

Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 17384

SAFAR 28, 1439 AH | FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2017

9 German court: Kuwait Airways can refuse Israeli passengers



10 Saudi Arabia says Hariri 'free to leave'



47 Saudi, UAE, Bahrain out of Gulf Cup amid Qatar crisis



Mol scraps decision to impound vehicles

Page 9



Local

The gold standard



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

In April, the minister of commerce and industry said during the opening of a gold and jewelry exhibition that the amount of gold entering Kuwait is much greater than the capacity of the inspection department. He pointed out the existence of some shortcomings, adding the ministry is working on avoiding them and upgrading its level of inspection and supervision. Since the goods that are handled are precious, its standard of accuracy and inspection must be, pardon the pun, a 'gold standard'.

The minister's statement confirmed two facts for me. Firstly, the minister knows the problem and its dimensions in terms of the gold market, but a comprehensive change is not as easy as we all wish. The second issue here is why such large quantities of gold are brought into Kuwait, as we are a small market. Is it because gold is the safest haven for individuals and countries?

I do not deal with gold on a daily basis, so I forgot this statement until reports this week said ministry of commerce and industry inspectors discovered a fraud of 3.940 kg in gold ornaments valued at KD 50,000 (\$165,000) at a jewelry store. The case was referred to the prosecution.

The ministry issued a statement saying that the forged items were gold ornaments of Indian design, adding that cavities in them were filled with cheap materials in order to increase their weight and sell them as pure gold. The ministry assured that it will take all necessary legal procedures against the persons involved in this crime and will increase inspection of gold and jewelry markets to verify the validity and condition of scales and percentage of precious stones set in the items displayed for sale. This is a good effort.

Gold is known to have the highest corrosion resistance of all metals. Also, gold has a fascinating history and a special place in the world. For thousands of years, it has been used as an ornament of kings, a currency and a standard for global currencies. From ancient civilizations to modern days, the use of gold has ranked as a monetary reference. Even at sports tournaments, the winner gets a gold medal. More importantly, for lower income people gold is one of only a few 'safe' investments, a way to save up bit by bit and a way to build wealth for the future generations.

So what is the total quantity of gold in the world? Gold is one of the most expensive metals, to the extent that not all countries of the world are open to talk about the amount of gold they own or the volume of gold extracted from mines. In some countries, there are many illegal mining operations too.

Although the price of the precious metal is suitable for buying a bracelet or a gold ring, it is troublesome to governments as a cause of a potential entry into international conflicts for various reasons. Therefore, governments are keen to combat this issue, because it is linked to the role of the government. So, gold is more than just a metal and the confidence of buyers and traders is essential.

I hope the ministry signs a contract with a private company to check and mark gold and precious stones. This case of forgery might be a rare incident, but this doesn't mean we should let it go and forget about it. The ministry needs to use all tools at its disposal to strictly supervise all jewelry, whether produced in local workshops or coming from abroad.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Bnaider is one of the most popular weekend destinations for people in Kuwait. — Photo by Lamya Alfarisi / KUNA

Fasten your seat belts!



IN MY VIEW

By Jeri Al-Jeri

local@kuwaittimes.com

While any caring mother or father would cheer this law that would save people's lives and their savings, the law administrators ought to review their ideas about the right punishments and their severity.

The exaggerated method of fighting two of the main causes for fatalities and permanent life on wheelchairs, should not be administered by taking away a driver's vehicle and locking it up for two or three months with a KD 2 fine per day. That seems more like someone trying to get rich than the government trying to protect society.

The aggressiveness of this law would only force the public to give in to their reactionary emotion, and would push them into overlooking the nobility of the cause, and only focusing on how harsh it is to them. The backlash will only restate to us Newton's third law "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction."

There will be an eventual parliament hero who will,

without any hesitation, vocalize the masses' outrage, in fact he or she will not need to be very artistic in articulating the fact that even the strictest of countries such as

Singapore or Germany, do not handle the illegal conduct of not wearing seat belts or using one's phone while driving, as a crime that requires removing the driver from his car in the middle of the street and impounding his car, and making him pay for all of its "jail-time", because forgetting about seatbelts and touching smartphones are not as sinister acts as death threats or sexual

harassment. In more clear words, I do believe that I share every considerate citizen's opinion when I express my full support for the war on the carelessness of not wearing seatbelts, and texting while driving. However, being a Kuwaiti who has seen a lot of laws passing...and passing out, I sincerely believe, that sadly, it is only a matter of time before this seat belt fever "wears" itself out - as it did in less than 31 hours this time!

“ For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction ”

Kuwait Times



SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW

KD 25



* your subscription for one year for only kd 25 and get 4 free tickets to Paintball kuwait valued at kd 37



* This campaign is limited to participants in Kuwait only. Ministries and their departments, companies and NGOs cannot enter the festival.
* Kuwait Times employees, spouses and their second-degree relatives also cannot participate.

Call now +965 248 33 199 - 248 333 58 Fax: +965 248 35 620 - 248 35 621
www.kuwaittimes.net

Talk to the hand

Local comedians and commentators
use social media to air views



By Faten Omar

Social media is mostly known for 'fake news' and fashionistas but many in Kuwait and the region also utilize the platforms as a way to express criticism or commentary about societal issues or controversies.

Kuwait Times spoke with a few Kuwaiti social media commentators to dig deep into their thoughts on current social media trends, issues and ideas. Q8 Hand is a popular Instagrammer who uses his hand to talk about

issues including Kuwait laws, traditions and trends. He is a 30-year-old government employee who asked to remain anonymous.

Q8 Hand started in 2014 on Instagram, "Since I was young, I used my hand as a funny person to express myself. This is why I chose Instagram, the most popular platform in Kuwait to discuss what I see in a humorous way. I think it is a new idea in the Arab comedy scene," he said. He believes that comedy is the only way to deliver any message smoothly.

Q8 Hand uses his hand to talk with his voice to the Kuwaiti community on social issues in a way that makes people laugh and understand reality. "I only discuss important subjects with my followers. Most of the time, I get inspired by the Kuwaiti environment or top topics, and present them in a respectable and comedic fashion. It is an entertainment show with a particular theme or issue, good even for discerning viewers," he told Kuwait Times. Q8 Hand is planning to expand to television, where he said there is much more to deliver to the Kuwaiti people.

Q8 Hand talks to the Kuwaiti community on social issues in a way that makes people laugh but at the same time consider societal norms.





كل واحد يحط بالكومنت شنو
اخر شي سواه كوبي
(copy) (paste)
قص ولصق باللغة العربية
الفصلى 🤖



For Ahmed Al-Mosawi, 27, a full-time comic and content creator and part-time guitar instructor, his funny videos on Instagram deliver the right message and reach most people in Kuwait because they tackle current topics. Mosawi started in 2010 as "The YouTube Guy", making videos. He claims YouTube is better as a platform to reach a wider audience, while Instagram was just a passing phase for him from 2014 to 2015. Most of Mosawi's videos are social and not related to politics, "since people in our region are a bit sensitive when it comes to religion and politics". "I make indirect symbolic political jokes within some of my videos though. When I started in 2010, taking videos of oneself was something odd and new to our society. Now social media is full of talented folks! Unfortunately most of them are offering the same generic and cliched style. So, why not make a difference!" he told Kuwait Times.

Mosawi prefers public topics that relate to every human being and not only Kuwaitis. "The videos addressed to Kuwaitis can easily be applied to other societies. In my opinion, comedy is the best way to speak to people without telling them what to do and what not to. Tell your joke and they will figure out what they ought to do," he reasoned.

"Usually, I am at the peak of devastation when I choose an issue



to talk about. I'm against talking randomly just for the sake of talking or staying relevant. Making fun of things I get tired of and watching people react to it whether they agree or not calms me down. The fame of my videos gives me more confidence and doubts at the same time. Confidence comes directly after every reaction to what I display. Doubt comes before making the next step - will it meet expectations or not?"

Mosawi prefers public topics that relate to every human being and not only Kuwaitis.

Local



Traditional hunting weapons of Kuwait

KUWAIT: “Kharraza”, “Om Sajma” (bump shot light hunting guns, air guns) and Om Batun or Om Batnin (hunting shotguns) were famous traditional weapons sold in Kuwait and used for hunting and sometimes even guarding. Souq Al-Selah (weapon’s market) used to be the perfect place for buying or selling such weapons, ammunition, or even finding

spare parts. Heritage Researcher Dr Adel Mohammad Abdulmeghni told KUNA yesterday that one of the popular weapons sold in this market was the “Musadas Bakra” (handgun) which was used for various hunting activities, and the Kharrazah, Om Sajma, Om Batun and “Om Khams” (five-round shotgun).

Abdulmeghni said the name of the ammunition used for these weapons is “Feshag”, noting that the shotguns were used for hunting various types of animals like birds and desert animals, and not against humans. He added that in the late 50s, the market was also a place for selling weapon accessories and for repairs and maintenance. —KUNA





Kuwait marks opening of International Book Fair

Thousands of English books available



Story and photos Athoob Al-Shuaibi

The National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature opened its 42nd Annual International Book Fair yesterday at the international fairgrounds in Mishref. The fair runs this year from November 15 to 25.

When you arrive at the exhibition grounds in the Mishref area, do not bore yourself by looking for a nearby place to park your car, shorten the time and park it as far as you can. At peak hours, dozens of yellow school buses, thousands of students and scouts, together with visitors of all classes will be thronging the halls. Near the en-

trances, the smell of corn, nachos and shawarma is here to serve the hungry after long hours of walking in the corridors of the expo.

Despite the continued specter of censorship, this is a flourishing cultural event intended to promote reading and writing in Kuwait and the Gulf. The exhibition is accompanied by book signing

parties, seminars, and workshops, as well as participation from some embassies such as the French Embassy and the Embassy of the United States of America. You might think that the book fair is devoted to Arabic books only, but there are tons of English publishers with their own stalls and thousands of English-language books to browse.



Local

Sheikha Hussah honored for promoting Islamic art

DAI chief praises hard work of her team

WASHINGTON: Director General of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah (DAI) Sheikha Hussah Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah was honored with the Middle East Institute's (MEI) Issam M Fares Award for Excellence for promoting Islamic art and heritage and advancing education and cultural dialogue. Sheikha Hussah, who is a renowned cultural educator, lifelong learner and art connoisseur was honored in appreciation of DAI's contribution to the cultural scene in the Middle East, which is home to one of the world's largest and most diverse collection of art from Islamic lands.

Speaking to KUNA, President of the MEI Wendy Chamberlin said that the Issam Fares Award for Excellence is given to someone from the region "who has made major a contribution to peoples of the region". She affirmed "we could not think of anyone who is more deserving of this award than Sheikha Hussah for her work in preserving the culture, the heritage, the art, in particular the Islamic art of the region. This is something that we are very mindful of and concerned about at the MEI".

"We fear that those mafia types and terrorists who loot art and heritage from the region are stealing a part of the Middle East, so

we are working to stop that and we deeply respect the work Sheikha Hussah does in this regard and have a great admiration for her," she remarked. Nijad Fares, whose father created the award, told KUNA "we are very honored to have Sheikha Hussah be the awardee. The work she has done is historic and the collection she has is one of the best collections ever".

"I am glad to say in Houston we have had an exhibit from her on loan for the past few years and it has been a very special thing. We are thrilled to present her with the award," he added. He noted "the award is endowed by my father and he cares deeply about the excellence in the Middle East, about the public service and improving and bettering our Middle East."

