowds who were eager to develop their skills and gain further insight and knowledge.

Zain firmly believes in the importance of mutual cooperation between the private sector and entities that support the youth through initiatives and programs that aim at developing and nurturing their skills and capabilities. Through supporting such initiatives, Zain reflects its commitment towards the development of the youth, ultimately achieving a more sustainable future.

Zain will remain a main supporter of such innovative initiatives that cater to the achievements of Kuwaiti youth. The company will remain dedicated to the further progress of youth development in the country, and will spare no efforts in supporting any entities that exert efforts in advancing the advancement of the youth sector in Kuwait.



**Organized by
Kuwait's
International
Law Society**



PAAET celebrates 'airport security' diploma graduates

KUWAIT: The Higher Institute for Administrative Services organized the graduation ceremony of the first batch of the diploma program for airport security inspection. The event took place under the patronage of Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Tariq Yousuf Al-Ameeri.



NatMed joins 2018 Horeca sponsors' list

KUWAIT: In view of the growing number of companies announcing intention to take part in the 2018 Horeca Kuwait exhibition, the National Medical Consumable Industries Company (NatMed) recently announced participating in the exhibition as one of its sponsors.

In this regard, NatMed's Chairman Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sarraf stressed that changes in the world of trade and services made specialized exhibitions such as Horeca indispensable in regards to setting successful marketing strategies for any sector at national, regional or international scales. He added that all commercial parties as well as state institutions in Kuwait have to perceive the significance of this role for turning Kuwait into a regional and international financial and commercial hub.

Speaking on signing the sponsorship contract, Sarraf stressed that NatMed thinks highly of Horeca as a unique exhibition, adding that his company plans to display prod-

ucts and services of interest to hotels and restaurants, including disposable aluminum and plastic packs and over 2,000 items of other paper and plastic products used in food serving and packaging, in addition to disposable medical products.

Further, Sarraf noted that Horeca Kuwait has gained momentum over the past seven years and managed to expand annually ever since. "It would not be surprising to see the exhibition display further services and products in the future," he added, noting that his company already provides public and private hospitals, clinics, pharmacies and the health ministry with disposable medical products.

The 2018 Horeca Kuwait exhibition is set to be organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Company at Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref from January 15-17, 2018.



Ahmad Al-Sarraf

CBK supports sports activities



KUWAIT: Recognizing the significance of supporting and sponsoring sport activities organized by state departments, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently provided platinum sponsorship for sports activities organized by the Public Authority of

Industry's (PAI) soccer team. In this regard, Ahmad manager in CBK's individual banking services sector Hanadi Al-Hunaidi handed over the sponsorship clique to PAI's acting director Abdul Kareem Taqi Abdul Kareem, who expressed gratitude for CBK's support.



India unveils an 'anti-smog gun'

Libya in grip of chaos 2 years after unity deal

Page 7

Page 9



OICHA: A displaced pygmy walks at a makeshift camp in Oicha. Displaced from deep in the forests, they are now struggling to adapt to more urban villages. Attacks allegedly carried out by the Ugandan Muslim Group, ADF in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), have displaced thousands of Pygmies. —AFP

Who killed UN experts in Congo?

A confidential file offers clues

DAKAR: UN investigators Zaida Catalan and Michael Sharp were on familiar ground when they sat down with local leaders in central Congo in March to discuss a widening seven-month-old conflict in the area. The pair - experienced members of a panel monitoring the sanctions regime in Democratic Republic of Congo for the UN Security Council - were meeting members of the Kamuina Nsapu, a local clan, on the sidelines of peace talks with the government in the city of Kananga. Among other things, they discussed plans to visit the village of Bunkonde, the site of violent clashes, the next day.

The two UN workers left Kananga on the morning of March 12. On March 27, their bodies were found in a shallow grave. Catalan had been decapitated. Congolese government officials maintained for months to reporters that no state agents were involved in the killings and that they did not know that the two experts were in the region, let alone heading to Bunkonde. But at least one person who helped organize the trip, Jose Tshibuabua, worked for Congo's intelligence service, the Agence Nationale de Renseignements (ANR). Reuters and Radio France Internationale (RFI) have learned.

The trial of a dozen suspected Kamuina Nsapu militia members started in June but was suspended in October pending the arrival in Congo of four UN experts last month to assist with additional investigations. Phone logs in a confidential prosecutor's case file compiled for the trial and seen by Reuters and RFI, who jointly reported this story, show that Tshibuabua had frequent contact with a local ANR boss, Luc Albert Tanga Sakrine, before and after the two experts were killed.

Two security sources said that case file was given to a UN board of inquiry that concluded militiamen were likely responsible for the killings of Sharp, 34, an American, and Catalan, 36, a Swede. Tshibuabua and his ties to the ANR were not mentioned in the board's confidential report to the UN Security Council or in the trial, however. The board said it was unable to establish a motive for state actors to have been involved. But the two experts were conducting investigations in an area where the United Nations has accused Congo's military of using excessive force against militia and civilians and of digging mass graves.

The top ANR official in Congo, Kalev Mutond said and RFI that Tshibuabua was working as a "volunteer informant" for the agency at the time of the meeting, but did not inform ANR officials about his contacts with the two experts. Since the trial of the militiamen was suspended, Tshibuabua was arrested and charged last week with the murder of Catalan and Sharp and participation in an insurrection, his lawyer, Tresor Kabangu said. Kabangu said his client denies the charges and has not worked for the ANR in more than a year.

Government spokesman Lambert Mende now says that authorities have not excluded the possibility that state agents were involved. "If there is a state agent who was involved, he will be pursued and judged," Mende said on Dec 1 after Reuters and RFI laid out the contents of the case file and phone logs. The UN board's chairman, Greg Starr, declined to say if he had seen the prosecutor's file or was aware of its contents. In an emailed answer to questions, Starr said only that the board's report had a tight deadline and did not include some sensitive information, which was turned over to authorities in the United States and Sweden, because of concerns about leaks.

"A thorough criminal investigation into a heinous act like this, under these circumstances, could not be accomplished in only three months," he said. Congo's top military prosecutor, Joseph Ponde, declined to respond to questions about why Tshibuabua's involvement was not raised in the trial, except to say the proceedings are public.

Tanga Sakrine declined to comment. President Joseph Kabila's deputy chief of staff, Jean-Pierre Kambila, also declined to comment, citing the ongoing trial.



Possibility state agents were involved

A tense relationship

Ties between the United Nations and Congo can be tense, with authorities often accusing the world body of meddling in their sovereign affairs. The UN peacekeeping mission, deployed in 1999 to monitor a cease-fire in a long-running war in the east, is the world's largest with about 18,000 uniformed personnel. Catalan and Sharp were investigating a new conflict in the central Kasai region. In August 2016, Kamuina Nsapu militiamen in the area rose up to demand government forces withdraw after the local chief, Jean-Pierre Mpanidi, was killed. Up to 5,000 people died in the violence.

On the weekend of March 11, a delegation of about 40 Kamuina Nsapu representatives was in Kananga to talk peace. Members of this delegation met Sharp and Catalan at the Woodland Hotel. In audio recovered from Catalan's computer by the United Nations, Tshibuabua describes himself as a Mpanidi family member and helps translate from the local Tshiluba language into French for the group's leader, Francois Muamba. He does not say he works for the ANR. According to a Reuters translation, Tshibuabua and another person assured Sharp and Catalan in French that their safety would be guaranteed in Bunkonde, even as Muamba warned not to make promises they couldn't keep.

"We don't know the situation over there," Muamba said at one point. He said he did have control of the local militia in Bunkonde. "Let's talk about (the situation) near us," Tshibuabua continued to assure the UN investigators that the militiamen "will not do anything", adding later: "Here in Kasai, we really guarantee your passage." —Reuters

Hurricanes, heat waves, fires ravage the planet in 2017

MIAMI: Fierce hurricanes, heat waves, floods and wildfires ravaged the planet in 2017, as scientists said the role of climate change in causing or worsening certain natural disasters has grown increasingly clear. It was also the year the world's second largest polluter, the United States, turned its back on the 196-nation Paris climate deal meant to limit global warming to under two degrees Celsius (1.5 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-industrial levels.

President Donald Trump, who has dismissed global warming as a Chinese hoax, vowed to quit the 2015 Paris accord and tapped fossil fuel allies to key environmental posts. His administration also dropped climate change from the list of national security threats, announced plans to auction off vast swaths of the Gulf of Mexico to oil and gas drilling, and signed a proposal to eliminate the Clean Power Plan, aimed at limiting the release of polluting greenhouse gases. Trump says the goal is to make America a dominant source of energy for the world, and to create jobs.

"Together, we are going to start a new energy revolution-one that celebrates American production on American soil," Trump said in June. In October, Trump signed a proclamation to make America a net energy exporter by 2026, reviving the coal industry and seeking to access the estimated \$50 trillion in untapped shale, oil, and natural gas reserves, particularly on federal lands. While the fossil fuel industry has applauded the moves, scientists have expressed alarm.

"The Trump administration, in less than a year, has done more to undermine climate policy than even the worst previous administration on climate (i.e. George W Bush) had done over the course of two full terms," said Michael Mann, a climatologist and geophysicist at Pennsylvania State University, in an email to AFP. Mann blamed the conservative billionaire Koch brothers and fossil fuel lobbyists for essentially running US environmental policy under the Trump administration. "They must be stopped," he added, because their actions "pose an existential threat to us and our children and grandchildren."



CALIFORNIA: Firefighters light backfires as they try to contain the Thomas wildfire in Ojai, California. —AFP

'New normal'

The more fossil fuels we burn, the hotter the planet becomes due to the accumulation of heat-trapping greenhouse gases. The world is currently on track for its third warmest year in modern times. Experts say global warming can make certain events, like floods, drought and hurricanes, more frequent and sometimes worse. Among the fiercest storms seen this year were severe monsoon rains in Bangladesh, India and Nepal that killed more than 1,200 people and affected 40 million people, destroying homes, livestock and crops, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Spain and Portugal have grappled with a deadly drought that dried up rivers, killed crops and fueled wildfires. Meanwhile, an unusually active hurricane season roiled the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean with 17 big storms,

the most since 2005. Major, deadly hurricanes included Harvey, which flooded Texas with 50 inches of rain in some places. The massively powerful Irma devastated the Caribbean and Florida, while Maria flattened much of Puerto Rico.

California Governor Jerry Brown, whose state is currently battling its third largest wildfire since 1932, spoke this month of how such devastation could be the "new normal." "This could be something that happens every year or every few years," Brown told reporters. That phrase was echoed in the 2017 Arctic Report Card, an international peer-reviewed report on the fragile Arctic, which is warming at twice the pace of the rest of the world. "The Arctic environmental system has reached a 'new normal,' that will raise sea levels, alter weather patterns and unleash more extreme weather across the globe, it said. —AFP

Thick smog keeps schools closed for fourth day in Iran

TEHRAN: Schools were closed for a fourth straight day in Tehran yesterday as dangerous air pollution covered the Iranian capital and traffic restrictions failed to clear the thick smog. Average airborne concentration of the finest and most hazardous particles (PM2.5) was "unhealthy" at 160 micrograms per cubic meter, slightly worse than Tuesday, authorities said.

That is more than six times higher than the World Health Organization recommended maximum of 25 micrograms per m3 over a 24-hour period. Authorities extended traffic restrictions so that only one in two cars could go on the street, depending on their number plates. Yesterday is the last day of the week for schools in Tehran and authorities have not yet said whether they will reopen on Saturday. Pollution was also blanketing at least four other major cities: Esfahan in the centre, Orumiyyeh in the northwest, Mashhad in the northeast and Tabriz in the northwest.

Schools were closed yesterday in all of those cities except in Mashhad, the state broadcaster's website reported. Ambulances were also deployed in the streets for possible medical emergencies, it added. Citizens, especially those with respiratory problems, children and the elderly, were advised to stay at home. Mines and factories emitting pollution around Tehran have been closed temporarily by the authorities. Mojtaba Khaledi, a spokesman for the country's emergency services, told the Fars news agency that calls to the emergency wards had increased by 20 percent compared with last week.

"Heart attacks in hospital emergency departments have doubled since last week," Khaledi said. Air pollution has blighted Tehran for more than two decades and worsens each winter. Local and government authorities blame each other for failing to tackle the problem. —AFP

International

Third Palestinian woman arrested over Israeli soldier slapping video

After US veto, UN assembly votes on Jerusalem resolution

RAMALLAH: Israeli forces arrested a third Palestinian woman yesterday in connection with a viral video showing Israeli soldiers being slapped in the occupied West Bank. Soldiers arrested Nour Naji Tamimi, 21, from the village of Nabi Saleh north of Ramallah in the West Bank, residents said. Cousin Ahed Tamimi, 17, a well-known campaigner against Israel's occupation, was arrested on Tuesday along with her mother.

The video shot last Friday, apparently with a mobile telephone, showed two Palestinian girls approaching two Israeli soldiers, before shoving, kicking and slapping them while filming on mobile phones. The heavily armed soldiers do not respond in the face of what appears to be an attempt to provoke rather than seriously harm them. They then move backwards. The army confirmed it had made a third arrest. The cousin is expected to be brought before an Israeli military court yesterday.

The video appears to have been filmed on the steps of the Tamimi house, during a day of protests against US President Donald Trump's controversial recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. It has been widely picked up by Israeli media, which often accuse Palestinian protesters of seeking to provoke the army into responses which are then filmed. Israeli politicians hailed the restraint of the soldiers as evidence of the military's values. Palestinians on social media criticized Ahed's arrest in the middle of the night, arguing it is the people's right to resist military occupation. A member of the Tamimi family was shot in the head with a rubber bullet during protests on Friday, the family said.

Jerusalem resolution

The UN General Assembly will hold an emergency session today to vote on a draft resolution rejecting President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital after the United States vetoed the measure at the

Security Council. Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the UN reacted angrily to the move, tweeting: "On Thurs there'll be a vote criticizing our choice. The US will be taking names," in rhetoric reminiscent of her boss's threatening style.

Turkey and Yemen requested the urgent meeting of the 193-nation assembly on behalf of the Arab group of countries and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The two countries circulated a draft resolution on Tuesday that mirrors the vetoed measure, reaffirming that any decision on the status of Jerusalem has no legal effect and must be rescinded. Egypt had put forward the draft at the council which was backed by all 14 other Security Council members in the vote on Monday. Like the Egyptian draft, the text before the assembly does not mention Trump's decision but expresses "deep regret at recent decisions concerning the status of Jerusalem."

Palestinian ambassador Riyad Mansour said he expected "overwhelming support" for the measure stating that Jerusalem is an issue "to be resolved through negotiations" between Israel and the Palestinians. "The General Assembly will say, without the fear of the veto, that the international community is refusing to accept the unilateral position of the United States," Mansour told reporters. No country has veto powers in the 193-nation assembly, contrary to the council where the United States, along with Britain, China, France and Russia, can block any resolution.

Trump Jerusalem recognition harms Christmas

Recognition harms Christmas

The Catholic Church's top official in Jerusalem yesterday criticized Donald Trump's controversial recognition of the city as Israel's capital, saying it damaged Christmas celebrations and led to hundreds cancelling trips. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, apostolic administrator of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, said "dozens" of groups had pulled out of planned visits



NABI SALEH: File photo shows Palestinian Ahed Tamimi (left) fighting with other members of her family to free a Palestinian boy (bottom) held by an Israeli soldier (center) during clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinian protesters in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh near Ramallah. —AFP

after being scared off by the announcement and subsequent clashes.

He added that the heads of the Christian churches in Jerusalem would find it difficult to accept an official request by US Vice President Mike Pence to visit the city's holy Christian sites in January, calling for him to "listen more" to other Christians. "Of course this created a tension around Jerusalem and this diverted attention from Christmas," Pizzaballa said of Trump's December 6 decision. "After this there are some tensions in Jerusalem,

Bethlehem also. This scared many people, so we've had less people than expected." He stressed, though, that they would continue with planned Christmas celebrations. Trump's recognition of Jerusalem, breaking with decades of US policy on one of the most complicated issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has been met with near-daily protests across the Palestinian territories. Pizzaballa, the most senior Roman Catholic official in the Middle East, stressed the church was opposed to "unilateral" decisions on the future of Jerusalem. —Agencies

Libya in grip of chaos two years after unity deal

TRIPOLI: Two years after a deal to form a unity government aimed at ending deep divisions between Libya's opposing sides, the country remains mired in crisis with no solution in sight. The UN-brokered agreement signed in Morocco in December 2015 establishing a Government of National Accord (GNA) brought hopes of an easing of chaos that followed the 2011 revolution.

But Libya has remained riven by divisions between the GNA in Tripoli led by Prime Minister Fayez Al-Sarraj and a rival administration backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar in the east. The GNA's position risks being further undermined by the expiry of its mandate—which under the 2015 accord was for one year and renewable only once on December 17. Instead of healing rifts, experts say the deal actually deepened tensions in the North African country. "I think it has never been the real solution for the country," said Federica Saini Fasanotti, an analyst with the Washington-based Brookings Institution.

The agreement "has never been recognized by the Libyan people," she added. Years of political turmoil have followed the overthrow and killing of Libya's long-time dictator Muammar Gaddafi in the 2011 revolution. People-smugglers took advantage of the chaos to turn the country into a major gateway for migrants heading to Europe, while Islamic State group jihadists also established a foothold. Underscoring the insecurity plaguing the country, the mayor of Libya's third-largest city Misrata was killed by unidentified assailants who abducted him on Sunday as he returned from an official trip overseas.

'Dangerous turning point'

Since its arrival in Tripoli in March 2016, the GNA has failed to stamp its authority across large parts of the coun-



BENGHAZI: Libyan armed forces cadets perform maneuvers during their graduation ceremony at the military academy in eastern Benghazi. —AFP

try, controlled by dozens of militias of shifting allegiances. Its legitimacy was questioned from the very start by its rivals and it was unable to secure a confidence vote by Libya's elected parliament based in the east of the country.

Haftar, who has never recognized the GNA's authority, said on Sunday that the "expiry of the Libyan political accord" on December 17 marked a "historic and dangerous turning point". "All bodies resulting from this agreement automatically lose their legitimacy, which has been contested from the first day they took office," he said. Saini Fasanotti, however, does not see major repercussions from the end of the GNA's mandate. "The GNA in my opinion has never been a real political actor in Libya, so I

do not think that the situation will change a lot at the moment in the Libya arena," she said. Haftar is accused by his opponents of wanting to take power and establish a military dictatorship.

Haftar wanted to take advantage of the end of the mandate of the unity government to stage "a coup", a GNA official who did not want to be named said. "But threats that were directly addressed to him by the international community dissuaded him," the official added. Haftar acknowledged as much on Sunday, saying he was "threatened with firm international measures" if he dared to take initiatives outside the framework set up by the international community and the United Nations. —AFP

Year on, Aleppo is licking its wounds

ALEPPO: The streets of Kalasseh, a neighborhood of Aleppo formerly held by rebels, are jammed with traffic again and its pavements are packed with people and overflowing market stalls. But the rows of flattened buildings flanking them are a constant reminder of the devastating battle that had reduced a city that was one of the jewels of the Middle East to ruins by the time Syrian government forces retook it a year ago on Friday. "It's crowded... people are coming back," says Khayro Moselmani, a former taxi driver from the neighborhood. Miles away in Idlib province, Mohammed Assaf, a supporter of the rebellion against President Bashar al-Assad, is still grieving the "tragic" day he had to flee his Aleppo home.

December 22, 2016 was a turning point in the Syrian conflict: after four years of relentless fighting that gutted the city and killed thousands of civilians, government forces retook control. It was the beginning of the end for the rebels, who went on to relinquish most of their bastions to regime forces backed by Russia, whose formidable firepower tipped the balance. The eastern part of Aleppo that was the rebels' stronghold was leveled by Russian and Syrian air

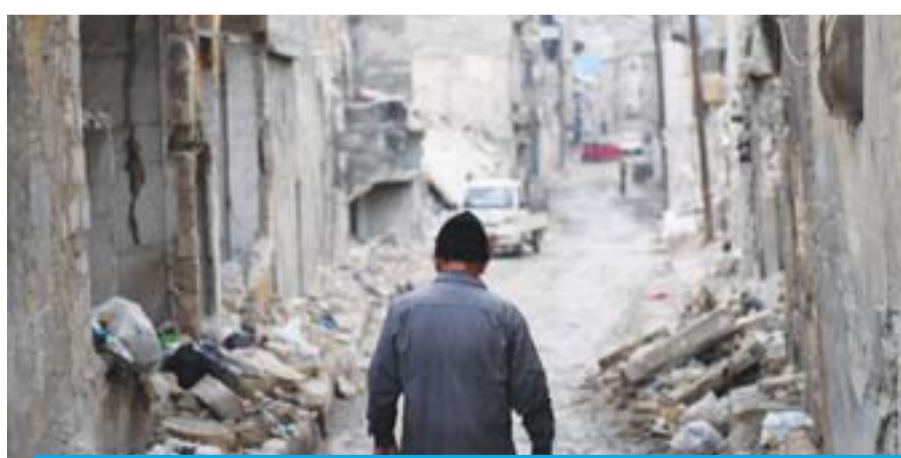
strikes. Months of siege left tens of thousands of people starving and in need of medical attention, and eventually led to their evacuation just a few days before the regime took full control.

Ghost town

A year on, life is slowly returning to the city. Water and electricity are back in most areas, the mountains of rubble are being trucked away, the streets cleaned and resurfaced. Moselmani fled Aleppo in the summer of 2012 as rebels took over the city's east, and moved to Tartus, a coastal town in the heartland of the Alawite community to which Assad belongs.

He returned to his hometown a month after the government took it back and found his home had been destroyed. "At the time we came back, it was almost unthinkable to see a single person in the neighborhood," the sexagenarian, who now sells grilled meat on the street, remembered. "Now, they are coming in and out... Thank god, there is security." The activity on the streets offers a stark contrast with last year's eerie, post-apocalyptic pictures of deserted districts in one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world.

On one thoroughfare, workers are trying to fill a gaping hole in the side of a building. Further down, some recently returned residents have had to make do with temporary plastic sheeting to replace their collapsed



ALEPPO: Syrian Khayro Moselmani walks amidst debris in the former rebel-held Kalasseh neighborhood in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo. —AFP

roof. "At the time of the rebels, it was starvation," said Salah Moghayer, a resident of the Salhin neighborhood who used to work in a hammam. Like thousands of other residents, he was evacuated at the end of the siege and returned in early 2017. "The hammam was destroyed. As soon as it is repaired, I will take my old job back," said the father of three daughters, who now works as a porter.

'Tearing your heart out'
Unofficial estimates say around

500,000 people, about half of east Aleppo's population, have returned. Fabrice Balanche, a visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, warned however that the rebirth of what was Syria's commercial hub is still a long way away. He said the looting of the industrial zone and the flight of Aleppo's business community has crippled the city. "They are in Gaziantep (Turkey), where they have rebuilt their factories and brought all their workers with them. They have no intention of returning," he said.—AFP

News in brief

Tattoos and tradition

JERUSALEM: A small shop in the heart of Jerusalem's walled Old City offers Christian pilgrims indelible memories of their visit to the holy city: tattoos with religious designs unchanged for centuries. Blending modern technology with tradition, the Razzouk family uses the Internet to draw clients to their business in a place that is sacred to Christians, Jews and Muslims. Noel Heavey, 54, from Ireland, never thought he would want a tattoo. But he said he stumbled on the Razzouks' website and "was just really taken by it". So on his first trip to Jerusalem, as the city's Christian Quarter began to prepare for Christmas, he chose a pattern with clean and simple lines. It was a black and red Jerusalem cross, made up of one central cross and four smaller ones, adorned with palm trees and the number 2017, representing his pilgrimage and the year his mother died.

'249 warning shots'

SEOUL: South Korea's coast guard said it fired 249 warning shots over a group of Chinese fishing boats "swarming around" one of its patrol ships in South Korean waters, prompting a call for restraint from Beijing. South Korean coast guard vessels regularly chase Chinese boats suspected of fishing illegally in South Korean waters, at times sparking violent confrontations, complicating a relationship which is key to efforts to try to rein in North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. A fleet of 44 Chinese fishing boats fortified with iron bars and steel mesh on Tuesday began to rush the patrol boat which broadcast warnings to steer clear, the coast guard said. The coast guard vessel fired 249 shots over the boats until they retreated. "The Chinese fishing boats sought to swarm around and collide with our patrol ship, ignoring the broadcast warnings," the coast guard said in a statement.

Drills around Taiwan

TAIPEI: Chinese jets conducted drills near Taiwan's airspace yesterday for the sixth time this month, as relations between the two rivals worsen. China sees self-governed Taiwan as part of its territory to be reunified at some point by military force, if necessary. The two sides split after a civil war in 1949. Although Taiwan is a self-ruling democracy, it has never formally declared independence. The latest drills come just days after China's warplanes flew over the Sea of Japan (East Sea), prompting South Korea and Japan to scramble jets. Taiwan's defense ministry announced yesterday that Beijing had directed several planes including jet fighters through the Bashi Channel south of the island, to the Pacific and back. "China's long-distance (drills) have become more frequent," it said, but urged Taiwanese people not to worry.

Singapore employee fined

SINGAPORE: A Singapore civil servant was yesterday fined but escaped jail for leaking confidential information to a journalist, a prosecution that a rights group described as an attempt to spread a "culture of fear". Government housing agency employee Ng Han Yuan, who could have been jailed for up to two years under the Official Secrets Act, was fined Sg\$2,000 (\$1,500) for passing details about a still confidential public housing resale portal to Janice Tai of the Straits Times daily. Such leaks rarely happen in the city-state, where the media is tightly controlled and the civil service is highly regarded. Public housing policies are seen as sensitive in rich but land-starved Singapore because more than 80 percent of the population lives in government-subsidized housing. According to court documents, 25-year-old Ng met Tai, 29, on a mobile dating app and they had gone out several times.

International

Too late, Theresa-Brexit's offer to EU citizens leaves many cold

Number of EU citizens leaving UK up

LONDON: Back from Brussels with a hard-fought Brexit deal, Prime Minister Theresa May wrote an open letter to the three million citizens of other European Union states living in Britain. "I know our country would be poorer if you left and I want you to stay," she wrote after striking the initial agreement, which promises to secure their British residency rights after Brexit and allows the negotiations to move onto trade relations. But for some EU nationals - who have endured uncertainty over their rights since the Brexit vote in June 2016, not to mention an unpleasant feeling that many Britons do not want them around - May's Dec 8 deal is too little, too late.

It's too late to keep German nurse Daniela Jones in the chronically short-staffed National Health Service (NHS), where she worked for 35 years. It's too late for French psychotherapist Baya Salmon-Hawk, who after 40 years in Britain has moved to Ireland to remain in the EU. It's too late for French accountant Nathalie Duran, who is planning early retirement in France because after 31 years as a taxpayer in Britain she objects to being told she has to pay a fee and fill in forms to be granted a new "settled status".

"I will have to regretfully decline your generous offer for settled status and oblige your lovely countrymen's wishes and go home," she wrote on Facebook in a response to May laden with irony. Duran said that the prime minister's "late outpouring of love" for EU citizens, after years of tough talk on the need to cut immigration, could not mask negative attitudes towards immigrants unleashed by the Brexit vote. "I think it's turning ugly," said 56-year-old Duran. "It's now OK to say 'go home foreigners'."

EU citizens, particularly those from the poorer eastern member states such as Poland and Romania, have complained of increasing hostility from some Britons. They find themselves accused of stealing jobs from Britons and driving down wages,

even though unemployment is at a four-decade low, or of overburdening health services as patients, even though many help to provide them by working for the NHS. Official figures show hate crimes in Britain surged by the highest amount on record last year, with the Brexit vote a significant factor.

The impact of Brexit on EU citizens in Britain is a serious concern for sectors of the economy that rely heavily on European workers, such as hospitality, construction, agriculture, care for the elderly and the cherished NHS. Britain won't leave the bloc until March 2019, but many EU nationals are already voting with their feet. In the 12 months following the referendum, 123,000 of them left Britain, a 29 percent year-on-year increase. They were still outnumbered by the 230,000 EU citizens who arrived to live in Britain in the same period, although that figure was down 19 percent on the previous year.



Individual stories show personal impact of Brexit

'British job for British worker'

Not everyone is making plans to go: 28,500 EU citizens applied for British citizenship in the 12 months after the referendum, an 80 percent year-on-year jump. With personal and professional roots often running deep, many more have applied for permanent residence documents. UK citizenship would be an option for nurse Jones, 61, who moved to England from Munich just before her 18th birthday. That was in 1974, the year after Britain joined what is now the EU.

Today she has a grown-up British son and a British husband. But as a point of principle she cannot see why she should apply for something she never needed in the past. "Despite my enormous love for Britain, I do not feel that I am British," was how she put it in a letter to Ruth Deech, a pro-Brexit member of parliament's House of Lords, sent in February to lobby her on the EU citizens' rights issue. In a one-line response to the long, impassioned letter, which made



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament's Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May (right) gesturing as she speaks during the weekly Prime Ministers Questions (PMQs) session in the House of Commons yesterday. —AFP

clear Jones had worked for 35 years in the state NHS, Deech said she should have applied for UK citizenship.

Jones replied it had never been necessary and explained that she was already a dual German and US national through her German mother and her American father, a serviceman in the US army who was posted to Germany in the 1950s. Deech sent another one-liner: "You sought US citizenship - presumably you could have shown the same commitment to this country." Jones was dismayed by that response, which in her eyes lacked understanding and respect. She began to think she needed to look after her own interests better.

A few months later, she quit her NHS job at a doctors' office in Yateley, a small town southwest of London. She is now re-training as a foot and ear care specialist and plans to work privately. "I still like looking after people but I want to do it on my own terms," she told Reuters. "It's time to get out. Work for myself, start a little business." Jones wrote to Deech again, saying: "I have now freed up a British job for a British worker." This time she got no response. Deech declined an interview request from Reuters, but said in an emailed response to questions that obtaining a British passport "might be a good idea for any EU citizen who is (probably needlessly) concerned". —Reuters

News in brief

Bikers gang banned

THE HAGUE: Dutch judges yesterday banned the violent bikers gang the Bandidos and ordered all its chapters to close down, saying it posed a public threat. "The Bandidos characterize themselves as lawless and use slogans that contain violent messages," the court in the Dutch city of Utrecht said in its ruling. "The club has a culture in which carrying out serious violence is encouraged," it added, highlighting how patches crowing "Expect No Mercy" were handed out to members after bloody fights. "A ban is therefore necessary in order to protect society." The case had been brought by the Dutch prosecution service, which alleged the bikers were involved in drugs and arms trafficking as well as prostitution. Founded in the United States in 1966, the Bandidos opened its first chapter in The Netherlands three years ago in the small southern city of Sittard.

Nigeria kickback scandal

MILAN: Italian giant Eni and fellow petroleum company Shell will stand trial in Italy over allegations of bribery and corruption in the 2011 purchase of an offshore oil block in Nigeria. A judge in Milan ordered Eni, Shell and key figures such as Eni chief Claudio Descalzi and his predecessor Paolo Scaroni to stand trial in proceedings to begin March 5. The companies are accused of corruption in the 2011 purchase of OPL245, an offshore oil block estimated to hold 9 billion barrels of crude, for \$1.3 billion. "Eni's Board of Directors has reaffirmed its confidence that the company was not involved in alleged corrupt activities in relation to the transaction," the Italian firm said in a statement yesterday. "Eni expresses its full confidence in the judicial process and that the trial will ascertain and confirm the correctness and integrity of its conduct," it said.

Bus crash kills 12

MEXICO CITY: A bus carrying tourists from US cruise ships to an archeological site in Mexico crashed Tuesday after running off the road, killing at least 12 people including several foreigners, state authorities said. The crash, which left another 18 injured, happened on a highway in the state of Quintana Roo, located on the eastern tip of the Yucatan Peninsula and well known as home to the Caribbean resort city of Cancun. The dead and injured included "citizens of the United States, Sweden and Brazil," a brief statement said without further information on numbers from each country, or their ages. The bus was carrying 31 passengers on a straight stretch of road with little traffic. The cause of the accident was not immediately known. Twenty-three of the passengers had arrived on the ships Celebrity Equinox and Serenade of the Seas, cruise owner Royal Caribbean Cruises said.

Antisemitic messages

MONTREAL: Synagogues in Montreal and Toronto-Canada's two largest cities-and elsewhere received threatening antisemitic messages at the start of Hanukkah, sources said yesterday. In Montreal, two synagogues alerted police "about the threats," said police spokesman Benoit Boisselle, adding that a "hate crime" investigation has been launched. Four other synagogues in Toronto, others in Kingston and Hamilton, Ontario; and another in Edmonton, Alberta received antisemitic messages saying the "Jewry must perish" alongside a swastika and a bleeding star of David, according to the Canadian branch of B'nai Brith. "Sadly, we've seen the swastika make something of a comeback this year, defacing the walls of high schools, university campuses, and public property," said the group's president Michael Mostry. "Today, it is more imperative than ever that we condemn this symbol of racism and hatred."

State agents and militants 'planned' Congo massacres

PARIS: Security forces and an army-backed militia planned massacres in an opposition stronghold in the Democratic Republic of Congo, human rights activists charged yesterday, calling the killings "crimes against humanity". The southern Kasai region suffered "one of the worst human rights crises in the world" between March and July, the Paris-based International Human Rights Federation (FIDH) said in a report compiled with partner rights groups in the country. It includes heart-rending testimony such as that of a 27-year-old woman who described soldiers attacking her village and burning down houses. As she fled, she "saw a lot of corpses... of children, of villagers."