Meanwhile, Sheikha Hussah told KUNA "this award means a lot not just because it is for my person but it means more than that. It is for Kuwait and the fabulous people at DAI who deserve to be acknowledged." Sheikha Hussah reiterated in remarks receiving the award that the award "is a tribute to the hard work of a fabulous DAI team in Kuwait. I am pleased to accept it on their behalf". —KUNA



WASHINGTON: Sheikha Hussah Al-Sabah is honored for her leadership promoting Islamic art and heritage to global audiences. — KUNA

News in brief

Boursa suspends 7 companies

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait, Kuwait's national stock market, has suspended seven companies for failing to present their financial statements, while allowing three other companies to resume trading yesterday. In a statement on its official website, Boursa Kuwait said it had suspended Mushrif Trading and Contracting Co, Yiacco Medical Company, Burgan Co for Well Drilling, Trading and Maintenance, Kuwait Bahrain International Exchange Co, Hayat Communications, MENA Real Estate and Gulf Investment House. Meanwhile, companies that resumed trading today after presenting their financial statements are Gulf Franchising Co, Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport and IFA Hotels and Resorts.

Passenger numbers rise

KUWAIT: Passenger movement at Kuwait International Airport increased 26 percent in October, with the total number amounting to a million compared to 840,000 in the same month in 2015, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said. It said in a statement yesterday that incoming passengers reached some 559,900 in October, in contrast to 475,800 in the same month in the past year. It quoted aviation monitor Abdullah Al-Rajhi as saying departing passengers amounted to 499,400 in October, against 382,300 in the same month in 2016. The total number of aircraft in operation at the facility reached 9,355, compared to 8,550.

Kuwait to send aid to Iraq, Iran

KUWAIT: An official source at the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry said yesterday Kuwait was very sad over the earthquake that hit Iraq and Iran, together with its human and material losses. Kuwait immediately contacted the governments of Iraq and Iran and offered necessary humanitarian aid in order to alleviate the aftershocks of this natural disaster, the source said. Preparations are underway for coordinating with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) to provide aid to quake-affected people, the source added.

Kuwaiti Week in Egypt to boost ties

CAIRO: The 10th Kuwaiti Week held in Egypt will further improve the already "distinctive" relations between the two countries, and will consolidate mutual knowledge and exchange of expertise, Kuwaiti officials told KUNA Wednesday. The Kuwaiti Week, sponsored by Egyptian Prime Minister Sherif Ismail, concluded its activities yesterday.

Talking to KUNA, Assistant Director of the Kuwaiti Interior Ministry's Public Relations Department Lt Col Yusuf Mursheed said that the ministry is keen on taking part in all the cultural events, activities and exhibitions in Arab countries. He highlighted the historical ties between Kuwait and Egypt based on deep-rooted brotherly bonds. The interior



CAIRO: The Kuwaiti interior ministry's pavilion at the 10th Kuwaiti Week. — KUNA

ministry is participating in the event with a variety of security awareness publications, he said.

Director General of the Amiri Diwan Martyr's Office Fatima Al-Ameer, stressed the significance of partaking in the event, and stressed the "distinctive" bilateral ties.

Kuwaiti-Egyptian ties are not confined to politics, economy and culture, but they are also "human and social", she said. Shorouk Bualian, from KUNA's public relations department, said that such cultural events contribute to bolstering ties between the two Arab countries on all levels. — KUNA

Sheikh Thamer speaks at S'pore forum

KUALA LUMPUR: Kuwait's National Security Apparatus chief Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah delivered a lecture Wednesday at the S R Nathan Fellowship Forum on preparation of leaders. His lecture, titled "Security Challenges in Arabian Gulf Region," tackled the latest developments in region. During his lecture, he lauded the role of the forum in cementing Singaporean-Middle Eastern relations.

The forum was also attended by Singaporean Senior Minister of State at the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mohamad Maliki Osman, several foreign ministry officials, ambassadors, academics and large audience of those interested in the security and political affairs of the Middle East.

During visit to Singapore, Sheikh Thamer held several meetings with senior state officials including Coordinating Minister for National Security, Prime Minister's Office, Teo Chee Hean; Minister of Defense Ng Eng Hen; Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Law K Shanmugam; Minister of Communication and Information and Minister in Charge of Muslim Affairs Yaacob Ibrahim; managing director of Singapore's internal security Eric Tan; and policies and planning manager at Singapore's intelligence and security sector Kevin Santa Maria. — KUNA



SINGAPORE: National Security Apparatus chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah delivers the lecture. — KUNA

Local

Mol scraps decision to impound vehicles

Seized cars to be returned • MP alleges corruption

By Nawara Fattahova and B Izzak

KUWAIT: The interior ministry has reportedly scrapped a plan to impound vehicles for two months for certain violations. The decision to impound vehicles of drivers caught using their mobiles while driving or driving without a seatbelt triggered widespread outrage and criticism among locals and residents. On the first day of the new regulation's implementation, more than 1,000 vehicles were impounded, according to sources. Leading opposition lawmaker Waleed Al-Tabtabaei meanwhile alleged high-profile corruption in the whole affair over awarding the contract to a private company in a very suspicious way and called on the interior and finance ministers to investigate.

This decision was strongly criticized by people and MPs as well. More than one lawyer filed a case against the ministry for applying such a decision, seeing it in conflict with the constitution and that this penalty is not equal to the minor violation. After just 24 hours of applying this decision, news spread that the decision has been canceled, although no official statement

has been issued. Calls to the interior ministry's public relations department by Kuwait Times were not immediately returned.

Local daily Al Anbaa said the decision was canceled by the Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dossari. According to the daily, motorists committing these two violations will get a regular fine as it was in the past. Vehicles that were impounded for these violations on the first day of the decision's application will be returned from Sunday.

According to a statement by the interior ministry, Dossari yesterday chaired a committee meeting held at its premises. The meeting included representatives of 25 relevant government bodies who discussed measures to be followed in cases of emergencies. Dossari urged various teams to review and update their work plans at all times to avoid any shortcomings in cases of civil defense-related emergencies. He also urged the media to help reassure people at such times to prevent panic and provide maximum protection for them.

Tabtabaei, who on Wednesday sent questions to the interior minister over the issue, said



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dossari chairs a meeting yesterday.

that he has received information about suspected corruption. He said that in previous years, the contract was normally awarded to the Kuwait Public Transport Company for KD 250,000, alleging that this year, an employee at KPTC was bribed so that the company did not

take part in the bid. As a result, only one private company was left to bid for the contract and won it for just KD 100,000, way below the amount in previous years. Tabtabaei called on the ministers of interior and finance to launch an investigation into the allegations.

Relatively cold at night on weekend

KUWAIT: Fair weather will continue in Kuwait during daytime and turn relatively cold during the night in the coming days, Kuwaiti meteorologist Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi said yesterday. He said in remarks to KUNA that the country is affected by high altitude air accompanied by northeast winds, making the weather warm during daytime and relatively cold during the night.

Weather yesterday was forecast to be relatively cold, with the lowest expected temperature between 10-13 degrees Celsius, with northwestern moderate to fast winds with speed of 06-26 km per hour. At the sea, mild to moderate waves between one to three feet was forecast. Today morning was expected to be mostly sunny with the highest temperature between 27-30 degrees, with light to moderate northwesterly winds (06-28 km/h). Scattered clouds will dot the skies, he added. By tonight, it will be cool with lowest expected heat between 9-12 degrees with light to moderate northwesterly winds (08-18 km/h), along with cloudy skies.

By tomorrow, it will be mostly sunny with highest temperatures expected between 27-30 degrees, with southeastern fluctuating winds. Weather by the evening will be cloudy, with lowest expected temperature between 9-12 degrees with southeastern winds between 06-28 km/h. — KUNA



KUWAIT: This March 18, 2012 file photo shows Kuwait Airways check-in counters at Kuwait Airport. — AP

German court: KAC can refuse Israeli passengers

BERLIN: A German court ruled yesterday that Kuwait's national airline didn't have to transport an Israeli citizen because the carrier would face legal repercussions at home if it did. The Frankfurt state court noted in its decision that Kuwait Airways is not allowed to close contracts with Israelis under Kuwaiti law because of the Middle Eastern country's boycott of Israel. The court said it didn't evaluate whether "this law make sense", but that the airline

risked repercussions that were "not reasonable" for violating it, such as fines or prison time for employees.

An Israeli citizen sued the airline after he booked a flight from Frankfurt to Bangkok with a stopover in Kuwait City. Kuwait Airways canceled his booking when he revealed he had an Israeli passport and offered to book him on another airline. The man refused the offer and filed the lawsuit, seeking compensation for alleged discrimination. He also insisted the airline should have to accept him as a passenger.

The court rejected his discrimination claim ruling that German law covers discrimination based on race, ethnicity or religion, but not nationality. A lawyer for the Israeli passenger, whose name was not given, called the verdict "deeply shocking". "This is an embarrassing ruling for democracy and for Germany," lawyer Nathan Gelbart said. "It cannot be allowed to stand like this." — AP

Charred body found in car

KUWAIT: Mangaf firemen found a completely charred body inside a vehicle that was destroyed by fire in an open yard in South Sabahiya. Security sources said the body was referred to forensics for identification and determining the cause of death.

Woman molests boy

A young woman was arrested for sexually assaulting an eight-year-old boy, who was her relative. Security sources said the boy's mother left him with the girl for a while, and was shocked to hear the boy's story after she picked him up. The sources added that medical examination of the boy verified his story. The girl was arrested and confessed. A case was filed.

Prostitutes arrested

Five Asian women were arrested in Jleeb for practicing prostitution in a building after luring passersby into accompanying them to their den. Security sources noting that a sixth Asian woman was arrested for selling pornographic videos on the street.

Driver beaten

A citizen was arrested for assaulting an Indian driver. Case papers indicate that the driver's sponsor (a citizen) escorted him to Taima police station in Jahra to file a case against the assailant, whose vehicle's license plate number they provided to the police. On summoning the suspect, he confessed and justified his assault by claiming that the driver suddenly cut into his lane, and almost forced him into colliding into another vehicle. A case was filed. — *Translated from the Arabic press*



Mugabe resists pressure to quit

Pakistan indifferent as smog kills more than militancy

Page 18

Page 12



RIAD: French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian (left) meets with Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri in the Saudi capital Riyadh yesterday. — AFP

Hariri 'free to leave' Saudi Arabia

Saudi denies detaining Hariri amid shock resignation

RIYADH: Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri is free to leave Saudi Arabia "when he pleases", the kingdom said yesterday, rejecting accusations from Beirut that he was being held in Riyadh following his shock resignation. Hariri has been in the Saudi capital since announcing there on November 4 that he was stepping down. Lebanese President Michel Aoun this week accused Saudi authorities of "detaining" the premier. Aoun said yesterday that Hariri's decision to accept an invitation to travel to France could be the "start of a solution" to the crisis sparked by his resignation.

Speculation has swirled around the fate of Hariri, who is a dual Saudi citizen. But Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir told reporters in Riyadh that Hariri was free to leave "when he pleases". Jubeir is the highest ranking Saudi official to comment on the situation. Aoun has refused to accept the prime minister's resignation from abroad. "We hope that the crisis is over and Hariri's acceptance of the invitation to go to France is the start of a solution," Aoun said on

the official presidential Twitter account. "I am awaiting the return of Prime Minister Hariri from Paris for us to decide the next step with regards to the government," Aoun added.

France visit 'not exile'

The announcement that Hariri had accepted an invitation to travel to France and meet President Emmanuel Macron came from French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian yesterday during a visit to Riyadh. "He will come to France and the prince has been informed," Le Drian told reporters, referring to powerful Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman with whom he held talks the night before. Asked about the date of the visit for talks, Le Drian replied: "Mr Hariri's schedule is a matter for Mr Hariri." Hariri in an



Hariri accepts invitation to visit France

interview on Sunday had vowed to return to Lebanon in a matter of days. Hariri also left open the possibility that he may withdraw his resignation if certain conditions are met—in particular an end to the involvement of Lebanon's powerful Shiite militant group Hezbollah in regional conflicts. The French president's office said on Wednesday that Hariri and his family had been invited to France for a "few days" but that did not mean he would stay there in exile. Macron has stressed that Hariri should be able to return to Lebanon to confirm or withdraw his resignation in person.

Common stance on Iran

In his resignation statement, Hariri accused Iran and its ally Hezbollah of taking over his country and destabilizing the broader region.

Hariri's resignation came against the backdrop of mounting tensions between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran, which back opposing sides in power struggles in hotspots such as Syria and Yemen. Many observers saw his stepping down as a power play of Riyadh against Tehran. Le Drian raised concern over Iran's role in the region. At a press conference with Jubeir yesterday, he echoed Riyadh's concerns over Iranian "intervention in regional crises" and "hegemonic" intentions. "I'm thinking specifically about Iran's ballistic program," Le Drian added.

France has however sought to maintain a nuanced position in the region. Macron, on his first state visit to the Middle East last week, called for vigilance towards Tehran over its ballistic missile program and regional activities. But he cautioned against creating a "new front" in a region already fraught with conflicts, including the war in Yemen. The Arab League is to hold an extraordinary meeting next Sunday at the request of Saudi Arabia to discuss alleged "violations" committed by Iran in the region.—AFP

Egypt tries to avoid a fight; allies escalate against Iran

Heightened rhetoric raises fears

CAIRO: Egypt faces high expectations from Saudi Arabia and its other Gulf Arab benefactors that it will have their back as tensions rise with their rival Iran, including throwing the weight of its military - the largest standing Arab army - into the crisis if needed. But Egypt clearly has no desire to be dragged into a military conflict or to see the tensions spiral into another Saudi-Iran proxy battle like the many that are already tearing up the Middle East.

Its reluctance could lead to frictions between Cairo and Riyadh. Egypt's leadership has been striking a balancing act, giving nods of support to its Gulf allies while trying to defuse their escalations against Iran. Last week, President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi proclaimed that any threat to Gulf security "is a threat to our own national security," warning Iran to stop meddling. But he also said the region "has enough instability and challenges as it is" and doesn't need a crisis with Iran or Hezbollah, and he called for dialogue to resolve tensions.

Other Egyptian officials sharpened their rhetoric against non-Arab, Shiite Iran, but have not embraced the sectarian or ethnic slant used by their Sunni-led Gulf friends. In the past month, Saudi Arabia has twice accused Iran and its

Lebanese ally Hezbollah of acts of war against it. A direct war between the two regional powerhouses still seems unlikely; but the heightened rhetoric raised fears that it wasn't out of the question or that a new proxy fight could erupt in Lebanon.

Egyptian commentators have bluntly warned against getting mired into a military conflict initiated by the Saudis. "Egypt's real national duty

is to tell our brothers ... that we are with them to defend the security of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf and the entire region ... But that does not mean that we get dragged by them into wars and conflicts that are essentially sectarian and benefit no one except the enemies of the (Arab) nation," the editor of the newspaper Al-Shorouk, Imad Hussein, wrote this week.

Hussein, who is close to the government, made sure to praise Saudi Arabia's regional role, its financial support for Egypt and its custodianship of Islam's holiest shrines. He also avoided naming Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the heir to the throne behind the kingdom's more hawkish anti-Iran stance. He has driven aggressive regional policies, including military interven-

tion in Yemen and the ostracizing of Qatar - a move that Egypt fell in line with. Another prominent commentator, veteran opposition figure Mohammed Aboul-Ghar, counseled the government to stay out of any potential Saudi-Iran conflict, arguing that Egypt's army was

needed to fight an insurgency by Islamic militants and protect the porous borders. "Coming close to that dangerous (Gulf) region is a horrifying prospect. It's neither wise nor sound to even talk about that," he wrote in Tuesday's edition of the Cairo daily Al-Masry Al-Youm. —AP



Egypt has been striking a balancing act



SANAA: Yemenis check the damage at a navigation station at Sanaa International Airport that was destroyed in Saudi-led air strikes in the Yemeni capital. Authorities in Yemen's rebel-controlled capital said a Saudi-led air strike destroyed a navigation station at Sanaa airport, which is critical to receiving already limited aid shipments. — AFP

Israel 'ready' to cooperate with Saudi to face Iran

JERUSALEM: Israel's military chief of staff said in an interview yesterday that his country was prepared to cooperate with Saudi Arabia to face Iran's plans "to control the Middle East." His comments were the latest sign that behind-the-scenes links between Israel and Gulf countries may be occurring due to Iran, their shared enemy, even though they do not have formal diplomatic ties. "We are ready to exchange experience with the moderate Arab countries and exchange intelligence information to face Iran," Lieutenant General Gadi Eisenkot was quoted as saying by Elaph, a news website run by a Saudi businessman. Asked whether any information had been shared recently with Saudi Arabia, he said "we are ready to share information if necessary. There are many common interests between us and them."

Israel's army confirmed the contents of the rare interview with Arabic-language media. According to Israel's army, it was the first interview of its kind since 2005. Sunni Muslim powerhouse Saudi Arabia

has long been at loggerheads with Shiite, non-Arab Iran but friction has spiraled recently. Earlier this month, Lebanese prime minister Saad Hariri announced from Saudi capital Riyadh that he was quitting, citing Iran's "grip" on his country. The leader of Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite group supported by Iran, has accused Saudi Arabia of pressuring Israel to launch attacks against it. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani made similar allegations this week.

Israel and Hezbollah fought a devastating war in 2006. Eisenkot said in the interview that "we have no intention of initiating a conflict with Hezbollah in Lebanon and reaching a war, but we cannot accept strategic threats to Israel there. I am very happy with the calm on both sides of the border, which has lasted 11 years. On the other hand, we see Iranian attempts to escalate." Israel and Arab countries are also concerned with Iran's influence in Syria, where Tehran and Hezbollah are backing President Bashar al-Assad's regime in his country's civil war. Gulf Arab countries are also worried about the Islamic republic's support for Shiite Houthi rebels in Yemen.

'New international alliance'

Eisenkot referred to US President Donald Trump's attempt to find a path to Israeli-Palestinian peace by drawing in

regional countries. Trump's first trip abroad as president included stops in Saudi Arabia and Israel. His son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner has reportedly formed a bond with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. "With President Donald Trump, there is a chance for a new international alliance in the region and a major strategic plan to stop the Iranian threat," Eisenkot said. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been promoting the idea that his country's ties with Arab nations are improving, and some experts have said there are signs that shared concerns over Iran are indeed nudging them closer.

Formal ties do not seem likely due to Israel's continuing occupation of Palestinian territory and the lack of progress in peace efforts, but behind-the-scenes cooperation has opened up in various areas, a number of experts and officials have said. Netanyahu has described relations with the Arab world as the "best ever", though without providing any details. Leaders of Arab countries have not publicly made similar comments, however that does not necessarily mean they dispute Netanyahu's claim. They face sensitivities within their own countries, where the Jewish state is often viewed with intense hostility. Only two Arab countries—Egypt and Jordan—have peace treaties with Israel.— AFP

IS has lost 95% of its caliphate

AMMAN: The Islamic State group has lost 95 percent of the cross-border "caliphate" it declared three years ago in Iraq and Syria, the US-led coalition fighting it has said. "Since our coalition was formed in 2014, ISIS has lost 95 percent of the territory it once controlled in Iraq and Syria," Washington's envoy to the coalition, Brett McGurk, said late Wednesday after a meeting in Jordan, using an alternative acronym for IS.

The jihadist group swept across Syria and Iraq the same year, declaring a cross-border "caliphate" in territory roughly the size of Britain, attracting thousands of foreign fighters. But several military offensives, including those backed by the US-led coalition, have since seen IS lose most areas it once controlled. "More than 7.5 million people have now been liberated from ISIS," McGurk said in a statement, adding that the group's finances are now "at their lowest levels to date".

With the jihadists' dreams of statehood lying in tatters following the battlefield defeats, Western attention is increasingly pivoting to trying to block foreign fighters from returning home to carry out attacks. McGurk insisted that flows of foreign IS fighters into Syria have "nearly stopped", and that jihadists are increasingly being picked up as they cross borders. "We are enhancing cooperation and border security, aviation security, law enforcement, financial sanctions, counter-messaging, and intelligence sharing to prevent ISIS from carrying out attacks in our homelands," he said. —Agencies

International

Mugabe, under house arrest, resists army pressure to quit

Coup signals end to Mugabe rule after 37 years

HARARE: President Robert Mugabe is insisting he remains Zimbabwe's only legitimate ruler and is refusing to quit after a military coup, but pressure is mounting on the 93-year-old former guerrilla to accept offers of a graceful exit, sources said yesterday. A political source who spoke to senior allies holed up with Mugabe and his wife, Grace, in his lavish "Blue Roof" Harare compound said Mugabe had no plans to resign voluntarily ahead of elections scheduled for next year.

"It's a sort of stand-off, a stalemate," the source said. "They are insisting the president must finish his term." The army's takeover signaled the collapse in less than 36 hours of the security, intelligence and patronage networks that sustained Mugabe through 37 years in power and built him into the "Grand Old Man" of African politics. A priest mediating between Mugabe and the generals, who seized power on Wednesday in what they called a targeted operation against "criminals" in Mugabe's entourage, has made little headway, a senior political source told Reuters.

Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai called for Mugabe's departure "in the interest of the people". In a statement read to reporters, Tsvangirai pointedly referred to him as "Mr Robert Mugabe", not President. The army appears to want Mugabe, who has ruled Zimbabwe since independence in 1980, to go

quietly and allow a smooth and bloodless transition to Emmerson Mnangagwa, the vice president Mugabe sacked last week triggering the political crisis.

The main goal of the generals is to prevent Mugabe from handing power to his wife Grace, 41 years his junior, who has built a following among the ruling party's youth wing and appeared on the cusp of power after Mnangagwa was pushed out. The last of Africa's state founders from the heyday of the struggle against European colonization still in power, Mugabe is still seen by many Africans as a liberation hero. But he is reviled in the West as a despot whose disastrous handling of the economy and willingness to resort to violence to maintain power pauperized one of Africa's most promising states.

Once a regional breadbasket, Zimbabwe saw its economy collapse in the wake of the seizure of white-owned farms in the early 2000s, followed by runaway money-printing that catapulted inflation to 500 billion percent in 2008. Millions, from highly skilled bankers to semi-literate farmers, emigrated, mostly to neighboring South Africa, where an estimated 3 million still live. After a brief revival under a 2009-13 power-sharing government, when Mugabe was forced to work with the opposition, the economy has once again cratered, with dollars scarce, inflation surging, imports running out and queues outside banks.

'Grand Old Man' of African politics



HARARE: A photo shows a view of the Zimbabwean capital Harare, a day after the military took power and announced plans to arrest 'criminals' close to the president. —AFP

Doors blown off

A fighter, both literally and figuratively during a political career that included several assassination attempts, Mugabe now appears to have reached the end of the road. With the army camped on his front door and the police - once seen as a bastion of support - showing no signs of resistance, force is not an option. Similarly, he has no popular backing in Harare, where he is widely loathed, and his influence in the ruling ZANU-PF party is evaporating. ZANU-PF youth leader Kudzai Chipanga, a vocal Mugabe supporter,

publicly apologised for opposing the army after being marched by soldiers into the state television headquarters to read out a statement, sources at the broadcaster said. He was then taken back to the army's main KGV6 (pronounced KG Six) barracks in Harare, where Finance Minister Ignatius Chombo is also being held, an army source said. Video footage obtained by Reuters from the houses of two key allies of Grace Mugabe - cabinet ministers Jonathan Moyo and Saviour Kasukuwere - indicated that the army was also prepared to use force if necessary. —Reuters

Human rights 'key' for Sahel anti-jihad force

DAKAR: The recently launched G5 Sahel force must ensure human rights are respected as it combats jihadists and criminals in this troubled swathe of Africa, officials say, to avoid further radicalization of the population. The five-nation counterterrorism force has completed its first operation in a zone covering the border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, all of which face an Islamist insurgency that has tacit support in areas where a state presence is near absent. Andrew Gilmour, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, said abuses under the guise of counter-terror "create more terrorists than there were before".