The FIDH said the atrocities "were perpetrated mainly by elements of the Bana Mura militia at the instigation and with the support of security forces... against civilians of the Luba ethnic group." The Luba are seen as supporting the anti-government Kamwina Nsapu militia, while other ethnic groups make up the Bana Mura militia active in Kasai. In one of the worst attacks blamed on Bana Mura, the remote village of Cinq was "totally destroyed" and several female survivors said they were raped or sexually mutilated. Several of their children were killed by militiamen with machetes, the 100-page report said.

Kabila anniversary

The Catholic Church has said the violence claimed more than 3,300 lives. The United Nations for its part has counted 87 mass graves and documented some 1.4 million displaced people. The conflict erupted in September 2016 after government forces killed a tribal chieftain, known as the Kamwina Nsapu, who rebelled against President Joseph Kabila's regime in Kinshasa and its local representatives. The release of the report comes a year to the day since Kabila refused to step down at the end of his second term, sparking a political crisis in the vast former Belgian colony. The Catholic Church brokered a deal on New Year's Eve 2016 enabling Kabila to stay in office pending elections to be held in 2017. Those elections, in turn, were postponed to December 23, 2018.

The opposition has insisted that Kabila leave by the end of this year. The FIDH said Lubas were "massacred



TSHIKAPA, DR Congo: A Congolese woman, who has had her arm amputated after a gunshot wound, sits on her bed in Tshikapa. —AFP

in several dozen villages... because of their ethnicity, their supposed political affiliation with the opposition and their supposed support or membership" of Kamwina Nsapu. "The crimes perpetrated... were planned, ordered and led by agents of the Congolese state" and the Bana Mura militia, it said, adding that the atrocities should be considered crimes against humanity. The FIDH compiled witness testimony in July at a refugee camp in neighboring Angola, speaking to 64 people, most of them Lubas, some with amputated limbs, permanent disfigurements or severe burns.

Atrocities on both sides

The report said anti-government Kamwina Nsapu militiamen earlier carried out "summary executions, often in the form of decapitations", after which they displayed the severed heads in the villages. Two United Nations experts were killed in March while investigating

the violence, of whom one was decapitated. The atrocities led Congolese "defense and security forces to carry out disproportionate acts of reprisal" including against civilians, the FIDH said. The UN, in a report released in August, also blamed state agents for more than 250 "extrajudicial or targeted killings" of civilians in the Kasai region from mid-March to mid-June.

Like the FIDH, UN investigators interviewed refugees in Angola who described atrocities at the hands of government troops and the Bana Mura as well as the anti-government Kamwina Nsapu militia. The Congolese government questioned the "impartiality" of the probe, saying it was based "on testimony lacking in credibility". The FIDH said it has the names of "at least 50" suspected perpetrators of atrocities which it could hand over to the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague if Kinshasa fails to mount a serious investigation. —AFP

Fighting in eastern Ukraine escalates

KIEV: Fighting in eastern Ukraine has escalated to the worst level in months, officials monitoring the conflict said yesterday, after the shelling of a front-line village wounded eight civilians and destroyed or damaged dozens of homes. A Russia-backed insurgency erupted in 2014 and the bloodshed has continued despite a ceasefire deal that was meant to end a conflict in which more than 10,000 people have been killed, with casualties reported on a near-daily basis.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which monitors the implementation of the peace

agreement, said it had recorded 16,000 ceasefire violations between Dec 11 and Dec 17, a 35 percent increase on the week before. "We note with concern a sharp deterioration in the security situation with ceasefire violations reaching levels not recorded since February this year," chief monitor Ertugrul Apakan said in a statement. In February, a surge of violence around the government-held industrial town of Avdiivka cut off power and water to thousands of civilians on the front line.

Apakan said the latest escalation reflected an established trend "in which a recommitment to the ceasefire by the sides was followed by a steady increase in the level of violence, culminating in fierce fighting". Apakan's comments followed warnings from aid agencies over the humanitarian situation in the eastern Donbass region, particularly given Monday's attack on the government-controlled village of Novoluhanske. The United Nations' OCHA humanitarian arm said on Twitter heavy shelling near Novoluhanske was

affecting 2,000 residents. People are fleeing the area in blizzard conditions, it said. Eight civilians were wounded and more than 50 buildings were damaged in the shelling, which also temporarily cut power supplies, the regional Kiev-controlled Donetsk administration said.

A Reuters witness saw residents picking their way through the rubble of destroyed homes and surveying fire-blackened buildings. The US State Department said the humanitarian situation was "dire" because of the shelling, which it blamed on Russian-led forces firing Grad multiple-launch rockets. The Ukrainian military on Tuesday accused pro-Russian separatists of deliberately firing more than 40 times from multiple-launch rocket systems at Novoluhanske.

Meanwhile, the rebel command said attacks from the Ukrainian side had almost doubled in the past 24 hours, according to separatist news website DAN. Rebels deny attacking Novoluhanske and say the Ukrainian military fired at the village to justify

attacks on separatist-held civilian areas, according to DAN. The US State Department also voiced concern about fighting around the Donetsk water filtration station, which has a system of pipes that carry chlorine gas. "If those were to go off in this area, which is close to where people live, it could be potentially devastating," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert told a briefing.

She said civilian water workers were trapped in the station's bomb shelter and could not get out because of fighting. In an effort to end the deadlock, the international community, including the United States, has in recent months been advocating for the deployment of UN peacekeepers in the Donbass.

Both Kiev and Moscow backed the idea but disagree on whether the troops should be positioned on the rebel-controlled part of the Ukraine-Russia border, so no decision was made. Russia denies accusations from Ukraine and NATO that it supports the rebels with troops and weapons. —Reuters

International

Ten bodies found in a Myanmar mass grave

Myanmar silent on whereabouts of detained journalists

YANGON: Myanmar's army said it found 10 corpses in a mass grave in a largely Rohingya village in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state, the epicenter of a violent military crackdown that triggered a mass exodus of the Muslim minority. Northern Rakhine has been gutted by violence that erupted on August 25, when the military launched a sweeping operation against Rohingya rebels who attacked police posts. Since then hundreds of villages have been torched and some 655,000 Rohingya have fled over the border to Bangladesh.

Doctors Without Borders says at least 6,700 Rohingya were killed in the first month of violence, while the UN has accused the army of waging an ethnic cleansing campaign with possible "elements of genocide". Myanmar, a mainly Buddhist country, has aggressively denied the charges and largely blocked off access to the conflict zone. Late Tuesday the army said it had exhumed 10 bodies in a grave discovered earlier in the week in Inn Din, a village in Rakhine's Maungdaw township. "An investigation is being carried out to uncover the truth behind the grave," said a statement published on the army chief's Facebook page, alongside blurred photos of skeletal bodies being dug out of a pit.

"Action will be taken according to the law if security members are found to be involved in the case," the statement added. One member of the team that unearthed the corpses told AFP, on condition of anonymity, that the bodies' state of decay suggested they had not been killed recently. "We cannot differentiate who the dead bodies were because we only saw their skeletons and bones," he said.

The discovery of the mass grave comes one week after the arrest of two Reuters journalists who have closely covered the crisis in Rakhine. The area has been out of bounds to the media since the military crackdown began with

exception of closely-monitored press trips organized by authorities. Myanmar has also blocked a UN fact-finding team from accessing the area to probe allegations of rights abuses. Myanmar reporters Wa Lone, 31, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 27, who have not been seen since December 12, have been charged for allegedly possessing documents relating to security forces in Rakhine. Their families, lawyers and colleagues have not been told where the two are, nor been allowed any contact with them.

Reuters did not immediately confirm what the journalists were working on or if their investigation was linked to the mass grave in Inn Din. The arrests have deepened concerns about fragile press freedoms in the emerging democracy. Human Rights Watch yesterday demanded the pair's immediate release, echoing similar calls from the EU, US and UN. "Their secret, incommunicado detention lays bare government efforts to silence media reporting on critical issues," said Human Rights Watch Asia Director Brad Adams. The reporters face a maximum sentence of 14 years in jail under the colonial-era Official Secrets Act.

UN envoy banned

Meanwhile the UN's rights envoy for Myanmar said yesterday the government had banned her from the country, adding her exclusion suggests something "awful" is happening in Rakhine state. UN Special Rapporteur Yanghee Lee had been due to visit Myanmar in January to assess the state of human rights across the country including in Rakhine, which was plunged into crisis by a military crackdown on the Rohingya minority Muslim community in late August.

Some 655,000 of them have fled for Bangladesh since then, with accounts of arson, murder and rape at the hands of soldiers and vigilante mobs in the mainly Buddhist country. The UN has accused troops of ethnic cleansing



RAKHINE STATE, Myanmar: This combination of handout photos courtesy of Human Rights Watch/DigitalGlobe shows an analysis of satellite imagery revealing new destruction of Rohingya villages during October and November 2017. —AFP

and possible "elements of genocide" against the Rohingya-charges the government vigorously denies as it faces intense global outrage. "I am puzzled and disappointed by this decision by the Myanmar government," said Lee, who is required to go to the country twice a year in order to report to the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly.

"This declaration of non-cooperation with my mandate can only be viewed as a strong indication that there must

be something terribly awful happening in Rakhine, as well as in the rest of the country," she added. The South Korean academic said she was told the decision was based on a statement she made after her last visit to Myanmar in July, in which she sharply criticized the government's rights record and its treatment of the Rohingya. At the time the government criticized the statement as "biased and unfair". The UN confirmed Myanmar had withdrawn all cooperation for the duration of Lee's tenure.—Agencies

India unveils an 'anti-smog gun'

NEW DELHI: India yesterday unveiled a new weapon against air pollution—an "anti-smog gun" which authorities hope will clear the skies above New Delhi but which environmentalists say amounts to a band-aid solution. The cannon's Indian manufacturers say the fine droplets of water it ejects at high speed can flush out deadly airborne pollutants in one of the world's smoggiest capitals. The giant mister-shaped like a hair dryer and mounted on a flatbed truck was tested in Anand Vihar, an area of Delhi's east bordering an industrial zone that often boasts the dirtiest air.

The US embassy website yesterday showed concentrations of the smallest and most harmful particles known as PM2.5 at Anand Vihar hit 380 - more than 15 times the World Health Organization's safe maximum. The cannon-designed to combat dust on mining and construction sites-costs roughly \$31,000 but government officials appear ready to open the cheque book. "If it proves to be successful, then we will roll these out on Delhi's streets as soon as possible," Imran Hussain, Delhi's environment minister, told AFP in Anand Vihar as the cannon spurted mist under hazy skies.

Manufacturer Cloud Tech said it can blast up to 100 liters of water per minute into the skies and clear 95 percent of airborne pollutants. Greenpeace was less than impressed, saying the cannon was a distraction from the root causes of Delhi's winter pollution, a phenomenon so bad the city's own chief minister described it as a "gas chamber".

Delhi chokes every winter as cool air traps a toxic blend of pollutants from crop burning, car exhausts, open fires, construction dust and industrial emissions



NEW DELHI: A view of an anti-smog gun trial in New Delhi. —AFP

close to the ground. "This is definitely not the solution. You can use it occasionally at sensitive locations but the solution to pollution lies in controlling it at the source rather than spraying water on it," Greenpeace's Sunil Dahiya said. "The Delhi government should look at more sustainable solutions rather than creating business for a few companies."

Delhi has struggled to curb the annual scourge, with drastic short-term measures—such as shutting factories and brick kilns and restricting car use failing to lower hazardous pollution levels. The crisis was so serious in November that doctors declared a public health emergency as schools were shut across the capital. Cloud Tech admitted one or two cannons would do little to combat the city's notorious air, suggesting instead 30 to 40 would be required. "This is a solution for when you're helpless," the company's Vimal Saini said. Beijing experimented with a mist cannon in 2014 but critics slammed officials for wasting money on a machine that scientists agreed did little to lower pollutants.—AFP

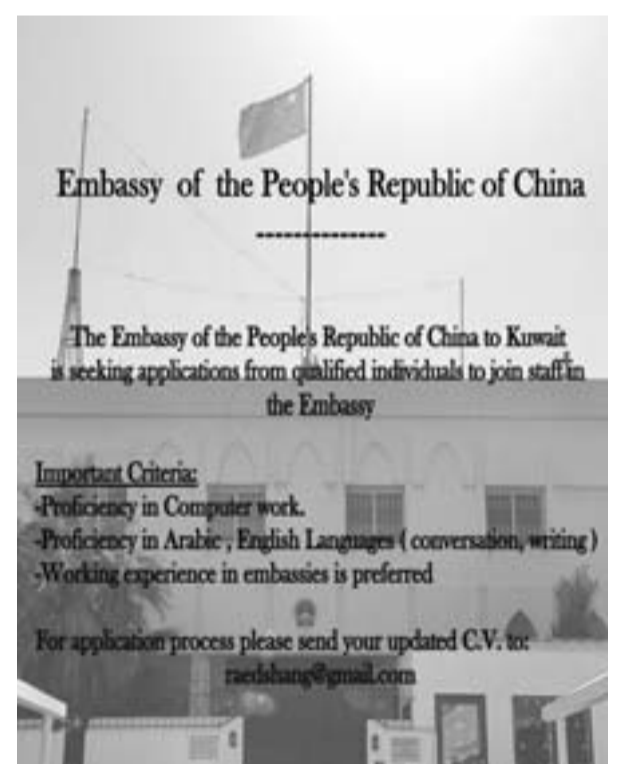
Air strikes kill at least 9 Yemenis

ADEN: The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen said yesterday it would keep Yemen's Houthi-controlled Hodeidah port open for a month, despite a fresh missile attack at Riyadh, but it kept up air strikes that killed at least nine people. The Western-backed coalition, which controls Yemen's airspace and port access, said last month it would allow humanitarian aid through Hodeidah following a nearly three-week blockade imposed because of a missile attack towards the Saudi capital's international airport.

The Saudis say the Red Sea port, which is Yemen's main entry point for food and humanitarian supplies, is also a hub used by the Iran-allied Houthi rebels to bring in weapons. Yesterday, the coalition confirmed it would keep access open to the port despite a further ballistic missile attack at Riyadh on Tuesday by the Houthis which Saudi forces also intercepted. "Keen to maintain humanitarian aid to the brotherly Yemeni people and as a result of intensified inspection measures, the coalition command announces that Hodeidah port will remain open for humanitarian and relief supplies," the coalition said in a statement carried by Saudi state news agency SPA yesterday.

The coalition said ships bringing in fuel and food would also be allowed to enter for another 30 days while proposals made by the United Nations envoy to Yemen were implemented, it added. The agency did not elaborate on the proposals. But the coalition has been demanding that a UN inspection regime agreed in 2015 be further tightened to prevent weapons from reaching the Houthis. Yemen's almost three-year-old war opposes the Iran-allied Houthis, who control the capital Sanaa, against the Saudi-led military alliance, which backs the government now based in the southern port of Aden.

Iran and Saudi Arabia are regional rivals. Tuesday's missile attack came as the Houthis marked 1,000 days since the Saudi-led coalition intervened in the Yemen war in March 2015 to try to restore President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi after a Houthi advance on his base in Aden forced him to flee. More than 10,000 people have been killed and a humanitarian crisis unleashed in a conflict which has intensified since ex-President Ali Abdullah Saleh was killed on Dec 4. —Reuters



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Disgraced US cardinal dies

VATICAN CITY: US Cardinal Bernard Law, a once-influential church figure forced to resign after failing to stop paedophile priests in one of the biggest crises in American Catholicism, has died, the Vatican said yesterday. He was 86. The former Boston cardinal had fallen from grace after he allegedly shielded priests involved in a wide-reaching sex abuse scandal that shook the Roman Catholic Church and eclipsed his long and at one-time venerated career. Allegations of molestation and cover-ups seemingly surfaced daily after the scandal erupted in Boston, where Law was forced to resign in 2002 for allegedly protecting predator priests despite evidence they had been abusing youngsters. In 2004, an investigation established that some 4,400 Catholic priests were paedophiles and that the number of victims from 1950-2002 stands at around 11,000.

The scandal was broken by the Boston Globe newspaper's Spotlight investigative reporting team, whose dogged uncovering of horrific widespread abuse by priests won a Pulitzer prize and was made into an Oscar-winning film, *Spotlight*, in 2016. —AFP

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In Georgia, battle of the 'Staceys' tests Democrats' future

The two Democratic candidates running for governor in Georgia are both lawyers and former state legislators. Both are women, and on many policy issues it's hard to tell them apart. Both even share the same first name - Stacey. But they sharply disagree on the path to victory. Stacey Abrams, 44, wants to become the first African American female governor in the United States by mobilizing solidly Democratic black voters, who vote sporadically in elections, to form a winning coalition with white liberals.

Stacey Evans, 39, thinks the math does not add up without also appealing to white moderates, many of them outside urban areas, who voted for President Donald Trump last November. She is highlighting her crossover appeal as a white suburban mother with country roots. Their divergent strategies mirror a wider debate within the Democratic Party that has grown louder after strong turnout by minority voters helped to power recent Democratic victories in Alabama and Virginia.

As the party prepares for the 2018 congressional elections, there is disagreement over which voters to spend more time and money on - minority voters who are a fast-growing share of the electorate but do not reliably cast ballots, or blue-collar and suburban whites who swing between parties. Reuters interviews with liberal activist groups, some donors and an examination of campaign finance records show that many on the left are betting on Abrams' strategy as the best shot at turning a Republican state.

Underscoring the stakes in Georgia is the unusual attention from national groups seeking to push the party farther left. Their level of early support for Abrams is largely unparalleled among other 2018 gubernatorial and many congressional races. A dozen liberal groups have already thrown support behind Abrams, according to a Reuters tally, even though the Democratic primary, or nominating contest, is still months away. The breadth of that support has been little reported.

Abrams, who rouses audiences to near religious fervor describing her struggles growing up poor and black in the South, argues that Democrats have wasted resources on swing voters. "We have left too many voters untouched," she said in an interview, noting that she refuses to tone down her support for abortion, gay rights and labor unions to appeal to Republican-leaning voters. Her opponent does not discount the importance of black voters and also embraces liberal views. But "you are going to have to persuade some moderate Republicans to vote for you, if you are going to win in Georgia," said Evans, who tears up before crowds when she recounts a childhood spent moving from one rural trailer home to another.

Democrats Regroup

After losing the White House last year, the Democratic Party found itself powerless in Washington. Some in the party faulted their presidential nominee, Hillary Clinton, for her lack of outreach to minority voters in key states. Others blamed her inability to connect with working class white voters who were once Democratic. Minorities supported the Democratic ticket by wide margins in 2016, but turnout was flat among Hispanics and sharply lower among African Americans, according to the Pew Research Center. Only half of Georgia's black voters cast ballots in 2016, compared to more than two-thirds of whites, a Reuters review of state records showed.

The Democratic National Committee said the recent wins in Alabama and Virginia "show that Democrats are a force to be reckoned with when we invest early in the communities that represent who we are as a Party". Jennifer Duffy, a political analyst at the nonpartisan Cook Political Report, said boosting Democratic turnout could work as a strategy. But she urged caution - focusing too narrowly on specific demographic groups risks alienating moderate Democrats. And swing voters, especially in suburban areas, also played a role in the recent Democratic victories, she noted. University of Georgia political science professor Charles Bullock agreed the numbers are there if Democrats do not lose more white voters.

How We Win

At the Abrams campaign headquarters, a poster titled "How We Win" points out that Democrats in Georgia have lost recent elections by some 200,000 votes. More than 1 million black voters did not cast ballots during the last governor's race in 2014, state data shows. "They don't vote because we don't ask, and this is a campaign that is going to keep asking," Abrams said, speaking at a recent evening to an audience of three dozen volunteers.

Abrams, a tax attorney and romance novelist who led Democrats in the state legislature, said her campaign has already reached out to more than 300,000 voters with door knocks, phone calls and text messages. She hosted summer events with music and barbecue in a dozen smaller cities - places like Macon, a predominately African American community, and tiny Dalton in the rural northern state.

National liberal activists are lining up endorsements, money and manpower behind Abrams, who is seen as starting with an advantage in a Democratic primary dominated by black voters. Democracy for America, MoveOn Political Action and the Working Families Party call her campaign a model of how to engage the nation's increasingly diverse electorate. —Reuters

Cartoon for the Soul



Era of female Latam presidents ends

When Chile's President Michelle Bachelet leaves office in March, it will mark the end of a generation of women leaders in Latin America, leaving the region without a female head of state as it shifts to the right politically. At the start of this decade, women held the top jobs in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica and Chile, collectively representing about 40 percent of the population in a region better known for its machismo. But conservative Sebastian Pinera's victory in the second round of Chile's presidential election on Sunday drew that period to a close.

Bachelet was the first of her female counterparts to rise to power in a leftist tide that swept South America during a commodities-fueled economic boom. She served as president from 2006 to 2010 before winning re-election in 2013. Together with Brazil's Dilma Rousseff and Argentina's Cristina Fernandez, Bachelet embodied the major strides made by women across a region that has passed laws deterring rampant violence against women and set quotas for political participation that have given Latin American women a bigger share of parliamentary seats than in Europe.

But now some worry that progress on women's rights could stall. "We're seeing a shift to conservative politics that is questioning the advances of the last 15 to 20 years," said Eugenia Piza-Lopez, who works on gender in Latin America for the United Nations Development Program. Conservative groups are targeting gender equality across the region, said Piza-Lopez. Protests over curriculums aimed at empowering girls to rise above traditional female duties have helped topple education ministers in Peru and Colombia.

During campaigning in Chile, Pinera voiced concerns about the country's declining birth rate as he took aim at changes to abortion laws under Bachelet, who loosened a strict ban to make exemptions for rape, unviable fetuses and the risk of death during labor. While there is no definitive study showing female leaders do more to advance women's wellbeing than men, Farida Jalalzai, a political scientist at Oklahoma State University, said her research on Latin America suggested that was the case. "Dilma

Ramaphosa win revives youth hopes in Soweto

Cyril Ramaphosa's victory in the ANC leadership battle has sparked renewed hope among many in South Africa's Soweto township where he grew up - and where frustration with the party has been mounting. "He is a model because he is one person that came out of the township and became a great businessman in this world," said 21-year-old journalism student Charlie Khoza from the Tshabwelo district of Soweto.

He was among a group of six young men standing on a street corner bathed in sunlight, drinking canned sodas the day after Ramaphosa's decisive victory in the tight leadership race. Their optimism for the probable future president and former trade unionist turned businessman was widely shared. In the less well-off Chiavele district of Soweto, just streets away from where Ramaphosa was born 65 years ago, Niseman Baleyi, 39, was cutting hair to the rhythm of traditional music. A father of two and a barber for 20 years, Niseman is increasingly struggling to make ends meet. But he is optimistic that the election of a multimillionaire to lead the African National Congress will mean an economic renaissance for South Africa where more than a quarter of people are jobless.

'A lot of promises'

As well as soaring unemployment, Africa's most industrialized economy has suffered as big companies deterred by political uncertainty have opted to swell their cash reserves rather than investing in expansion or job creation. Tanking investor

(Rousseff), for example, would take a policy that was already in existence and reframe it in ways that made it clear it was a women's issue, whether it was poverty or home ownership," Jalalzai said.

Piza-Lopez said Fernandez, who ruled Argentina from 2007 to 2015, helped narrow the gender poverty gap with her generous spending on social programs aimed at women. Stella Zervoudaki, head of the European Union delegation in Chile, pointed to Bachelet's creation of a ministry of women, her programs to finance companies led



Some worry that progress on women's rights could stall

by women and work for marriage equality. "I'm not sure this would have been as forceful without a woman leader," Zervoudaki said. She said Bachelet had pressed for a chapter on gender in an update to an EU trade agreement that called for progress on equal pay, fair maternity leave and better access to technology for women.

Corruption Scandals

In a region where corruption scandals often hurt presidencies, South America's women leaders were no honorable exception. Rousseff was removed from office in 2016 on accusations she manipulated budget laws and was later charged with graft. A judge in Argentina has charged Fernandez, now a senator who is also under investigation for graft, with treason for allegedly cover-

ing up Iran's possible role in a 1994 bombing. Both women deny wrongdoing. Rousseff recently visited Fernandez in her apartment in Buenos Aires to commiserate, and has said sexism played a role in her own impeachment. Brazil's conservative President Michel Temer appointed an all-male cabinet after Rousseff's exit. She was voted out after lawmakers held up signs saying "bye, dear!" In contrast, Pinera said on Monday he would announce the "women and men" who would form his team, a sign he would create a balanced cabinet, perhaps taking his lead from Bachelet, whose first cabinet was exactly half men and half women. Bachelet's own approval ratings were hit hard after her daughter-in-law was accused of using political ties to get access to a bank loan.

Six Elections

Although Latin America is poised to hold six elections next year - in Costa Rica, Paraguay, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico and Brazil - the chances for another female president are slim. In Mexico, leftist frontrunner Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has repeatedly referred to his rival Margarita Zavala as "the wife of Felipe Calderon" - her husband and a former president - angering her supporters, who charge it is sexist. She is polling around 10 percent of votes.

In Brazil, Marina Silva, who has lost the presidency twice, recently joined the race and lies third in most polls. A number of female candidates are expected to compete in Colombia's presidential race, though none is expected to win. Maria Eugenia Vidal, the governor of Argentina's largest province of Buenos Aires, is the country's most popular politician, according to several polls, but is not expected to run for president in 2019. Still-rampant sexism and sexual harassment in politics remain deterrents to women who want to rise to the top, said Mercedes Araoz, Peru's Prime Minister and a former presidential candidate. "I've been a victim (of sexual harassment)," Araoz recently told journalists. "It's important to realize how discouraging it can be." —Reuters

Liberia wartime ghosts return to haunt election

Dekergar Duko, a lean father-of-two who crushes rocks for a living, often reminisces during his days of backbreaking labor about his life under Liberia's warlord-turned-president, Charles Taylor. Living in a hovel metres away from the so-called "College of Knowledge" where the dreaded strongman trained child soldiers to kill, Duko recalls when times were so much more comfortable. "I really wish for our former president to be back with us," Duko says. "In Taylor's day, at least we were growing."

Duko's image of Taylor as a caring, decisive man - he would alter the price of a sack of rice with a simple declaration on the radio - contrasts starkly with the reputation of a man who fuelled conflicts across several countries, leaving hundreds of thousands dead. But, in Bong county, one man's war criminal is often another man's hero. It was from here that Taylor, 69, launched attacks in his rebel days and where his sprawling farm still remains. In his pomp, the county and its people were cosseted.

The man himself is gone, but as key wartime figures and their associates cement a grip on positions of power, prosecutions for Liberia's back-to-back civil wars in 1989-2003 that killed an estimated 250,000 people are slipping further away, experts say. Meanwhile Taylor's ex-wife, Jewel Howard-Taylor, could well become vice-president on the ticket of footballing icon George Weah in a run-off election to be held on Dec 26, while former rebel leader turned

politician Prince Johnson has pledged them his support.

Taylor 'did his best'

Many families living in Bong county, or in Johnson's stronghold county of Nimba, lost jobs and protection when Liberia's civil wars ended. For them, 12 years of living under President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf often compares unfavorably. Duko, who is supporting a wife and two children on a meager income, complains that essentials have in some cases tripled in price since the Taylor era. "He was fighting war and at the same time sustaining the Liberian people," echoed insurance company employee Eddie Dahn, who lives in the Bong county capital of Gbarnga, explaining how Taylor helped protect Bong and provided employment on his farm.

Dahn said Taylor "did his best" - a view not shared by the international community. Taylor is currently serving a 50-year sentence for war crimes in a British jail cell, although he was convicted of funding rebel groups in Sierra Leone, not the recruitment of child soldiers, killings, rape and pillaging of which he is accused at home. "Liberia's lack of effort and progress in holding to account individuals responsible for horrific human rights violations and war crimes is deeply disappointing," said Human Rights Watch's Corinne Dufka, who helped gather evidence that led to Taylor's prosecution.

No prosecutions

Other ghosts from Liberia's harrowing past sit in the Senate, head major companies, and even preach from the pulpit on Sundays. Yet not a single sentence for wartime offences has been handed down in the country. Johnson, who was filmed laughing and drinking beer as his band of ragtag rebels savagely tortured ex-president Samuel Doe to death in 1990, is now a senator, recent presidential candidate, and born-again preacher. —AFP

Blinded in one eye, Syrian baby becomes symbol of govt siege

KAFR BATNA, Syria: The heartrending photograph of a Syrian baby who lost an eye in an air strike has set off a viral social media campaign, with users sharing pictures of themselves covering one eye. The shot depicts 40-day-old Karim Abdallah, wrapped in a puffy red jacket, with crescent-shaped scarring where his left eye should be and a dark red welt on his forehead. An Oct 29 government air strike on a rebel bastion near Damascus severely wounded Karim and killed his mother, according to relatives and the doctor who treated him - and kicked off a worldwide support campaign.

Users are taking pictures of themselves covering one of their eyes and sharing them on Twitter and Facebook with the hashtag #SolidarityWithKarim. The campaign even reached the United Nations, where British ambassador Matthew Rycroft tweeted a photograph of himself at the Security Council, his right hand over his eye. "When we sit around the UNSC & warn that inaction will mean more people are going to die. More schools bombed. More children scarred. This is what we mean," he wrote. "We must see an end to the bombardment & siege of Eastern Ghouta."

Government forces have besieged the rebel-held Eastern Ghouta region since 2013, restricting access to food and medicines for some 400,000 residents. Eastern Ghouta is one of four "de-escalation" zones agreed in May in a bid to reduce fighting in some parts of the war-ravaged country, but the regime has ramped up bombing since mid-November.

Photographs in solidarity with Karim have been posted by other Syrian children, journalists, activists and members of the White Helmets rescue service, which operates in rebel-controlled areas. Government ministers in Turkey, a supporter of the rebels, also took up the cause. "Even if the world remains silent, and nobody hears the screams from Syria, we will be the voice, eye and ear" of baby Karim, tweeted Culture and Tourism Minister Numan Kurtulmus.

The campaign was launched by Amer Almohibany, a freelance photographer in Eastern Ghouta and occasional AFP contributor. "I visited the baby, and he made his mark on me even before taking his picture. It haunted me," said Almohibany, 28. In mid-December, he published a photograph he took of Karim, before taking a picture of himself with his hand over his eye. "The goal of the campaign is to... bring to the world the voice of this baby, who lost his eye and his mother," he said.

Almohibany was first inspired by Ghouta-based activist Qusay Noor, who posted an image in which he photo-shopped his own eye out. But he also drew inspiration from a similar campaign in support of five-year-old Buthaina Mansur, a Yemeni girl whose parents and five siblings were killed in a Saudi-led strike on Sanaa in August.

'Assassinating childhood'

More than 340,000 people have been killed and half the country's population displaced since Syria's conflict broke out in 2011. The raid that wounded Karim and killed his mother hit a market in Hammuriya, a town in Eastern Ghouta, on Oct 29. The damage to his frontal lobe and left eye would likely leave him suffering long-term effects, said the brain surgeon who treated him and who identified himself as Abu Jamil. "The frontal lobe plays an essential role in a human being's comprehension, intelligence, and memory," said the 50-year-old doctor.

"It's treatable with behavioral and cognitive therapy... and cosmetic surgery, but not in Ghouta. If he could leave Syria, it would be different," said Abu Jamil. Over the years, several Syrian children have become powerful symbols of the civilian suffering brought on by the war. Other iconic images have featured toddler Omran, who was photographed bloodied in an ambulance in second city Aleppo in 2016, and Aylan Kurdi, whose body washed up on a Turkish shore after his family tried to reach Europe by boat.

Karim's father, who preferred not to give his real name, said the boy's "aunt was taking care of him and is following up with his treatment in a hospital in Hammuriya." Eastern Ghouta activists have mobilised quickly to raise awareness of the humanitarian crisis in the region. "We wanted to draw the world's attention to the crimes committed by the Syrian regime against residents of besieged Eastern Ghouta," said 24-year-old photographer Firas Al-Abdallah. "It's assassinating childhood." — AFP



This combination of pictures created on Tuesday shows Syrians covering one eye with their hands in the rebel-held town of Douma in Syria's besieged eastern Ghouta region, as part of a campaign in solidarity with the baby boy Karim. — AFP



A picture taken on Dec 4, 2017 shows Syrian baby Karim Abdallah being held by his brother in the rebel-held town of Beit Sawa in the eastern Ghouta region. — AFP

Govt probes alleged graft in French...

Continued from Page 1

an investigation. He based his arguments on a report by Al-Rai newspaper which cited an article in the French Marianne magazine which said that a middleman had demanded €60 million from Airbus in commission.

Meanwhile, MPs yesterday voiced their pride over the government's stance toward the recent US move on Jerusalem. They praised HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's reiteration of Kuwait's historical stance during the Islamic summit held in Istanbul last week. The Assembly yesterday resumed discussions on US President Donald Trump's decision on Dec 6 recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and giving orders to begin preparations to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to the holy city.

Following the discussions, the parliament approved a host of recommendations on Jerusalem, which expressed the Kuwaiti people's stance toward the issue and stressed the fact that Jerusalem is the "eternal capital of Palestine". The MPs recommended speeding up steps for the formation of a parliamentary committee to support the Palestinians and other afflicted people. They also called upon the government, through embassies and representation offices, to continue denunciation and opposition of the US decision.

In addition, the government has been urged to begin executive procedures to realize a full recognition of the state of Palestine, which must have full representation in all the international organizations. The MPs affirmed that Jerusalem is a pivotal and major UN, Arab and Muslim issue. Denouncing the US decision, they said that Kuwait has been embracing the Palestinian struggle and will continue support of the cause. The legislators lauded National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem's efforts and adoption of the Jerusalem issue.

Also during yesterday's session, MPs debated the issue of national reconciliation and called for establishing a government agency for crises and catastrophes. The Assembly unanimously called for issuing legislation for emergencies, and for forming a temporary committee to follow up with the government's preparations for crises.