The viability of the force rested on its ability to gain the trust of local populations and maintain the support of the international community, he said while visiting Mali to meet force commander Didier Dacko. The precedents set in recent years sit uneasily with these ideals, however. Peacekeepers serving with the UN

mission in Mali, present since 2013, have been accused of excessive force and the world body has admitted instances of torture and sexual abuse by staff, as well as one instance of causing the death of a detainee.

The Malian army has also faced abuse allegations, in particular in the troubled northern and central regions where ethnic minorities are more strongly represented. "In central Mali, terrorist armed groups are often firmly entrenched within the population and in some cases have taken on state functions," noted UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a report released a month ago. Military operations that have no benchmarks for rights "not only adversely harm civilians and result in human rights violations, but may also risk contributing to further destabilization, including fuelling youth radicalization," Guterres added.

Urging legitimacy

The vast Sahel region, stretching from Senegal to Sudan, has turned into a hotbed of lawlessness since chaos engulfed Libya in 2011, Islamists overran northern Mali in 2012 and Boko Haram rose up in northern Nigeria. Priority number one for the G5 force is to re-establish authority in the Burkina-Mali-Niger border region, according to General Dacko, speaking at the force's headquarters in Sere. —AFP

From skinheads to street art: Homeless tour guides walk away from streets

LONDON: When he moved to London after university, Pete had a well-paid job, a girlfriend and a roof over his head. Three years later, he lost it all in the space of a few months. "Initially I went squatting," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, sipping a cup of tea at a cafe in east London's eclectic Brick Lane, where he has been living as a homeless man for almost a decade. Now in his 40s, he plans to rent a place of his own soon, after two years working as a guide for Unseen Tours - a social enterprise that employs the homeless to show tourists around London streets where they have lived.

"It's my favorite job ever. I've always been a bit of an actor and a storyteller," said Pete, who did not want to give his full name as his family is not aware of his situation. Homelessness has been soaring in Britain in recent years, with record numbers of people sleeping rough or in emergency accommodation due to rising rents, welfare cuts and a lack of affordable homes, charities say. More than 300,000

people did not have a place to call home in 2017, up 4 percent on the previous year, according to the housing charity Shelter.

With a penchant for politics and foreign swear words, Pete's East End tour takes in street art, gentrification and sites where suffragettes campaigned for women's right to vote, skinheads attacked immigrants and Jack the Ripper roamed. Pete is one of three homeless guides currently working with Unseen Tours at three London locations. They keep 60 percent of the money earned, with the rest spent on running costs. Pete, who has been living in a hostel for the homeless since 2016, said he can earn up to 1,000 pounds (\$1,300) a month.

Group tours are held between two to four times a week, each ticket costing 12 pounds (\$16). The company said it has helped more than 20 homeless people get back on their feet since it started in 2010. But it is not just about money. "The first aim is to empower the guide and the second is to challenge public perceptions of homeless people," said Giacomo Mason, a volunteer who helps run the company. Tours hope to raise awareness about homelessness and its social causes, while building bridges between the poor and the rest of society, he said. "A lot of people think homeless persons are all druggies and albies (alcoholics) - and a lot of them are of course - but there are also others like me that have an unfortunate situation," —Reuters

Cambodian Supreme Court dissolves opposition party

118 opposition members banned

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia's Supreme Court dissolved the main opposition party yesterday, leaving authoritarian Prime Minister Hun Sen clear to extend over three decades in power in a general election next year. The government had asked the court to dissolve the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), which was accused of plotting to take power with help from the United States after the arrest of party leader Kem Sokha on Sept 3. The court ruling also ordered a five-year political ban for 118 members of the opposition party. It had threatened a major election challenge to Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge commander who is the world's longest serving prime minister.

In a televised address, Hun Sen told Cambodians the election would go ahead "as normal" and called on CNRP members who had not been banned to defect to his

party. The CNRP rejected the accusations against it as politically motivated. It did not send lawyers for the court ruling. "It shows that Hun Sen will never stop if no one is stopping him," said Kem Monovithya, the daughter of Kem Sokha and also a party official. "The verdict is expected. It's time for sanctions from the international community." Western donors, who sponsored elections overseen by the United Nations in 1993 in the hope of founding an enduring democracy, had called for Kem Sokha's release.

But they have shown no appetite for sanctions against Cambodia's government, which is now closely allied to China. The United States and European Union missions in Cambodia declined immediate comment on the court ruling. Despite ramping up anti-US rhetoric and linking the United

States to the alleged plot against him, Hun Sen lauded US President Donald Trump at a regional summit at the weekend and said he welcomed his policy of non-interference. Dozens of police manned barriers outside the gold ornamented court in the centre of Phnom Penh. There was no sign of protests.

Few people on the streets wanted to talk about the ruling, the latest chapter in decades of manoeuvring that have kept Hun Sen and his ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) in power across all levels in the country of 16 million. "People are scared to talk amongst themselves," said Seang Menly, 39, a driver of one of the rickety tuk-tuks that ply the streets of Phnom Penh. "In my neighborhood, people who used to give money and food to the CNRP no longer dare to." Hun Sen and his defenders say only he can ensure peace. — Reuters



PHNOM PENH: Cambodian Police officials block a street in Phnom Penh. — AFP

Kuwait Times

Premier Brands

To see your ad here, call:
+965 248 35 616 / 617
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
 ad@kuwaittimes.net
 Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

GRAND SALE

It's shopping time!

Panasonic
MC-YL633G747
Vacuum Cleaner

• 8 m cord
• Anti bacteria filter

32

40

Panasonic
MC-CL561A747
Vacuum Cleaner

MEGACYCLONE
EFFORTLESS

20L DUST CAPACITY

21

28

SHARP
EC-CA2121-Z
Vacuum Cleaner

• 21 Ltr
• Copper Meter
• 8m Cable
• Sms Filter

19

35

Midea
VTD18A1
Vacuum Cleaner

• 1600W
• 18 L
• Washable bag

10

16

18 Ltr

1600 Watts City

21 Ltr

2100 Watts City

18 Ltr

1600 Watts City

best
AL-YOUSIFI

www.best.com.kw

1809 809

Free Delivery

International

Hanson's 'battler bus' takes the anti-immigrant road in Australia

One Nation party rides global anti-immigration wave

TOWNSVILLE: It was early morning last Thursday when Pauline Hanson's rented "battler" bus started hissing so loudly the election campaign was halted at a petrol station on a stretch of desolate highway near a remote edge of Australia. Unable to get to the rural Queensland state voters she is relying on to deliver her anti-immigration One Nation party its best result in two decades, her supporters came to her.

Stranded near the gemstone-mine town of Marlborough, with a population of just a few hundred, Hanson was approached by truckers and travelers, most seeking to get a picture taken with her. "I was actually stopping to get something to eat, and as I was looking across I went, 'Oh there's the 'battler' bus, I'll have to go say hello to Pauline,'" said truck driver Shane Williams, who came over to look at the engine.

"I think immigration is a big thing for everybody. I think it's going to be a good thing if Pauline gets some say in parliament - keep the bastards honest." Hanson is not a candidate in the Queensland state election on Nov 25, having last year re-entered the federal parliament on a wave of popular support after a near two-decade absence. But her face is on almost every One Nation party billboard and flyer in Queensland's coal-rich and sugar cane-growing heartland, turning the vote into a test of whether Hanson's resur-

gence continues, or is pushed back to the fringes. To Australia's most prominent right-wing nationalist it's not about joining a global populist push; it's that the rest of the world is finally catching up. "I was espousing a lot of this 20 years ago," Hanson told Reuters in the sunny tropical town of Townsville, a gateway to the Great Barrier Reef marine park. US President Donald Trump's election victory a year ago, however, "is resonating across the world," she added. "This is definitely the start. People are starting to wake up. You see people had no one else really to vote for."



Populist party enjoys strongest polling in decades

Coal and cane

With its blown turbo hose fixed, Hanson's bus rolled down the road, three hours behind schedule, stopping at several towns before arriving at a town hall-style event that evening more than 400 kilometers away. Hanson's

town halls are a mix of stump speech and off-the-cuff observations, usually involving 'battler' stories she's heard from locals on the campaign trail: Claims that foreigners are buying up agricultural land and immigrants are not paying taxes; complaints about crippling energy prices and government handouts to Aboriginals; support for a ban on Muslim migrants. Hanson's rhetoric can be blunt, and draws almost instant condemnation in the cities, where she's often viewed as extreme. But in her rural heartland, where one town can be



SYDNEY: Protesters chant at a Liberal Party fundraiser in Sydney as they call on the ruling Liberal coalition government to bring back 600 refugees from an Australian detention centre in Papua New Guinea. —AFP

in drought while another gets hit by cyclonic floods, she is the mainstream.

"She's the only one trying to save our country really," said 20-year-old Jack Roach in Proserpine, a sugar-cane town of 3,500 in Queensland. Polls suggest One Nation might take around 20 percent of the popular vote in Queensland, Australia's third-most populous state, and situated in the northeast. That would mark its biggest electoral success since the 1990s. It's unclear, however, whether that will translate into more than a handful of seats among the 93 parliamentary seats at stake in the election.

On the hustings, support appears very strong in towns beyond the black stump - a colloquial term in Australia to describe remote areas - as well as coal-producing areas and sugar cane fields. More vigorous opposition to Hanson's policies comes from more tourist-dependent coastal areas. To her supporters, Hanson is the plain-speaking, anti-politician who can shake up the Liberal-National and Labor political establishment in Australia. "She speaks like us," said 24-year-old carpenter Brodie Tophan, who works south of the coastal town of Bowen and approached Hanson for a "selfie". —Reuters

Gender plan seeks to put women in the driving seat of climate fight

BONN: Achala Abeysinghe, an expert on legal issues at the UN climate change talks, advises the chair of the world's poorest countries at the negotiations. While she has worked with a series of "really good gentlemen" over the years, she thinks it's high time the group was led by a woman. A new gender action plan, set to be approved at the end of the annual climate conference on Friday in Bonn, could help make that a reality in the coming years.

The plan, which comes five years after a "gender balance" goal was first adopted in Doha to increase women's participation in the negotiations, notes a "lack of progress" on this aim. Mary Robinson, former Irish president, founder of her own climate justice foundation, and someone who pushed hard to ensure gender equality was enshrined in the 2015 Paris Agreement to tackle global warming, said the new plan was "a big step forward" for a UN process that initially ignored gender.

The reality is "we are slipping further away from

achieving the goal of gender balance", she warned. Statistics cited in a recent paper from the UN climate change secretariat show the average percentage of women participating in negotiating sessions from 2008 to 2012 was about 31 percent. After the Doha decision, the percentage of women delegates at the annual conferences, known as COPs, rose to a high of 36 percent but dropped back down to 32 percent in 2015 and 2016.

Analysis by climate news website CarbonBrief showed the proportion has jumped back to 38 percent this year in Bonn. But women at the talks said there was still much work to do to achieve gender equality, both at the talks and in climate change action more widely. "We all need to understand that... if we don't involve women in our decision-making processes - and the knowledge they have - we are not going to be living in a world that any of us want to be a part of," said Osprey Orielle Lake, founder and co-director of the Women's Earth and Climate Action Network.

Abeysinghe, who is Sri Lankan, said that in the countries she advises at the talks, such as Bangladesh and Burundi, climate change makes existing inequalities worse, and leaves many poor women struggling to provide for their families. In Sub-Saharan Africa, about 70 percent of the burden of collecting water for households falls on women and girls, and changing rainfall patterns could force them to travel even further in search of the essential resource, according to the New Climate Economy, a global commission. —Reuters

French consent law in the dock over sex with 11-year-olds

PARIS: In most developed countries, the age of sexual consent is a fairly straightforward matter. Not so in France, which is in the midst of a furious debate over the issue after a man in his twenties was acquitted of raping an 11-year-old girl. Under current French law, any sexual act by an adult with a child under the age of 15 can be prosecuted as a sexual offence, which carries a maximum five-year prison sentence. But to prove rape, prosecutors must demonstrate that the sex was forced.

This would be punishable by 15 years in jail. In cases of very young children, under 10 for example, judges have no problem convicting, but it becomes more complicated when pre-teens are involved, such as the two cases that sparked outrage this month. "We need to think quickly about the age limit, which can be 15, 14 or 13," Justice Minister Nicole Belloubet told the CNews channel on Wednesday. Over the last month, MPs, ministers and associations have been arguing that France needs a change

in the law, which Belloubet has promised for the first half of next year in light of the two controversial cases.

Last week, a 30-year-old man was acquitted of the rape of an 11-year-old girl because the court ruled she had not been subjected to "constraint, threat, violence or surprise". The defendant, aged 22 at the time, claimed the girl had agreed to an encounter in a park in a distant eastern suburb of Paris and she had lied about her age. In another case involving an 11-year-old girl, a 28-year-old man faces charges of sexual relations with a minor, rather than rape, as this too was considered by authorities to be consensual.

France out of step

Campaigners say no child of 11 is capable of giving consent, meaning that in both cases the sex should automatically be classed as rape-but French law says otherwise. "Putting an age limit in place is crucial," Claude Halmos, a specialist in child psychology said. "Consent is being capable to judge calmly for yourself what you want or do not want." On Tuesday evening, dozens of activists from a feminist group demonstrated at the justice ministry calling for the age of sexual consent to be set at 15. An online petition urging a change in the law has also garnered more than 330,000 signatures. Belloubet has suggested that 13 would be an appropriate age of consent, while Equality Minister Marlene Schiappa has suggested somewhere between 13 and 15. —AFP

International

Bangkok firefighters on front line of the city's snake scourge

Common problem facing Thai capital: Snakes

BANGKOK: When the latest distress call came into Phinyo Pukphinyo's fire station in Bangkok, it was not about a burning home or office building. Instead, the caller needed urgent help with a far more common problem facing Thailand's capital: snakes. A 2-meter (10-foot) -long python was dangling from the caller's garage roof, and after rushing to the scene, it took Phinyo less than a minute to remove the slithering reptile.

The number of snakes ending up in urban homes is on the rise in Bangkok, apparently in part because of development pains in the vast metropolis of about 10 million people. Thailand's has 300 species of snakes and 10 percent are venomous - including king cobras, kraits and pit vipers - making many city dwellers fearful of dealing with the creatures themselves. Tara Buakamsri, Thailand country director for Greenpeace Southeast Asia, said the city



is seeing more snakes because it sits on a "flood plain with a wetland ecosystem, which is a habitat for amphibians, including snakes," and housing expansions in recent years have curtailed their land.

Bangkok's low-lying landscape makes it prone to floods during the rainy season, which also invites snakes and other reptiles such as monitor lizards. The huge python Phinyo's team caught was not the first of the day, or the last. Hours later, the station was called to remove a green snake found in the bathroom of an-

other Bangkok resident, who apologized to the firefighters for calling them for the third time this year.

"I've been living in this house for 20 years and we would very rarely see any snakes," said the caller and homeowner, Chanun Chisa. "But this year, it seems like we see one every few months." Phinyo said his fire station gets more calls to catch snakes than to put out fires. "In a day, we can get several calls to catch snakes," he said. "I think people have just started to become aware that they can call officials up to deal with it. Beforehand, people used to handle the snakes themselves, using sticks to hit them and that kind of thing."

Number of snakes on the rise in Bangkok

erinarian who works for the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, said Bangkok's snake invasion is sustained by the city's growing piles of trash, which subsequently leads to more rats and birds - favored prey for serpents.

The Thai capital is producing more trash every year, and struggles to get rid of it. It has produced around 10,454 tons of trash per day this year, up from 8,943 tons daily in 2011, according to the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. "In the wild, you'd have

He said he can now identify most types of snakes and has become an in-house instructor who teaches other firefighters how to safely capture the wriggly reptiles. "We have no choice but to learn how to handle them," Phinyo said. Piya Saereerak, a vet-

war, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Some 100,000 people were killed and another 2.2 million displaced in the conflict.

In Bozanovici in eastern Bosnia, his cousin still lives on an unpaved lane bearing the sign "General Mladic Street", opposite the house where the military chief was born. Dusko, a retired construction worker and himself a former soldier, recalls the days when Mladic would return on leave from the Yugoslav army, make hay in the fields and create toy guns out of pieces of wood for his younger relative. Dusko proudly shows AFP a bottle of homemade "rakija", fruit brandy enjoyed throughout the Balkans, with labels bearing pictures of the general. "If we stand on the side of justice, truth, God, he should be acquitted," Dusko insists.

Mayor unmoved

The war ended with a deal that divided Bosnia along ethnic lines into two semi-independent entities: the Serb-run RS and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, dominated by Bosnian Muslims (known as Bosniaks) and Croats. In the RS, home to around one million Serbs, Mladic will "remain a hero, regardless of everything", says Momcilo Krajisnik, 72, a former speaker of the RS assembly. Krajisnik himself was sentenced to 20 years in prison in The Hague and released in 2013, after which he received a triumphal welcome back home in the RS. —AFP



BANGKOK: Fireman Phinyo Pukphinyo holds a sunbeam snake at a home in Bangkok, Thailand. —AP

eagles and big birds that eat snakes, and their eggs are food for other reptiles," Piya said. "But in a big city like Bangkok, there is nothing hunting them." Piya heads a wildlife clinic that takes in around 300 to 400 snakes a month from rescuers such as firefighters in Bangkok. Every week, the staff from his clinic releases truckloads of snakes caught in the city into the jungle. City authorities say the number of snakes caught in Bangkok homes has risen exponentially in recent years, from 16,000 reported cases in 2013 to about 29,000 in 2016. Figures for the first half of 2017 are

over 30 percent higher than last year.

Penchom Saetang, director of the environmental foundation Ecological Alert and Recovery Thailand, said Bangkok is producing more trash each year because the city is quickly expanding under an insufficient waste management system. A July 2017 Greenpeace report notes there are 2,490 waste management centers around the country, but only 466 of them working properly. Piya's advice to Bangkok's residents is to keep the city clean in order to keep the snakes away. —AP

'Butcher of Bosnia' still a hero at home as verdict looms

BOZANOVICI: Dusko Mladic points to the portrait on his wall of his beloved cousin Ratko, the wartime Bosnian Serb army chief, who will next week learn if he is convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity. "I guarantee you that he is not guilty of a single murder," Dusko insists of his "idol", who faces a verdict from UN judges at The Hague over his actions in Bosnia's bitter 1992-1995 conflict. Ratko Mladic became known internationally as the "Butcher of Bosnia", particularly for his alleged leading role in the 44-month siege of Sarajevo and the massacre of 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica.

But in his family village of Bozanovici-and across the rest of the Bosnian Serb entity, Republika Srpska (RS) — the 74-year-old general is still widely regarded as a hero for his part in the civil war. "If those judges knew him only 60 percent as well as I know him myself," says Dusko, "he would be immediately acquitted and rewarded". On trial since 2012 at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Mladic faces judgment on November 22 on 11 charges arising from the

No winter let-up for the migrants in Jungle camp

CALAIS: When the squalid Jungle camp near Calais was demolished last year, France hoped it was the last time migrants trying to reach Britain would be sleeping in tents and makeshift shacks outside the port city. But just over a year later, as another winter sets in, there are still hundreds of migrants bracing for the cold, desperate to cross the Channel and to make a fresh start in Britain.

This time, however, they do not have a camp or even tents to sleep in, and a pledge by authorities to provide shelter will kick in only when daytime temperatures fall below minus five Celsius (23 Fahrenheit) and minus 10 at night. "My birthday is in a few days, but I don't think I'll be celebrating," said Mohammad, a 23-year-old from Syria, as he and several other migrants gathered at a community kitchen run by the Auberge des Migrants NGO. Even though the harshest winter weather has not yet hit, most are already exhausted as they battle the cold and the lack of sleep.

Having been here just four days, Mohammad tries to look on the bright side as he warms his hands over a portable heater. "It's tough, it's really cold. But me? I've no problems with clothing and I've got a sleeping bag," he says. Another Syrian, who is also named Mohammad and is seven years older, doesn't have it so good. "I need some better shoes," he says, pointing to the holes in the ones he is wearing. "I ask every day" if local associations might have some-but so far in vain.

Shoe confiscations

Proper footwear is a major issue for many of the migrants. Some associations blame the local authorities for confiscating the meagre possessions that the asylum seekers do possess-sometimes even their shoes. "Belongings are confiscated and destroyed systematically, from sleeping bags to tents, shoes and personal items," says Franck Esnee, regional coordinator from the NGO Medecins du Monde.

"We have to distribute every week, or even more often," says Sylvain Marty of the Auberge des Migrants, pointing to shelves of sleeping bags in storage. "The refugees don't understand why one guy brings them blankets and then another takes them away the next day," he says. Contacted by AFP, a spokeswoman at the local prefect's office, which represents the French state in the Calais area, confirmed that "dismantling operations have taken place." —AFP

International

Merkel warns of tough talks; clock ticks on coalition deal

'Serious differences' remain, Chancellor warns

BERLIN: Chancellor Angela Merkel warned that "serious differences" remain between the parties hoping to form Germany's next government but voiced hope a deal would emerge, hours before a deadline that could trigger snap polls. We have "very different positions" on some policy issues, Merkel told reporters, adding however that "I believe it can work". After weeks of quarrelsome exploratory talks, Merkel's CDU/CSU bloc, the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) and the left-leaning Greens are holding a final day of negotiations before announcing whether they have found enough common ground to begin formal coalition negotiations.

The awkward bedfellows, who differ on everything from refugees to climate protection and EU reforms, have been pushed together by September's inconclusive election, which left Merkel badly weakened as the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) lured millions of voters. The stakes are especially high for Merkel, eyeing a fourth term, who set the deadline to reach an agreement in principle with the goal of having a new government in place by Christmas. "If the conservatives, the Greens and the FDP can't pull together, there's no way to avoid new elections," Der Spiegel

news weekly wrote.

"No one wants that. But is that enough to justify an alliance?" The potential tie-up, dubbed a "Jamaica coalition" because the parties' colors match those of the Jamaican flag, is untested at the national level and how stable such a government would be is anyone's guess. The final round of pre-coalition talks is expected to run late into the night as party officials tackle issues including migration. Merkel is facing "her most dangerous night", Germany's best-selling Bild newspaper said. "It's not just the chancellor's fourth term that depends on the success of Jamaica, but her entire political career."



Stakes high for Merkel as she eyeing 4th term

'Building bridges'

Mindful of the anger over the 2015 refugee influx that helped carry the anti-Islam AfD into

the Bundestag lower house of parliament, migration remains one of the most contentious items on the docket, with the conservatives eager to tighten asylum policy. Merkel's Bavarian CSU sister party wants to go even further with a cap on migrant numbers.

But that is anathema to the Greens, who are pushing to ease restrictions on family reunifications for asylum seekers. The Greens will likely dig in their heels after already watering

protesters decided to stay the night at the rally with the hope of seeing the governor. "Just after midnight, the Lagos State Task Force stormed the protest ground and began beating the peaceful demonstrators," said JEI founder Megan Chapman. "They brought three 'Black Maria' mobile detention vehicles and arrested many of the protesters, especially men. "We have reports from inside that one vehicle was packed with 46 demonstrators. We believe the others contain similar numbers."