The lawmakers called on the government to prepare a full formula for reconciliation and for the Assembly to work out and pass legislation for national reconciliation. They also recommended to establish a media outlet to focus and work for consolidating national unity.

The debate was called by opposition MPs to debate the need for national reconciliation after three MPs were handed jail terms along with over 60 opposition activists for storming the Assembly. MP Ali Al-Deqbasi called for the "need to open a new page and overcome all our crises and disputes". He called on the interior minister to crack down on all those who undermine national unity. He also called for a pardon for the jailed activists and said that Kuwait is passing through extraordinary conditions and all must unite.

MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri said the Kuwaiti people are solidly behind the ruling family and accused certain quarters of trying to create a dispute between the people and the ruling family. MP Mohammad Al-Dallal questioned what has been done to face the dangers like the ones seen in Qatar, in a reference to its blockade. He said national reconciliation has become a necessity because "some people are still living in the past".

MP Khaled Al-Otaibi said that there was no criminal intent among those who entered the Assembly building. He hoped that the court of cassation will correct the jail terms against the activists and called for an amnesty for them.

Speaking from the seat of MP Jamaan Al-Harbash, who is in jail, MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said for the national reconciliation to happen, members of the ruling family must end their quarrels and the government must reconcile with the law and stop sending political activists to jail. MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei stressed on the need for reconciliation and warned that the infighting is destructive for Kuwait.

'Know your place': Erdogan rebukes ...

Continued from Page 1

The UAE's top diplomat shared the tweet by the user called "Ali Al-Iraqi" and presenting himself as an Iraqi dentist living in Germany. "Ali Al-Iraqi" said the former Madinah governor "committed a crime against the people of Madinah by stealing their money, kidnapping them and putting them on trains that took them to Syria and Istanbul". The user added: "Those are the ancestors of Erdogan and this is the history that they have with Arab Muslims."

Erdogan told the minister to "know your place" as he railed against the Twitter user's claims. "Now you see unfortunately those near (Madinah) unashamedly, relentlessly are making slanderous claims. First, know your place! It means you do not know this country, you

do not know Erdogan, you do not know about Erdogan's ancestors," he thundered. Fahreddin Pasha was governor during the siege of Madinah (1916-1919). "When Fahreddin Pasha was protecting Madinah, hey you wretched slandering us, where were your ancestors?" Erdogan retorted during a speech in Ankara.

Erdogan's spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, said on Tuesday the tweet was a "propaganda lie" and the governor had "bravely defended" Madinah against the "British plans". Relations between the UAE and Turkey are filled with distrust as Ankara supports Qatar in a six-month crisis with its Gulf neighbors including the UAE, as well as political groups stemming from the Muslim Brotherhood movement. The UAE outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood as a "terror" group in 2014.

Since June 5, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt have cut all ties with Qatar, accusing the emirate of supporting Islamist extremists and of being too close to Shiite Iran, Riyadh's archrival. Turkish pro-government newspapers also routinely allude to UAE involvement in last year's attempted coup against Erdogan. — AFP

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Sports

Russia Paralympic ban remains, Pyeongchang decision in January

Strong chance Russia will be banned from Olympics

LONDON: The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) said yesterday it was maintaining its suspension of the Russian Paralympic Committee but had yet to make a final decision on whether its athletes could compete at the 2018 Winter Games in South Korea.

In a strongly worded statement, the IPC accused the Russian Ministry of Sport of being "evasive and unhelpful" and said there was "a very strong likelihood" that the suspension will remain in place beyond the Games start date next March.

But the IPC has kept in place an interim measure for Russian athletes to compete as neutrals in qualification events across four winter sports: alpine skiing, biathlon, cross-country skiing and snowboard.

A final decision on whether Russian athletes can compete at the Games in Pyeongchang will be made in late January, little more than a month before they open on March 9.

The IPC imposed a blanket ban on Russia for the Rio Paralympics last year after revelations of a systematic doping culture in the country—a tougher stance than that taken by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) which elected not to ban Russia from the Summer Games in Brazil. "Although the IPC Governing Board continues to be impressed at the level of co-operation and progress made so far by the RPC,

it is united in its decision to maintain the suspension as the reinstatement criteria have not yet been met in full," new IPC president Andrew Parsons said yesterday.

Last September the taskforce highlighted that seven key measures still needed to be met before it was able to recommend the reinstatement of the RPC. Yesterday it said five areas of concern remained.

"The RPC is making headway with the IPC on three of the five remaining reinstatement criteria, however sadly, and much to our growing disappointment and frustration, there is a lack of progress regarding an official response from the Russian authorities specifically and adequately addressing the McLaren findings and evidence," Parsons said. A report for the World Anti-Doping Agency by lawyer Richard McLaren in 2016

found more than 1,000 Russian competitors in over 30 sports had been involved in a conspiracy to conceal positive drug tests over a five-year period.

'EVASIVE APPROACH'

"Added to this is the complete lack of information provided to us by the Russian Ministry of Sport regarding its own investigations into the

matter, despite several requests from the IPC Taskforce," said Parsons. "There is now a very strong likelihood that this unhelpful and evasive approach will



MOSCOW: File photo shows President of the Russian Olympic Committee, Alexander Zhukov (6thR) and officials prepare to start a meeting in Moscow on December 12, 2017 on deciding how to respond to IOC ban on Russia participating in Winter Games. — AFP

“

The RPC made good on all its obligations

”

Wild Oats hit by lightning ahead of Sydney-Hobart

SYDNEY: Leading Sydney to Hobart yacht race contender Wild Oats XI has been struck by lightning in a big blow to its chances ahead of the gruelling blue-water classic, it was revealed yesterday. The supermaxi, an eight-time winner which was forced to retire from last year's race over a hydraulics issue, was in Sydney when a bolt of lightning hit the top of its 45-metre (147-feet) high carbon fibre mast. Race organisers said a large number of electronic instruments were destroyed, all of which are vital if it is to maintain maximum speed and stay on course.

The boat will be put through its paces yesterday to see if any of the carbon fibre rigging was damaged. "It's a major blow for us on the eve of the big race," said Wild Oats owner Sandy Oatley.

"However, I'm sure our great team will have everything ready for the start on Boxing Day. There is no stopping them." Another line honours favourite, Comanche, was docked alongside Wild Oats when the storm struck on Sunday, but escaped any damage. The fleet for the 73rd edition of the often brutal 628-nautical mile (1,163-kilometre) race across the Tasman Sea will leave Sydney on December 26. Australian supermaxi Perpetual Loyal, a long-time rival to Wild Oats, smashed the record last year, arriving at Hobart's Constitution Dock in 1 day 13hr 31min 20sec.

In a gesture to ensure Wild Oats can start, fellow supermaxi Black Jack has offered some of its own equipment from its warehouse in Brisbane. "That's the spirit that exists in this level of ocean racing," said Oatley. "We might be arch rivals on the race course, but we're all supportive of each other when necessary." Wild Oats' skipper Mark Richards said he was hopeful the yacht will be ready. "I'd like to think that this is the third strike when it comes to bad luck for Wild Oats XI in the Hobart race," he said.

"Two years ago the mainsail shredded in a storm; last year the canting keel hydraulic system keel failed, and now we've been hit from the heavens." There are 103 entries this year for one of the world's most challenging races, including 28 from overseas. — AFP

Djokovic picks new format for Australian Open

SYDNEY: Former world number one Novak Djokovic will warm-up for a tilt at a record seventh Australian Open crown by playing in an innovative quickfire event at the Melbourne venue. Djokovic, who has been sidelined since July with a right elbow injury, is making his long-awaited return to the game at an exhibition tournament in Abu Dhabi from December 28-30. The Serbian world number 12 and volatile Australian Nick Kyrgios will headline the eight-man Tie Break Tens tournament at Margaret Court Arena at Melbourne Park on January 10.

Each match will last for one tiebreak, with the first player to 10 points winning. The entire tournament will be completed on the night, and the winner will pocket US\$250,000. The Australian debut of the novel format comes after three previous events in London, Vienna and Madrid. Kyrgios, who brought an early end to his season in October because of a long-standing hip injury, said the tournament "really suits my game style." "I am looking forward to having some fun with it and I reckon the crowds will really get into it," he added. The Australian Open's tournament director Craig Tiley said he was "absolutely thrilled" the format would feature in Melbourne, adding that it was "fast, its flashy and heaps of fun for everyone". The Australian Open begins at Melbourne Park on January 15. — AFP

Magnificent Mary driven by Ali in bid for more boxing gold

BANGALORE: She is a five-time world champion, mother of three and member of parliament, but Indian boxer Mary Kom believes that at 35 there is plenty more glory in the ring to come.

Dubbed "Magnificent Mary" for a glittering career that has already inspired a Bollywood biopic, veteran Kom last month defied critics who wrote her off by winning a record fifth Asian women's championships title in Vietnam.

Driven on by the legacy of three-time world heavy-weight champion Muhammad Ali, she has now set her sights on the Commonwealth Games in April, and even the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 where she hopes to improve on the bronze medal she won in London.

"I am really inspired by Muhammad Ali, who was a legend across the world. He is my mentor and my only inspiration (is) his achievements," she told AFP. "And he was such a great boxer—that is why I am still able to do this." The Asian title in November was her first gold at international level since winning the Asian Games in 2014. But Kom has long rejected the doubts of those who have highlighted her age and questioned her ability to combine boxing with being a mother and an MP in India's upper house. "I am still fit. Some people talk about the X-factor and say 'she cannot perform'. That

is always the mindset.

"So I say there is no X-factor ... I have more experience and I am getting better and better," added Kom. In her bid for gold, she has dropped back down to the 48kg category she fought in when she first grabbed headlines at the 2001 world championships.

"The Games will soon be here," she said referring to the Commonwealth event in Australia's Gold Coast. "I am trying my best to improve day-by-day." Kom said the Indian government and much-criticised Boxing Federation of India (BFI) were providing "good facilities" so she has no excuses for not being ready.

EARLY STRUGGLE

It is a far cry from recent years. Fighting in the Indian federation led to Kom failing to make the 2016 Rio Olympics. No Indian boxers took part in qualifying. "It was very unfortunate because the reason was there was no federation, they were fighting each other to hold power, be president," said Kom.

But businessman Ajay Singh's election as BFI president last year has ended the turmoil. Like her hero Ali, Kom had her own struggles growing up, with her rise from an impoverished family in the remote northeastern state of Manipur being made into a 2014 Bollywood movie starring Priyanka Chopra.

"In the beginning it was difficult to get my own gloves, it was difficult to even buy one glove and my family did not support me in the beginning," Kom said. "They were worried that if I got injured, who will take the responsibility?" "Everything moves with money only. If we want something to eat or to buy clothes or do anything, without money you can't do anything," she said with a laugh. Blessed with three sons, Kom is now

"The positive moment is that all the athletes who qualified continue to take part in events," Kolobkov added. "The IPC has put off its decision, but it will be taken in January. In our opinion, this is a purely technical decision. It is clear that the RPC will discuss with us all issues regarding its participation (in the Olympics)."

The IOC recently issued a ban on Russia for the Winter Olympics, which take place in South Korea from Feb. 9-25, although it will allow "innocent" athletes who can prove they do not have a doping history to compete as neutrals. — Reuters



Mary Kom

happy juggling roles as a mother, lawmaker and gym owner. But she insists that boxing remains her top priority. "That is obviously very difficult. People might also say how can she maintain all these things? How can she keep performing? It is a question of will and mindset," she said. "Whether I am going to a parliament session or programme or my own personal programme, that is secondary. The first priority is training, the rest comes second and that is why I am still performing." — AFP



Nick Kyrgios

Kyrgios to stay coach-less in new season

MELBOURNE: Nick Kyrgios has sacrificed his love of basketball for more time in the gym to get fit for the Australian Open but sees no immediate need for the extra discipline of a full-time coach.

The 22-year-old Australian worked with Frenchman Sebastian Grosjean on a part-time basis this year but has yet to find a candidate with his "best interests" at heart, he told reporters in Brisbane yesterday.

"I haven't got a coach and I think I'm just going to go about my thing the same way that I did this year," he said. "I've pretty much done it all alone the last three years to get to a career high of 13.

"To bring someone on, it's tough to know whether they're just doing it for the sake of getting a bit of cash or rather have best interests at heart. "I'm not looking for someone who has a big name or anything, it's more trying

to find someone who has my best interests and I can confide in.

"So far I haven't really met anyone that meets those requirements. I don't think I'm ready for a full-time coach just yet either." The mercurial talent's world ranking has slipped to 21 after a season blighted by problems with his hip but said he was doing everything in his power to be in prime shape for Melbourne Park in January.

That has extended to less time playing his beloved basketball, which he blamed for causing a knee injury in the leadup to the 2017 tournament where he crashed out in the second round.

"I was playing a lot (of basketball) through the off-season but I know it's not great on my body," said Kyrgios. "Especially training for tennis and playing that, it's not the smartest. But you know, I'll live."

Kyrgios will warm up for the year's first grand slam at the Brisbane International before heading to Melbourne to play in Tie Break Tens with Novak Djokovic, an exhibition of 10-point tiebreak matches.

"I feel like I've taken care of my body a bit more than last year," said Kyrgios. "Last year I wasn't doing anything, I was kind of playing too much basketball. "I had so many niggles going into the Australian Open. I feel like I've done everything I can. I've still got a lot of time to kind of find my feet." — Reuters

Chadli, Dawson edging closer to West Brom return, says Pardew

LONDON: West Bromwich Albion winger Nacer Chadli and defender Craig Dawson could return from their respective injuries for Saturday's Premier League clash against Stoke City, manager Alan Pardew has said.

Chadli, 28, and Dawson, 27, last played for West Brom in October before picking up muscle and knee injuries respectively to rule them out of the club's last nine league games but are likely to make the bench at the bet365 stadium.

West Brom are winless in their last 16 league games and are second-bottom in the table, two points and places behind 17th-placed Stoke. "Next weekend's game is very important and fortunately for me this week Chadli will train. Dawson will train," Pardew was quoted as saying by the Express and Star. "Chris Brunt and Gareth Barry are back so that will boost my hand."

"I'm a little in the dark on a lot of players. Nacer Chadli and James Morrison have not played for me but obviously I know them well. "Some of the others have not had an appearance in the first team. I've looked at the players as best I can. I've worked with the players that haven't started to understand what we have."

Midfielder Matt Phillips, who sustained a hamstring injury last month, could also return for Saturday's fixture. West Brom were beaten by Manchester United 2-1 last Sunday, but Pardew believes his team's continued ambitious performances along with the return of key players will boost the Hawthorns outfit.

"We have to play like we played in the second half (against United), like we played at Liverpool and like we played in the first half at Swansea and against Crystal Palace - with a bit more conviction in what we're doing and ambition."

"You can't win games unless you have ambition and it was only really when Gareth Barry and Brunt came on that we looked to me like we had the ambition to go and get something." — Reuters

Sports

Maple Leafs celebrate 100th 'versary by routing Hurricanes

Jets scores twice to earn 6-4 victory over Predators

MONTREAL: The Toronto Maple Leafs sure know how to celebrate an anniversary. They matched their season best in goals scored in an 8-1 home rout of the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday afternoon to mark the 100th anniversary of their first game. Mitch Marner and Tyler Bozak each scored and added three assists as Toronto defeated Carolina. James van Riemsdyk contributed a goal and two assists for the Maple Leafs, who ended a three-game losing streak. Leo Komarov, Patrick Marleau, Kasperii Kapanen, William Nylander and Connor Carrick also scored for Toronto and goaltender Frederik Andersen stopped 32 shots. Zach Hyman had two assists. Jeff Skinner scored for the Hurricanes, who had their three-game winning streak stopped. Scott Darling made 25 saves for the Hurricanes. Kevin Fiala, P.K. Subban and Yannick Weber scored for the Predators.

just after a power play ended, and Derek Stepan added a goal late in the second to give the Coyotes a 2-0 lead.

CAPITALS 4, STARS 3 (OT)

Andre Burakovsky capped a three-point night with his second goal at 1:51 of overtime as Washington defeated Dallas. Brett Connolly, who also had an assist, and Dmitry Orlov also scored for the Capitals. Jamie Benn, Gemel Smith and Alexander Radulov tallied goals for the Stars.

BRUINS 3, SABRES 0

Anton Khudobin made 36 saves to lead Boston over Buffalo. It was Khudobin's first shutout of the season and the sixth of his career. Jake DeBrusk, Tim Schaller and David Backes scored for the Bruins.

RED WINGS 6, ISLANDERS 3

Trevor Daley scored the tiebreaking goal with 9:57 left in the third period as Detroit beat New York. Mike Green, Luke Glendening, Martin Frk, Gustav Nyquist and Anthony Mantha also scored as the Red Wings won their second straight. Goaltender Petr Mrazek, making his first start since Dec. 2, recorded 34 saves. Anders Lee, Ryan Pullock and Josh Bailey scored for the Islanders, who lost hours after Newsday reported the franchise's owners won a bid to build a new arena club was based from its inception in 1972 until moving to Brooklyn in 2015. Goalie Thomas Greiss made 16 saves.

JETS 6, PREDATORS 4

The Winnipeg Jets scored twice in the last 1:26 to earn a 6-4 victory over the Nashville Predators on Tuesday, avenging a November loss. Brandon Tanev's wrist from a sharp angle on the left wing beat Pekka Rinne for the tiebreaking goal. Blake Wheeler tacked on an empty-netter at 19:58 as the Jets moved within a point of Nashville and idle St. Louis for first place in the stacked Central Division. Nikolaj Ehlers scored twice and Adam Lowry and Patrik Laine once each for the Jets. Calle Jankrok,



Khudobin scores first shutout of the season

in Nassau County, where the Jets moved to Brooklyn in 2015. Goalie Thomas Greiss made 16 saves.

PANTHERS 3, COYOTES 2

Mike Matheson finished off a three-goal Florida flurry in less than six minutes, turning around a game that Arizona was dominating. Nick Bjugstad scored with 10 seconds left in the second period to start the rally. Denis Malgin tied it early in the third period and James Reimer stopped 39 shots as the Panthers halted a three-game skid and won for only the third time in 10 games. Christian Fischer scored late in the first period.

RANGERS 4, DUCKS 1

Paul Carey scored twice-doubling his season goal total- as New York defeated Anaheim at Madison Square Garden. Henrik Lundqvist stopped 39 of 40 shots for the Rangers, who also got goals from Kevin Hayes and Michael Grabner. David Desharnais and Nick Holden each had two assists. Ondrej Kase had the goal for the Ducks and John Gibson made 28 saves in defeat.



TORONTO: Mitchell Marner #16 of the Toronto Maple Leafs sets up a play against the Carolina Hurricanes during an NHL game at the Air Canada Centre on Tuesday. — AFP

WILD 6, SENATORS 4

Minnesota scored five unanswered goals in a come-from-behind win over Ottawa. Eric Staal led the Wild with two goals, while Nate Prosser, Jonas Brodin, Chris Stewart and Miko Koivu had the others. Erik Karlsson scored twice for the Senators, and Jean-Gabriel Pageau and Derick Brassard each added a goal. Alex Stalock made 28 saves for the Wild, while Craig Anderson stopped 33 shots in the Senators' net.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 4, LIGHTNING 3

Shea Theodore's power-play goal with 2.3 seconds remaining lifted Vegas over Tampa Bay. It was just the second goal of the season for Theodore, who also had three assists. James Neal, Jonathan Marchessault and Erik Haula also scored goals and David Perron added three assists for the Golden Knights, who won for the

seventh time in eight games and moved into a first-place tie in the Pacific Division with the Los Angeles Kings. Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 35 shots to pick up the win in net. Victor Hedman, Steven Stamkos and Vladislav Namestnikov scored goals and NHL leading scorer Nikita Kucherov added two assists for the Lightning, who had a seven-game winning streak snapped. Goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy had 32 saves.

CANADIENS 7, CANUCKS 5

Nicolas Deslauriers scored two goals and Jeff Petry had a goal and an assist as Montreal beat Vancouver. Daniel Carr, Paul Byron, Alex Galchenyuk and Phillip Danault supplied the Canadiens' other goals. Thomas Vanek led the Canucks with three goals and one assist, while Daniel Sedin and Brock Boeser each had a goal and an assist. — Reuters

Hathurusingha sees opportunity for struggling Sri Lanka



Chandika Hathurusingha

COLOMBO: Chandika Hathurusingha said yesterday he scents opportunity as the new head coach of Sri Lanka despite a string of humiliating defeats. "It will not be pressure but an opportunity," the 49-year-old former Test batsman told reporters after being named to the post on December 8.

"I am proud to take this opportunity to coach my own country to maximise the potential that we see from outside," Hathurusingha also said he would streamline the selection process which he believed could revive the sagging fortunes of the team.

Sri Lanka this year have turned in their worst performance since 1987. Out of a total of 29 ODIs they won only five while losing 23. In Tests, they lost eight matches including a 3-0 pasting at home at the hands of world number one India.

During their continuing tour of India, Sri Lanka lost a three-match Test series 1-0 and the subsequent one-dayers 2-1. Yesterday they played the first of a three-match Twenty20 series with India. They travel next to Bangladesh for a tri-series

also involving Zimbabwe, followed by a two-Test rubber with the hosts.

Hathurusingha resigned as Bangladesh's coach in October after guiding the national team through their most successful period in his three years in charge, masterminding Test wins over England and Australia.

His contract with the Bangladesh Cricket Board was due to run until World Cup 2019 and made him one of the world's highest-paid cricket coaches on \$40,000 a month. The Sri Lanka post had been vacant since South African Graham Ford quit in June. Nic Pothas, the fielding coach, was asked to fill the position in the interim. — AFP

Streak told reporters. "It is a challenge, though the 98 overs in a day does make it a four-and-a-half day test. It will be interesting and exciting to be part of, hopefully it is something that does work out for the future of test cricket." It is a point backed up by Zimbabwe captain Graeme Cremer, who feels his side will be in with a better chance of winning tests as it will force opponents to be more daring.

"When the two teams aren't ranked that close together, the game will move that much quicker, it will be good to watch," he said. "What a lot of the so-called bigger teams do (in five-day matches) is bat the other team right out of the game because they know they have the bowlers to bowl them out twice. "So now what I think the bigger teams will do is probably try and score a bit quicker, and give the lesser team a lot more opportunity to get wickets." The four-day format has not been met with the same enthusiasm by South Africa captain Faf du Plessis. "I believe some of the great test matches have gone to the last over on day five and that is what is so special about five-day cricket," he told reporters recently. "Four-day or first-class cricket does feel a bit easier, whereas for five days bowlers have to bowl a lot more and batters have to construct much bigger innings." — Reuters

Four-day Tests a boost for smaller nations: Streak

CAPE TOWN: Zimbabwe coach Heath Streak is unsure if four-day matches are the future of Test cricket, but says they will help to level the playing field between the so-called bigger nations and the minnows.

South Africa host Zimbabwe in the first official four-day Test at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth on Boxing Day, a fixture that will also be played as a day-night game. There will be 98 overs in a day, eight more than in five-day matches, and the follow-on target has been reduced from 200 to 150.

Streak believes the playing conditions will force teams to take more risks to engineer a result, playing into the hands of the underdogs. "In terms of higher and lower ranked (teams), it is much harder to bat a team out (of the game) because in doing so you might make it harder to win the test,"

SCOREBOARD

WHANGAREI, New Zealand: Final scoreboard of the first one-day international between New Zealand and the West Indies in Whangarei yesterday.

West Indies

C. Gayle c Latham b Bracewell	22
E. Lewis lbw b Astle	76
S. Hope c Latham b Bracewell	0
S. Hetmyer c Ferguson b Astle	29
J. Mohammed b Ferguson	9
J. Holder c Taylor b Bracewell	8
R. Powell c Williamson b Bracewell	59
A. Nurse lbw b Astle	2
R. Beaton c Latham b Ferguson	3
K. Williams not out	16
S. Gabriel not out	0
Extras (lb6, w18)	24
Total (9 wickets, 50 overs)	248

Fall of wickets: 1-40 (Gayle), 2-41 (Hope), 3-103 (Hetmyer), 4-117 (Mohammed), 5-134 (Holder), 6-177 (Lewis), 7-182 (Nurse), 8-201 (Beaton), 9-246 (Powell)

Bowling: Southee 10-2-49-0 (3w), Boulton 10-2-48-0 (4w), Ferguson 10-0-49-2 (3w), Bracewell 8-0-55-4 (1w), Astle 10-1-33-3 (1w), Munro 2-0-8-0.

New Zealand (target 249)

G. Worker b Nurse	57
C. Munro c Nurse b Williams	49
K. Williamson b Holder	38
R. Taylor not out	49
T. Latham lbw b Nurse	17
H. Nicholls c Hope b Holder	17
T. Astle not out	15
Extras (lb2, w5)	7
Total (5 wickets, 46.0 overs)	249

Fall of wickets: 1-108 (Munro), 2-118 (Worker), 3-175 (Williamson), 4-201 (Latham), 5-230 (Nicholls)

Did not bat: Doug Bracewell, Tim Southee, Lockie Ferguson, Trent Boult.

Bowling: Gabriel 10-0-57-0 (1w), Beaton 9-1-42-0 (2w), Holder 9-1-52-2, Williams 5-0-18-1, Nurse 10-0-55-2 (1w), Mohammed 2-0-13-0, Powell 1-0-10-0 (1w).

Result: New Zealand won by 5 wickets
Series: New Zealand lead the three-match series 1-0
Man of the match: Doug Bracewell



WHANGAREI: Ross Taylor (R) of New Zealand bats watched by West Indies Shai Hope (L) during the first ODI cricket match between New Zealand and the West Indies at Cobham Oval in Whangarei yesterday. — AFP

New Zealand beat Windies by five wickets in first ODI

WHANGAREI: New Zealand cruised to a five-wicket win over the West Indies in the first one-day international in Whangarei yesterday.

The tourists reached 248-9 after losing the toss and being sent in to bat, a target the Black Caps overhauled with four overs remaining. Opening batsmen George Worker and Colin Munro laid the foundation for the hosts' chase with a 108-run partnership.

New Zealand paceman Doug Bracewell was named man of the match after taking four for 55 with the ball,

while spinner Todd Astle took three for 33 on debut. The tourists struggled from the start of their innings, with dangerman Chris Gayle failing to fire and managing just 22.

Fellow opener Evin Lewis was the pick of the West Indies batsmen with a classy 76, while Rovman Powell staged a stirring rearguard action to score 59 off 50 balls. However, New Zealand always looked comfortable pursuing the relatively modest total.

The loss leaves the West Indies yet to register a win on their New Zealand tour after a 2-0 whitewash in the Test series. They have not won an ODI series in New Zealand since 1995, and are in a form slump that has seen them win only three of 17 ODIs contested in 2017. The next fixture in the three-match ODI series is in Christchurch on Saturday.

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson and paceman Tim Southee will be rested for the second and third ODIs. — AFP

Duckett to miss England Lions tour after bar incident

LONDON: Batsman Ben Duckett has been left out of the England Lions squad to tour the West Indies after pouring a drink over James Anderson in a Perth bar. Batsman Duckett, 23, had already been fined and suspended from Lions' matches on the Australia

tour after the late-night incident ahead of the third Test which infuriated the team's management.

"Ben Duckett has not been selected as a result of the off-field incident which led to his suspension and fine in Australia," said an England and Wales Cricket Board spokesman. The Northamptonshire batsman, who has played four Test and three one-day internationals for England, has already received a reported \$1,500 (\$2,000) fine and final written warning over his conduct.

The incident, the latest in a string of alcohol-related antics to generate headlines during England's Ashes tour, took place as players from the senior and development squads socialised together in Avenue bar in Perth on

December 7. It followed Ben Stokes' arrest and omission from the Ashes squad after a fight outside a Bristol bar in September, and Jonny Bairstow's "headbutt" greeting to Australia batsman Cameron Bancroft in the same Perth bar on the first night of the tour.

The spotlight on the off-field antics of the England team, who trail 3-0 in the five-match Ashes series, led to them being labelled "tourists masquerading as cricketers" by the Australian press. England coach Trevor Bayliss described Duckett's incident as "trivial" but "not acceptable".

The Lions development side will play three four-day matches and three one-day games against West Indies A in Jamaica and Antigua in February and March. — AFP

Sports

Bravo for City in shootout win, Arsenal also into semis

Last-gasp Vardy penalty for Foxes forces extra time

LONDON: Manchester City's stellar season gathered yet more momentum as the runaway Premier League leaders reached the League Cup semi-finals with a penalty shootout victory at Leicester City after a 1-1 draw following extra time on Tuesday.

Arsenal, one of the sides trying vainly to catch City in the league, also battled into the last four by beating London rivals West Ham United 1-0 with a Danny Welbeck goal at The Emirates.

Pep Guardiola's City, even with a second-string team, maintained their 21-match unbeaten record in domestic matches this season, thanks once again in this competition to their reserve goalkeeper Claudio Bravo. The visitors looked to have booked a semi-final place with a first-half Bernardo Silva goal until Leicester were awarded a soft looking penalty seven minutes into stoppage time which Jamie Vardy converted.

But after extra time produced no further goals, Bravo, their hero with two saves in a penalty shootout win over Wolverhampton Wanderers in the previous round, again delivered. With City leading 4-3 in the shootout, Leicester's two big guns, second-half substitutes Vardy and Riyad Mahrez, who both helped change the game's momentum, surprisingly misfired.

Vardy's spot kick clipped the outside of the right-hand post before Mahrez's poor effort was saved by Chilean Bravo to clinch a City victory that utterly delighted Guardiola. "I'm so happy," the Spaniard told Sky Sports after he had bounced on to the King Power Stadium pitch to congratulate his mixed bag of promising starlets and international heavyweights.

"A lot of young players played for us. They played real good," he said. "The way we had to react was not easy (after Leicester's penalty). We were tired, we had a lot of young players, and it's not easy because Jamie Vardy and Riyad Mahrez were there. What I liked the most is how we reacted and overcame that situation. It's a good indication for the future."

Guardiola had brought in some young blood, including Phil Foden, the teenager voted the Under-17 World Cup's best player in England's triumph, yet it was two of his big name recruits who dovetailed to put City ahead. Ilkay Gundogan sliced through Leicester's midfield in the 26th minute before putting in Portuguese international Silva, who toe-poked home confidently. The Foxes, who had also kept their luminaries on the bench, unleashed Vardy and Mahrez and started to look a match for City. However, Guardiola was left complaining of an



LEICESTER: Leicester City's English striker Jamie Vardy (R) scores an equalizing goal from the penalty spot to make the score 1-1 during the English League Cup quarter-final football match between Leicester City and Manchester City at King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England on Tuesday.— AFP

"unfair" finale when, with eight minutes added on, Demarai Gray tumbled in the box having barely been touched by fullback Kyle Walker.

Vardy put away the penalty with aplomb but when asked to do the same in the shootout both he and Mahrez were found wanting. Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, who replaced all 11 of his starters from the weekend Premier League home win over Newcastle United, still had plenty of international pedigree as England's Danny Welbeck got the winner three minutes

before halftime. Welbeck's persistence in bundling home from close range was one of the few highlights, a solitary shot on target, in a dull derby but David Moyes's side never threatened Arsenal, with a wayward Aaron Cresswell free kick proving their best effort.

With Arsenal and City progressing, there is the prospect of two mouthwatering last-four clashes because holders Manchester United visit high-flying Championship side Bristol City and Chelsea host struggling Bournemouth.— Reuters

Politically divided Spain united by El Clasico rivalry

MADRID: Often symbolised as pitting the pride of Catalonia against Spain's capital, the 'El Clasico' between Barcelona and Real Madrid is a match laced with political and social as much as sporting tension.

Even more so this week when the sides face off in Madrid on Saturday lunchtime just over 36 hours after polls will close in local elections in Catalonia that were called over the crisis caused by the region's drive for independence. "They have a very strong ideological connection," political scientist Pablo Simon told AFP. "On the one side are Real Madrid, who normally can be said to have a more conservative and nationalist fan base."

By contrast, Simon cites Barca's 'more than a club' motto as being rooted in a sense of Catalan identity. The sights and sounds of their Camp Nou and Santiago Bernabeu stadiums reflect that difference.

In Barcelona, Catalan flags, including the independence-supporting Estelada, are commonly flown, while the crowd at Europe's biggest stadium chant in favour of independence in the 17th minute of each match to mark the fall of Catalonia in the Spanish War of Succession in 1714.

At the Bernabeu, Spain flags are splattered across the stadium, while cries of "Viva Espana" rang around on October 1 in the hours following a violent crackdown by Spanish police forces on a referendum on independence called by separatists in Catalonia. However, for all their differences, El Clasico and particularly the fear of losing the matchup should Catalonia gain independence, unites both sets of fans. "It is the derby of Spain and it feels like it is impossible to be neutral," Sid Lowe, a Spanish football

journalist and author of the book "Fear and Loathing in La Liga" on the rivalry, told AFP. "It is a unifying event. No one wants to lose this game, even in the event of Catalan independence."

NO CLASICO NOT CONTEMPLATED

La Liga president Javier Tebas has repeatedly warned Barca would not be allowed to continue playing in the Spanish league if the drive for independence is followed through. However, that is a scenario both clubs refuse to envisage with many believing threats from Tebas, who attended a nationalist march earlier in the year, are aligned to his own political beliefs.

"I want to tell all members that the intention of the club is to continue playing in La Liga. Right now our participation is guaranteed," Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu told the club's AGM in October.

"I can't contemplate a Spain without Catalonia, nor La Liga without Barca," Real Madrid president Florentino Perez told Spanish newspaper El Espanol.

Bartomeu's board has tried to tread a fine line by defending Catalonia's institutions following the Spanish government's application of home rule, but also not coming out in favour of independence. Barca played Las Palmas behind closed doors on October 1 in protest at the violence at the polling stations.

However, even outspoken pro-independence campaigners like former Barca president Joan Laporta have called for Barca to remain in La Liga. "No one at Barcelona wants to lose this game even though that potentially contradicts their political or social position," added Lowe. The most-watched football match in the world will attract a potential TV audience of 650 million people who will tune in to see five-time Ballon d'Or winners Cristiano Ronaldo of Real and Barcelona's Lionel Messi.

"It paralyses normal life in Spain," added Simon. "That's why we always recommend to go to the theatre or the cinema at that time because they will be empty." Yet, the fact that what could happen to Barca, and by extension El



BARCELONA: File photo shows Barcelona's Brazilian midfielder Paulinho (2R) celebrates with Barcelona's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez, Barcelona's Spanish defender Jordi Alba and other teammates after scoring during the Spanish league football match FC Barcelona against RC Deportivo de la Coruna in Barcelona.— AFP

Clasico, has played such a big role in the independence debate is a sign of the match's deeply-rooted importance to Spanish society as something more than just a sporting event. "On the face of it the fact we are concerned about the impact for football from Catalan independence is

absurd because there are so many other things to be worked through," added Lowe. "Yet, it is the one that has occupied people the most. Will Barcelona still be in the league? Will there still be a Clasico? And no one wants that to be lost." — AFP

Bullet point previews of Premier League matches

LONDON: Match-by-match facts and statistics ahead of round 19 of the Premier League on Dec. 22-23.

FRIDAY, DEC. 22

ARSENAL V LIVERPOOL

- Fifth-placed Arsenal have lost their last three league games against Liverpool, conceding 11 goals and scoring four. They have not lost four in a row to the Merseysiders since 1988.

- Arsene Wenger's Gunners have won 13 of the last 14 league matches at the Emirates Stadium, with their only loss coming against Manchester United this month.

- Fourth-placed Liverpool have won 19 of the 51 Premier League games between the two sides while Arsenal have 15 wins, nine of which have been at home.

- Petr Cech needs one clean sheet to reach 200 in the league. He has nine clean sheets this season but has conceded 14 goals for Arsenal in five games against Liverpool.

- Arsenal striker Olivier Giroud, who has scored seven league goals this season, is out of the match with a hamstring injury.

SATURDAY, DEC. 23

EVERTON V CHELSEA

- Chelsea have beaten Everton in their last three league meetings, scoring 10 goals and conceding none. Everton's last victory against the defending champions came at home in 2015.

- Third-placed Chelsea have won three of their last six away games in the league, drawing once and losing twice.

- Sam Allardyce has guided Everton into ninth, with the club collecting 10 points from a possible 12 since he was appointed manager earlier this month.

- Everton striker Wayne Rooney has scored 10 goals in 16 league matches this season. The last time he reached

double figures in the league was in the 2014-15 season.

- Chelsea striker Alvaro Morata has been directly involved in seven league goals this season, scoring five times and providing two assists.

BRIGHTON AND HOVE ALBION V WATFORD

- Promoted Brighton have won one of their last 11 league meetings with Watford, prevailing 1-0 at Vicarage Road in the Championship in 2012. They have drawn five and lost five.

- Brighton have lost four of their last six league games and are 13th in the league. Their last victory was against Swansea City in November.

- Tenth-placed Watford are on a three-game losing run and have collected seven points in their last 10 league matches.

- Marco Silva's Watford have had a player sent off in each of their last three league games. They will be without Abdoulaye Doucoure, Marvin Zeegelaar and Troy Deeney on Saturday.

- Brighton have scored 14 goals in 18 league games this season. Only relegation-threatened West Bromwich Albion (13) and Swansea City (10) have scored fewer.

MANCHESTER CITY V BOURNEMOUTH

- Leaders City have beaten Bournemouth in all of their five previous league meetings, scoring 17 goals and conceding twice.

- City have scored 97 league goals in 2017 so far and could become the first team to reach 100 goals since Liverpool scored 106 in 1982.

- Pep Guardiola's City are unbeaten this season and are on a 16-game winning streak. The record in Europe's top five leagues is 19, set by Guardiola's Bayern Munich in 2013-14.

- Eddie Howe will look to become the first English manager to win at the Etihad Stadium since Harry Redknapp's Tottenham Hotspur beat the hosts 1-0 in 2010.

- Bournemouth are without a victory in six league games and sit 16th in the table with 16 points.

SOUTHAMPTON V HUDDERSFIELD TOWN

- Southampton have lost one of their last 26 games against newly-promoted sides, winning 17 and drawing eight times.

- Huddersfield have lost five of their last seven league games and are 11th in the league with 21 points.

- Two of Huddersfield's 16 goals this season have been own-goals by the opposing team.

- Southampton are 12th in the table and have not kept a clean sheet in their last nine league games, the longest run this season alongside Newcastle United.

- Southampton defender Cedric Soares is out of the game after picking up an injury in last weekend's 1-0 loss to Chelsea.

STOKE CITY V WEST BROMWICH ALBION

- Stoke have one win from the last eight games and are 17th in the table after losing their last three matches.

- Alan Pardew has won eight league games against Stoke, but the Englishman is still looking for his first league victory at West Brom since taking over from Tony Pulis last month.

- Stoke have conceded 39 goals in the league for the worst defensive record this season behind Watford (33) and West Ham United (32).

- West Brom are on their longest ever winless run of 16 games after two victories in their opening two games of the season.

- West Brom have had 10 different scorers this season but none have scored more than two goals, with Hal Robson-Kanu, Jay Rodriguez and Salomon Rondon topping their list.

SWANSEA CITY V CRYSTAL PALACE

- Swansea defeated Palace 5-4 when the two teams last met at the Liberty Stadium. A total of 12 goals were scored in the two games between the sides last season.

- Palace, 14th in the league, have won once in nine previous Premier League meetings between the two teams while Swansea have four victories.

- Bottom side Swansea have one win in 10 league games this season and have lost eight of those.

- Swansea have scored 10 league goals this season. Only Everton (9) in 2005-06 and Derby County (8) in 2007-08 have scored fewer after 18 games.

- Wilfried Bony, Swansea's only scorer in the last seven games, is a doubt for the clash after picking up a hamstring injury in the 3-1 defeat by Everton.

WEST HAM UNITED V NEWCASTLE UNITED

- The two teams have played 39 times in the Premier League, with Newcastle posting 18 victories to West Ham's 11.

- Newcastle have lost eight of their last nine league games, including the last four, and are 18th in the table.

- West Ham are unbeaten in their last three league games, beating champions Chelsea and drawing with Arsenal in the process to climb to 15th.

- West Ham midfielder Manuel Lanzini will miss the match as part of his two-game suspension for simulation.

- Newcastle manager Rafa Benitez has won seven of his last nine Premier League meetings with David Moyes.

BURNLEY V TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

- Burnley and Tottenham have played each other seven times in the Premier League, with Spurs winning four times. The two teams played out a 1-1 draw in their last meeting in August.

- Sixth-placed Burnley have scored 16 goals this season, the fewest in the top 10, but have conceded 12 goals, the same as Manchester City and Manchester United at the top of the table.

- Sean Dyche's Burnley have lost one of their last eight home games in the top flight, winning five and drawing twice.

- Seventh-placed Tottenham's top scorer with 12 goals, Harry Kane has hit the woodwork six times this season.

- Only 10 league goals have been scored at Turf Moor this season, with home side Burnley scoring seven of them.

LEICESTER CITY V MANCHESTER UNITED

- United have won 15 of the 23 games played between the two teams in the Premier League, with Leicester winning twice.

- Eighth-placed Leicester have collected 20 points from their last 10 games. Only Manchester City (30), Chelsea (25), United (21) and Liverpool (21) have more points in this period.

- United striker Romelu Lukaku has directly been involved in five goals in the last six league games against Leicester, with four goals and an assist.

- Leicester striker Jamie Vardy scored his first Premier League goal against United and is one short of 50 strikes in the competition.

- United have won seven of the last 10 games and are second in the table.— Reuters

Sports



23rd Gulf Cup continues legacy of prestigious football competition

Gulf football tournament, birthplace of stars, talents



The Late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah receiving Kuwaiti national football team, winner of the Eighth Gulf Cup tournament that was held in Bahrain in 1996.



HH the Amir, who was then Prime Minister, hands out the Cup to the Saudi football team captain after winning the 16th Gulf Cup held in Kuwait in 2004.

KUWAIT: The 23rd Gulf Cup for Football, scheduled for December 22 until January 5, will continue the legacy of the prestigious tournament, which kicked off in the early 70s. Since 1970, the Gulf Football Cup had become the venue where several stars and talents were born. This prestigious tournament helped the status of the game to progress in the Gulf region, bringing various footballers to the attention of the world.

In 1970, Bahrain was the venue of the first-ever Gulf Cup tournament with the four teams of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain taking part. Kuwait was crowned as champion.

Saudi Arabia hosted the second tournament in 1972 with the participation of the five teams of Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Bahrain. Again, the Kuwaitis were crowned as champions.

Two years forward, Kuwait hosted the tournament in 1974 with the participation of the six teams of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, and Oman. The teams were separated in two groups with Kuwait coming up on top again.

The 1976 tournament saw the participation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the UAE, Oman, and host Qatar. Kuwait dominated the tournament, winning it for the fourth time in a row.

In 1979, the Kuwaiti dominance over the tournament was broken with Iraq winning the tournament it hosted. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, and Iraq took part in the competition. The UAE hosted the sixth tournament in 1982 with the participation of seven countries. Kuwait came back and retained the title. Oman hosted the seventh tournament in 1984. The Iraqis returned home as champions. In 1986, Kuwait won the tournament, which was held in Bahrain. This

was the Kuwaiti team's sixth title.

Saudi Arabia hosted the 1988 tournament. Iraq won the title for the third time.

In 1990, Kuwait hosted the tournament and its team was crowned champion for the seventh time. Kuwait withdrew from the competition. Qatar hosted the 1992 Gulf Cup. The 11th edition of the tournament, which was missing the Iraqi team, and saw the host Qatar win the tournament for the very first time. The UAE hosted the 1994 Gulf Cup tournament with six teams participating. Saudi Arabia won the tournament for the first time since the tournament kicked off. The 13th edition of the tournament was held in Oman in 1996. Kuwait came back to

the winners' podium, clinching its eighth title.

Bahrain hosted the tournament in 1998. Kuwait won the title for the ninth time.

In 2002, Saudi Arabia hosted the tournament and won the title for the second time. Kuwait's 2003 tournament saw Saudi Arabia continuing to dominate, winning the trophy for the third time.

The 2004 tournament held in Qatar saw eight teams partaking in the event. Qatar won the tournament for second time in its history.

The UAE's 18th edition of the championship in 2007 saw the host winning the title for the very first time.

Oman hosted the 19th incarnation of the tournament and the host country won the title for the first time since the tournament was held.

Yemen, the new team to be included in the tournament, hosted the 2010 Gulf Cup. Kuwait won the title for the tenth time. Bahrain's 2013 tournament saw the UAE winning the title for the second time. In 2014, Qatar snatched its third title in the tournament held in Saudi Arabia. —KUNA



Kuwait won the title for the tenth time

Saudi Arabia won the tournament for the first time since the tournament kicked off. The 13th edition of the tournament was held in Oman in 1996. Kuwait came back to



Saudi team

Media centers ready for football tourney: Official

KUWAIT: The media centers of the Gulf 23 Football Tournament are ready to provide up-to-date and timely coverage of the grand sport event, said an official yesterday. Head of the media committee of the Gulf 23 Cup Mohammad Saleh told KUNA that the media centers, covering the event from December 22 until January 5, would be equipped with the latest technological tools that will help media personnel in their work.

From daily news bulletins, fast internet and Wi-Fi, and other services, the media

centers are ready to give the television audience a spectacular Gulf Cup experience, said Saleh. Some 2,700 local, regional, and international media personnel will be covering the tournament, indicated Saleh. Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Youth (PAY) said yesterday that it would provide all its expertise to make the Gulf 23 Football tournament, held under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, a successful event.

Speaking to KUNA, PAY's Board of Directors Spokesman Faisal Al-Duwaihees said the authority is in full coordination with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and General Authority of Youth Sports to support the Kuwaiti youth who play an important role in the organizational aspects of the championship.

The Gulf 23 Football tournament includes Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Iraq, Yemen, Bahrain, and the UAE competing for the title. —KUNA

Football teams start arriving for Gulf Cup 23

KUWAIT: The national football teams of Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates arrived here on Tuesday to take part in the 23rd edition of the biennial Gulf Football Tournament.

The teams of Bahrain, Qatar and Yemen will arrive today, Secretary-General of Kuwait Football Association Dr. Mohammad Khalil told KUNA. The stage is set for the event which will

take place between December 22 until January 5, he added, affirming that the technical and administrative preparations are complete. —KUNA



Omani team



KTV ready to provide up-to-date coverage.



UAE team



Iraqi team

Jaber, Kuwait club stadiums ready for Gulf 23

KUWAIT: Jaber International Stadium and Kuwait Sports Club arena are ready to host the Gulf 23 Football Cup on December 22 until January 5, said the Municipality yesterday.

Speaking to the press, the head of the Municipality Public Relations Abdulmohsen Abu Al-Khayel said that the tournament, held under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, would be

held on schedule. Municipal teams will be at the venues of the tournament to provide any necessary assistance, affirmed the official. —KUNA

Live Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE

Eibar v Girona	21:30
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Deportivo Alaves v Malaga	23:30
beIN SPORTS HD	

12 Magnificent Mary driven by Ali in bid for more boxing gold



14 Bravo for City in shootout win, Arsenal also into semis



15 23rd Gulf Cup continues legacy of prestigious football competition



WASHINGTON: E'Twaun Moore #55 of the New Orleans Pelicans and Bradley Beal #3 of the Washington Wizards go for a loose ball in the first half at Capital One Arena on Tuesday in Washington. — AFP

Giannis powers Bucks over Cavaliers

Turkey wants NBA star Kanter jailed for insulting Erdogan

WASHINGTON: Giannis Antetokounmpo's three-point play with 5.9 seconds left capped a 27-point night and halted a furious comeback attempt as the Milwaukee Bucks snapped a three-game losing streak with a 119-116 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Tuesday night at the Bradley Center. LeBron James led the Cavaliers with 39 points but wasn't on the floor in the fourth quarter as Cleveland used a 24-2 run to dig out of a deep deficit. Jeff Green and Dwyane Wade scored nine each in the final quarter, finishing with 13 and 14, respectively. Eric Bledsoe had a big night for Milwaukee, scoring 26 points on 10-of-16 shooting, including two 3-pointers, as the Bucks made 11 of 29 from distance and shot 52.4 percent overall.

WIZARDS 116, PELICANS 106

Bradley Beal scored 22 of his 26 points during the second half of a game loaded with massive point swings as Washington outlasted New Orleans. Mike Scott had 24 points on 11-of-15 shooting for the Wizards, who

rebounded from Sunday's 106-99 loss to Cleveland. John Wall finished with 18 points and 10 assists. Anthony Davis scored 22 of his 37 points in the first half for the Pelicans, who have dropped three of four. DeMarcus Cousins had 26 points and 13 rebounds.

KINGS 101, 76ERS 95

Zach Randolph, taking advantage of the absence of Joel Embiid, scored 27 points as Sacramento rallied for a victory over Philadelphia. Buddy Hield added 10 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter for the Kings, who erased a 16-point third-quarter deficit to end a two-game losing streak. Frank Mason Jr. chipped in with 16 points. Robert Covington scored 17 points to lead the Sixers, who lost



DeMarcus Cousins had 26 points and 13 rebounds

their third straight and their seventh in eight games. Jerryd Bayless added 15 points, and Ben Simmons had 13 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists. Embiid, the team's leading scorer and rebounder, missed his second straight game with lower back soreness. Philadelphia is 1-6 without Embiid this season.

Meanwhile, Turkish prosecutors yesterday demanded over four years jail for Turkish NBA player Enes Kanter on charges of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, state media reported. The 25-year-old basketball player faces up to four years and eight months in jail for tweets posted last year, state-run Anadolu news agency said. The New York Knicks centre has voiced support for US-

based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen in Twitter postings after a coup bid last year aimed at ousting Erdogan.

Kanter, who has previously compared Erdogan to Adolf Hitler, lives in the United States and will be tried in absentia. The date of the trial is not yet known. While Turkey accuses Gulen of ordering the July 2016 coup bid, Kanter says the Gulen movement is a social initiative advocating human rights.

Ankara claims the group is a "terror" organisation but Gulen, who lives in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania, denies this and any involvement in the attempted putsch. Kanter's father was also briefly arrested in June while an arrest warrant had been issued for Kanter for alleged "membership of a terror organisation" in May.

Since July, over 55,000 people have been arrested over alleged links to Gulen and the coup bid while more than 140,000 public sector employees have been suspended or sacked in a crackdown which has raised concern in the West. —Agencies

Rahul, Chahal give India big win in first S Lanka T20

CUTTACK: Opener Lokesh Rahul's attacking half-century and four wickets by leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal powered India to their biggest ever Twenty20 win, outplaying Sri Lanka by 93 runs in the first match yesterday.

Chahal returned impressive figures of 4-23 to help dismiss Sri Lanka for 87, in 16 overs, while

chasing 181 as the hosts took a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. India's previous biggest T20 triumph in terms of runs was their 90-run win over England in the 2012 World Cup group match in Colombo.

Rahul smashed 61 off 48 balls as India posted a challenging 180-3 after being invited to bat first. But it was Dhoni (39) and Manish Pandey (32) who set up India's big win with their unbeaten 68-run stand for the fourth wicket that lifted the team from 112-3 to put up a challenging total. Dhoni hit 4 fours and a six during his 22-ball blitz while Pandey also hit the bowlers to all parts of the ground during his 18-ball stay.

Earlier Rahul, who replaced Shikhar Dhawan in the XI, put on a crucial 63-run stand with Shreyas Iyer, who made 24, after India lost an early wicket. Angelo Mathews got skipper Rohit Sharma caught at mid-on for 17 to check India's

surge after the openers gave the team a brisk start.

Rahul, who hit 7 fours and a six, carried on with his attacking play as he reached his second T20 fifty in 34 balls, prompting skipper Thisara Perera to rotate his bowling options. The play worked as Sri Lanka took two quick wickets including that of Rahul and also managed to stem the flow of runs. Perera bowled Rahul on a well-disguised slower delivery.

But Dhoni and Pandey finished off the innings with a flurry of fours and sixes as India got 66 runs in the last five overs. In reply, the Sri Lankan batting faltered against the Indian wrist spinners as Upul Tharanga top-scored with 23. Fast bowler Hardik Pandya claimed three wickets while left-arm unorthodox bowler Kuldeep Yadav picked two. The second match is scheduled for Friday in Indore. — AFP

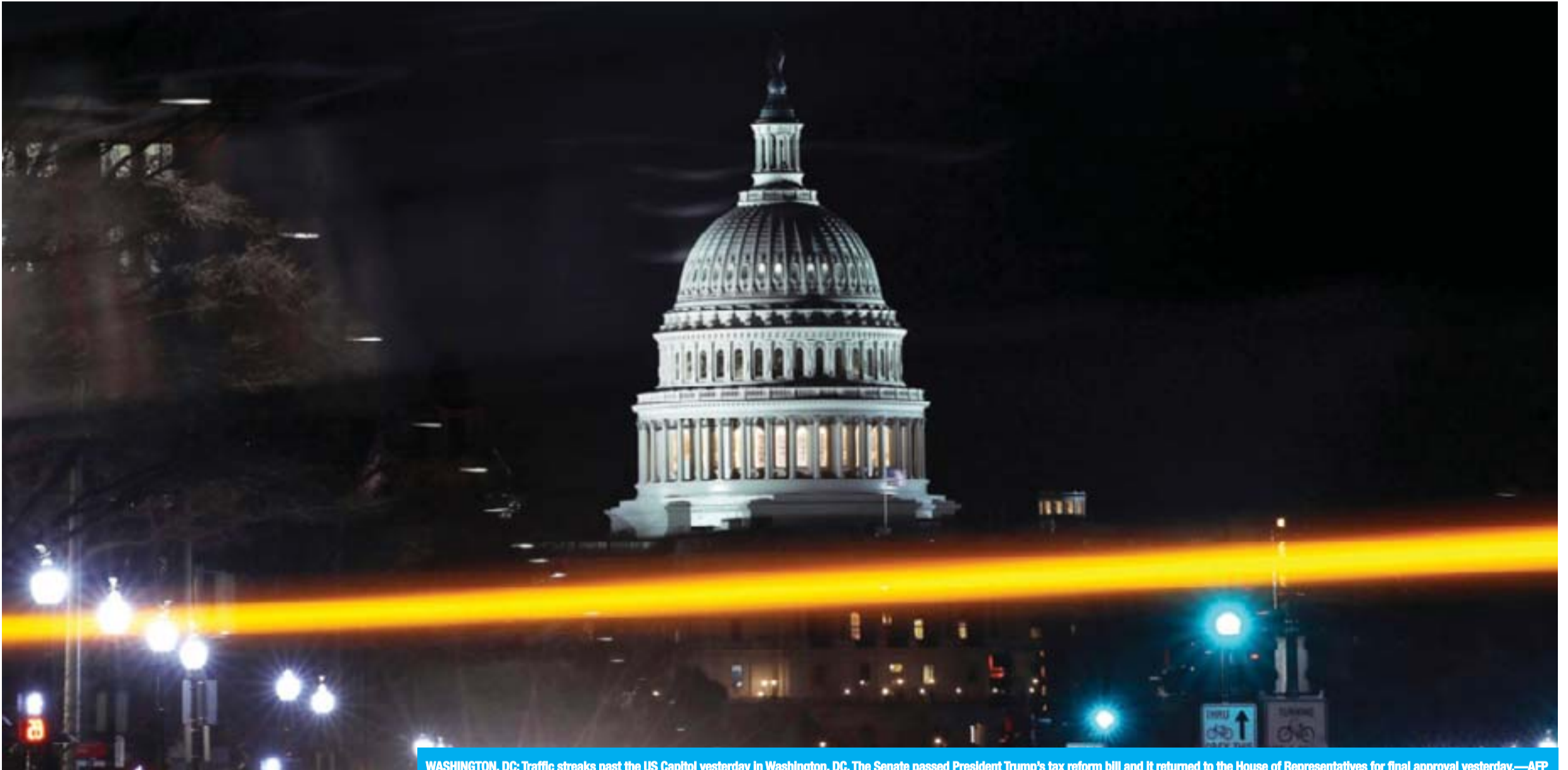
SCOREBOARD

CUTTACK, India: Final scoreboard of the first Twenty20 international between India and Sri Lanka in Cuttack yesterday:

India			
R. Sharma c Chameera b Mathews	17	K. Perera c Dhoni b Yadav	19
L. Rahul b Perera	61	A. Mathews c & b Chahal	1
S. Iyer c Dickwella b Pradeep	24	A. Gunaratne st Dhoni b Chahal	4
M.S. Dhoni not out	39	D. Shanaka c Pandya b Yadav	1
M. Pandey not out	32	T. Perera st Dhoni b Chahal	3
Extras (bl, lb, nb, w)	7	A. Dananjaya c & b Pandya	7
Total (3 wickets, 20 overs)	180	D. Chameera c Rahul b Pandya	12
Fall of wickets: 1-38 (Sharma), 2-101 (Iyer), 3-112 (Rahul)		V. Fernando c Unadkat b Pandya	2
		N. Pradeep not out	0
Did not bat: D. Karthik, H. Pandya, J. Unadkat, K. Yadav, J. Bumrah, Y. Chahal		Extras (w2)	2
Bowling: Fernando 2-0-16-0, Dananjaya 4-0-30-0, Chameera 3-0-38-0 (w2), Mathews 3-0-19-1, Perera 4-0-37-1, Pradeep 4-0-38-1 (w2, nb)		Total (all out, 16 overs)	87
Sri Lanka		Fall of wickets: 1-15 (Dickwella), 2-39 (Tharanga), 3-46 (Mathews), 4-55 (K. Perera), 5-58 (Shanaka), 6-62 (T. Perera), 7-70 (K. Perera), 8-76 (Dananjaya), 9-85 (Chameera), 10-87 (Fernando)	
N. Dickwella c Rahul b Unadkat	13	Bowling: Pandya 4-0-29-3 (w1), Unadkat 2-0-7-1, Chahal 4-0-23-4 (w1), Bumrah 2-0-10-0, Yadav 4-0-18-2	
U. Tharanga c Dhoni b Chahal	23		

Business

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2017

18 China, Australia ports clogged as coal, iron ore demand soars**19** It's o-fish-al: Tokyo's Tsukiji market to move on Oct 11**21** Avaya completes restructuring and emerges from chapter 11

WASHINGTON, DC: Traffic streaks past the US Capitol yesterday in Washington, DC. The Senate passed President Trump's tax reform bill and it returned to the House of Representatives for final approval yesterday.—AFP

Trump nears tax win; Senate OKs bill

US House to give final nod to tax overhaul after procedural foul-up

WASHINGTON: The Republican-controlled US House of Representatives yesterday was expected to give final approval to a sweeping tax bill and send it to President Donald Trump to sign into law, sealing his first major legislative victory in office.

In the largest overhaul of the US tax code in 30 years, Republicans in mere weeks steamrolled over the opposition of Democrats to slash taxes for corporations and the wealthy, while offering mixed, temporary tax relief to working American individuals and families.

The Senate approved the bill in the wee hours of yesterday morning on a 51-48 vote, but had to send it back to the House, which had passed it on Tuesday, for another vote due to a procedural foul-up that embarrassed Republicans, but was not expected to change the outcome.

The sprawling, debt-financed legislation cuts the US corporate income tax rate to 21 percent from 35 percent, gives other business owners a new 20 percent deduction on business income and reshapes how the government taxes multinational corporations along the lines the country's largest businesses have recommended for years. Millions of Americans would stop itemizing deductions under the bill, putting tax breaks that incentivize home ownership and charitable donations out of their reach, but also making tax returns somewhat simpler and shorter.

It keeps the present number of tax brackets, but adjusts many, though not all, of the rates and income levels for each one. The top tax rate for high earners is reduced. The

estate tax on inheritances is changed so far fewer people will pay. In two provisions added on to secure needed Republican votes, it also repeals part of the Obamacare health system and allows oil drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Democrats have railed against the legislation as a giveaway to the wealthy and the business community that will widen the income gap between rich and poor, while adding \$1.5 trillion over the next decade to the \$20 trillion national debt, which Trump promised in 2016 he would eliminate as president.

Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen said the bill "will harm millions of middle-class families ... It contains huge, permanent giveaways for big banks and corporations, and asks our children, millions of working Americans and senior citizens, and future generations to pay the price."

A few Republicans, whose party was once defined by its fiscal hawkishness, have protested the deficit-spending encompassed in the bill. But most of them have voted for it anyway, saying it would help businesses and individuals,

while boosting an already expanding economy they see as not growing fast enough. "We've had two quarters in a row of 3 percent growth. The stock market is up. Optimism is high. Coupled with this tax reform, America is ready to start performing as it should have for a number of years," said Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell after the chamber's vote.

Despite Trump administration promises that the tax overhaul would focus on the middle class and not cut taxes for the rich, the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center, a think tank in Washington, estimated

middle-income households would see an average tax cut of \$900 next year under the bill, while the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans would see an average cut of \$51,000.

The prospect of a Republican victory was tinged with embarrassment. House lawmakers initially voted 227-203, largely along party lines, to approve the bill on Tuesday afternoon. The measure went to the Senate, where the parliamentarian ruled three minor provisions in violation of an

arcane Senate rule. To proceed, the Senate deleted the three provisions and then approved the bill.

Because the House and Senate must approve the same legislation before Trump can sign it into law, the Senate's late Tuesday vote only ping-ponged the bill back to the House.

Democrats pounced on the mistake as evidence of the hurried, often secretive process used by Republicans in developing the bill. Ignoring Democrats and much of their own rank-and-file, Republican congressional leaders and White House officials drafted the bill behind closed doors, unveiling it on Sept. 27. No public hearings were held and numerous narrow amendments favored by lobbyists were added late in the process, tilting the package more toward businesses and the wealthy.

"When future generations look back at the short and messy history of the Republican tax bill, its most enduring lesson will be what it has taught us about how not to legislate," said Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer on the Senate floor.

"After only a few months of frantic backroom negotiations by only one party, we are left with a product as sloppy and as partisan as the process used to draft it ... What a disgrace." US House Speaker Paul Ryan defended the bill in television interviews yesterday morning, saying support would grow for the tax plan after it passes and Americans felt relief. "I think minds are going to change," Ryan told ABC's "Good Morning America" program. — Reuters



Democrats slam 'hurried and secretive process'

Bitcoin suffers dramatic price plunge in Asia

TOKYO: Bitcoin prices plunged about 15 percent in Asian trade yesterday before recouping some of the losses as investors apparently took fright at news that a South Korean exchange had been hacked. The unit, which hit a record \$19,500 at the start of the week, took a hit as it emerged that South Korean exchange Youbit had been hacked, leading the firm to say it will close and start bankruptcy proceedings, according to Bloomberg News.

Separately, US authorities on Tuesday suspended trading in a popular Bitcoin-related stock, citing concerns about market manipulation. The Crypto Company's share price had risen 1,700 percent between the end of September and Monday evening before the

Securities Exchange Commission intervened to halt trades until January 4.

"Both the news of South Korea's exchange having been hacked and position adjustment following recent rallies affected the market today," Raita Yamaguchi, senior consultant at Nomura Research Institute, told AFP. However, "the weight of South Korea as a Bitcoin market is not that big," he added.

Bitcoin dropped to \$15,815.78 in early Tokyo trade from \$18,000 Tuesday evening, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The crypto currency recovered to around \$16,000 in early afternoon trade in Tokyo. Bitcoin has soared almost 20-fold since the start of the year and this month saw it move into the mainstream as two major US exchanges began trading futures in the unit.

The US Securities Exchange Commission on Tuesday suspended trading of a popular Bitcoin related stock that has soared in recent weeks, citing concerns about market manipulation. The Crypto Company's share price had risen an eye-watering 1,700 percent, from \$3.30 to \$575 between the end of September and Monday

evening before the SEC intervened to halt trades until January 4. A statement cited "concerns regarding the accuracy and adequacy of information in the marketplace about, among other things, the compensation paid for promotion of the company, and statements in Commission filings about the plans of the company's insiders to sell their shares of The Crypto Company's common stock."

"Questions have also arisen concerning potentially manipulative transactions in the company's stock in November 2017," it added. The firm describes itself as a service to provide institutions and

individuals "direct exposure to the growth of global blockchain developments." Blockchain is the technology behind the cryptocurrency bitcoin. It is a digital ledger stored across a network of computers without the need for a central authority, a mechanism which protects it from tampering. All transactions are listed publicly. Bitcoin is currently highly speculative on the market and its price has risen in the space of a few months from a few hundred dollars to around \$17,800 currently. —AFP



CHICAGO, IL: A computer screen at the Cboe Global Markets exchange shows Bitcoin cash and futures prices on Tuesday in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

Business

China, Australia ports clogged as coal, iron ore demand soars

Around 300 ships caught in jam that would stretch 40 miles

SINGAPORE: More than 300 large dry cargo ships are having to wait outside Chinese and Australian ports in a maritime traffic jam that spotlights bottlenecks in China's huge and global commodity supply chain as demand peaks this winter.

With some vessels waiting to load coal and iron ore outside Australian ports for over a month, key charter rates have jumped to their highest in more than three years. Placed end-to-end, the total delayed fleet would stretch more than 40 miles, enough to span the English Channel from Dover to Calais and back. As well as choking supplies to the world's second-biggest economy, the clog is costing extra in a shipping sector operating on tight margins, just as it recovers from its worst downturn in more than three decades. Charterers of capesize ships - the largest bulk dry cargo carriers - face paying an extra \$1 million per vessel, assuming a 45-day wait, according to fixture data on the Reuters Eikon terminal.

"There are some ports in east Australia that have 80 vessels anchored, which translate into 20-25 days of delay and congestion," said Ziad Nakhleh, managing director of Greek ship owner Teo Shipping.

Shippers and brokers said the delays were typical, especially during the peak demand winter season, as bad weather including fog and strong winds in China and infrastructure issues in Australia exacerbate increased demand for vessels to satisfy China's soaring minerals appetite.

Australian ports affected include Queensland export terminals at Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay, where there are 76 capesize and panamax vessels - named for being the largest size than can navigate the Panama Canal - waiting to load, according to shipping data in Thomson Reuters Eikon.

At Dalrymple Bay, the 93,296 deadweight ton (DWT) panamax ship Plavia arrived to load coal on Nov. 4. But loading only started on Dec 17.

"It must be congestion. I don't think it's normal to wait

six weeks," said Nicolaus Bunnemann, joint managing director of the ship's German owner, Atlantic Lloyd. Delays at Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay were caused by a combination of port maintenance and the ongoing impact and disruption caused by Cyclone Debbie in March, said Ian Macfarlane, chief executive of the Queensland Resources Council. "It's business as usual off Hay Point but we're still seeing queues for Dalrymple, however it's declining steadily and we're expecting a return to normal sometime in January," Macfarlane told Reuters.

Ports closed

Once finally loaded, most ships will head to China, where some vessels have already waited over two weeks to unload, according to shipping data. "There have been

Infrastructure, weather partly to blame for delays

several incidents where ports in China have been closed for two or three days at a time," one Singapore-based capesize ship broker told Reuters. "Changjiangkou (or CJK, the anchorage outside Zhoushan-Ningbo) and Bayuquan were all closed at one stage, although CJK was the worst affected."