Amnesty International Nigeria researcher Morayo Adebayo gave a similar number while Raymond Gold, of the Nigerian Slum and Informal Settlement Federation, said "about 100" were held. "Some of them were wounded," he said. Lawyers were sent to secure their release, he added. The JEI said it condemned "in the strongest possible terms the use of force and unlawful arrest of peaceful protesters who have come out to demand justice and an end to forced evictions that plague the urban poor". Lagos state police spokesman Olarinde Famous-Cole said he had no information about any arrests and confirmed only that Wednesday's "dispersed at about 2:00 pm".

But he added that it would be "a breach of security for anybody to be found within the vicinity of the governor's office without authorization after office hours". —AFP



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel, also leader of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party, arrives for further exploratory talks with members of potential coalition parties to form a new government yesterday. —AFP

down key campaign pledges to unblock contentious talks on the environment. Greens leader Cem Ozdemir abandoned demands for a 2030 end date for coal-fired plants and the internal combustion engine, and called on other parties to also show some flexibility. "You build bridges together or not at all," he told Bild.

But his proposals to make polluting diesel cars less attractive and close the country's 20 dirtiest coal plants have met with resistance from the conservatives and the FDP, who worry

about job losses and disrupting the mighty auto and energy sectors. On the eve of the talks deadline, the sniping and mud-slinging continued to play out in the media with the CSU's outspoken negotiator Alexander Dobrindt accusing the Greens of "clinging to ancient demands". The Greens' political director Michael Kellner hit back at the CSU's "irresponsible" behavior. "The only conclusion to draw from Dobrindt's daily insults is that he wants the talks to fail," Kellner complained. —AFP

Nigerian police disperse evicted shanty dwellers

LAGOS: Police broke up a sit-in protest in Lagos yesterday, dispersing hundreds of former slum-dwellers demanding compensation after being evicted from their waterfront homes. Some 600 people from the Otodo-Gbame area of the Nigerian megacity, including women and children, had earlier on Wednesday marched to the office of the state governor.

They were among more than more than 30,000 people made homeless in the last year, as part of a move by the city authorities to remove shanty towns. At least 11 people are said to have died and 17 others disappeared as the bulldozers moved in and residents were chased into the nearby lagoon. Earlier this week, Amnesty International published a report calling the evictions from the poor fishing community "unlawful" and demanded an investigation into the violence.

The Justice and Empowerment Initiatives (JEI) lobby group said police moved in when

Nigeria state poll tightened after a 'Biafran boycott'

LAGOS: Voters in Anambra state, southeast Nigeria, go the polls to elect a new governor this weekend, with security tight after a call from a pro-Biafran group for people to boycott the polls. The result of tomorrow's election is unlikely to change anything politically at national level but proceedings are being watched closely because of what analysts have said are "unprecedented" measures to stop unrest. Nigeria's federal police said it is sending 26,000 extra police officers, including counter-terrorism and bomb disposal specialists, sniffer and attack dogs. Three surveillance helicopters will monitor proceedings from the air, while there will be 10 gunboats on the river Niger, plus 15 armored personnel carriers and 303 patrol vehicles.

Police said the measures were "to ensure adequate security and safety of lives and properties before, during and after the elections". "Police personnel deployed for the election are under strict instructions to be polite and civil but firm in the discharge of their duties and other responsibilities," it added. But the tactics are being seen as heavy handed. "This is an unprecedented deployment. It's an aberration. It's like we are in a war situation. For God's sake, this is an election," security consultant



File photo shows political activist and leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) movement, Nnamdi Kanu. —AFP

Don Okereke said. "It will be counter-productive as there will be voter apathy, which will lead to low turnout of voters and the election of unpopular candidates."

'Civil disobedience'

Some 37 parties are fielding candidates in Anambra to try to wrest power from governor Willie Obiano, of the All Progressives Grand Alliance, who is seeking a second term. The leading contenders are Oseloka Obaze, of the main national opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and Tony Nwoye of the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC). But Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), is the most well-known name as the polls prepare to open. In September, long-running tensions between his supporters and the military boiled over after soldiers were sent in large numbers to the neighboring state of Abia. —AFP

International

Fear, loathing in South Korea as university exam postponed

Earthquake forces postponement of university exam

SEOUL: South Korean test-takers expressed confusion and dejection yesterday as the country's highly competitive annual university entrance exam, called a "life assignment exam" by some, was postponed a week for the first time ever due to safety concerns. South Korea postponed the exam after a rare earthquake rattled the country on Wednesday, causing damage to buildings including some schools.

The exam is life-defining for many high school seniors, as a prestigious university on one's resume is seen a minimum for securing a place in limited corporate jobs in Asia's fourth-largest economy, which is dominated by conglomerates. Because the wrong answer to a single question in the roughly 200-question exam can mean dropping in the national ranking and failure to enter one's choice of university, tensions ran high.

"It's a bit hellish thinking I have to do this for one more week," said 20-year-old Cho Hyun-lee, studying at one of Seoul's largest cram schools to take the test again after last year. "People are dispirited, lying with their faces down." Some scrambled to recover books they'd thrown away yesterday or buy new ones, two test-takers told Reuters, while others "gave up", uploading pictures of classmates sleeping or reading online comics on social media. Still others agonized over missing concerts of their favorite singers or South Korea's largest online game exhibition this week.

9 die as suicide bomber strikes near wedding hall in Kabul

KABUL: A suicide attacker blew himself up outside a wedding hall in Kabul killing at least nine people, officials said yesterday, in an apparent attempt to strike a political gathering under way inside. The Taliban was quick to deny responsibility for the attack, the latest to hit the war-weary Afghan capital where insurgents have been stepping up assaults in a show of deadly force. Supporters of Atta Mohammad Noor, the powerful governor of the northern province of Balkh and a vocal critic of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, had been holding an event inside the hall at the time of the blast.

Noor was not at the event, one of his aides said. The bomber tried to enter the building but was stopped at the security checkpoint where he

Meanwhile, South Korean society, geared for the exam's smooth progress, prepared to do it all again next Thursday. Airplanes, barred from taking off or landing for 35 minutes yesterday morning to prevent their noise from interfering with the exam's listening section, were allowed to land or take off, the transport ministry said. But the stock market and banks still opened an hour late yesterday—a device to help keep roads

clear for students getting to test sites. The defense ministry allowed extra leave for soldiers in mandatory military service who had taken personal leave to sit the exam.

Four police officers were stationed on double shifts at each

of the 85 locations exam questions are kept and police patrolled the premises every two hours to prevent their leaking. As fainter aftershocks continued yesterday, many Koreans said they support the postponement—but some were inconsolable. "It feels like I was turning the handle on the exit door from hell then returned to square one," said Lee Yoon-mi, a high school senior in Incheon. "If you're not a test-taker, you could never understand."

1,500 homeless

The 5.4 magnitude earthquake that was South Korea's second-strongest in decades damaged infrastructure, injured dozens of people and left about 1,500 homeless, officials said yesterday. No deaths have been reported since the quake rattled the southeastern coastal region

detonated his device, Kabul police spokesman Abdul Basir Mujahid said. "A number of our police personnel are among the casualties," Mujahid added. Interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish said seven policemen and two civilians had been killed. "The bomber detonated himself after he was identified by the police at the entrance gate," Danish said. Another nine were wounded including seven police and two civilians, he added.

'Chaos and panic'

"After lunch as we were exiting the hall a huge explosion shook the hall, shattering glass and causing chaos and panic," Harun Mutaref, who was at the gathering said. "I saw many bodies including police and civilians lying in blood." An AFP photographer said the windows of the wedding hall had been shattered by the force of the blast and a vehicle parked outside was on fire. Dozens of police and intelligence officers have swarmed the area and blocked access to the public. Photos posted on Twitter showed multiple bodies of men lying on top of each other in a muddy street and in a drain, and people dragging away the wounded. Noor, a senior leader of the Tajik-dominated Jamiat-e Islami party, has been an outspoken critic of Ghani and the National Unity Government. —AFP



SEOUL: Parents pray for their children's success in the Scholastic Aptitude Test at the Jogye Temple in Seoul, South Korea.—AP

around the port city of Pohang on Wednesday afternoon.

As of yesterday morning, 1,536 people had been forced to evacuate their homes and 57 people were injured, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety said in a statement. More than 1,000 houses and dozens of other buildings and cars were damaged or destroyed, and cracks and other damage were found in military facilities, bridges, port facilities and water supply facilities. Media images showed crumbled walls piled on

damaged cars, broken windows and cracks in buildings. The quake also forced the education ministry to put off the university entrance exam for one week because some buildings chosen as test venues had cracks and students in the southeastern region were displaced from their homes and complained of anxieties. The annual test administered by the government is a huge national event in South Korea, where diplomas from top colleges often guarantee better jobs and spouses.—Agencies

'Mounting evidence' of Myanmar genocide

WASHINGTON: Myanmar security forces slit the throats of Muslim Rohingya, burned victims alive, and gang-raped women and girls, according to two separate reports detailing mounting evidence of genocide against the minority group. Human Rights Watch focused on the use of sexual violence in its report on the military's campaign against the Rohingya, and concluded that the depredations amounted to crimes against humanity.

"Rape has been a prominent and devastating feature of the Burmese military's campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya," said Skye Wheeler, a researcher at Human Rights Watch and author of the report. "The Burmese military's barbaric acts of violence have left

countless women and girls brutally harmed and traumatized." A separate report by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Southeast Asia-based Fortify Rights documents "widespread and systematic attacks" on Rohingya civilians between October 9 and December of last year, and from August 25 of this year.

The 30-page report, entitled "They tried to kill us all," is based on more than 200 interviews with survivors and eyewitnesses, as well as international aid workers. Some world leaders have already described as "ethnic cleansing" the scorched-earth military campaign against the Rohingya. Evidence gathered by Fortify Rights and the Holocaust Museum demonstrates that "Myanmar state security forces and civilian perpetrators committed crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing" during two waves of attacks in the majority Buddhist nation, the report says. "There is mounting evidence to suggest these acts represent a genocide of the Rohingya population," it says. Almost 700,000 Rohingya, more than half of the population in northern Rakhine state, have been forcibly displaced since October last year when Myanmar's army began "clearance operations" after a previously unknown group attacked and killed security officers.—AFP

International

Federal govt, states spar over funds to tackle haze

Pollution level climbs to 12 times above recommended limit

NEW DELHI: As pollution level climbed to 12 times above the recommended limit this week in India's capital, government officials said they knew what was needed to control the smoky haze, but nothing would be done, at least this year. A major source of the smog at this time of year across northern India, including New Delhi, is farmers burning the stubble of the previous crop to prepare for new plantings in November.

An estimated \$600 million is needed to provide farmers with alternatives, but the Bharatiya Janata Party of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and opposition parties in power in New Delhi and nearby Punjab states are squabbling over who will

pay, said three federal government officials who have been briefed on the situation. "Nothing more is likely to happen this year," said one of them. "We're now praying. Only God can save us."

The official said he had bought pollution masks for his family and installed air purifiers at his home in New Delhi, now the most polluted city in the world, according to the Brookings Institute. The city is home to more than 20 million people. A spokesman of the federal environment ministry declined comment on federal and state

governments bickering over funds to tackle the problem of stubble burning. The provincial leaders of New Delhi and neighboring Haryana states, after exchanging barbs on Twitter for days, agreed on Wednesday on measures to control the smog - in 2018.

As a thick blanket of haze settled over parts of northern India, including the capital, over the past few days, the official response to what has become an annual phenomenon has been paralysis and lack of ownership, interviews with government officials show. It's not just the crop burning - a combination of industrial smog, vehicle exhaust and dust envelop the re-

gion every year as winter approaches and wind speeds drop. It's been particularly bad this year with levels of PM 2.5, tiny particulate matter that reaches deep into the lungs, climbing to over 600 last week, according to a US Embassy measure.

The upper limit for healthy air is 50, the government has said. Respiratory diseases killed about 10 people a day in the year to March 2017 in the national capital region, according to the health ministry. The World Bank estimates pollution cost the country as much as 7.7 percent

New Delhi faces 'hazardous' air pollution



India PM remains overwhelmingly popular: Pew poll

NEW DELHI: Nearly nine out of 10 Indians hold a favorable opinion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and more than two-thirds are satisfied with the direction he is taking the country, a Pew survey has found, two years before he heads into a general election. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition won the biggest parliamentary majority in three decades in a 2014 election and the poll by the US-based research centre showed that his personal ratings remain high. Critics have accused hardline Hindu groups linked to the ruling coalition of promoting a partisan agenda, including targeting minority Muslims, since he came to power.

They have also blamed Modi for slowing economic growth and for failing to generate the hundreds of thousands of jobs needed for young people joining the workforce each month. But the Pew poll found that 88 percent of Indians held a favorable view of Modi, a shade higher than the 87 percent who gave him a thumbs-up in 2015, a year after he swept to power promising to transform India

into a high-growth economy. Such high ratings are unusual for political leaders three years into office in south Asia, where governments are more often voted out than retained as people become frustrated with broken campaign promises.

Modi's favorable rating is 31 percentage points higher than that of Sonia Gandhi, the leader of the main opposition Congress party, and is 30 points more than that for her son, Rahul Gandhi, who is expected to take over the party leadership. "Three years into Modi's five-year tenure, the honeymoon period for his administration may be over but the public's love affair with current conditions in India is even more intense," Pew said in comments on its findings.

The survey was conducted in February and March, a few months after Modi withdrew most high-value bank notes in a shock move aimed at illegal wealth, but which put millions of people in difficulty as cash was sucked out of the economy. Modi defended the measure as an attack on the rich hiding their wealth from the taxman and said gains would come to the poor. Economic growth eased to a three-year low in the June quarter and experts said part of the reason was that the withdrawal of most of the currency had hurt consumer demand in a largely cash-driven economy. A poorly implemented goods-and-services tax that went into



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

effect in July has further unsettled small businesses, many of which are part of the bedrock of the BJP's political base. But the poll found that more than 80 percent of those surveyed said economic conditions were good, up 19 percentage points since just before the 2014 election. "Overall, seven-in-ten Indians are now satisfied with the way things are going in the country. —Reuters



NEW DELHI: A macaque monkey eats food after stealing it from an Indian child outside a temple in New Delhi yesterday. —AFP

of the GDP in 2013. In 2015, Modi launched the first national air quality index in New Delhi and promised to take steps to clean the air.

Tried our best

Authorities temporarily banned diesel-run power generators, construction, burning of

garbage and plying of trucks with non-essential goods, but construction and truck movements were allowed to resume as pollution levels dropped. In recent days, authorities also began to use fire engines to spray water over parts of the capital hoping it would help settle the dust. But the steps have largely proved ineffective. —Reuters

Pakistan indifferent as smog kills more people than militancy

ISLAMABAD: The toxic smog that has covered parts of Pakistan for weeks has exposed official torpor over rampant pollution that has killed thousands more people than have died in years of militancy. The polluted air that has lingered in Islamabad in recent days was finally dispelled by rain this week, bringing the surrounding Margalla Hills into view once again.

In Lahore, where the situation was most critical, the level of PM2.5 - microscopic particles that lodge deep in the lungs-had dropped to 159 Wednesday from more than 1,000 during the pollution spike, according to PakistanAirQuality, a citizen-driven monitoring initiative. But what looks good for Pakistan is still very bad: 159 is six times higher than the World Health Organization's (WHO) safe limit. "Question is, can a change from #Hazardous to Very #Unhealthy be called an improvement?" tweeted PakistanAirQuality.

Pakistan is already ranked third in the world-behind China and India-for the number of deaths caused by pollution, with 125,000 people killed annually, according to one measure by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, a research institute founded by the Gates Foundation. The figure is well beyond the estimated 60,000 people who have died in the militancy-wracked country's years-long battle against extremism. —AFP

Lifestyle

Friday Times

www.kuwaittimes.net

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2017



A model presents a creation made out of chocolate, during the 7th Beirut Cooking Festival. — AFP

China's futuristic library: More fiction than books

Page 25

Fallout continues for Weinstein and his former company

Fallout from sexual harassment and abuse allegations against Harvey Weinstein continued Wednesday as the disgraced producer was hit with a new lawsuit, lost an honorary degree and his former company forced to sell off a major film asset because of the scandal. Weinstein and his former company were hit Wednesday with a proposed class action lawsuit that targets what it called the producer's "casting couch" harassment and abuses. The suit, filed in Los Angeles federal court by an unnamed aspiring actress who claims Weinstein harassed her in a building occupied by his former com-



Accuses its leadership of being complicit



In this Jan. 8, 2017, file photo, Harvey Weinstein arrives at The Weinstein Company and Netflix Golden Globes afterparty in Beverly Hills. —AP photos



This image released by ABC shows actor Terry Crews, right, with co-host Michael Strahan during a segment on "Good Morning America," Wednesday, Nov 15, 2017, in New York.

pany, Miramax, also names The Weinstein Co. as a defendant and accuses its leadership of being complicit in Weinstein's systematic harassment and abuse of women.

Representatives for Weinstein and the company did not respond to messages Wednesday seeking comment. The company is reeling from the allegations against its co-founder, and on Wednesday announced it had sold the distribution rights to its biggest upcoming release, "Paddington 2." Warner Bros. will now release the film, which is based on late author Michael Bond's famous "Paddington Bear" stories. "Paddington" producer David Heyman earlier said he intended that the Weinstein Co. name to be "nowhere near" "Paddington 2," which

was wholly financed by Studiocanal.

Trustees from the State University of New York and the SUNY chancellor on Wednesday revoked the degree granted to Weinstein in 2001. He was an English major at the University at Buffalo from 1969-1973. In a statement, the University at Buffalo says Weinstein's alleged conduct is "inconsistent" with the values and policies of the university and "contradicts the spirit of the honorary degree" and "undermines the accomplishments" that were cited to bolster the awarding of the degree. It is the latest honor lost by Weinstein, who has been expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and received lifetime bans from the television academy

and producers guild.

'Casting couch mentality'

Dozens of women, including actresses Gwyneth Paltrow, Angelina Jolie, Lupita Nyong'o and Ashley Judd, have accused Weinstein of sexual harassment, while actresses Asia Argento, Rose McGowan and others have accused the Oscar-winner of raping them. Weinstein's representatives have denied all accusations of non-consensual sex, but no charges have been filed. Weinstein, 65, is being investigated by police in Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, New York and London. —AP

The harassment and abuse allegations against Weinstein

Film Review

'Mudbound' a moving, literary epic of family, race

Perhaps it's a sign of the times that after seeing an epic story as poetically told as Dee Rees' "Mudbound" feelings of awe and admiration are quickly replaced with frustration that Hollywood hasn't traditionally embraced the artistic visions of people who aren't white and male. Maybe it's because feelings are so raw in this post-Weinstein era, where the obstacles women face on their way to success are just beginning to be publicly understood. "Mudbound" is beautiful, complex and flawless, regardless of who made it. That it happens to come from a queer black woman is both significant and irrelevant: Brilliance is brilliance, no matter its packaging. But given Hollywood's exclusive (and potentially abusive) power structure, some brilliance must fight harder than others to be heard, and we may never know what less-hardy voices have been silenced through the years by harassment and discrimination. Themes of prejudice and discrimination are also central to the story of "Mudbound," based on the award-winning 2008 novel by Hillary Jordan. Set in the American South in the early 1940s, it's both a tale of two families, one black and one white, and a portrait of an era beset by racism and rigid social rules.

Rees' telling is literary and cinematic, striking with both words and images. Her script with Virgil Williams captures Jordan's writing style and the characters' distinct voices as they alternately narrate the story. And the stunning photography by Rachel Morrison - leafy

woods, light-dappled buildings, watercolor sunsets across enormous skies - creates a beautifully bucolic setting for the ugly racism that brings life-altering pain to both families. Like a novel, the story gradually then completely absorbs as the characters reveal themselves. Though there are many, each is wholly drawn. The title refers to the landscape: a central character of sappy farmland that leaves everyone covered in dirt.

Memories of hate

The drama begins when Henry McAllan (Jason Clarke) moves his family from Memphis to Mississippi to make his farming dreams come true. The Jacksons are their neighbors, sharecroppers who've tended the land for generations and dream of owning a piece. Though ostensibly equals, social norms clearly dictate the Jacksons' deference to the McAllans. When Henry needs help from Hap Jackson (Rob Morgan, speaking volumes with his eyes), he orders more than asks. But Henry's father, Pappy (Jonathan Banks), is far worse: he's openly hateful, and later shown to be a devoted member of the Ku Klux Klan.

The Jacksons and the McAllans share more than land. The family matriarchs, Laura McAllan and Florence Jackson (Carey Mulligan and Mary J Blige, both superb), develop a bond resembling friendship that their husbands don't fully understand. And as World War II draws US participation, each family sends one



of their own off to war.

Henry's younger brother, Jamie (Garrett Hedlund), and the Jacksons' eldest son, Ronsel (Jason Mitchell), are forever changed by their time overseas. They form an unlikely friendship when they return, sharing the psychological scars of battle and the challenges of their newly expanded worldviews. But such a friendship between white and black men is forbidden in the segregated South, and both pay dearly for it.

With hate remaining a tenet of American life, the racism depicted in "Mudbound" is like a distant and present memory. Rees doesn't shy away from showing the stark and subtle effects of racial hate. It's just as painful to see Ronsel, in his military uniform decorated with medals, quietly take a seat in the "colored"

section of the bus as it is to see him confronted by racists in town.

In her dozen years behind the camera, Rees has told stories about people whose lives might have remained unseen had she not brought them to the screen. In a country and world as diverse as ours, there are countless experiences and perspectives to be shared, and not all of them belong to white men. "Mudbound," a Netflix release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "some disturbing violence, brief language and nudity." Running time: 134 minutes. Four stars out of four. —AP

Grappling with fame, success Smith still sings from the heart

Sam Smith thought he had cracked it - it being "fame." He released the first single from his new album, the groovy burner "Too Good at Goodbyes," and didn't put his face on the single artwork or do much TV promotion for the song. He felt like he had re-entered the celebrity world without dealing with the usual drama that comes with being famous. Two months later, when the album came out, things changed, and the "freak out" happened.

"I get really upset because it was literally overnight. As soon as the album came out, everyone was recognizing me again, and it scares me," said Smith, days after his second album, "The Thrill of It All," was released. "Whenever the fame stuff gets mad again, I just remind myself what I am. I am a singer. I'm a songwriter. I'm here to make music. I don't want to fuel gossip, you know?"

That's been the biggest struggle for the performer since he found success - the balance of Sam the celebrity, a normal twenty-

Multi-platinum status

His debut album, "In the Lonely Hour," launched more hits, reached multi-platinum status and was lauded for its emotional songs and Smith's strong vocals. He won about every major award - from Grammys to a Golden Globe. He was even named best new artist at the BET Awards. But it wasn't all golden: The inevitable backlash that comes with mainstream success also hit Smith. Some criticized his music for being too sappy, but perhaps more hurtful to Smith were critics from the gay community. The star was lambasted after the 2015 Academy Awards, when he took home an Oscar and he inaccurately said he was the first openly gay person to win the prestigious award.