Ship owners with ships stuck in the maritime traffic jam miss out twice around: they are unable to hire out their vessels at the higher rates the congestion has caused. Charter rates for a 180,000 DWT capesize ship from Western Australia to China hit \$10 a ton - equivalent to about \$28,000 a day - on Dec. 12, the highest since April 2014.

Adding to the congestion is a coal and iron ore buying spree that kicked in after the National Congress of China's communist party in October. "There has been an abundance of cargo in the market since November after import controls were imposed during the 19th National Congress Meeting," said Ong Choo-Kiat, president of Taiwan's dry cargo shipper U-Ming Marine Transport.

"Bad weather, substitution of domestic ore with better quality imported ore caused by the anti-pollution policy, and strong steel prices...have all helped to push freight rates up," Ong said.



BRISBANE: Shipping containers at Asciano Ltd's Patrick terminal at the Port of Brisbane. More than 300 large dry cargo ships are having to wait outside Chinese and Australian ports in a maritime traffic jam that spotlights bottlenecks in China's huge and global commodity supply chain as demand peaks this winter.

Shippers fragile

China's December coal imports are set to hit 28 million tons, the highest since December 2013, according to Ralph Leszczynski, head of research at ship broker Banchemo Costa in Singapore.

For all of 2017, China is on course to import 220.2 million tons of coal, up 10 percent year-on-year, according to shipping services firm Clarkson.

Iron ore imports are set to hit 1.07 billion tons, up 6 percent compared with 2016, Clarkson said. The strong

demand for iron ore and coal adds to already soaring Chinese consumption of oil and natural gas, most of which is also imported. That's a boon for a shipping industry that is struggling to recover from one of its worst-ever downturns.

Still, shippers say any recovery is fragile, due to an ongoing oversupply in ships. "The return to permanent profitable freight rates is still way off," said Peter Sand, chief shipping analyst at shipping industry lobby group, Bimco.—Reuters

Portuguese bond yields at best level against peers since 2010

LONDON: Portugal saw its borrowing costs drop further below Italy's yesterday and the spread over other peers was at its tightest level in years as the country's impending inclusion into bond indices and stable politics drew in investors. With political noise surrounding Italy and Spain, the yield on Portugal's 10-year benchmark bond outperformed the rest of the market, dropping 3.5 bps to 1.77 percent on a day when most other bond yields were unchanged or a touch higher.

At that level, Portugal's 10-year yield was 14 basis points below the Italian equivalent and just 29.5 bps over Spain. It was last at those levels in January 2010, and it is a sea change from the start of the year when Portugal was paying a 200-250 basis points premium over its Southern European counterparts to borrow from bond market investors.

The spread over 10-year German Bund yields, the more traditional benchmark security for the euro zone, was 138.5 bps, the tightest since March 2015. "There is a switch between Italian and Portuguese bonds at the moment because

you have this uncertainty over the Italian election in March," said DZ Bank analyst Rene Albrecht. "In Portugal on the other hand you have this left of center government which made some remarkable progress in paying back loans and debt to international investors."

Euro zone finance ministers have chosen Portugal's Mario Centeno as the next president of the Eurogroup, a move that Albrecht said was a recognition from the EU of the progress Portugal has made. Portugal saw its 10-year yields fall below Italy's for the first time in years earlier this week following a two-notch upgrade from Fitch that could put the country's debt back into many of the world's major bond indices.

Italian yields on the other hand have risen sharply in the past week on reports of an upcoming election on March 4, with a hung parliament the most likely outcome. Though Spain's government debt has been relatively resilient ahead of a Catalonia vote on Thursday that many hope will resolve Spain's worst political crisis in decades, it still lags Portugal in recent times. Debt across the euro zone was hit hard on Tuesday in a sell off triggered by a rise in German borrowing plans for 2016 strong U.S. economic data, and expectations around a U.S. tax overhaul.

On Tuesday night, congressional Republicans hit a last-minute snag in their drive to pass the biggest US tax overhaul in 30 years, requiring them to hold another vote on Wednesday.—Reuters

Greek parliament approves 'final bailout' budget

ATHENS: Greece's parliament yesterday approved the 2018 budget, described by the government as the last under the country's multi-billion bailout, which nominally ends in August.

"After eight years...this is the final bailout budget parliament is called to approve. We leave behind a period nobody will want to remember," Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras told the chamber.

"We have regained credibility in managing public funds," Tsipras said. The Greek finance ministry is maintaining high taxation with the aim of collecting a budget surplus equivalent to 3.8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), excluding debt payments in 2018.

And the economy is expected to grow by 2.5 percent, compared to 1.6 percent this year.

"This is the first budget of normality in the past seven years," said defense minister and government coalition partner Panos Kammenos. "There will be no more bargaining for (bailout) loan tranches," he said. The ministry last month said that enough "fiscal room" was achieved to permit tax cuts after 2018, when the country is scheduled to exit its third multi-billion EU-backed bailout.

The government has already legislated pension and tax break cuts that will take effect even after Greece exits the bailout, in 2019 and 2020.

EU economic affairs chief Pierre Moscovici has also said that Greece will remain under fis-



ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (C) gestures as he delivers a speech during a parliamentary session in Athens yesterday. —AFP

cal supervision until it repays 75 percent of its EU loans. "There are tight restrictions until at least 2022," said main opposition leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis. "Greeks hope this will be the last budget by your government."

Greece is now keen to take advantage of a growing appetite for Greek debt, with its 10-year bond yields lately hovering at pre-crisis levels. Last week, 10-year bond yields fell below

4.0 percent for the first time since 2006, and five-year bonds are around 3.5 percent.

"This means that independently accessing the markets and regaining the country's economic and political sovereignty is not just fantasy, it's a goal fully within our reach," said government spokesman Dimitris Tzanakopoulos. According to reports, Greece plans at least two bond offerings in the first half of 2018.—AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.690
Indian Rupees	4.720
Pakistani Rupees	2.760
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.975
Nepali Rupees	2.961
Singapore Dollar	225.670
Hongkong Dollar	38.733
Bangladesh Taka	3.645
Philippine Peso	6.012
Thai Baht	9.250

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.814
Qatari Riyal	83.235
Omani Riyal	787.032
Bahraini Dinar	804.700
UAE Dirham	82.509

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.160
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.978
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.216
Tunisian Dinar	123.610
Jordanian Dinar	427.090
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.019
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.565

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.850
Euro	358.880
Sterling Pound	406.730
Canadian dollar	236.600

Turkish lira	79.910
Swiss Franc	309.500
Australian Dollar	233.950
US Dollar Buying	301.650

GOLD

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.400
Canadian Dollar	235.642
Sterling Pound	406.430
Euro	359.705
Swiss Frank	299.500
Bahrain Dinar	802.595
UAE Dirhams	82.725
Qatari Riyals	83.545
Saudi Riyals	81.500
Jordanian Dinar	427.795
Egyptian Pound	17.077
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.975
Indian Rupees	4.724
Pakistani Rupees	2.740
Bangladesh Taka	3.668
Philippines Peso	6.012
Cyprus pound	17.994
Japanese Yen	3.675
Syrian Pound	1.589
Nepalese Rupees	2.946

Malaysian Ringgit	75.205
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.260
Thai Bhat	10.215
Turkish Lira	79.150

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.398369	0.406869
Czech Korune	0.005932	0.015232
Danish Krone	0.044059	0.049059
Euro	0.352778	0.360278
Georgian Lari	0.118684	0.118684
Hungarian O.001053	0.001243	
Norwegian Krone	0.032160	0.037360
Romanian Leu	0.060590	0.077440
Russian ruble	0.005136	0.005136
Slovakia	0.009023	0.019023
Swedish Krona	0.031926	0.036926
Swiss Franc	0.300556	0.311556
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.223340	0.235340
New Zealand Dollar	0.204121	0.213621
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.229611	0.238611
US Dollars	0.298650	0.303070
US Dollars Mint	0.299150	0.303070
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003298	0.003882

Chinese Yuan	0.044369	0.047869
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036631	0.039381
Indian Rupee	0.004130	0.004771
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002592	0.002772
Korean Won	0.000269	0.000284
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070580	0.076580
Nepalese Rupee	0.003021	0.003191
Pakistan Rupee	0.002579	0.002869
Philippine Peso	0.005932	0.006232
Singapore Dollar	0.219222	0.229222
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001697	0.002277
Taiwan	0.009983	0.010163
Thai Baht	0.008926	0.009476
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.796269	0.804769
Egyptian Pound	0.014736	0.020454
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000186	0.000246
Jordanian Dinar	0.422401	0.431401
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022130	0.046130
Omani Riyal	0.0780045	0.785725
Qatar Riyal	0.078868	0.083808
Saudi Riyal	0.079647	0.080947
Syrian Pound	0.001283	0.001503
Tunisian Dinar	0.117536	0.125536
Turkish Lira	0.073792	0.084092
UAE Dirhams	0.081002	0.082702
Yemeni Riyal	0.000984	0.001064

Business

BoE to allow EU banks to operate in UK after Brexit

London bids to preserve its clout after Brexit

LONDON: The Bank of England will allow European banks to continue operating without creating expensive subsidiaries after Brexit, the BBC reported, the opening gambit in a tussle with the EU over London's position as a top global financial hub. The BoE's decision, if confirmed, would mean European banks offering wholesale services would not face new hurdles to operating in London after Britain leaves the European Union in March 2019.

A BoE spokesman declined to comment on the report ahead of the publication at 1300 GMT of the central bank's approach to future supervision of foreign banks, insurers and clearing houses. By allowing EU banks to function as normal, the BoE's announcement represents the first salvo in an expected struggle with the EU over banking rules that will decide the fate of London's lucrative financial center for decades to come. The central bank's proposal indicates a much softer British position than that of the EU, which insists London-based banks will lose access to EU banking markets after Brexit and wants to pull some key banking business back.

London vies with New York for the title of the world's financial capital, dominates the \$5.1-trillion-a-day global foreign exchange market and is home to more banks than any other center. But many other EU capitals see London's Brexit tumult as an opportunity to grab new business. Countries such as France, Germany and Ireland are wooing banks based in London to move operations to them after Brexit. Earlier this year, BoE Governor Mark Carney called for Britain

and the EU to recognise each others' bank rules after Brexit, or risk a potentially damaging hit to financial services across Europe where many companies depend on London for funding.

Brexit banking

The EU's top Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier this week reiterated his stance that London stands to lose access to the EU banking market if it sticks to its plan to impose new controls on migration, one of the conditions for membership of the single market. The EU has already proposed that clearing of euro-denominated derivatives, which are

largely conceded to the EU on the structure, timetable and substance of the negotiations. A later version of the BBC story removed a reference to the BoE proposing that EU banks would be allowed to operate as usual even if no divorce deal was struck between London and Brussels. The BoE's proposal indicates both Britain's concern to preserve London as by far the biggest global banking center in its time zone but also worry about the potential regulation that the EU could impose on banks after Brexit.

May has said Britain will leave the EU's single market, raising questions about how companies in Britain will do business in the bloc after Brexit, and how European companies can operate in Britain.

The City of London welcomed the BoE's move. "Allowing European wholesale banks to operate as normal in the UK after March 2019 is a welcome bit of news to end the year for the City," said Catherine McGuinness, the head of the City of London Corporation.

The BoE move could also be a gesture of goodwill aimed at softening European Commission plans, due to be published yesterday, to stiffen the rules for non-EU investment banks which operate inside the bloc. Many of those banks, like Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley have their main European operations in London at present, though they are making plans to move some operations to EU centers. The BoE has said around 10,000 financial services jobs are likely to move out of the UK immediately after Brexit in March 2019. Bankers say more may follow in the years ahead. More



EU plans to stiffen rules for non-EU banks

done mainly in London, could move to the euro zone after Brexit, if there is no comprehensive Brexit deal between EU and UK regulators.

The tough EU line on banking is extremely sensitive for the United Kingdom which collects over 70 billion pounds (\$94 billion) a year in tax from the financial services sector.

So far, British Prime Minister Theresa May has

steady economic growth in 2018. In the first nine months of this year, the economy grew 6.9 percent from a year earlier. Growth was underpinned by stronger exports and sustained state spending, positioning China to exceed the government's growth target of around 6.5 percent this year. China will maintain economic growth in a reasonable range next year and also keep credit growth reasonable, Xinhua said.

Sources have told Reuters that Chinese leaders are likely to stick with that growth target for 2018, even as they ratchet up efforts to prevent a destabilising build-up of debt. Beijing has made progress this year controlling the level of debt in the economy as a portion of GDP, with corporate debt ratios declining slightly this year, according to data from the Bank of International Settlements.

While the statement following this year's economic conference made no mention of the need to lower corporate leverage - in contrast to last year's readout - that does not mean China is de-emphasizing the deleveraging drive, said Yang Zhao, Nomura's chief China economist. "Deleveraging might not be intensified with new policies, but for policies already rolled out, they will materialize and be implemented next year," said Zhao, who added that deleveraging is a component of China's supply-side reform strategy. "The deleveraging, I think, will remain in place."

The leadership said the fight to control risks was primarily focused on dealing with financial risks. Xinhua said. That aligns with a campaign this year to defuse points of risk in China's financial markets, including reining in the massive shadow banking sector and rolling out new rules for micro-lenders.

China will also take concrete measures to strengthen the regulation of local government debt, promote private investment, and will deepen reform of state-owned firms in 2018, Xinhua added.

In the property sector, which saw a rapid run-up in prices in recent years though gains have slowed, China will maintain the stability and continuity of property tightening measures, Xinhua said. — Reuters

China to deepen reform, keep growth steady in 2018

BEIJING: China will deepen structural reforms and curb risks to the country's financial system while maintaining steady economic growth in 2018, the official Xinhua news agency said yesterday, citing leaders at an economic planning meeting. China has seen better-than-expected economic growth this year even as it stepped up a campaign to cut debt, though there are growing concerns that the tighter policy environment could weigh on growth in the world's second-largest economy next year.

The annual economic conference is attended by China's top leaders and is keenly watched by investors for clues to policy priorities and economic targets in the year ahead.

The government will push forward with structural supply-side reform and maintain prudent, neutral monetary policy next year as it looks to improve the quality of growth, the news agency said citing a statement following the meeting. "China's economic development has entered a new era. The basic feature is that our economy has shifted from the high-speed growth stage to a stage of high-quality development," the statement said.

"Pushing forward high-quality growth is a requirement for maintaining healthy development of the economy." The statement echoes President Xi Jinping's comment at a key party congress in October that China would strive for higher quality, more efficient and fair growth. At a Politburo meeting earlier this month, top leaders pledged to deepen structural reforms and curb systemic risks from the country's growing debt pile while maintaining

After US Republicans' tax elation, a hangover may loom

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and his Republican Party are in a party mood as they are on the verge of enacting the most sweeping tax cuts in three decades—but analysts warn the country may wake up to a hangover. The centerpiece of the \$1.5 trillion legislation is a series of deep cuts for businesses that Republican leaders say will spur productivity and job creation and nudge an already humming US economy even higher.

"Enjoy and create many beautiful JOBS!" Trump tweeted Tuesday, hours before both the US Senate and House approved the major tax revamp. A last-minute snag will force the lower chamber to consider the package Wednesday once again—after a parliamentarian stripped out three provisions found to be in violation of Senate rules—but the House is expected to sign off on those minor changes, sending the bill to the president's desk.

But if history is any guide, some economists say, fiscal realities could soon force the tax plan's proponents to eat their words. In past decades, policymakers have reversed major cuts as deficits ballooned and economic windfalls failed to materialize. The Trump administration estimates the cuts will pay for them-

selves with tax revenues rising as the economy grows, a hotly contested analysis, of which polls show the public remains skeptical.

Yet even outside economists who support the Republican plan do not claim its gains will balance out its costs. "It won't pay for itself but it would be worth the cost," Glenn Hubbard, a former chief White House economist under president George W. Bush, told AFP. Hubbard was one of nine Republican economists whose views were touted by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, in advancing the claim that the plan would increase GDP growth by 0.3 percent a year over a decade. This faced sharp pushback from Democratic economists, including former treasury secretary Larry Summers. Major tax cuts enacted in 1981 and again in 2001-2003 ultimately suffered U-turns as policymakers faced a worsening fiscal outlook and politically unpalatable spending cuts. In 1981, president Ronald Reagan's administration oversaw steep tax cuts, including capital investment write-offs for companies, but agreed to reverse some of these the very next year, unnerved by shrinking tax receipts. Still, deficits continued to balloon during the 1980s, with federal debt rising more than 60 percent to \$2.6 trillion

It's o-fish-al: Tokyo's Tsukiji market to move on Oct 11

TOKYO: Tokyo's famed Tsukiji fish market will move to a new site on October 11, the capital's governor said yesterday, ending years of delays marked by scandals and emotional divisions among fishmongers. Yuriko Koike's decision should also clear the way for a key transport hub for the 2020 Olympic Games to be situated on the market's site in eastern Tokyo.

"We believe the schedule will give us enough time to prepare for a smooth relocation," she told reporters. The market, a popular tourist attraction in an area packed with restaurants and shops, will move to Toyosu, a former gas plant a bit further east.

Koike's decision draws to a close a charged debate over what to do with the dilapidated but beloved Tsukiji market that handles 480 kinds of seafood worth \$14 million daily—as well as 270 types of fruits and vegetables. The market is best known for its pre-dawn daily auctions of tuna, caught from all corners of the ocean, for use by everyone from top Michelin-star sushi chefs to ordinary grocery stores. The market opened in 1935 and has fed Japan's hunger for fresh seafood ever since.

But in recent years the antiquated facility has prompted its users, such as seafood wholesalers, to voice concerns about its earthquake resistance, sanitation and fire safety, as well as the structure's use of asbestos and its crumbling walls.

They have also discussed the need for upgraded technology, such as better refrigeration systems. However, the move, originally

between 1981 and 1988 — switching the United States from the world's largest international lender to its biggest debtor. Nevertheless, that year presidential candidate George H.W. Bush uttered six fateful words he quickly came regret: "Read my lips: no new taxes."

'You're going to regret it'

By 1990, with Bush in office, the White House retreated, deciding it had no choice but to accept some painful tax hikes, allowing the top marginal rates and the alternative minimum tax levied on many wealthier Americans to rise, just as the United States was about to slip into recession. The move immediately opened up a chasm with Bush's own party, sending his political team into disarray and exposing the president to ridicule from rival candidates. The climb-down likely cost Bush reelection in 1992. "He probably lost his job because of it," Matthew Gardner, a senior fellow at the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, told AFP.

"The lesson is pretty similar to the lesson that we should have learned in the '80s and again in 2001: If you cut taxes without a flight path to sustainability, you're likely to go to regret it." Tax cuts enacted under president George W. Bush in the early 2000s met a similar, although less straightforward, fate, according to Gardner. Between 2001 and 2003, the administration and Congress lowered the top marginal tax rate to 35 percent from 39.6 percent, but after a protracted battle lawmakers allowed it to drift back up again to 39.6 percent in 2013 — where president Bill Clinton's administration had left it in 1993. — AFP



LONDON: Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond (center) listens during a press conference where International Monetary Fund (IMF) managing director Christine Lagarde presents the preliminary conclusions of the IMF's 2017 annual review of the UK's economy at the Treasury in central London yesterday. — AFP

than 100 banks operating in London are branches of lenders headquartered elsewhere in the EU. Currently, they operate in Britain under EU "passporting" rules which are due to expire when Britain leaves the bloc in March 2019.

The BoE had previously said it would let banks know before the end of the year whether these branches must reapply for branch licenses to operate after Brexit, or would need to be turned

into subsidiaries, an option Boston Consulting Group has said could cost banks up to 40 billion euros. Switching from being a branch to a subsidiary means having to build up buffers of capital and cash locally, and come under the direct supervision of the Bank of England. EU retail banks that hold UK customer deposits above a certain threshold would have to become subsidiaries, the BoE has already said. — Reuters



This file photo taken on January 5, 2016, shows fishmongers inspecting bluefin tuna before the first auction of the new year at Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market. Tokyo's famed Tsukiji fish market will move to a new site on October 11, 2018, the capital's governor said yesterday, ending years of delays marked by scandals and emotional divisions among fishmongers. — AFP

slated for late 2016, also faced loud opposition from various businesses that operate at or around the market, an extremely popular attraction located conveniently within walking distance from the Ginza shopping district. Many businesses were emotionally attached to the Tsukiji brand as well as the location, which also had its own problems with soil contamination as it used to house a dry cleaning plant before the market was built.

Koike, a former TV anchorwoman, put the relocation plan on hold shortly after being elected Tokyo's first female governor last year. She then found a series of problems with the new site in Toyosu, including soil and groundwater contamination as well as the discovery that contractors had inexplicably failed to fill

a basement at the new site with clean soil as a buffer against underground pollution.

The local government has paid hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up the new facility.

Tsukiji's wholesalers have voiced frustration over the delay, arguing that postponing the move was costing them millions of dollars a month. The decision will also officially make the upcoming new year tuna auctions the last at the beloved market.

In January, Kiyoshi Kimura, Japan's self-styled "Tuna King," paid more than \$600,000 for a 212-kilogram (467-pound) bluefin tuna at the first auction of the new year. In 2013, the restaurateur paid a record \$1.8 million for a bluefin—a threatened species—outbidding a rival bidder from Hong Kong. — AFP

26 new winners in Al-Hassad Islamic account this week

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw. Kuwait's leading sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 20th of December 2017.

The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Abdulla Rashed Khalifa. 25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Zahid Anwar Khan, Fayez Salem Alnashwan, Omar Salem Eissa Alali, Ameen Mohammad Albaqshi, Mohammed Mnahe Al-Osaimi, Nahle Rashad Rak, Mazed Saoud Alshammeri, Basem Ibrahim Al-Attari, Najeeb Mustafa Alzaied, Hamad

Manea Alajmi, Mohammad Mirza Abdullah, Ali Hamad Alajmi, Asia Mohammad Albannay, Waleed Khaleel Alfoudari, Samiha Murad Behbehani, Zikriat Abdullrasul Almuwail, Athal Basheer Aldhafaeri, Reyadh Ali Mohsen, Ebrahim Ali Almulla, Salwa Ali Algannas, Mohammed Rafia Mohammed, Abdulla Mirza Ali, Mohamed Khalifa Khalifa, Ahmed Abdulla Ahmed and Mohamed Wael Mohamed.



Al-Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions. Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year." Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw.



Alghanim Auto reveals future expansion plans

Press event held in presence of President of Ford Middle East & Africa

KUWAIT: Alghanim Auto, the official dealer of Ford Motor Company, Ford Trucks and Lincoln Motor Company in Kuwait, revealed its future expansion plans at a press event hosted by CEO of Alghanim Industries, Omar K. Alghanim, held at the Ford Alghanim Showroom.

The event was attended by the President of Ford Middle East & Africa, Jacques Brent, the Vice President of Marketing, Sales and Service of Ford Middle East & Africa, Met Arias, executives from Ford Middle East, Alghanim Industries and members of the press.

The event included a special ceremony where Omar K. Alghanim unveiled plans to open five new Ford, Ford Trucks, and Lincoln facilities within the next two years in several locations, including Shuwaikh, Fahaaheel, and Ahmadi. Following the press event, attendees inaugurated the construction site of the new Ford Showroom and Service and Parts Center in Shuwaikh, where they participated in the first ground breaking ceremony.

Speaking at the event, Omar K. Alghanim said: "Over a year ago, Alghanim Industries became Ford's partner in Kuwait. We've achieved a great deal since announcing our partnership. Today, Ford Alghanim is a vibrant part of Kuwait's automotive sector. Both Alghanim Industries and Ford Motor Company began as family run businesses and for generations, have been serving customers' needs with products and services. Continuing this legacy, we're pleased to announce our plans to build new facilities that would expand our geographical reach and serve our customers with convenience, latest technologies and global knowhow."

He went on to say: "Alghanim Industries has over 70 years of experience in the automotive sector, which we intend to channel in order to provide our customers with the best experience. To that end, we're investing in state of the art facilities, all designed in a way that integrates world-class technology with the latest environmental practices. We're proud to represent Ford in Kuwait and, most of all – we're grateful to our customers for welcoming us into their hearts and homes."

President of Ford Middle East & Africa, Jacques Brent, said: "We are thrilled to partner with Alghanim Auto. They've done a tremendous job in growing the Ford brand locally in a short space of time. Not only delivering outstanding customer service, but also growing our customer base. Their passion for customer excellence and drive for the business is world-class and truly commendable, as evidenced by the great plans that Mr. Omar K. Alghanim revealed. Customers are at the heart of our business and their satisfaction and trust is core to our growth. And this customer-focused strategy is stronger than ever here in the Middle East, where we work with our distributor partners to deliver the products, services and ownership experience that our customers want and value."

Mr. Brent also added: "Just last month we revealed to the Middle East region some of the latest additions to our lineup, including the much awaited all-new 2018 Ford Expedition full-size SUV, along with the new 2018 F-150 truck and the new 2018 Ford Mustang, in addition to the all-new Lincoln Navigator and the



CEO of Alghanim Industries, Omar K. Alghanim



President of Ford Middle East & Africa, Jacques Brent

Presidential line. We are really excited about these products and can't wait to launch them in Kuwait".

The new Ford, Ford Trucks and Lincoln facilities for sales, service and parts will be fully automated, smartly controlled and among the best environment friendly buildings in the region, with the use of LED lighting, heat insulation, thermally insulated glass fascia, efficient cooling system and many other high quality features.

During the event, attendees toured the current Ford Showroom and Service and Spare Parts Center, the new dedicated Lincoln Alghanim Showroom in the Middle East and the first dedicated Ford Motorcraft Battery Sales and Service Center in the Middle East. Omar K. Alghanim and Jacques Brent presented the very first Ford sales customer, Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Slisel, and the very first Ford service customer, Mr. Ahmad Al-Ajamy, special tokens of appreciation for their trust and loyalty to Alghanim Auto.

Ford customers can visit the Ford Alghanim New Vehicle Showroom and Service and Spare Parts Center located in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, opposite from the Classical Car Museum. Showroom working hours are from 9:00AM to 10:00PM, Sunday to Thursday, and 2:00PM to 8:00PM on Friday. Service Center working hours are from 7:00AM to 7:00PM Saturday to Thursday.



Business

Avaya completes restructuring and emerges from chapter 11

Company exits with stronger balance-sheet

KUWAIT: Avaya Holdings Corp ("Avaya" or the "Company") announced that it has successfully completed its debt restructuring and emerged from chapter 11.

"This is the beginning of an important new chapter for Avaya," said Jim Chirico, Avaya's president and CEO. "In less than a year since the commencement of our chapter 11 restructuring, Avaya has emerged as a publicly traded company with a significantly strengthened balance sheet. Overall, we reduced our prior debt load by approximately \$3 billion, and we exit today with more than \$300 million in cash on our balance sheet. The reduction of our debt and certain other long-term obligations will also improve annual cash flow by approximately \$300 million compared to fiscal 2016."

"We have the flexibility we need to invest in the large and growing contact center and unified communications markets as we complete our transformation to a software, services and cloud solutions provider," Chirico added. "With a new Board

and leadership team firmly in place, Avaya is now well-positioned to execute on its growth plan and deliver the returns and value expected by our stakeholders."

Avaya is taking the steps necessary to list on the New York Stock Exchange. The company expects to have approximately 110 million shares outstanding upon emergence.

Centerview Partners LLC and Zolfo Cooper LLC are Avaya's financial and restructuring advisors and Kirkland & Ellis LLP is the company's restructuring counsel.

Avaya enables the mission critical, real-time communication applications of the world's most important operations. As a global leader in delivering superior communications experiences, Avaya provides the most complete portfolio of software and services for contact center and unified communications—offered on premises, in the cloud, or a hybrid. Today's digital world requires communications enablement, and no other company is better positioned to do this than Avaya.



Beginning of an important new chapter



Mercedes-Benz Cabriolet collection: Awaken the senses with a test drive

KUWAIT: AR Albisher & Z Alkazemi Company are encouraging customers to make the most of the mild winter climate and experience the joy of top down driving in their most extensive cabriolet family to date. With the Authorized General Distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait offering test drives for the month of December, motoring enthusiasts can experience a visceral driving experience with unobscured 360-degree vision in the latest Mercedes-Benz E Class Cabriolet and C Class Cabriolets.

The sporty four-seater C-Class cabriolet's design showcases modern luxury with a youthful touch, making it an exceptional entry-level model into the cabriolet world of Mercedes-Benz. Similarly, the new E Class Cabriolet brings a scintillating and sporty exterior, a host of new technologies and a sophisticated climate control system which offers an unnoticeable transition between closed and open top driving. Both models come with the option of being equipped with the AIRCAP electric draught-stop system and the AIRSCARF neck-level heating system, to enhance comfort when driving with the roof down.

"There are many reasons to purchase a cabriolet, not least the unparalleled feeling of having the sun on your face and wind in your hair as you steer into the next bend. Driving a cabriolet is not about getting from A to B, it's about enjoying a wholly encompassing driving



experience and savoring every moment - and winter in Kuwait really is the perfect time to enjoy the Cabriolet's sporty driving dynamics," said Mohammed Abdul Rahman Albisher, Director of Abdul Rahman Albisher & Zaid Alkazemi Company.

"With many years spent refining and reducing noise levels and vibrations to a minimal in order to ensure driver comfort, it's also great to be able to offer drivers full access to a car's capabilities and allow them to hear the engine come to life and appreciate its sound when the top is down," added Michael Ruehle, CEO of A R Albisher and Z Alkazemi Company.

With its top up, the profile of the new two-door C Class cabriolet resembles that of the C-Class Coupé with virtually identical basic dimensions: a striking front end featuring a diamond radiator grille, LED High Performance headlamps, long bonnet and high belline. Efficient, powerful engines delivering between 115 and 270 kW (156 to 367 hp) and a suspension designed for dynamics (with optional AIRMATIC air suspension) ensure sportily agile handling, while the new 9G-

TRONIC automatic transmission is available for all engine variants.

The fifth and youngest member of Mercedes-Benz's E-Class family, the Cabriolet has been renewed entirely within the space of one year. Compared with its predecessor, the new E-Class Cabriolet has grown in length, width and wheelbase, with a vehicle length of 4826 mm, a vehicle width of 1860 mm and a height of 1428 mm. Efficient, powerful engines delivering between 115 and 270 kW (156 to 367 hp) and a suspension designed for dynamics (with optional AIRMATIC air suspension) ensure sportily agile handling, while the new 9G-TRONIC automatic transmission is available for all engine variants. With the fully automatic fabric acoustic soft top controlling itself elegantly and blending in seamlessly with the sporty silhouette, the new E Class and C Class Cabriolets are amongst some of the best in their class in terms of sound, durability and operation. The Mercedes-Benz C Class and E- Class Cabriolets are available at A R Albisher's Shuwaikh showroom.

NBK's Laki Titanium and Alshaya offer special shopping promotion for women

KUWAIT: Ladies in Kuwait receive special rewards, instant discounts, benefits and promotions when they bank with National Bank of Kuwait. The Laki Titanium Credit Card offers uniquely tailored rewards for today's modern woman. Shop at top Alshaya brands -and receive an instant discount when paying for purchases with NBK's Laki Titanium credit card whilst earning NBK Cash Back Rewards Points at the same time.

"NBK values and respects the purchasing power of today's woman and we customize specific products and services to meet her lifestyle needs," said Noor Al-Baijan - NBK Marketing Representative, National Bank of Kuwait.

"The Laki Titanium Credit Card rewards women with double benefits by giving them instant discounts at selected Alshaya stores when they pay using this card at the point of purchase as well as Rewards points," explained Al-Baijan.

All Laki Titanium credit card holders earn NBK Reward Points when they use their credit card. How does it work? It is very simple and



easy. All you need to do is use your Laki Titanium credit card to pay for purchases, earning up to 10 percent of your original spend in NBK Rewards Points when shopping at any of the NBK Rewards Partners at more than 700 participating outlets. Certain transactions also qualify for instant discounts when the Laki Titanium Credit Card is used for purchases. More details about the instant discount are available on nbk.com

Earning NBK Reward points is easy and merely requires customers to use their NBK Credit Card at Rewards Partners. Look for the Blue Dot to identify merchants whom are part of the NBK Rewards program. For every KD 1 spent, customers earn 10 reward points. These

points can then be redeemed at more than 700 participating outlets around Kuwait including restaurants, shops and lifestyle brands. Details regarding Rewards Points balances and the equivalent KD value are available to customers through NBK Online Banking.

"At Alshaya, we offer our customers the widest range of shopping and dining experiences with well-known international brands. Our partnership with National Bank of Kuwait means we can offer our customers in Kuwait even greater value when they shop with us," said Saj Arshad, Chief Marketing Officer at Alshaya.

Customers can pay for all or part of their shopping at participating outlets with the instant reward points at the following Alshaya stores: Coast, Evans, Foot Locker, Jackwills, Milano, Miss Selfridge, Oasis, Payless, Topshop, Wallis, Warehouse, Claire's, COS, H&M, Justice, Mothercare, The Body Shop, MUJI, Solaris, Vision Express, Pottery Barn, Pottery Barn Kids, PBteen, West Elm, Pinkberry, Williams Sonoma, Next, Victoria's Secret, Victoria's Secret PINK, and Icing.

Other value-added lifestyle benefits for Laki Titanium credit card holders include free valet parking at various locations around Kuwait, discounts on rides with Careem, concierge service, complimentary airport lounge access across the MENA region, free travel insurance up to \$250,000, fraud protection and premium lifestyle offers, discounts and promotions from Mastercard.

National Bank of Kuwait continues to develop products and services customized to suit the individual lifestyle needs of its customers, for today and for the future. Apply for the Laki Titanium Credit Card to start earning rewards today by visiting award-winning NBK.com website.

INJAZ Kuwait successfully concludes its 'Innovation' workshop

KUWAIT: INJAZ Kuwait has successfully concluded its "Social Innovation Camp" workshop, held in collaboration with "Zahhab", a student community that provides all the necessary academic assistance to university students and professors. Held at Al-Shaheed Park, on 13 December 2017, the workshop has witnessed the participation of 70 students, from different universities, who have enjoyed the workshop and the competitive and enthusiastic atmosphere which filled up the venue.

INJAZ's Innovation Camp's four-hour workshop is part of INJAZ Kuwait's series of programs and workshops which aim at helping students to understand the concept of social entrepreneurship and develop their skills to think critically and analytically towards finding the most appropriate solutions to their business



challenges. Participants were divided into groups; a specialized consultant was hired to help each of them to compete with the rest of the teams.

Laila Al-Mutairi, INJAZ Kuwait CEO said: "Proud of students who participated in this workshop and shared their ideas and innovative projects in a way that reflects their skills and talents. At INJAZ, our responsibility has always been and will always remain to develop youth of Kuwait by providing innovative educational programs that aim to develop their leadership and entrepreneurial skills and help them to turn their creative ideas into genuine business. We would like to thank 'Zahhab' for their contribution which led to the success of this workshop, and wish all participating teams the best of luck in their future".

Participating teams have presented their own innovative business solutions to a panel of judges which included Mrs. Laila Al-Mutairi, INJAZ Kuwait CEO, Mohammad Al-Momen, University Coordinator of Zahhab Kuwait and Abdullah Kamal, Communications & Partnerships Director at UNESCO, where they carefully evaluated each solution presented based on the teams' level of innovation. The facilitator was Jarrah Abuloushi.

INJAZ Kuwait will continue to equip and support youth, to ensure a more prosperous future for generations to come.

ABK concludes A+ Student Account campaign

KUWAIT: Bringing its A+ Student Account campaign to a successful close, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Fatemah Faisal Al-Yousef as the winner of the Dodge Charger SE 2017 in the grand draw held at ABK's Head Office, which was accepted by her brother on her behalf. Launched earlier this year, the campaign aimed at instilling a savings habit amongst ABK's 18-25 year old customers who were eligible to enter the draw upon opening a student account before November 30, 2017.

Commenting on the success of the

campaign, Stewart Lockie, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK said, "The needs of Generation Y 'tomorrow's customers' are very different to those of our traditional banking customers, that is why we developed the ABK A+ Student Account 'for students, by students', through the use of social media polls to gather customer data and design a proposition aligned to the segment. This has proven to be a great success. On behalf of ABK we congratulate the year's winners."

The ABK A+ Student Account campaign also saw 30 lucky customers win back their student allowance of KD 200 in cash draws during the months of May and September. Moreover, these customers were able to avail discounts using '2 for 1' deals at over 100 outlets under The Entertainer throughout the campaign period.

ABK will continue to invest in tomorrow's customers, and will provide them with a unique banking experience in the future.



Technology

Uber suffers new blow as EU court rules it's a taxi service

Another thorn in the side for US-based company

BRUSSELS: The EU's top court ruled yesterday that Uber is an ordinary transportation company instead of an app and should be regulated as such, in a decision that is being closely watched around the world. Hailed by the plaintiffs—a Spanish taxi association—as “a social victory”, the case is yet another thorn in the side for US-based Uber, which has drawn the fury of taxi drivers and officials for flouting local regulations.

It also comes the same week as one of its drivers admitted to the attempted rape and murder of a British embassy worker coming home from a night out in Beirut, Lebanon. “The service provided by Uber connecting individuals with non-professional drivers is covered by services in the field of transport,” said the Luxembourg-based European Court of Justice.

“Member states can therefore regulate the conditions for providing that service.” Uber, the biggest name in the growing gig economy, claims it is a mere service provider, connecting consumers with drivers in more than 600 cities. Uber has run into huge

opposition from taxi companies and other competitors who say this allows it to dodge costly regulations such as training and licensing requirements for drivers and vehicles.

The case was brought by a taxi drivers' association in the Spanish city of Barcelona, where belief runs high that Uber is a taxi company that should be subject to rules governing such vehicles. “This will truly represent a social victory, and the whole of society will benefit from this,” Ivan Esma, spokesman for the Elite Taxi association, told reporters, adding that “the road will be long” for the ruling to be enforced.

Uber said the ruling would make little difference in practice. “This ruling will not change things in most EU

countries where we already operate under transportation law,” an Uber spokesperson said in an emailed statement. “However, millions of Europeans are still prevented from using apps like ours.” In a dense legal judgment, the ECJ said that Uber was a service that connects “by means of a smartphone application and for remuneration non-professional drivers using their own vehicle with persons who wish to make urban journeys.”

That means it is “inherently linked to a transport service and, accordingly, must be classified as a ‘service in the field of transport’ within the meaning of EU law.” The EU court's senior adviser had said in a legal opinion in May that Uber was indeed a transport com-

pany. Uber has had a rough ride in Spain, where a judge ruled in 2014 that its UberPop service risked breaking the law, leading to the Barcelona submission to the ECJ. Early last year it decided to only operate a limited version of its UberX service in Spain which uses licensed, professional drivers instead of the amateurs who had previously worked via the UberPop application. Uber has already had problems with the law in several European countries, particularly France where the company was forced to overhaul its business model.

In November a labour court in London, where the company is threatened with losing its license, said it had to pay the drivers a minimum wage and give them paid leave. Uber does not employ drivers or own vehicles, but instead relies on private contractors with their own cars, allowing them to run their own businesses. Licensed taxi drivers meanwhile often have to undergo hundreds of hours of training, and they accuse Uber of endangering their jobs by using cheaper drivers who rely only on a GPS to get around. —AFP

“ This will truly represent a social victory ”

North Korea's new front: Cyberheists

SEOUL: The messages are alluring, the pictures are attractive. But the women seeking to beguile South Korean Bitcoin executives could actually be hackers from Pyongyang in disguise, experts warn. In the face of sanctions over its banned nuclear and ballistic missile programs, the cash-strapped North is deploying an army of well-trained hackers with an eye on a lucrative new source of hard currency, they say.

Its cyberwarfare abilities first came to prominence when it was accused of hacking into Sony Pictures Entertainment to take revenge for “The Interview”, a satirical film that mocked its leader, Kim Jong-Un. But it has rapidly expanded from political to financial targets, such as the central bank of Bangladesh and Bitcoin exchanges around the world, with Washington this week blaming it for the WannaCry ransomware that wreaked havoc earlier this year. And a South Korean cryptocurrency exchange shut down on Tuesday after losing 17 percent of its assets in a hacking—its second cyberattack this year, with the North accused of being behind the first.

According to multiple South Korean reports citing Seoul's intelligence agency, North Korean hackers approach workers at digital exchanges by posing as beautiful women on Facebook, striking online conversations and eventually sending files containing malicious code. They also bombard executives with emails posing as job seekers sending resumes—with the files containing malware to steal personal and exchange data.

Moon Jong-Hyun, director at Seoul cybersecurity firm EST Security, said the North had stepped up online honeytrap tactics targeting Seoul's government and military officials in recent years. “They open Facebook accounts and maintain the online friendship for months before backstabbing the targets in the end,” Moon told a cybersecurity forum, adding many profess to be studying at a US college or working at a research think tank.

‘Criminal enterprise’

Simon Choi, director of Seoul cybersecurity firm Hauri, has accumulated vast troves of data on Pyongyang's hacking activities and has been warning about potential ransomware attacks by the North since 2016. The United States has reportedly stepped up cyberattacks of its own against Pyongyang. But Choi told AFP: “The North's hacking operations are upgrading from attacks on ‘enemy states’ to a shady, lucrative moneymaking machine in the face of more sanctions.”

Pyongyang's hackers have showed interest in Bitcoin since at least 2012, he said, with attacks spiking whenever the cryptocurrency surges—and it has



SEOUL: A man is reflected on a screen showing exchange rates of cryptocurrencies at an exchange. —AFP

soared around 20-fold this year. US cybersecurity firm FireEye noted that a lack of regulations and “lax anti-money laundering controls” in many countries make digital currencies an “attractive tactic” for the North. Cryptocurrencies, it said in a September report, were “becoming a target of interest by a regime that operates in many ways like a criminal enterprise”.

It documented three attempts by the North to hack into Seoul cryptocurrency exchanges between May and July as a way to “fund the state or personal coffers of Pyongyang's elite”. In October, Lazarus, a hacking group linked with the North, launched a malicious phishing campaign targeting people in the bitcoin industry with a fake but lucrative job offer, according to US cybersecurity firm Secureworks.

‘Hard to predict’

Hacking attacks targeting digital currencies are only the latest in the long list of alleged online financial heists by the North. The North is blamed for a massive \$81 million cyber-heist from the Bangladesh Central Bank (BCB) in 2016, as well as the theft of \$60 million from Taiwan's Far Eastern International Bank in October.

Although Pyongyang has angrily denied the accusations—which it described as a “slander” against the authorities—analysts say the digital footprints left behind suggest otherwise. The attack on the BCB

was linked to “nation-state actors in the North”, cybersecurity firm Symantec said, while the Taiwanese bank theft had some of the “hallmarks” of Lazarus, according to the British defense firm BAE Systems.

Proceeds from such actions are laundered through casinos in the Philippines and Macau or money exchanges in China, said Lim Jong-In, a cyber-security professor at Korea University in Seoul, making it “virtually impossible” to trace. The global WannaCry ransomware attack in May infected some 300,000 computers in 150 nations, encrypting their files and demanding hundreds of dollars from their owners for the keys to get them back.

Experts say that young hacking talents are hand-picked at school to be groomed at elite Kim Chaek University of Technology or Kim Il Sung Military University in Pyongyang, and now number more than 7,000. They were once believed to be operating mostly at home or neighboring China, but analysis by cybersecurity firm Recorded Future noted “significant physical and virtual North Korean presences” in countries as far away as Kenya and Mozambique. FireEye CEO Kevin Mandia put the North among a quartet of countries—along with Iran, Russia and China—that accounted for more than 90 percent of cybersecurity breaches the firm dealt with. Its hackers, he said, were “interesting to respond to and hard to predict”. —AFP

Crew of three docks at ISS

A three-man space crew made up of American and Japanese rookie astronauts and an experienced Russian cosmonaut successfully docked at the International Space Station to begin a six-month mission yesterday. NASA TV footage showed the Soyuz MS-07 capsule containing Scott Tingle of NASA, Anton Shkaplerov of Roscosmos and Norishige Kanai of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency dock at the ISS at 0839 GMT following a two-day flight. A NASA TV commentator hailed the “textbook arrival” of the trio at the orbital lab positioned more than 250 miles above “the boot of Italy” at the time of contact.

In a statement, Roscosmos also confirmed that the Soyuz MS-07 had “successfully docked” at the ISS. The space travelers who blasted off from Russia's Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan in freezing conditions Sunday will now join Russia's Alexander Misurkin and NASA pair Mark Vande Hei and Joe Acaba currently aboard the ISS. Both Tingle, 52, and Kanai, 40, are in space for the first time but flight commander Shkaplerov, 43, is an experienced hand. The former Russian military pilot has spent exactly a year in space over two missions and will mark his birthday in orbit for the third time in February next year.

Kanai is the youngest astronaut in the history of the Japanese space agency, and the last of a trio of Japanese astronauts who were certified for travel to the ISS back in 2011. US Navy captain Tingle is a graduate of Purdue University in Indiana, which also counts space legend Neil Armstrong among its alumni. While most flights to the ISS now take around six hours, the trio took the more circuitous two-day route due to the lab's position in space at the time of the launch.

Yesterday's docking marks a prompt crew rotation after Sergei Ryazansky of Roscosmos, NASA's Randy Bresnik and European Space Agency astronaut Paolo Nespoli returned to Earth Thursday. NASA stopped its own manned launches to the ISS in 2011 but recently moved to increase the crew complement on the US section of the ISS to four as the Russians cut theirs to two in a cost-saving measure announced last year. The ISS laboratory, a rare example of American and Russian cooperation, has been orbiting Earth at about 28,000 kilometers per hour since 1998. —AFP

YouTube seals deal with top music label

NEW YORK: YouTube said Tuesday that it had sealed a licensing agreement with the world's largest music label conglomerate Universal as the video behemoth explores creating a new streaming service. YouTube, which is part of Google, said it reached a long-term agreement with the Universal Music Group, months after a deal with competitor Warner Music. A joint statement did not specify the terms but hinted that the agreement would address compensation by YouTube, a constant source of irritation within the music industry.

“This important step forward provides our recording artists and songwriters improved content flexibility and growing compensation from YouTube's ad-supported and paid-subscription tiers,” Universal chairman and CEO Lucian Grainge said in the statement. He said the agreement also advanced “YouTube's commitment to manage music rights on its platform.”

The recorded music industry has posted two years of solid growth after years in the doldrums thanks to the rapid growth of subscriptions on Spotify, Apple Music and other streaming platforms. But the industry, led by the IFPI trade group, has long berated YouTube for the rates it pays. YouTube argues that it pays a fair price. With the video site's focus on user-generated content, YouTube enjoys protection under United States law that largely absolves internet companies from responsibility for users' activities.

With Google languishing behind in music streaming, several technology sites reported last month that YouTube is preparing the launch of its own streaming service in 2018. The video site already has a YouTube Music platform and the advertising-free YouTube Red subscriptions, but it is reportedly looking to set up a more elaborate site on the model of the major, on-demand music services. The licensing agreements would be vital for a successful YouTube streaming service, with music fans unlikely to embrace a platform that has glaring gaps in its catalog. —AFP

From cars to watches, sharing sites offer slice of luxury

PARIS/ZURICH: Online platforms offering rentals or shares in everything from glitzy watches to sports cars are making inroads in the luxury goods market, as a shift in consumer habits begins to head up market. Playing off the sharing economy model popularized by the likes of Airbnb, such companies invite people to enjoy luxury brands without spending a fortune. For example, a fixed monthly fee gives a consumer use of a Rolex watch for a few weeks which they then send back to exchange for another luxury brand.

Businesses say the market for renting or co-investing in everything from jewellery to fine art is taking off with moderately well-off clients aspiring to a taste of the high life, and potentially the seriously wealthy. “The modern generation leads a very different life, people want to keep their options open,” said Marco Abele, who formerly worked in digital banking at Credit Suisse and is now developing sharing platform TEND, set to launch in Switzerland in March.

Tradable stakes

The platform offers people ways of buying trad-

able stakes in a Porsche or a vineyard, for a return on their investment and a chance to go for occasional spins in the car or get customized bottles. While aiming to “democratise” luxury, its target customers are not quite every man or woman: their net worth would be around 100,000 to 1 million Swiss francs (\$1 million), Abele said.

While still small, the sharing economy is predicted to grow from around \$15 billion in 2016 to \$335 billion by 2025, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers.



Enjoy luxury brands without spending a fortune

Luxury is only a small part of that but has potential. “It's not a significant market, but it's getting under way, it will become more significant,” said Olivier Abtan, a luxury specialist at Boston Consulting Group. “There are a lot of start-ups and especially young people piling into this.”

Eleven James, a US-based watch rental site launched in 2014, is considering moving into jew-

ellery and artworks and may expand overseas, Chief Executive Olivier Reza said. The company - whose monthly fees range from \$150 to \$500, depending on the value of the watches - used to rent out its own stock. But in November it opened up to collectors wanting to lease their timepieces. “This mainly came about because of consumer demand,” Reza said. “People have more watches, they can't wear them all at once, they tire of them.”

Test before buying

For some luxury manufacturers, this budding market may be an unwelcome development. They had only just started to make peace with e-commerce, having long been afraid that online sales might dilute their brands, and are still fighting to control distribution, resisting moving onto mainstream sites such as Amazon.

Now they run the risk of missing out on sales as people rent a piece of the luxury they offer, making items more accessible - and ubiquitous - undermining their exclusivity. Still, rentals of evening dresses or designer items by Chanel or Louis Vuitton have long existed, as have co-investments in assets including private jets and yachts. Online platforms offer a means of rapidly expanding such services.

For watch enthusiast Chi Chan, 43, a New York-based IT developer who has consigned four watches to Eleven James, the rental site is an easy way of testing before buying. “It is very intimidating sometimes to go to a boutique with the salespeople judging you,” said Chan, suggesting online leasing was less pressured. —Reuters

Health

Philip Morris' search for a cigarette less harmful than a cup of coffee

A device that heats tobacco but does not burn it

NEUCHÂTEL, Switzerland: When Hans-Joerg Urban joined Philip Morris International Inc's research headquarters as a scientist in 2005, he said a senior executive laid out the tobacco giant's vision for the future: to create cigarettes no more harmful than a simple cup of coffee. About a decade later that quest culminated in the iQOS, a device that heats tobacco but does not burn it. Philip Morris says the lack of combustion means smokers are exposed to far lower levels of toxic emissions than with regular cigarettes. "The ultimate result of this is reduced tobacco related harm and diseases," the company said in a statement.

The world's largest publicly traded tobacco company by market value has applied to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to market iQOS as less harmful than cigarettes. But four scientists and researchers who worked for the company on the iQOS program told Reuters that while Philip Morris was able to prove the lower amounts of exposure to harmful substances, that doesn't necessarily mean that using the device is less likely to result in disease than regular cigarettes. "Exposure is not directly linked to the risk of having a disease," said Urban, a scientist who worked at Philip Morris until 2010 analyzing data from clinical and laboratory experiments. "The diseases are much too complicated." Dorothy Hatsukami, a former member of the FDA's tobacco products scientific advisory committee, agrees. "At this point, research is still too nascent to say with certainty that reduced exposure translates into reduced risk," she said.

Different standards

Philip Morris is seeking FDA approval to market iQOS under two different



man lights a cigarette in this file photo. —AFP

standards. It has applied for approval as a device that reduces exposure to harmful substances. It has also applied on a second track with a higher bar - to get approval to market it as carrying reduced risk of tobacco-related disease. The first option, a special provision for companies that are unable to meet the threshold of reduced risk, comes with a restriction. Consumers cannot be "misled into believing" the product is less harmful than other tobacco products, FDA regulations say.

If the FDA approves the application, that would raise the possibility of Philip Morris International's former parent company and U.S. partner, Altria Group Inc, capturing market share in a nation

where overall cigarette sales plummeted more than 30 percent between 2005 and 2016. Kishor Lad, a clinical data manager at the company between 2012 and 2015, said to prove the product presents less risk of tobacco-related disease, the company would need to conduct large clinical trials over several years to show that people who used iQOS lived longer than people who smoked cigarettes.

Philip Morris said it disagrees. Under U.S. regulations, the company said, the FDA "does not require premarket epidemiological data as a condition of marketing authorization." Lad added that it's not correct to say that "if you're less exposed to these harmful substances then, sort of, it's less harmful for you." —Reuters

Fish intercourse so loud it could deafen dolphins

PARIS: A species of Mexican fish amasses in reproductive orgies so loud they can deafen other sea animals, awed scientists said yesterday, calling for preservation of the "spectacle" threatened by overfishing. An individual spawning Gulf corvina, said the research team, utters a mating call resembling "a really loud machine gun", with multiple, rapid sound pulses.

And when hundreds of thousands of fish get together to spawn once a year, "the collective chorus sounds like a crowd cheering at a stadium or perhaps a really loud beehive," study co-author Timothy Rowell from the University of San Diego told AFP. "The sound levels generated by chorusing is loud enough to cause at least temporary if not permanent hearing loss in marine mammals that were observed preying on the fish," he said. Rowell and colleague Brad Erisman of the University of Texas used specialized underwater sound gear to eavesdrop on spawning Gulf corvina, a popular eating fish.

Each spring, all adults of the species migrate to a single site—the Colorado River Delta in the northernmost part of Mexico's Gulf of California—for what scientists call a "spawning aggregation" that can number into the low millions. The frenzy sees all the world's adult corvinas gathered in less than one percent of their usual home range for a few weeks.

During this time, male corvinas emit calls that reverberate through the hulls of fishing

boats, and can be heard even above water-drawing in the fishers. A single boat with one net can harvest two tons of corvina—which can grow to about a meter (3.3 feet) in length and weigh as much as 12 kilogram (26 pounds) — within minutes, said the study authors.

'Vulnerable' to extinction

A fleet of some 500 boats nets as many as two million fish each spawning season, placing the species in peril. According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which keeps a Red List of species, the Gulf corvina is "vulnerable" to extinction. Earlier this year, Rowell and Erisman, with other experts, reported in the journal Scientific Reports that listening to the love calls of corvinas can help scientists keep track of their numbers for conservation purposes. The fish cannot be seen in the murky waters of the gulf, making them hard to count. But there is evidence that landed corvinas are getting smaller—a sign of overfishing, which happens when fish of a particular species are caught faster than they can reproduce. Pursuing their research, Erisman and Rowell recorded the fish and said they were "a bit surprised by how loud the aggregation is".

They took measurements in March and April 2014, when an estimated 1.5 million corvinas gathered to procreate. "These spawning events are among the loudest wildlife events found on planet Earth," Rowell told AFP by email. It is, furthermore, "the loudest sound ever recorded for a fish species." The frequencies of sound produced by the corvina fell within a range that could harm the hearing of seals, sea lions and dolphins, or even deafen them, the duo concluded. —AFP

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248 33 199

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What's On

Enjoy the Magical and Merry buzz at Symphony Style Hotel



Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait, The Quorvos Collection's flagship hotel in Kuwait, welcomes you to experience magical, magnificent and merry dose of luxury celebrations this festive season. Starting from Christmas Eve up until the New Year's, Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait is celebrating with special Christmas and New Year menus across its dining outlets, from specially designed buffets, to a la carte delights, with live music to enhance the festive feeling.

Located on the shores of Kuwait Bay, Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait is the perfect venue to enjoy and indulge. The hotel is hosting a buffet lunch and dinner enhanced with seasonal Christmas specialties for celebratory dining, at Cucina and the award-winning Luna restaurants, in addition to festive treats at Chococafe and Symphony, Gourmet.

Enjoy the grand Xmas Buffet on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, featuring sumptuous cold and hot dishes, with a carving station serving Turkey and prime ribs with condiments. It's the season to indulge so don't be shy at the delicately prepared sweets buffet. The Christmas Buffet on December 24 is open from 7:00pm until 11:30pm for dinner, and from 12:30pm to 4:30pm for lunch on December 25, priced at KD 13 per person respectively, including beverages.

Meanwhile, enjoy the sounds of music sessions taking place throughout the day and complimentary gifts and a visit from Santa Claus for our young guests at the Kids Club, from 9am to 9pm, followed with a Xmas Party starting at 1pm until 6pm on December 25. Festivities and celebrations just don't

stop there! Join the hotel on New Year's Eve for a specially curated dining experience featuring special treats for your taste buds - with two options at Cucina and Luna restaurants.

Guests at Cucina restaurant can savor the New Year Eve Buffet, featuring live cooking stations from 7:00pm until 12:30am. Priced at KD 20 per person, all guests will be welcomed a complimentary sparkling juice. Furthermore, priced at KD 25 per person, guests at Luna restaurant can enjoy special a New Year's Eve set menu along with a sharing selection of cold and hot appetizers, main course platter, including meat, chicken and seafood; and dessert and fruit platter. Following the New Year's Eve bash, guests can start the first day of 2018 with sumptuous lunch buffet priced KD 14 at Cucina.

ICSK organizes 43rd annual sports meet

The Indian Community School, Kuwait, organized its 43rd Annual Sports Meet on Dec 8, 2017 at Qadsiya Sports Club, Hawally. The Sports Day was a special occasion this year as the oldest school in Kuwait celebrated its record sixteenth CBSE Kuwait Clusters Annual Athletic Championship, proving beyond doubt that ICSK is a force to reckon with not only in academics, but also on the sports ground.

The sports day is the culmination of the athletic events which are conducted house-wise throughout the year in the four branches of the school. A spectacular welcome dance which was an amalgamation of all the dance forms of India enthralled the audience and was successful in invoking patriotic fervor in each and every one present.

The stars of the day were the athletes of ICSK who won the CBSE Kuwait Clusters Athletic Championship for a record sixteenth time. There was a roar of applause as they marched past the dais. The school band came in for a special round of applause as the bandleader threw the mace into the air and saluted the chief guest. After the school flag was hoisted, the best athletes of the ICSK took turns to carry the torch to light the sports flame. All students were sworn in with an oath which was conducted by the sports captain.

Other than the usual track and field events, the function also witnessed a pompous pageantry of drill display by all the four branches -



an amalgamation of exactitude, politeness, aerobics and dexterity enveloped in decorum. Spectators watched with bated breath as the students flooded the stadium in rainbow colours. Their rhythmic and synchronized movements appeared like a celestial feat and indubitably it was a feast for eyes. The stadium reverberated and rumbled with relentless rounds of applause from the astonished spectators. The chief guest, the members of the board of trustees and the principals gave away trophies to the CBSE Kuwait Cluster champions and other sports event winners of all the branch schools.

Open house by Division D District 20 Toastmasters

It was a wintry evening, with tea and biscuits to warm up. Yes, a totally educative, entertaining and elusive open house held on Dec 12 at Indian Community School Amman branch. This open house was initiated by Division D -District 20 of Toastmasters International by the very daring and different Division D Director Alfiya Lakdawala. Along with the usual demo meeting the aura was ignited by the presence of Principal Rajesh Nair along with the member of the board of trustees Agnelo Fernandes.

A full house attendance of 76 guests and Toastmasters was observed along with the



presence of Abdul Rahman Shaikh (Chairman), Aamir Mohammed (Secretary), Gagadhar Shirsath (Principal of ICSK - Khaitan) and Binumon (Principal of ICSK - Senior Branch).

The meeting was opened by the beautiful Malin Williams who also was the timer of the day. The Toastmaster of the day was none other than Lakdawala herself, who had a lovely theme: "First things first". She stressed

on what should be important in our lives and what should be prioritized. A beautiful theme in this age when we give importance to unimportant things. Nijo Johnson took the stage by storm and with his persuasive speech he bowled all over. He had an equally charming and positively critical evaluator in DTM Shaukat Lokhandwala, who bailed him a winner.

GUST wins 1st place in Arab Collegiate Programming Contest

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) announced yesterday that two teams of Computer Science majors participated in the 20th Arab Collegiate Programming Contest (ACPC 2017), which was held in Sharm Elsheikh under the patronage of General Khaled Fouda, Governor of South Sinai, Egypt. GUST team "Nameless" won the first place among all teams from the Gulf region. GUST President, Professor Donald Bates, said, "I am extremely proud of our students for winning first place in this rigorous competition. They demonstrated skill, finesse, and creativity. Having secured this victory, I feel encouraged that our curriculum and faculty were able to produce such competent programmers."

GUST teams competed against over 120 teams, from 66 universities, representing 11 countries from the Arab region, which were then divided into four divisions by region. GUST was represented by two teams, Team Nameless, who won first place, included Karim Al Maghrabi, Amr Ahmed, and Ebraheem AlMuaili; while the second team, Bounty, included Ali Almosawi, Talal Alammam, and Mohammad Alessa. Both teams were coached by Fadi Deeb, a faculty member in the Computer Science (CS) Department at GUST. Participating teams had the chance to demonstrate their skills in programming and prob-



lem solving. The competition also engenders creativity, teamwork, and enables students to test their ability to perform under strict time constraints.

GUST's Head of the Computer Science Department, Taher Ali, said "This win comes to complete our outstanding achievements for this year; our students won the Gulf Programming Contest in March, then they secured 1st, 3rd, and 4th places in the Kuwait Collegiate Programming Contest in October, and now they made us proud and with the 1st place win from the Gulf region in the Arab contest. The CS Department is always keen on organizing, participating, and supporting events that motivate team work and self-learning skills. The department is moving towards building a community between previous contestants and current students to maintain continuous training to pass on experience. Competition based learning enriches the educational system. We have seen evidence of dramatic changes in students' performance after participating in such events."

Marina Hotel welcomes LOYAC interns for 5th consecutive year

Marina Hotel Kuwait welcomed interns from LOYAC, a non-profit organization working towards the overall development of the youth. The collaboration aimed to provide an overall knowledge of the hospitality sector and to help interns grow as individuals, both professionally and personally.

The internship program included two students aged between 16 -27 years. It started on 29 October 2017 until 07 December 2017. A dedicated team of professionals were involved to enhance the needed skills in this industry with a focus on housekeeping and front office. The continuous collaboration between Marina Hotel and LOYAC reflects the hotel's involvement to encouraging and inspiring youth by giving them the chance to gain exposure and experience

different areas of interest.

Both students were trained in the Housekeeping and Front Office Department and covered a total of 120 hours respectively. They found the hotel's team very friendly and helpful and commented that they are truly grateful for this opportunity. Nabil Hammoud, General Manager of Marina Hotel said: "We are very pleased to cooperate with LOYAC, given its long history in creating career opportunities for youth at national levels. Internships are extremely valuable and important as they are a small taste of the real world."

"We are proud to provide such trainings in our industry to help students reinforce the knowledge of responsibility, focus, drive and ambition. We want to be part of their success and we wish them all the best in their future careers" he added. The interns were given tasks and provided with hands on experience of a professional service orientation. At the end of their internship period, the interns were assessed and given feedback on their performance by their direct mentor. This collaboration is repeated annually and offers college, university and high school students the opportunity to acquire first-hand experience in the hospitality industry.



Girls top winners in MMF essay competition



Meril Susan

Niranjana

Niranjana Anand of Indian Educational School (IES), Jleeb Al-Shouyoukh won the first prize while Meril Susan Sam of Indian Community School (Senior), Salmiya won the second prize in the inter-school essay competition that was held by Malayali Media Forum (MMF), Kuwait on November 18. While girls bagged the first two laurels, Sashank Cheekala of India International School, Mangaf and Nishel Alexander of the same school shared the third prize.

MMF, the association of Keralaite expats working in the media industry, held the essay competition as part of its 10th anniversary celebrations in which students nominated from Indian schools in Kuwait participated. The students of Standard 9, 10, 11 and 12

were given 'Demonetization in India: Merits and Demerits' as the topic for the essay. The topic was given 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the competition.

The four winners will be awarded gold medals and certificates and all participants will be given certificates during the MMF annual conference which is slated for early 2018. The results were announced at a media conference held in Farwania on Saturday which was addressed by well-known Indian journalist N P Narendran. MMF General Convener T V Hikmat presided over the function and Event Coordinator Sajeer K Peter announced the winners. Convener Nijas Kasim welcomed the audience while Convener Girish Ottapalam proposed a vote of thanks.

TV



01:05 Nick Of Time
02:45 War Of The Worlds
04:50 Knight And Day
06:55 Road Wars
08:35 Nick Of Time
10:10 War Of The Worlds
12:15 6 Ways To Sundown
14:00 Knight And Day
16:00 The Net
18:00 The Call Up
19:35 Face/Off
22:00 Death Race 2050
23:35 3 Headed Shark Attack



00:50 Untamed & Uncut
01:45 Treeshouse Masters
02:40 Cats 101
03:35 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
04:00 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
04:25 Tanked
05:15 Treeshouse Masters
06:02 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
06:49 Untamed & Uncut
07:36 Meet The Penguins
08:00 Meet The Penguins
08:25 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
08:50 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
09:15 Treeshouse Masters
10:10 Cats 101
11:05 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
12:00 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
12:28 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
12:55 Tanked
13:50 Treeshouse Masters
14:45 Cats 101
15:40 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
16:35 Untamed & Uncut
17:30 Treeshouse Masters
18:25 Whale Wars
19:20 Whale Wars
20:15 Cats 101
21:10 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
21:38 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
22:05 Whale Wars
23:00 Whale Wars
23:55 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia



00:20 Eastenders
00:50 Stella
01:35 Poldark
02:30 The Durrells
03:15 Top Of The Lake
04:10 I Want My Wife Back
04:40 Eastenders
05:10 The Durrells
06:00 Eastenders
06:30 Death In Paradise
07:25 Doctor Who
08:15 Doctor Who
09:00 I Want My Wife Back
09:30 Eastenders
10:05 Death In Paradise
11:00 New Tricks
11:55 Doctor Who
12:45 Doctor Who
13:30 I Want My Wife Back
14:00 Eastenders
14:30 Death In Paradise
15:30 Doctor Who
16:20 Doctor Who
17:10 New Tricks
18:40 I Want My Wife Back
18:30 Eastenders
19:05 Death In Paradise
20:00 Holly City
21:00 Stella: Christmas Special 2016
22:30 Line Of Duty
23:30 I Want My Wife Back



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 Cold Case Files
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 Cold Case Files
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
20:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
21:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
22:00 Cold Case Files
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 Demetri 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 Demetri Martin
10:35 I Live With Models
11:00 Impractical Jokers
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:20 Impractical Jokers
12:40 Punk'd (Bet)
13:05 Punk'd (Bet)
13:30 Important Things With Demetri Martin
13:55 Friends
14:20 Friends
14:45 Workaholics

15:10 Key And Peele
15:35 Kroll Show
16:00 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwafef
16:30 Impractical Jokers
16:55 Friends
17:18 Friends
17:40 Disaster Date
18:05 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 Teachers
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds
01:20 Head Games
02:10 The Big Brain Theory
03:00 Ultimate Survival
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds
04:15 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 NASA's Unexplained Files
12:00 Curiosity: Nefertiti - Mummy Queen Mystery
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 Tallest Tower: Building The Shard
18:40 Science Of The Movies
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 Tallest Tower: Building The Map
22:50 Ultimate Survival
23:40 North America

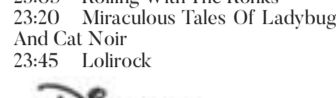


00:50 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
01:45 Casey Anthony: Killer Mom?
02:40 Village Of The Damned
03:35 Murder By Numbers
04:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
05:25 The Locator
05:50 The Locator
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It
07:10 American Monster
08:00 The Locator
08:25 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
09:15 The Locator
09:40 The Locator
10:10 American Monster
11:05 Forbidden: Dying For Love
12:40 Murder Chose Me
12:55 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 American Monster
15:40 Forbidden: Dying For Love
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 American Monster
21:10 Forbidden: Dying For Love
22:05 The Perfect Murder
23:00 Murder By Numbers
23:55 Reasonable Doubt

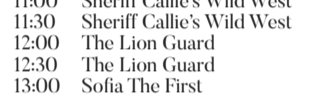


00:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And 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
08:50 Bunk'd Transylvania: The Series
09:35 Tangled: The Series
10:00 16 Wishes
11:40 Austin & Ally
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 Descendants Wicked World
20:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
20:35 Disney The Lodge
21:00 Alex & Co.
21:25 Alex & Co.
21:50 LoloRock
22:15 LoloRock
22:40 Evermoor Chronicles
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
23:45 LoloRock



00:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
00:25 Unbungalievable
00:35 Loopdidoo
00:55 Henry Hugglemonster
01:15 Calimero
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopdidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopdidoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopdidoo
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 Loopdidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 Loopdidoo
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 The Wizard Of Dizz
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 The Lion Guard: Return Of The Roar
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 The Wizard Of Dizz
22:45 Minnie's Bow-Toons
23:00 P-King Duckling
23:30 Puppy Dog Pals



00:00 Chopped
01:00 Bakers vs. Fakers
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
04:00 Man Fire Food
05:00 Chopped Junior
06:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa
06:25 Barefoot Contessa
06:50 Bake With Anna Olson
07:15 The Kitchen
08:05 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



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:05 Sean Conway: On The Edge
01:50 X-Ray Mega Airport
02:35 Breaking Magic
03:20 Misfit Garage
04:05 Deadliest Catch
04:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Gold Divers
06:45 Street Outlaws
07:30 Misfit Garage
08:15 Deadliest Catch
09:00 Container Wars
09:25 How Do They Do It?
09:47 How Do They Do It?
10:12 Sean Conway: On The Edge
10:57 X-Ray Mega Airport
11:42 Breaking Magic
12:04 Breaking Magic
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:48 Extreme Collectors
13:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
13:55 Deadliest Catch
14:40 Gold Divers
15:25 Misfit Garage
16:10 Street Outlaws
17:00 How Do They Do It?
17:25 How Do They Do It?
17:50 Extreme Collectors
18:20 Container Wars
18:50 Deadliest Catch
20:35 How Do They Do It?
21:00 Finding Escobar's Millions
21:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
22:40 The Wheel: Survival Games
23:30 Misfit Garage

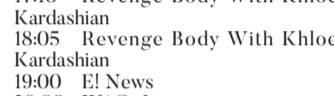


06:00 Disney II
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Marvel's Spider-Man
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Walk The Prank
08:10 Phineas And Ferb
08:35 Mech-X4
09:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
09:25 Lab Rats
09:50 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
10:14 Disney Xd EC
10:20 Gravity Falls
10:45 Kid vs. Kat
11:10 Milo Murphy's Law
11:35 Right Now Kapow
12:00 Frozen In Time
12:55 Pair Of Kings
13:20 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
15:05 The Suite Life Of Zack & Cody
15:30 Gravity Falls
15:55 Gravity Falls
16:20 Two More Eggs
16:25 Lab Rats
16:50 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
19:25 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Walk The Prank
20:20 Walk The Prank

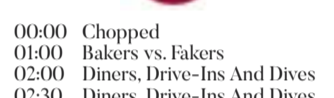
20:45 Supa Strikas
21:10 Supa Strikas
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats Elite Force
22:15 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am
KSA



00:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:50 E! 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 E! NYC
06:55 E! News
07:10 E! NYC
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
10:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
11:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:00 E! News
12:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
13:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
14:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
15:00 E! News
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
17:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
18:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
19:00 E! News
20:00 WAGs La
21:00 WAGs La
22:00 WAGs La
23:00 E! News
23:15 Famously Single



00:45 Sara's Australia Unveiled
01:45 David Rocco's Dolce India
01:10 Food School
01:40 David Rocco's Dolce India
02:05 Sinful Sweets
02:35 Chef On The Road
03:30 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
03:55 Places We Go
04:50 Migue's Feasts
05:45 Sara's Australia Unveiled
06:15 Jose Andres: Dinner In Haiti
07:10 David Rocco's Dolce India
07:35 Sinful Sweets
08:05 Chef On The Road
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13:35 Nilla's Mega Kitchen
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14:55 Places We Go
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15:50 Migue's Feasts
16:45 Sara's Australia Unveiled
17:15 What's For Sale?
17:40 What's For Sale?
18:10 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
19:05 Places We Go
19:30 Migue's Feasts
20:00 Migue's Feasts
20:30 Sara's Australia Unveiled
21:00 What's For Sale?
21:30 What's For Sale?
22:00 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
22:25 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
23:20 Carnivale Eats
23:50 Nilla's Mega Kitchen



00:10 Bakers vs. Fakers
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
04:00 Man Fire Food
05:00 Chopped Junior
06:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa
06:25 Barefoot Contessa
06:50 Bake With Anna Olson
07:15 The Kitchen
08:05 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
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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 Smartest Guy In The Room
00:30 Smartest Guy In The Room
01:00 Ancient Discoveries
02:45 Clash Of Warriors
03:40 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
03:50 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
04:40 How The States Got Their Shapes
05:30 Smartest Guy In The Room
05:55 Smartest Guy In The Room
06:20 Ancient Discoveries
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Clash Of Warriors
09:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
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18:00 The Universe
19:00 Ancient Discoveries
20:00 Clash Of Warriors
21:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
22:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
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 Alex 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
17:45 Counting Cars
17:40 Swamp People
18:30 Alone
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 Pawn Stars
20:35 Pawn Stars
21:00 The Warfighters
21:50 Billion Dollar Wreck
22:40 Time Team
23:30 Alone



00:15 Sara's Australia Unveiled
01:45 David Rocco's Dolce India
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01:40 David Rocco's Dolce India
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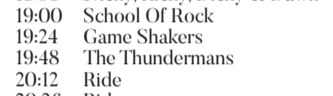
00:10 Heroes Of The Long Road Home
01:00 Dian Fossey: Secrets In The Mist
02:00 Titanic: 20 Years Later With James Cameron
03:00 The Long Road Home
04:00 Heroes Of The Long Road Home
05:00 Family Guns
06:00 Live Free Or Die
07:00 Science Of Stupid
07:30 Science Of Stupid
08:00 Fish Tank Kings
09:00 Family Guns
10:00 Machine Impossible
11:00 SuperCar Megabuild
12:00 Brain Games
13:00 Live To Win At Everything
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
19:00 Science Of Stupid
19:30 Science Of Stupid
20:00 Machine Impossible
20:50 SuperCar Megabuild
21:40 Airport Security: Colombia
22:50 Science Of Stupid
23:20 Science Of Stupid
23:45 How To Win At Everything



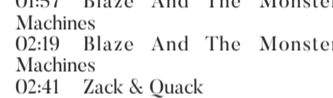
00:20 Tiger On The Run
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
02:45 Jobs That Bite!
03:45 Incredible Insects
04:40 Clan Of The Meerkat
05:35 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
06:30 Jobs That Bite!
07:25 Incredible Insects
08:20 Clan Of The Meerkat
09:15 Animal ER
09:45 Cameramen Who Dare Secret Brazil
10:10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



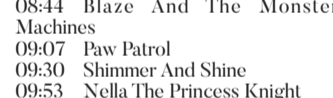
00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
06:50 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 Nicky Deuce
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 Escape From Mr. Lemoncello's Library
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 Ride
20:36 Ride
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



00:15 Shimmer And Shine
00:39 Shimmer And Shine
01:01 Max & Ruby
01:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:47 The Day Henry Met
01:52 The Day Henry Met
01:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:41 Zack & Quack
02:52 Kid-E-Cats
02:58 Kid-E-Cats
03:04 Shimmer And Shine
03:26 Nella The Princess Knight
03:38 Paw Patrol
04:01 Little Charmers
04:13 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
04:24 Dora The Explorer
04:46 Max & Ruby
05:06 Nella The Princess Knight
05:11 Nella The Princess Knight
05:35 Shimmer And Shine
05:59 Wallykazam!
06:21 Zack & Quack
06:32 The Day Henry Met
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:00 Rusty Rivets
07:13 Paw Patrol
07:37 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight
08:10 Kid-E-Cats
08:15 Kid-E-Cats
08:21 Bubble Guppies
08:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:07 Paw Patrol
09:30 Shimmer And Shine
09:53 Nella The Princess Knight
10:15 The Day Henry Met
10:22 Paw Patrol
10:45 Rusty Rivets
11:05 Wallykazam!
11:28 Bubble Guppies
11:52 Team Umizoomi
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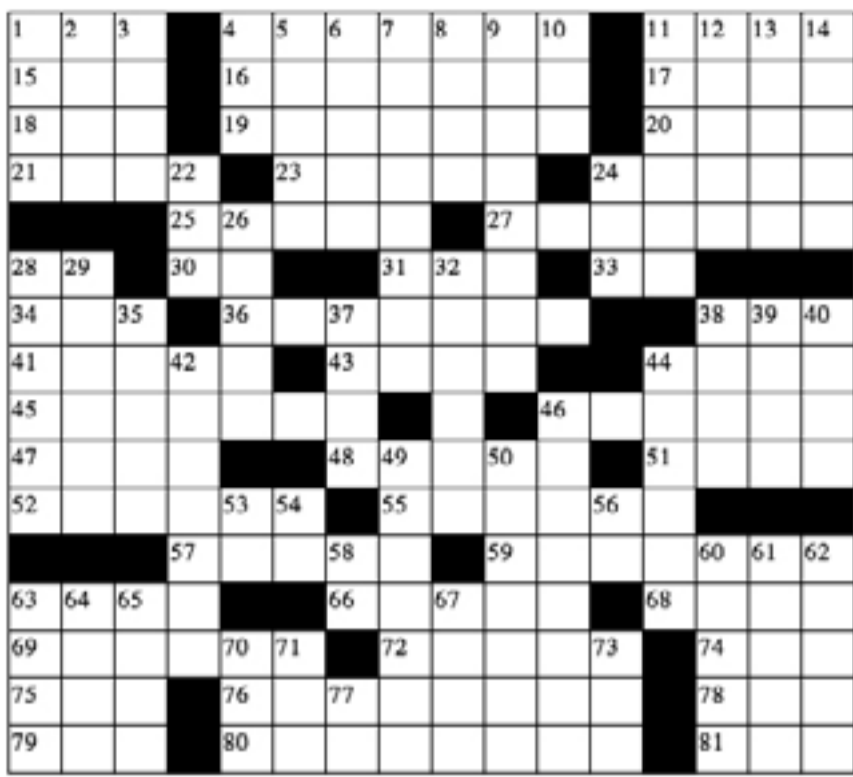
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04:00 Heroes Of The Long Road Home
05:00 Family Guns
06:00 Live Free

Stars

CROSSWORD 1790



ACROSS

- 1. (computer science) A computer that is running software that allows users to leave messages and access information of general interest.
4. Small bitter fruit of the marasca cherry tree from whose juice maraschino liqueur is made.
11. A slight rounded elevation where the malleus attaches to the eardrum.
15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
16. Of or relating to Iran or its people or language or culture.
17. A lawman concerned with narcotics violations.
18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
19. (Sumerian and Akkadian) A demon personifying death.
20. A short erect tail.
21. A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
23. German composer.
25. Infections of the skin or nails caused by fungi and appearing as itching circular patches.
27. The tenth month of the Moslem calendar.
28. Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
30. Before noon.
31. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
33. A colorless explosive liquid that is volatile and poisonous and foul-smelling.
34. A boy or man.
36. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
41. Large west African tree having large palmately lobed leaves and axillary cymose panicles of small white flowers and one-winged seeds.
43. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
45. Italian operatic soprano (born in 1922).
47. The small projection of a mammary gland.
48. English film actress (1913-1967).
51. A kiln for drying hops.
52. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
55. The world's largest desert (3,500,000 square miles) in North Africa.
57. The basic monetary unit in many countries.
59. A republic consisting of 26 of 32 counties comprising the island of Ireland.
63. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
66. A very loud utterance (like the sound of an animal).
68. Not only so, but.
69. Any plant of the genus Reseda.
72. An industrial city in northern France near the Belgian border.
74. A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
75. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
76. A trellis on which ornamental shrub or fruit tree is trained to grow flat.
78. An oral poliovirus vaccine (containing live but weakened poliovirus) that is given to provide immunity to poliomyelitis.
79. Hormone released by the hypothalamus that controls the release of thyroid-stimu-

- lating hormone from the anterior pituitary.
80. Most direct.
81. 100 pyas equal 1 kyat.

DOWN

- 1. Divulge information or secrets.
2. A small cake leavened with yeast.
3. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
4. A unit of time equal to 60 seconds or 1/60th of an hour.
5. (Welsh) Lord of Annwn (the other world).
6. Tall perennial herb of tropical Asia with dark green leaves.
7. An agent that counteracts or neutralizes acidity (especially in the stomach).
8. The granite-like rocks that form the outermost layer of the earth's crust.
9. A town in southeastern New Mexico on the Pecos River near the Mexican border.
10. (Babylonian) The sky god.
11. (of a piece of ground) Not have a crop sown on it.
12. Long-tailed brilliantly colored parrot of Central and South America.
13. A city in northwestern Turkey.
14. Of or pertaining to a number system having 8 as its base.
22. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
24. The syllable naming the sixth (submediant) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
26. Urge or force (a person) to an action.
29. The particular occupation for which you are trained.
32. Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus Acacia.
35. Bar temporarily.
37. The lower house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
38. Any branch of Shinto other than Kokka.
39. A large number or amount.
40. Being precisely fitting and right.
42. Sweet liqueur made from wine and brandy flavored with plum or peach or apricot kernels and bitter almonds.
44. Full of submerged reefs or sandbanks or shoals.
46. Small order of macroscopic fresh and brackish water algae with a distinct axis.
49. Large snake mackerel with rings like spectacles around its eyes.
50. A shoe without a tongue and with decorative lacing up the instep.
53. A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.
54. Unknown god.
56. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
58. A state in New England.
60. Greek author of fables (circa 620-560 BC).
61. In small tight curls.
62. An Indian tree of the family Combretaceae that is a source of timber and gum.
64. A facial expression of contempt or scorn.
65. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
67. A jaunty rhythm in music.
70. A potent estrogen used in medicine and in feed for livestock and poultry.
71. The residue that remains when something is burned.
73. The universal time coordinated when an event is received on Earth.
77. A radioactive metallic element that is similar to tellurium and bismuth.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

There may be a tiny lazy streak that would like to surface from you today. This could cause you to ignore your responsibilities and do some socializing. However, reality has a way of rearing its head and you find you can simplify and complete tasks in no time at all. There could be a sense of accomplishment that you had not even considered. Whatever you decide to do to busy yourself this afternoon, you will feel great support from others. This could be reorganizing a room or reading a book. There is optimism, faith and a tendency to take chances at the deepest emotional levels; a hot air balloon ride is possible. This is a time of exploring your feelings, a kind of restlessness for new emotional experience... Divine wanderlust, if you will.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You appreciate what is aboveboard and straightforward and have a particular distaste for anything that is secretive. You may be a bit stressed to complete and clear away some work this morning but as the day progresses you are able to relax and see that much is accomplished. Before you leave your work you take a great opportunity to talk to someone in the workplace that may seem to have some misunderstandings or problems. There is an opportunity to listen to this person and you may find that is all that is needed. You enjoy comfort and you enjoy keeping a clean home—do allow yourself room to mess up a little now and then. You are coming into a more creative phase in your life and will enjoy spending time with a fun craft project.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You should be feeling very good about yourself and enjoying your particular situation, as well as support from those around you. If you are at work today, this is the time you may find you and your work mates praising one another. Set the challenges aside for now... No points are counted today. One way to be prepared for a smooth return to your work is to take notes of where you stopped and what needs to be done when you return. After work you might enjoy some time with your friends and the young people you work with. Visit, relax and have a few snacks before heading home in the traffic. If there are any family gatherings, offer your assistance. All should go smoothly. Make sure there is plenty of ice and plenty of places to park.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Someone may assist you in figuring out how to proceed with some special plans or decisions regarding your life strategy. You may decide that you want to dedicate some of your time to a volunteer group. Taking food to shut-ins and joining a food drive are just a couple of subjects you may contemplate. It may surprise and please you to find that someone you are close to really understands and is supportive of your ideas. You may find yourself serving to guide someone younger than you in matters of importance this day and in the future. Being a tutor for those that cannot afford it is commendable. Listen to a child this evening—there is an idea that has become embedded in the mind that needs the parent's attention—perhaps you can give some guidance.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have lots of friends and today is one of those days when the phone keeps ringing. Later, you may be sought after for your ability to help with a few commonsense situations. You will be able to take some time out to think through some methods or suggestions that would be helpful to others. Your personality proves invaluable when dealing with people. Perhaps this is in a religious setting and you are in the job of helping people. Nostalgia and domesticity plays a large part in helping you to realize the importance of security and a feeling of having roots. Knowing that you are wanted and needed on a private, personal and intimate level is very satisfying. Your family, home, relatives and real property all play a bigger part in your life now.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You could find appreciation coming from others because of their sympathy and understanding about your needs. They seem to understand just how you feel. It could almost be a mutual admiration society, as you too are aware of others' needs, in much the same way. It seems easy for you to communicate regarding groups and the public at large. Being recognized in some special way is always nice, and you can expect a small boost of some kind now—either some extra support or recognition from those around you. You may feel very much in touch and in harmony with others as the lines of communication are wide open. All of the support that you need should be there for you now. Early bedtime this evening helps to rebuild your energy level.

Wordsearch Puzzle

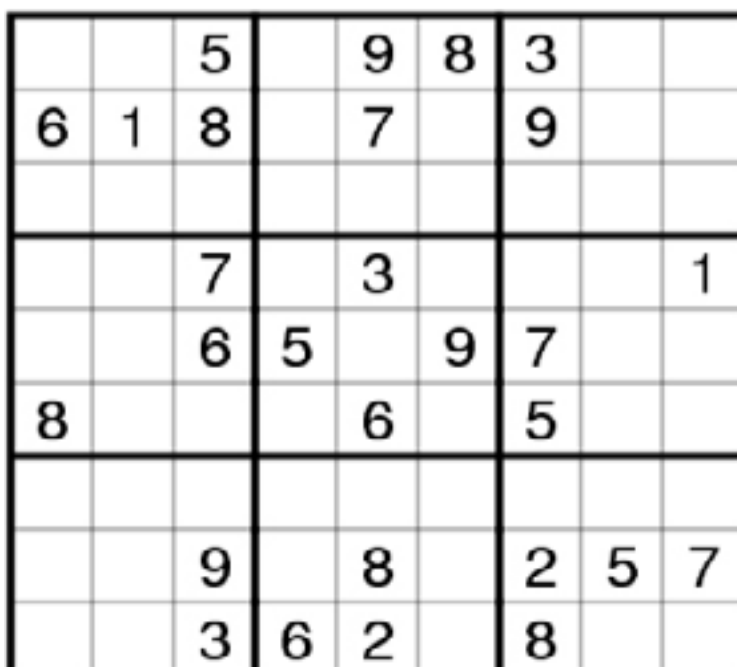
Elvis

Find and circle all of the words, names, songs, and movies that have to do with Elvis. The remaining letters spell a line from an Elvis song.



- AARON ALL SHOOK UP BLUE HAWAII BURNING LOVE CLAMBAKE COLONEL PARKER DON'T BE CRUEL DRAFTED G.I. BLUES GIRL HAPPY GLADYS
GOOD LUCK CHARM GOSPEL GRACELAND GYRATING HEARTBREAK HOTEL HOUND DOG IN THE GHETTO JAILHOUSE ROCK KENTUCKY RAIN KING CREOLE LISA MARIE
LITTLE SISTER LOVE ME TENDER MEMPHIS ONE NIGHT PRISCILLA RCA RETURN TO SENDER ROCKABILLY ROUSTABOUT SHE'S NOT YOU
STUCK ON YOU SUN RECORDS SURRENDER SUSPICIOUS MINDS THE KING TOO MUCH TUPELO U.S. ARMY VERNON VIVA LAS VEGAS

Daily SuDoku



Libra (September 23-October 22)



You are looking forward to a bright and interesting future. You may feel that there must be some changes made in your present way of doing things in order to reach that future. Allowing yourself to step away from the work for a short while to enjoy the day and the people around you pays off big time. This is a period of optimism and emotional stability, making it a good time to evaluate and modify existing relationships as well as your goals. Also, there may be opportunities to mend any difficulties with loved ones. Take care when discussing emotional things. You are good to keep your number one rule in mind: to stay focused. This is the way you can save a situation from becoming difficult. You enjoy peace and quiet in the family.



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

This morning you enjoy a quiet morning. There is a little time to catch up on your personal e-mail and to tend to some unfinished business as well. You may decide to take some time to clean out a few drawers and put your desk or workspace in top condition so that when you come back to work after a few days away, you will see everything clean and a like-new workspace. There may be a few things that gain your attention but on the whole, you are feeling quite accomplished. After the work is done, all may gather for some social time. You are an excellent negotiator. You might send out for pizza and have a rap session in the board room. Learn how people feel about certain programs or guidelines and ask for ways to improve the workplace.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Someone may disagree with you profusely concerning matters of convention. Some sort of temporary obstacle could appear. This could frustrate you. One of the heartening things about these kinds of cycles is that they don't last too long. Keep your faith—and this too shall pass. You may have a lot of fun this afternoon—there is a process of storytelling—perhaps in writing for children's books. They will be a great success if you decide to publish them! You truly desire fun and should not hesitate to get to know new people and form new acquaintances. The exchange of ideas becomes a focal point in your life now. Learning and knowing a little about a lot of things satisfies a need for mental stimulation. Your talents are recognized.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find yourself very bold, possibly even a little bit headstrong and impatient, and could even go where angels fear to tread. This is a time when you might just sit down and update your personal employee folder. Place a record of your successes and your ability to rise from any difficulties in that folder. Make notes on your unused talents and what you really enjoy most from your work. Also, create a goals list by month. You will be very pleased with the results by the end of next year. The old tried-and-true has begun to bore you; therefore, you will be seeking out new adventures, new and fun travel experiences. Being able to understand those around you could have you enjoying a special time with someone you love this evening.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your confidence is high and you should be able to accomplish much during this time. This afternoon is the perfect time to do those things that you previously put off, whether from fear of failure or lack of motivation. You welcome the new people that come into your life. Having and appreciating things of beauty and value play a bigger role in your life now. Shopping after work, you are quite pleased at the purchases. Provided you don't spend it all on the fancy things that catch your eye, this can be a financially favorable period. You will find interaction with a loved one both stimulating and delightful. There are great opportunities to spend quality time with your loved ones and family this evening. A new bird or other animal comes into your life this evening.

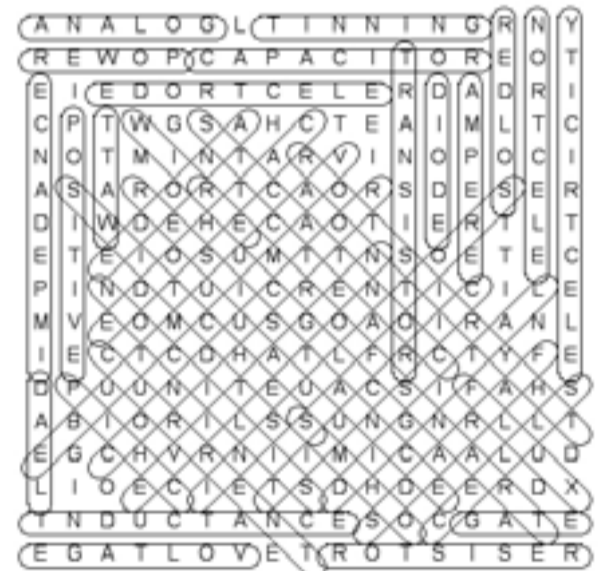


Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Others are appreciative of your great understanding and sensitivity to their needs and feelings. You are in a good place emotionally to communicate in relation to groups and society, as well. Working with youth groups or with people that have sincere needs to heal will be most beneficial to you at this time. Teaching others how to relax and how to be focused on more than one person is a difficult but most important goal. This may be a church group, a twelve-step group or even a group in the workplace that is under continuous pressure. A fun and fast game of scrabble, trivia or some board game fills your evening. Later tonight you and a friend or loved one will calculate methods of increasing the budget; good luck. There are adjustments between want and need.

Yesterday's Solution

Electronics



- AMPERE ANALOG ANODE CAPACITOR CELLS CHIP CIRCUIT CONDUCTOR CONTACTS
CURRENT DIGITAL DIODE ELECTRICITY ELECTRODE ELECTRON FARRADS FLUX GATE IMPEDANCE
INDUCTANCE INSULATORS LEAD NEGATIVE OHMS POSITIVE POWER RESISTANCE RESISTOR SILICON
SOLDER SWITCHES THYRISTOR TUNING TRANSFORMER TRANSISTOR VACUUM TUBE VOLTAGE WATT WIRE

The hidden item is: LIGHT EMITTING DIODE

Yesterday's Solution



Classifieds

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Kuwait Times
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 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
 Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Cold with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 20 km/h.

BY DAY: Warm with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 22 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 20/12/2017 1200 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	26 °C	14 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	26 °C	09 °C		
ABDALY	27 °C	10 °C		
BUBYAN	24 °C	09 °C		
JAHRA	27 °C	11 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	24 °C	10 °C		
SALMIYAH	22 °C	16 °C		
AHMADI	24 °C	15 °C		
NUWAISIB	26 °C	11 °C		
WAFRA	26 °C	10 °C		
SALMY	26 °C	10 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	12/21	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	26 °C	09 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Friday	12/22	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	27 °C	09 °C	VRB	06 - 20 km/h
Saturday	12/23	Partly cloudy to cloudy	27 °C	10 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Sunday	12/24	Partly cloudy to cloudy	28 °C	12 °C	S-SE	12 - 35 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:13
Sunrise	06:38
Zuhr	11:46
Asr	14:36
Sunset	16:54
Isha	18:16

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	24 °C
MIN. Temp.	05 °C
MAX. RH	65 %
MIN. RH	29 %
MAX. Wind	W 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UP.0 2017/12/20 14:28 UTC V1.00 T2.4 ق.ت.ع.غ-1/8

Airline

American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
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

NOTICE

Gulf Establishment for Central Air Conditioning
 would like to inform that

Mr. Chaudary Mohammad Nawaz Chaudary Nazar Hussain

of Pakistan, Passport number DD4198291, submitted his resignation from the Establishment with effective from 25/07/2017 and his resignation was accepted. He is no longer associated with Gulf Establishment and the Establishment is not responsible for any commitments made on his behalf.

EMERGENCY

112

SITUATION VACANT

Maid is needed to work as a part time in a flat located in Salmiya, salary is KD 100/month and time is flexible. Contact: 66417504. (C 5370) 21-12-2017

Kuwait Times

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DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Thursday 21/12/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 21/12/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
SAI	441	Lahore	00:15	JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
KAC	102	London	00:50	PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	SAI	442	Lahore	01:15
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	JZR	502	Luxor	01:30
WAN	416	Beirut	01:05	JZR	142	Doha	01:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	PGT	859	Istanbul	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	WAN	341	Sohag	03:45
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	KAC	203	Lahore	05:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	KAC	205	Islamabad	05:20
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:05
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	DHX	172	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	JZR	902	Baku	07:50
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	WAN	133	Doha	08:10
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	413	Bangkok	08:10
MEA	400	Beirut	07:15	MEA	401	Beirut	08:15
QTR	8511	Doha	07:35	KAC	791	Madinah	08:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	BAW	156	London	08:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	117	New York	09:00
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	QTR	8512	Doha	09:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	JZR	238	Amman	09:10
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:00	KAC	101	London	09:45
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
WAN	342	Sohag	10:15	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
NIA	161	Cairo	11:35	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	WAN	778	Jeddah	10:40
FEW	933	Sohag	12:40	KAC	4101	IAA	11:00
FDB	075	Dubai	12:45	FDK	804	Damascus	11:00
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	11:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	IRA	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	11:10
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	JZR	241	Amman	11:25
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	JAI	574	Mumbai	11:30
KAC	792	Madinah	13:20	WAN	836	Sarajevo	11:35
JZR	903	Baku	13:30	MSC	405	Sohag	11:40
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:40	BBC	043	Dhaka	11:45
IAW	157B	Al Najaf	13:55	KAC	546	Sarajevo	11:50
PAL	668	Manila	14:00	FDB	071	Dubai	12:35

Lifestyle | Music and Movies

'The Post': A Hollywood ode to journalism

At a time when the media is being accused of peddling "fake news," Steven Spielberg, Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks are bringing Hollywood star power to a movie celebrating journalism and the virtues of a free press. "The Post," which comes out in theaters in the United States on Friday, recounts the nail-biting behind-the-scenes story of the 1971 publication by The Washington Post of the Pentagon Papers, which exposed the lies behind US involvement in the Vietnam War.

Directed by Spielberg, whose long list of credits includes "Saving Private Ryan," "Schindler's List," "Jaws" and "E.T.," "The Post" stars Streep as aristocratic Post publisher Katharine Graham and Hanks as the newspaper's scrappy executive editor Ben Bradlee. The drama at the heart of the film revolves around Graham's decision to go ahead and publish the Pentagon Papers, a move which could have had potentially fatal consequences for the family newspaper she took over eight years earlier upon the suicide of her husband.

The Pentagon Papers, leaked by whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg, were a 7,000-page classified report which determined—contrary to the public assertions of US government officials—that the Vietnam conflict was unwinnable. The New York Times published excerpts until the administration of president Richard Nixon obtained a court injunction barring the newspaper from continuing to do so on national security grounds. That's where the Post stepped in, braving legal and financial peril to take up the torch.

Spielberg, Streep and Hanks attended a screening of "The Post" at the shrine to journalism, the Newseum, in Washington last week, located just a few blocks from the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue. Not present but looming over



This file photo shows from left: Tom Hanks, Rita Wilson and Marty Baron arriving for the premiere of "The Post" in Washington, DC. — AFP photos

the event was President Donald Trump, who has waged a vitriolic campaign against media outlets he believes are unfair to him. Trump has been particularly scathing about CNN and The New York Times but he has also repeatedly attacked the Post, calling it "dishonest," "phony" and his favorite—"fake news." He refers to the newspaper in his tweets as the "Amazon Washington Post," a reference to Jeff Bezos, the owner of online retail giant Amazon who purchased the Post from the Graham family in 2013.

'A movie about patriotism'

Speaking to reporters on the red carpet at the Newseum screening, Spielberg, Hanks and Streep—once dismissed by Trump as "overrated"—were reluctant to call out the president by name and downplayed suggestions the movie was a shot across the bow of his White House. "I think it's very, very important that our movie is seen not as a political, partisan play on the part of

what they call the liberal media or Hollywood," Spielberg said.

"I see it not as a partisan movie," he said, "but a movie about patriotism and a movie about the courageous media, the Fourth Estate, and what they did to be able to get the Pentagon Papers published, which then led to Watergate." Watergate, of course, was the subject of a 1976 Hollywood blockbuster in which The Washington Post also played a starring role—"All the President's Men" featuring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman as Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. Despite Spielberg's protestations, reviewers are finding parallels inescapable between "The Post" and its championing of the media and the non-stop vilification of the press by Trump.

"('The Post') takes you back to a time when the outcome was precarious, and the freedoms we thought we took for granted hung in the balance," said Variety. "Just as they do today." For The



Actress Meryl Streep



Director Steven Spielberg

New Yorker, "The Post" is "not a period movie." "Instead, it is squarely addressed to the present day, striving for the urgency of a headline," it said. "The film is here to warn us of fresh threats to press freedom."—AFP

Ridley Scott won't release Kevin Spacey's 'All the Money in the World'

Sir Ridley Scott will never releasing Kevin Spacey's cut of 'All the Money in the World'. The 80-year-old filmmaker helmed the new John Paul Getty biopic and decided to cut Spacey from the film after he was accused of sexual harassment and assault by numerous men, following actor Anthony Rapp's allegation that he made inappropriate advances to him when he was 14 years old. Scott brought in Hollywood legend Christopher Plummer to play the Getty Oil Company magnate instead. The filmmaker spent \$10 million reshooting 22 scenes in the kidnapping drama with his new-look cast, and has now admitted he will be putting away Spacey's version of the film.

Speaking to 'Entertainment Tonight', Scott said: "[It's] highly unlikely. I think this would be put away for a while. That version, because I wouldn't want to bring it out. It wouldn't be right, put it that way." The film follows the kidnapping of 16-year-old John Paul Getty III (Charlie Plummer) and the desperate attempt by his devoted mother Gail (Michelle Williams) to convince his billionaire grandfather (Plummer) to pay the ransom. Recently Williams and Mark Wahlberg, who stars as advisor and CIA operative Fletcher Chase, revealed they didn't ask for more money to be added on to their salaries when they did the re-shoots.

Williams, 37, said: "I just thought that this experience that we had all treasured was going to be essentially flushed down the toilet. I adore [Ridley], worship him, would do anything for him. I hated that this man's time and expertise and gentlemanly-ness was going to be kind of for naught. So when I got the phone call about the change of plans I was thrilled. I was enlivened, it picked me up off the couch a little bit and got me excited. I said I'd be wherever they needed me, whenever they needed me. And they could have my salary, they could have my holiday, whatever they wanted. Because I appreciated so much that they were making this massive effort."—Bang Showbiz

Twittersphere aghast over Trump likeness at Disney exhibit



Photo courtesy of Disney shows the Hall of Presidents, an iconic Magic Kingdom Park attraction near Orlando, Florida, offering a journey through American history. — AFP

It's got his orangish hair, too-long tie, and trademark unbuttoned jacket. But is that robo-guy at Disney's Hall of Presidents really supposed to be Donald Trump? If you go by the chorus of tweets out there ranging from puzzled to horrified, the facial likeness of the animatronic figure unveiled Tuesday is a botch job. The robotic figure stands on a stage alongside life-size models of Trump's predecessors.

It can speak and move its hands, but was widely derided by friends and foe for its fleeting resemblance to the 45th president. Twitter users said the figure, dressed in a dark suit, looked more like Hillary Clinton or Hollywood actor Jon Voight, a Trump supporter. Others compared it to veteran US actress Angela Lansbury or the character Biff Tannen from the film "Back to the Future."

"The more I see of Disney's 'Hall of Presidents' Trump, the more I'm convinced they made a Hillary one first and had to redo it" said Twitter user Maplecocaine. "It looks like Jon Voight and Hillary had a

man-baby," said another Twitter account under the handle Tyree. The comedy website Funny or Die quickly dubbed over the official recording on Trump's voice, in which he talks about "the achievements of the American spirit," with some of his more lurid proclamations, such as the "Access Hollywood" tape in which he boasts of sexually grabbing women.

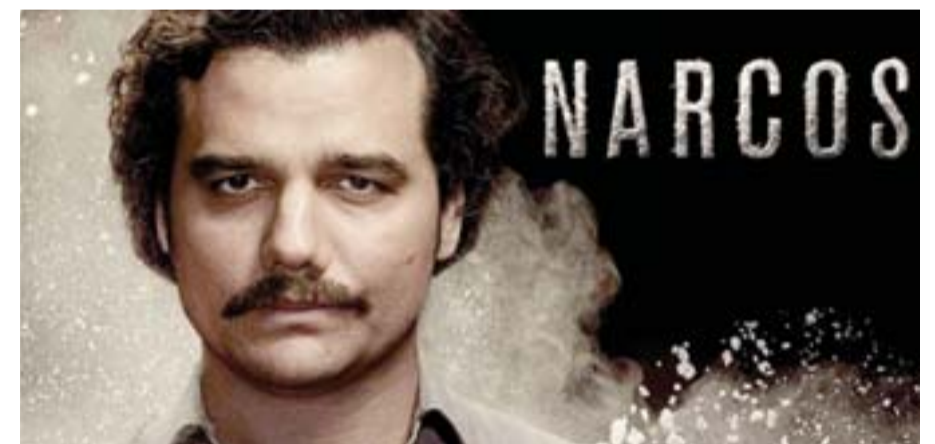
With a nod to the special prosecutor's investigation into the Trump campaign's possible ties to Russian election meddling, Twitter user Rex Hupke said that "the best part of Donald Trump being in Disney's Hall of Presidents will be when they move him ... and put him in the Pirates of the Caribbean ride's jail." Singer and movie star Bette Midler recalled the president's sensitivity to criticism that he has small hands, joking that "they had to use an old pair of hands from one of the 'It's a Small World' kids." There was no immediate reaction from the president himself, a prolific user of Twitter. — AFP

New series of 'Narcos' moves to Mexico

The new series of the hit Netflix series Narcos will move to Mexico after the demise of Colombian kingpin Pablo Escobar and the Cali cartel, a trailer released on Tuesday showed. The fourth series of the show will feature Michael Pena, who recently starred in the film Ant Man, and Diego Luna, who featured in the Star Wars movie Rogue One and who cut his teeth in the Mexican cult hit movie Y Tu Mama Tambien. The new trailer gave away no details of story lines or what characters will be portrayed, but featured a Mexican mariachi band playing against a dark backdrop, as clouds of white powder—presumably cocaine—burst from their instruments.

"Guadalajara is not only the birthplace of mariachi and tequila, it's also the home of the newest season of Narcos. Coming 2018," an accompanying announcement said. Guadalajara is the capital of Jalisco state and gave rise to the Guadalajara drugs cartel in the 1980s, founded by Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, Rafael Caro Quintero and Ernesto Fonseca Carrilloto to smuggle first heroin and marijuana, and then later cocaine, into the United States.

It was one of the first Mexican drugs rings to work with the Colombian cartels, which were later eclipsed by the Mexican organizations. The Guadalajara cartel was where famed drugs lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman cut his teeth before founding his own outfit, the hugely powerful Sinaloa cartel. A Mexican location scout for the show was found shot dead in his car earlier this year, about an hour's drive from Mexico City. With Pedro Pascal playing DEA agent Javier Pena, the initial three series of Narcos focused on the drugs wars in Colombia, first with Escobar's Medellin cartel and then the rise of the rival Cali cartel after his death. Luna and Pena have worked together before, in 2014, when the Mexican cast Pena in his directorial debut, "Cesar Chavez."—AFP



Lupita Nyong'o was challenged filming Black Panther

Lupita Nyong'o felt "challenged" when shooting 'Black Panther'. The 34-year-old actress stars as Nakia in the new Marvel Cinematic Universe movie by Ryan Coogler, and Nyong'o revealed the filmmaker avoided the "expected female-rival narrative" in the latest film. Speaking to Teen Vogue, Nyong'o said: "Ryan made a point of avoiding the expected female-rival narrative. In this genre, where spandex is involved, oftentimes the women are pitted against each other. In our story, there are so many different women holding their own space. Women may be in competition with each other, sure, but that doesn't necessarily mean there's an absence of love or respect. Shuri [Letitia Wright] is the sister to the Black Panther [Chadwick Boseman] and the leader of technological pursuits and Nakia is someone who has a complicated history with the Black Panther and is a warrior in her own right. You see them work together, and you see a dynamic that is really encouraging. Making this film awakened me. I walked away from this experience feeling extremely supported and I felt challenged."

The motion picture is expected to expand on the storyline that was first introduced in 'Captain America: Civil War' of how T'Challa becomes the Black Panther. T'Challa's father T'Chaka is king of the African nation Wakanda and has the ceremonial title Black Panther as the chief of the Panther Tribe, but is killed when a bomb goes off at the UN making his son the Black Panther. Other actors in the movie include Forest Whitaker, who will take on the role of Zuri, an elder statesman in Wakanda, and 'The Walking Dead' star Danai Gurira, who is to portray Okoye, the head of the Dora Milaje, the Black Panther's personal bodyguards. — Bang Showbiz



MNEK wants to sing for Cardi B

MNEK is desperate to spit some lines on a Cardi B track. The 23-year-old producer and songwriter has worked on tracks for the likes of Zara Larsson and Anne-Marie, but he's set his sights on performing a hook on a track by the 'Bodak Yellow' rapper. He has even offered to perform at her forthcoming wedding with her Migos star fiancé Offset. MNEK - whose real name is Uzochi 'Uzo' Emenike - tweeted Cardi: "i now know all the words to 'Bodak Yellow' your verse on 'No Limit' AND 'Motorsport'. I'm stanninggggg, can i sing a hook for you? or at your wedding idk.... in any case... lmk @iamcardib (sic)"

The 'Never Forget You' hitmaker may be in with a chance as the 'Motorsport' star said she is "taking her time" with her debut album. Cardi - whose real name is Belcalis Almanzar - has written a whole host of songs but wants to make sure they are top notch before letting any of them make the final cut. Giving an update on her first record, Cardi wrote on Twitter last month: "I have a lot of pressure on me. I have songs stashed up. I just don't think they qualified for my album. Sometimes i think is ready sometimes i think it's not so I'm going to take my time till it's right. (sic)"

Meanwhile, the 25-year-old rapper recently found herself involved in a feud with fellow rapper Azealia Banks. The '212' singer accused Cardi of being fake, and said she doesn't believe she has the "black woman's expression". Azealia explained: "Dont get me wrong I'm very entertained by Cardi B, and I really like 'Bodak Yellow'. "That's a really good song, but you are not that girl. "It's just truth, it's just the truth, you know what I'm saying? I'm not trying to take anything from you, but you're just like - you know it's like this female rap thing, it's like a lineage. "It's a real fire that burns in a soul, you don't have that fire, I'm very happy for your success and I love your come-up and I love like seeing you smile and having a good time. "But this like, woman's expression, this black woman's expression ... just the fire of the black woman's expression ... you don't have it, Cardi. And you won't get it, because it's not you. (sic)". — BangShowbiz

In sweet-toothed Germany, Christmas marzipan gets a makeover

‘Women buy marzipan, but men also like to eat it’



This file photo shows a roasting pot filled with freshly made marzipan at the headquarters of the traditional confectionary maker JG Niederegger GmbH in Luebeck, Germany. — AFP photos



This file photo shows an employee filling roasting pots with freshly made marzipan at the headquarters of the traditional confectionary maker JG Niederegger GmbH in Luebeck, Germany.



Employees removing freshly cooked marzipan from roasting pots at the headquarters of the traditional confectionary maker JG Niederegger GmbH in Luebeck, Germany.

Germans believe no Christmas is complete without marzipan, the mouth-watering treat made of sugar and crushed almonds that dates back to the Middle Ages. But market pressures are driving innovation of the beloved holiday tradition—not least in Luebeck, the charming port city in northern Germany that is arguably the world capital of marzipan. Marzipan “has a frumpy, slightly dowdy image,” said Janine Judetzki, a spokeswoman for the German marzipan firm Lemke.

“We are anxious to make the image a bit younger and also cater to other target groups.” The delicacy was, according to Luebeck lore, invented in the 15th century and has been savored by Prussian emperors and praised by cherished writers such as local son Thomas Mann, whose visage carved in marzipan can be seen at a museum on the city’s high street. However, the rising price of almonds has also put a strain on the venerable family businesses that make the product, several of which have gone bankrupt in the past few years.

The Luebeck firm Niederegger, founded in 1806, is one of the oldest German candy companies and occupies a central place in the city, where its products are sold on seemingly every corner. Part of marzipan’s charm is that it can be formed into countless shapes such as snowmen, Christmas trees and pigs. The industry is in the process of widening the variety further in order to remain competitive. Two years ago, Niederegger launched a successful line of marzipan for men called “Man Stuff” in which the marzipan is tinged with “bitter” flavors like cashews and whiskey and comes in virile packaging like toolboxes.

Eight generations

“Women buy marzipan, but men also like to eat it,” Kathrin Gaebel, a Niederegger spokeswoman, explained in the company’s bustling factory, where smashed almonds are caramelized in copper pots at a temperature kept secret. The company even installed a 3-D printer to make little marzipan figures in its packed store in downtown Luebeck, though the machine cannot replicate the delicate shapes crafted in the factory, where replicas of fruit and animals are handmade to order.

Niederegger hopes that such changes may help expand its sales, 60 percent of which occur around



Employees preparing pigs made of fresh marzipan.



Heart-shaped marzipan passing along a conveyor belt at the headquarters.



Heart-shaped marzipan passing along a conveyor belt at the headquarters.



An employee preparing pigs made of fresh marzipan at the headquarters.



An employee preparing a pig made of fresh marzipan at the headquarters of the traditional confectionary maker JG Niederegger GmbH in Luebeck, Germany.

Christmas. Two sisters, Antonie Strait and Theresa Mehrens-Strait, now run the company as the eighth generation of the Niederegger family. But rising costs of nuts have made their work difficult. “The hazelnut industry and almond industry have both been suffering,” Marcia Mogelonsky, a food specialist at the market research firm Mintel, told AFP. When the cost of almonds rises, as it does after periods of drought in California, the company must bear far higher costs.

“When you think that we have 2/3 almonds and only 1/3 sugar, you have to think that the price (of the marzipan) would need to double at least,” when the cost of almonds quadruples, said Gaebel. Niederegger refuses to further sweeten its marzipan, even though doing so could cut costs and attract more customers abroad, who currently account for only 20 percent of sales.

Gift for children

Marzipan from Luebeck is protected by the European Union under the same category as Czech beer and French poultry, and companies must adhere to strict rules about the contents of the almond paste. The rising price of foodstuffs has affected all of the German sweets industry with sales stagnating for the

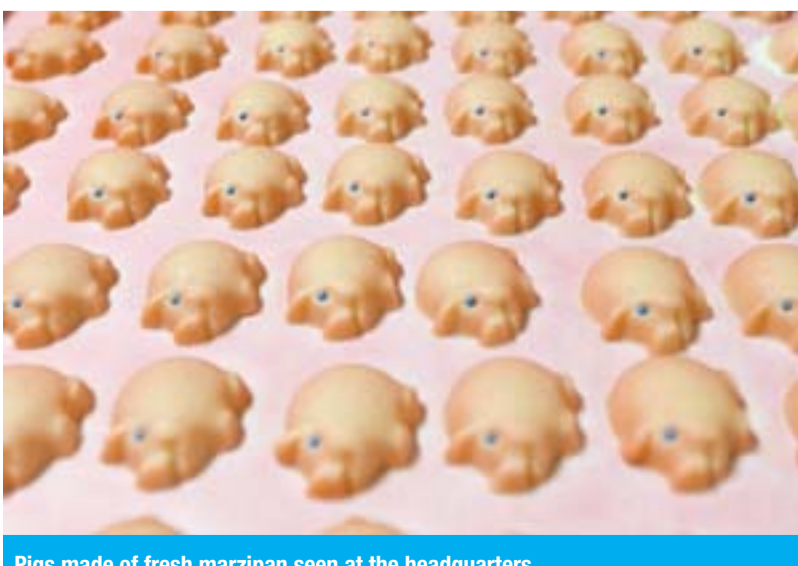
past several years. But they especially hurt small companies like Niederegger, which employs around 750 people. Last year the state of Schleswig-Holstein gave Niederegger and another local marzipan company 885,000 euros (\$1.04 million) to help promote new and quicker forms of production.

Traditional companies need support to be competitive worldwide, said Harald Haase, spokesman for the regional economy ministry. A number of small confectionery companies in Germany have been sold to larger corporations or are bankrupt, according to business newspaper Handelsblatt. Gaebel declined to comment on Niederegger’s profits but said “we are lucky that we are a family company.”

Starting in January Niederegger will sell an ice cream line throughout Germany and the company, which said it develops 15 new products a year, has experimented with new flavours such as cheesecake and maple syrup. And despite all the innovation, when it comes to marzipan it may just be its central place in German culture that helps it survive. “As a child, you get it as a gift,” said Eva Mura, another Niederegger spokeswoman, “and you give it to children as a gift.” — AFP



An employee preparing a pig made of fresh marzipan.



Pigs made of fresh marzipan seen at the headquarters.



An employee preparing pigs made of fresh marzipan.



Employees preparing pigs made of fresh marzipan at the headquarters.



This file photo shows skiers sitting in a ski lift as others ski down a slope in the Swiss Alps resort of Les Crosets. — AFP

Swiss Alps try to beat pricey image with 'low-cost' ski passes

To overcome their reputation as high-cost destinations and woo back an ever-dwindling number of skiers, Swiss Alpine resorts have this year launched "low-cost" season passes that have already begun working their magic. Swiss ski resorts, long renowned for their high quality and even higher prices, have in recent years been hard-hit by global economic woes that have spurred many winter sport enthusiasts to seek out cheaper slopes abroad or snub them altogether. "For the past 40 years, we have kept the same rates and were happy to wait. But we cannot wait any longer," said Pierre Besson, in charge of the mechanical lifts at the Villars-Gryon-Diablerets station near Lausanne. During the 2016-17 season, Swiss ski stations sold 21.2 million day passes — the lowest number in more than a quarter of a century, according to the lift operators.

'The Magic'

Spurred on by the low turnout, Besson masterminded the new "Magic Pass"—a low-cost pass giving access to 25 of Switzerland's Alpine stations for the entire season. The "Magic", as it is called, aims to draw the Swiss back to the slopes by slashing the cost enthusiastic skiers would usually dish out during a season in half or even more, insiders say. While individual stations have offered their own season passes, this is the first low-cost pass that offers skiers the chance to sample the slopes at so many stations. More than 80,000 people purchased them at a cut rate of 359 Swiss francs (\$362, 307 euros) a piece for

adults during a limited five-month period that closed before the season began.

This has allowed the ski stations to pocket nearly half of their anticipated annual sales before the season even kicks off, Besson, who runs the cooperative of stations involved in the project, told AFP. Other initiatives, like the Top 4 Ski Pass, which includes high-end resorts like Gstaad and Wengen, or the Wintercard sold by the Saas Fee station, also aim to dramatically cut the price skiers pay for access to lifts. "There is a small revolution underway when it comes to subscriptions," said Veronique Kanel, spokeswoman of Switzerland Tourism.

The new passes prompted Swiss daily Le Temps to dub the 2017-18 season "the first winter of low-cost skiing" in Switzerland. The wealthy Alpine nation, credited with inventing winter sports in the 19th century, has been facing dwindling interest in its slopes for more than a decade. "Over the past dozen years, the Swiss market has seen visits to its stations drop 25 percent," said Laurent Vanat, the author of an annual report on the global ski market.

Several factors have played a role. "The most important is the ageing population, and the fact that people ski less than before," said Vanat. "Not only is the pool of skiers not being renewed, but the existing skiers are coming less frequently," he added. The strengthening of the Swiss franc in recent years has made the already pricey resorts in the country even more expensive for skiers coming from abroad. "Just a decade ago, all the Alpine stations cost the same. Without raising their

prices, the Swiss stations suddenly became 15 to 20 percent more expensive," Vanat said.

But the franc has recently lost some of its vigour, and with the Magic Pass and the other season passes on offer, the Swiss stations hope to shift the balance. "We are making waves," Besson said, adding that the season had already gotten off to a promising start. Massive amounts of early snow on the slopes, after last year's poor showing, has also made a difference. "The station activity is already very profitable."

The high-altitude restaurants, sports stores, hotels: all the actors in this sector have big smiles on their faces," Besson said. Consumers are happy too, he said. "People have rediscovered the pleasure of being in the mountains because they don't feel like they have paid too much." But Besson said he wanted to wait until the end of the winter to declare total victory. "This is a test season," he acknowledged. Kanel of Switzerland Tourism also said that "an excellent winter season... would be a very positive signal" about the profitability of the new pass system. But she stressed that the biggest question is whether this model will help finance the heavy investments required for the upkeep of the stations and the lifts.

Vanat too hinted that the new pass system may not be enough on its own. He said the Swiss stations needed to make great strides in other areas too, and should especially look at improving the quality-to-price ratio in accommodations if they want to draw more skiers over the long term. "We are currently at a completely experimental stage," he said. — AFP

Afghan raisin houses get a facelift to boost productivity

Afghan farmer Abdul Jalil Gulzar sits by a pile of raisins in the squat mud brick shed where generations of his family have dried their grape harvest. Such traditional huts have long been used to hang and desiccate the fruit, but now the keshmesh khanas—the Dari term for raisin houses—are getting a facelift as Afghanistan looks to improve its yield. The country once accounted for 10 percent of the global raisin market, but nearly four decades of conflict have driven its share of the world market down to just 2-3 percent.

In a bid to boost productivity and earnings, the agriculture ministry and aid groups are financing new modern khanas. "The new raisin house has much more capacity and they have a

single purpose (to dry the grapes)," Gulzar told AFP inside the rustic khana built by his father in Dhi Sabz district near Kabul. The Afghan agricultural sector, is the main driver of the economy and biggest employer. Hajji Malek Zabet shows off his new brick raisin house near the Afghan capital. Inside the cement-floored room are neat rows of metal hanging racks where grapes drape down like vines in a jungle.

Afghanistan boasts nearly 100 varieties of grapes which are grown across the country and celebrated in popular poetry, nursery rhymes and proverbs. In the absence of a winemaking industry, which is prohibited in the Islamic country, many farmers turn their grapes into raisins which are easier to conserve and bring a higher price. Fresh grapes sell for an average of 300 afghanis (about \$4.50) for seven kilograms, while just one kilogram of raisins fetches more than 1,000 afghanis.

Though the profits are nothing compared to the amount farmers can reap from what is now Afghanistan's biggest export: opium, the lifeblood of the Taliban insurgency and an economic lynchpin for many Afghans. A recent UN report showed that the area under poppy cultivation has hit a record high, underscoring the importance of providing farmers with successful alternatives.

Holding to the old ways

Afghanistan produced nearly 900,000 tons of grapes last year. However it only exported a frac-

tion — 111,000 tons of fresh grapes and 15,000 tons of raisins, according to government data. A lack of cold storage facilities and strict import requirements in many overseas markets means the bulk of Afghanistan's grape crop ends up being sold in local bazaars at harvest time, causing a glut and driving down prices. "Basically these new keshmesh khanas have three effects: they remove fresh grapes from the market and improve the quality of the process and product, and support prices," said Abdul Samad Kamawi, national horticulture coordinator at the agriculture ministry.

But even with the improvements, Afghanistan's rudimentary growing and processing methods means accessing export markets beyond Pakistan, India, the UAE and Russia is difficult. "Despite their know-how Afghans are still struggling to meet European criteria which are increasingly stringent," a Western importer told AFP. Some companies are going hi-tech to lift the quality of their raisins. Tabasom, a major exporter, has two production lines in Kabul equipped with X-ray machines and metal detectors to ensure only the best raisins are packed and sent abroad.

The drying process in the new brick and cement khanas is quicker and cleaner, but Gulzar is stubbornly keeping his earthen raisin house where his family often seeks shelter during the hot summer months. "They are cooler," he said, sitting happily on the dirt floor surrounded by hay and bunches of garlic. — AFP



This photograph shows Afghan women working at a raisin factory on the outskirts of Kabul.



Afghan women working at a raisin factory on the outskirts of Kabul. — AFP photos

OSN partners with leading Arabic children's edutainment platform Lamsa

OSN customers on select packages will receive a free subscription to the app, guaranteeing full-access to all-new interactive kids content



OSN, the region's leading entertainment network, has partnered with the Middle East & North Africa's award-winning Arabic children's edutainment provider, Lamsa, to ensure even more value to customers through an easy-to-use, child-friendly mobile app. The collaboration represents a mutual value-driven initiative that amplifies OSN and Lamsa's focus on delivering engaging, culturally relevant and interactive content experiences for families across the region.

As part of the strategic partnership, OSN will facilitate a one-year free subscription to the app on selected subscription packages, guaranteeing access to all-new programs, while assuring unrivalled value for children and families.

With more than 10 million users across the region, the app is ranked at number one in the 'Kids' and 'Family' categories on iTunes and the Play Store, offering hundreds of interactive edutainment options for children across the region. Neil Martin, Chief Commercial Officer, OSN, said: "Our customer is at the very heart of every OSN partnership with the objective of delivering the utmost convenience and value added digital experiences for families across the region. Now, through OSN's partnership with Lamsa, digital natives with Arabic as their mother

tongue will be able to engage in valuable edutainment using the easy-to-navigate mobile app, bringing about what we believe to be a great opportunity to engage our younger audience and families in a meaningful and valuable manner."

Badr Ward, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Lamsa said: "Our partnership with OSN will take Lamsa to new heights, exposing our leading Arabic content to even more unique users and creating new stories and learning experiences for all the children we touch with Lamsa. Our partnership with OSN is in line with our vision of 'Empowering generations, one child at a time'."

Lamsa, which recently won the prestigious Etisalat Digital Book of the Year award, as well as Google's children's app of the year 2017, is the leading children's edutainment platform in the region. Lamsa which means 'touch' in Arabic, is based on the concept that children have a world of imagination, learning and creativity at the tap of a finger. The app has been designed based on this, and its fluidity and interactivity represent Lamsa's vision to give children a world where they can learn, play and create with culturally relevant content that is fun, safe and trusted. Be the first to hear about OSN news by following @OSNnewsME on Twitter.

Medieval jewelry displayed in Kuwait



By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: More than 300 pieces of jewelry from the Middle Ages are displayed at the Asdourian Jewelry shop in Salihiya Complex in Kuwait City. Most of the items are part of the collection of Abduljalil Al-Enezi, a Kuwaiti art collector and businessman based in Japan. "I have a gallery in Japan, Gallery Khadour (The Golden Palace). I have items dating back to the medieval era that I bought in auctions. I wanted to showcase these items so that everyone will be able to see them, and perhaps if they can afford it, buy them," he said.

Aram Asdourian, CEO and founder of the Armenian Art Gallery, said the pieces are part of a luxury collection from the past. "The title of the three-day exhibition is 'Visiting the Past'. Here in our shop, you can see the collection and can buy the displayed items. They are expensive because they are works of art - these are real and original antiques and jewelries," he said. "It's open to the public and you can see it," he added. Asdourian is a jewelry shop specializing

in the heritage of Armenia. The breathtaking aesthetic and vibrant collections are classified by category. "We have a variety of arts and crafts items divided into several categories - from eclectic and unique jewelry pieces to genuine and distinctive paintings, intricate silverware, indigenous natural stone sculptures and handcrafted watches," Asdourian said.

Manvel Badeyan, Ambassador of Armenia to Kuwait, said he was happy to have been part of the inaugural ceremony to open the Armenian art and jewelry exhibition on Sunday. "It reflects our deep and cultural Armenian background. We are known for our jewelry craftsmanship - the best of the best jewelry craftsmen are from Armenia," he asserted.

The Armenian community in Kuwait numbers around 6,000, and according to the Armenian envoy, they were the first people from Europe to settle in this part of the world. "Armenians settled here from the 1940s, establishing churches and schools. We run several businesses, including jewelry shops," he added.

Turkish Airlines flies to Portugal



Turkish Airlines, a four-star airline flying to more than 300 destinations worldwide. According to the 2017 Skytrax survey, Turkish Airlines, already having a six consecutive years of "Best Airline in Europe" award from 2011-2016, is now chosen as the "Best Airline in Southern Europe" for the ninth consecutive time. Having won the "Best Economy Class Onboard Catering" award in 2010, Turkish Airlines was also awarded as the World's "Best Business Class Onboard Catering" in 2013, 2014 and 2016, and 2017.

In order to keep alive its brand equity, which provides a serious advantage in terms of competition, Turkish Airlines invests in its quality of service, in-flight entertainment systems, comfortable seats, gourmet cuisine and its qualified human resources. Turkish Airlines is always on the forefront of the latest technological advances and innovations in the aviation industry and boasts one of the youngest fleets. As the airline stably expands its routes and number of aircrafts, continuing vocational training of its employees is of the utmost importance in insuring the safety of its passengers.



Turkish Airlines regards flight safety and service quality as two of the most indispensable necessities. The carrier currently holds a four-star ranking and consistently strives to secure a five-star ranking. Turkish Airlines recently launched new flights to Bogota, Panama, Dubrovnik, Atlanta, Kosice, Hanoi, Cluj Napoca, Seychelles, Zanzibar, Havana, Caracas, Kharkiv, Conakry, Algeria: Voronezh and Samara, and Phuket.

Being aware of its responsibility as a leading airline within the global aviation community, Turkish Airlines determined to persistently carry out its mission moving forward with its unparalleled service concept, superior quality, trustworthiness and reliability. In addition to Europe, Turkish Airlines is also strategically expanding its network into Russia, Central Asia, Far East Asia, the Middle East, Africa and North and South America. As one of the fastest growing airlines in the world, Turkish Airlines holds a strategic position between the East and the West.

Turkish Airlines along with media delegations recently flew to the beautiful cities of Lisbon and Porto in Portugal.

Porto

Porto is a fascinating and vibrant city that is rapidly becoming one of Western Europe's most respected tourist destinations. Porto is Portugal's second largest city after Lisbon. The city is set on the northern bank of the Douro River, which gives rise to a dramatically undulated landscape and makes for spectacular vistas. Whilst the city itself is located inland from the Atlantic, there are also glorious beaches just a short train ride away.

The city boasts an extensive history, interesting tourist attractions and a buzzing nightlife. Porto is a historic and varied city, from the warren of narrow streets that make up the ancient Ribeira district through to the grand plazas of the Avenida dos Aliados. The region is famed for the production of Port, which is still stored in the vast cellars that stretch along the banks of the mighty Douro River. The Ribeira

district is one of the oldest districts of the city which is filled with ancient houses, narrow cobbled streets and numerous family owned restaurants, cafes and bars.

The Douro River, which is the scenic backdrop to Porto, is crossed by magnificent bridges and the route for relaxing boat tours. Porto is ideally explored as a city break destination but is also a convenient base from which to explore northern Portugal. The city is truly vibrant and visitors can be assured of a great nightlife, daring restaurants and a blossoming cultural scene. The city has an extensive history and this is reflected by its World Heritage protected old town, baroque churches, characterful winding streets and abundance of tourist attractions.

Landmarks

Igreja de Sao Francisco that hides one of Portugal's most dazzling displays of baroque finery and Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis: Porto's best art museum presents a stellar collection ranging from Neolithic carvings to Portugal's take on modernism, all housed in the formidable Palcio das Carrancas are some of the famous landmarks in Porto.

Lisbon

Lisbon is Europe's second-oldest capital (after Athens), once home to the world's greatest explorers like Vasco da Gama, Magellan and Prince Henry the Navigator, becoming the first true world city, the capital of an empire spreading over all continents, from Brazil to Asia (Macao, China, Goa, India). The capital of



Portugal, Lisbon (Portuguese: Lisboa) has experienced a renaissance in recent years, with a contemporary culture that is alive and thriving and making its mark in today's Europe.

Perched on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, Lisbon is one of the rare Western European cities that faces the ocean and uses water as an element that defines the city. Lisbon enchants travelers with its white-bleached limestone buildings, intimate alleyways, and an easy-going charm that makes it a popular year-round destination.

Landmarks

Castelo de Sao Jorge is located up the hill, with a great view over the city and the river. If you have the energy, you can get there by walking from downtown, going through the fan-



tastic old neighborhood of Alfama. The ticket office is way before the entrance, so make sure you buy the ticket first, or you'll be turned back when you eventually reach the entrance.

Museu do Teatro Romano is along the way from downtown to St. George's Castle.

Ponte 25 de Abril is a sister bridge to San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge. It was designed by the same architect in 1966 to connect Lisbon with the Setubal peninsula across the Tagus (Tejo) River. Formerly known as the Salazar Bridge, it was renamed after the Carnation Revolution.

Ponte Vasco da Gama is the longest bridge in Europe, and ninth longest in the world.



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2017



A man dressed as a Santa Claus descends from the roof of the Pediatric Clinic in Ljubljana yesterday. — AFP

Vandals take hammer to ancient Australia dinosaur footprint

Chinese firm turns panda poop into toilet paper

When life gave one Chinese company giant panda poop, it decided to make paper-and-profits. The Qianwei Fengsheng Paper Company in southwest Sichuan province has teamed up with the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda to recycle the animal's faeces and food debris into toilet paper, napkins and other household products, state media reported yesterday. The goods, soon to be released on the Chinese market, will be

marketed as part of a "panda poo" product line decorated with a picture of the bamboo-eating, black-and-white bear.

"They're taking care of our garbage for us," Huang Yan, a researcher at the giant panda center, told the Chengdu Business Daily. Huang told Xinhua state news agency that the 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of bamboo poo that adult pandas unleash daily are rich in fiber after absorbing the fructose from the shoots. In addition to their valuable dung, pandas also produce 50 kilograms of food waste every day from the bamboo husks they spit out after chewing.

While the process of turning bamboo into paper generally involves the breaking down of fructose to extract fibre, this step naturally occurs in the pandas' digestive tract, the paper company's president, Yang Chaolin, told Xinhua. Fengsheng will collect the faeces from three panda bases in Sichuan a couple of times a week. After it is boiled, pasteurized and turned into paper, it will be tested for bacteria before going on sale. Boxes of "panda poo" tissues will be sold at 43 yuan (\$6.5) a pop. "Pandas get what they want and we do too," Yang said. "It's a win-win." — AFP



Napkins made by panda faeces and food debris is seen in Chengdu in China's southwestern Sichuan province yesterday.



A staff member displaying napkins made from panda faeces and food debris in Chengdu in China's southwestern Sichuan province. — AFP photos

Vandals have taken a hammer to a 115 million year-old dinosaur footprint at a world renowned site in Australia, with officials yesterday slamming the "sad and callous" act. The footprint of the medium-sized theropod was found by palaeontologists in 2006 at Flat Rocks in Victoria state—one of only a handful of polar, or ice-age, dinosaur sites in the world. Last week officials discovered it had been deliberately damaged as they took a school group to see it. "It is sad to think a person or persons who knew the location of the footprint would deliberately damage an important local icon that is recognized as being of international scientific significance," said Parks Victoria ranger Brian Martin.

Soon after its 2006 discovery palaeontologists made a silicon rubber mould of the find. But rather than remove and store it at a museum, they decided to leave it in the rock, so visitors could have the thrill of seeing it in its natural state. It is located at an area known as the Dinosaur Dreaming site within the rocky Bunurong Marine Park, discovered in 1991 and which has yielded thousands of bones and teeth. Parks Victoria said the footprint was significant as it represented a moment frozen in time when a meat-eating dinosaur stood on that spot.



An undated handout combo picture released by Parks Victoria yesterday, shows a dinosaur footprint (left) before it was damaged by vandals (right) at Flat Rocks. — AFP

This differs from the recovery of bones from fossil layers in the area that have been deposited there by ancient fast-flowing rivers. Mike Cleeland, from the Bunurong Environment Centre, said he hoped the footprint could be repaired. "The thrill of seeing a real dinosaur

footprint has been diminished with the callous act of vandalism," he said. "Fortunately, I was able to retrieve some of the broken pieces of the footprint and hopefully the technicians at Museum Victoria may be able to restore the footprint to some degree." — AFP



Tourists pose for a photograph in front of a Christmas decoration set on Lubyanka Square in Moscow. — AFP