"My Oscar speech - that was my fault," said Smith, who won best original song for "Writing's on the Wall" from the James Bond film "Spectre." "If I'm going to say something on a big scale like that in front of nine million people I should go over it again, and again,

work on his music. Fast forward two years later, and Smith, 25, is back with a batch of songs that represent the last few years of his life. "Thrill," like his first album, is a cohesive set of songs that are both heavy and beautiful, with Smith's piercing voice in the starring role. He had a hand in writing all of the songs.

'I got dumped on the phone'

"I knew that I wanted this album to be more personal than the first one," said Smith. "A lot of this album is about me and how I didn't like myself a lot while I was making this record and how I can be my worst enemy." He worked again with "Stay With Me" co-writer Jimmy Napes on the project, but also invited other major players to the sessions, including Timbaland, StarGate (Rihanna), Malay (Frank Ocean), Poo Bear (Justin Bieber) and country singer-songwriter Cam.

"I think he's grown just as a person, even before music. He's still young, but it's a big difference. He was 19 when I first met him ...and he's 25 now. He's grown up into a man. And I think his voice has reflected that," Napes said. "He's gotten a little bit wiser to be able to dig a little bit deeper into the world and his life, and I hope we captured that on this album." One of those songs ended up being "Baby, You Make Me Crazy," the album's liveliest moment inspired by Smith's breakup.

"I got dumped on the phone," Smith says with a light laugh. "A phone call. It still pisses me off." "I remember putting down the phone, walking into my garden and my friends were there and I was (like), 'It's over,'" he added. "We all decided, '...Instead of being depressed tonight, let's just go out and have the most amazing night.'" "Scars" is another personal song on the album, focusing on his mom and dad. "Pray" was inspired after a trip to Iraq for charity work, and a boy coming out to his father makes up "HIM." The latter was also created in response to an article Smith read about the singer not saying "he" or "him" in the songs on his debut album, even though he was a gay man. "I remember thinking, '(Expletive) you, I'm going to write a song and call it 'HIM' because I'm just not trying to hide anything here.' I never have. I think maybe I was scared of saying the wrong thing," he said. — AP



In this Nov 2, 2017 photo, musician Sam Smith poses for a portrait in New York to promote his latest album, "The Thrill of It All." — AP

something who has to live his life with constant cameras around him, and Sam the singer, who just wants to perform songs he's written about his life. He achieved a breakthrough almost as soon as he hit the music scene: In Europe it was with "Latch," the electronic dance hit with Disclosure, and in the United States with "Stay With Me," the winner of both record and song of the year Grammys in 2015.

and again, till it's cemented in my mind. That is my responsibility. But I also just think that comes with age. You know, I mean, I ... just turned 23 when all that happened."

After the incident, Smith said he felt like he was "losing my mind. Like, I just needed to get back to normal life because I wasn't enjoying it. It wasn't real life to me." So he took a break from the public, spent time with family and friends, and continued to

Egyptian singer faces trial after mocking the Nile



Egyptian fishermen row on the Nile River in Cairo. — AP

A famous Arab singer will stand trial next month in her native Egypt over a video clip in which she advises a concert fan against drinking from the Nile River, officials said Wednesday. The clip shows Sherine Abdel-Wahab, widely known by her first name, saying "You are better off drinking Evian," a reference to a French brand of mineral water.

The fan had asked her to sing one of her hit songs, named for an Egyptian saying, that one who drinks from the Nile is bound to return. Sherine now faces a host of charges, including incitement and harming the public interest. The remark, clearly made in jest, set social media ablaze, with some users calling it an insult to Egyptian national pride and others saying the real culprits are those who pollute the river.

The trial, before a Cairo misdemeanor court, is due to start on Dec. 23, according to the court officials. The case arose from a complaint filed by a lawyer after the video surfaced this week. If convicted, Sherine could face up to three years in prison or a heavy fine, but she will have recourse to appeal. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media. Egypt's government and media have relentlessly stoked nationalist sentiment since the military overthrew an elected Islamist president in 2013, portraying nearly all criticism as part of an international plot to undermine the country's stability.

Crackdown on dissent

Activists, artists or writers who dare speak critically of government policies or the country's general-turned-president, Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, risk vilification on popular TV talk shows. Thousands have been jailed in a wide-scale crackdown on dissent. "At the time when the government is working to revive tourism, the singer acted with crude mockery, which drew laughter from the crowd that amounted to an insult to the Egyptian state," Lawyer Hany Gad wrote in his complaint.

Sherine has also been banned from performing in Egypt by the local musicians union, which said in a statement that her comment was an "unjustified ridicule and mockery of our dear Egypt." The agency that runs state TV and radio informally instructed employees not to broadcast her songs until further notice. Sherine apologized for her comment in a Facebook post. "My beloved Egypt and its children: I apologize from all my heart for any pain I may have caused you," she wrote. "It was a bad joke that I would never use if I go back in time." The Musicians Union said the concert was in Lebanon, but Sherine's statement said she believed it was in the United Arab Emirates more than a year ago. The video clip emerged at a sensitive time.

Egypt fears a soon-to-be-completed upstream dam in Ethiopia could cut into its share of the river, which supplies more than 90 percent of the arid country's water. The Nile's polluted waters must be treated to be safe for drinking. But critics took Sherine's remarks to imply that Egypt was not doing enough to protect the river at a time when it is trying to rally world support in the dispute with Ethiopia. — AP

STONE TEMPLE PILOTS BACK WITH NEW SINGER

Grunge rockers Stone Temple Pilots are back with a new frontman, chosen in an audition of 15,000 applicants after their previous two singers died. The band with heavy guitar and dark introspection were a leading force in the grunge scene of the 1990s, led by the voice of Scott Weiland, who died of an overdose in 2015 on his tour bus. The troubled Weiland had already been replaced before his death by

Chester Bennington, the frontman of Linkin Park. Bennington left Stone Temple Pilots amicably and earlier this year killed himself.

Stone Temple Pilots marked their rebirth on Wednesday with the release of the song "Meadow" and said to expect an album in 2018. The fast-paced guitar track features the voice of Jeff Gutt, the 41-year-old singer from the defunct California nu-metal band Dry Cell who had

returned to his native Michigan. Stone Temple Pilots had put out a call for a new singer and received around 15,000 submissions but Gutt was invited to audition after bassist Robert DeLeo was introduced to him while playing in Michigan. Gutt told Rolling Stone that he had considered Weiland a model as a singer since first hearing the Stone Temple Pilots' debut album "Core" in 1992, when the new frontman was a teenager. — AFP

NEPAL'S MUSICIANS RETUNE TO TRADITION



Nepali band 'Night' gather for a rehearsal during an interview with AFP in Kathmandu. — AFP photos

Nepal's musical heritage is enjoying a revival as young musicians fuse the sounds of traditional instruments once at risk of disappearing with lyrics that examine the modern challenges facing the country. The Himalayan country has a rich folk tradition, but its unusual traditional instruments—which include a leaf from a native tree that is played like a harmonica—were dying out as younger generations moved towards Western music styles. That was until bands such as Night, which formed in 2006 as a metal group, decided to create a modern take on its indigenous music.

"We grew up listening to sounds of guitars and drums and so we started to play the same. But then we started experimenting with folk instruments," said Night's Jason Kunwar. Now the 33-year-old singer's musical repertoire includes the more esoteric Sarangi, a three-stringed instrument made of wood and dried sheep skin whose sounds are said to closely resemble the human voice, as well as the deeper-sounding Pivancha. The band's latest album evolved from months

spent researching instruments and singing styles in remote western Nepal. "It is fascinating to discover and learn new instruments. We are fortunate that there are still people who can teach us," said Kunwar. "The longer we wait, the more likely we are to lose such valuable knowledge." The songs tackle some of the most pressing social is-



Months spent researching instruments, singing styles

sues facing the country, including the huge number of Nepalis forced to migrate for work, often not seeing their families for long periods. The combination has proved popular—it was standing room only at the band's recent gig in Kathmandu.

'Turning point'

Ram Prasad Kandel, founder of a folk instrument museum in Kathmandu, believes the country is witnessing a "turning point" in attitudes towards its music traditions. "There is such diversity in the sound and make of the instruments, and their playing methods. It is a gift from our ancestors," he told AFP. "It is our identity and the young generation has to continue it."

Popular rock and pop bands Nepathya and 1974 AD were among the first to produce fusion hits with folk elements. Then Kutumba, an instrumental ensemble formed in 2004, brought the sounds of rural folk instruments to a more hip urban demographic. They have taken their performances around the world, and are particularly popular with Nepal's sizeable international diaspora. "They are very excited when we play. Perhaps the music helps them connect to their roots," said band member Kiran Nepali.

Nepal—a country of 29 million people—is home to around 125 ethnic groups, each with its own music traditions and well as different ways of

making instruments. The songs tell the stories of the country's culture and history—about sowing seeds and harvesting crops, of husbands and sons migrating for work, of the wounds from the country's brutal ten-year civil war. Nepal's movie industry is also experiencing a revival, with directors moving away from the Bollywood song-and-dance format with storylines about the often harsh reality of life in impoverished Nepal.

This has opened up a new market for musicians who produce background scores and soundtracks that weave in a traditional touch. Kalo Pothi, a 2016 film about the Maoist insurgency that scooped a series of awards at international film festivals, told the story of two boys in a village in western Nepal against a beautiful soundtrack inspired by the sounds of the region. Pushpa Palanchoki, 24, performs with emerging bands Ma and MiKu, which are also jumping on the trend, fusing contemporary lyrics with traditional sounds. "Why should we do what everyone is doing when we can create unique music with what is our own," she said. — AFP

DA VINCI PAINTING SELLS FOR \$450M IN AUCTION RECORD

A 500-year-old work of art—believed to be by Leonardo da Vinci and depicting Jesus Christ—sold in New York on Wednesday for \$450.3 million, smashing a new art auction record, Christie's said. The whopping price dwarfed the previous record for the most expensive piece of art sold at auction, set at \$179.4 million for Pablo Picasso's "The Women of Algiers (Version O)" by Christie's in 2015. The auction house says "Salvator Mundi" or "Savior of the World" is one of fewer than 20 Da Vinci paintings in existence that are generally accepted as from the Renaissance master's own hand.

All other known paintings by Da Vinci are held in museum or institutional collections. Dated back by the auction house to around 1500, the oil on panel sold after 18 minutes of frenzied bidding in a historic sale, the star lot of the November art season in the US financial capital. Whoops and applause rippled through the showroom as the bids quickly escalated into uncharted territory, led by rivals on the tele-

phone. "An historic moment here. We'll wait," said auctioneer Jussi Pylkkanen in a brief pause in bidding at \$300 million. He eventually hammered the painting at \$450 million. The final price came to \$450.3 million including the buyer's premium. The price throws shade at its Russian billionaire seller, who has sued a Swiss art dealer in Monaco for allegedly swindling him into parting with \$127.5 million for the work in 2013. Dmitry Rybolovlev, the boss of soccer club AS Monaco, accuses Yves Bouvier of conning him out of hundreds of million dollars by overcharging him on a string of deals, and pocketing the difference. "Salvator Mundi" at been at the heart of that court battle. Bouvier bought the work at Sotheby's for \$80



This file photo taken on November 03, 2017 shows Leonardo da Vinci's "Salvator Mundi" on display at Christie's New York during a press preview for the Post-War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale.



Christie's employees take bids for Leonardo da Vinci's "Salvator Mundi" at Christie's New York. — AFP photos

million in 2013. He resold it within days to the Russian tycoon, for \$127.5 million, netting a \$47.5 million profit. Bouvier denies any wrongdoing.

The work was exhibited at The National Gallery in London in 2011, after years of research trying to document its authenticity after it was found, mistaken for a copy, in a regional US auction in 2005. Before that it had disappeared for years, previously fetching a mere 45 pounds (\$60 in today's money)

in 1958 as a believed copy. Christie's said pre-sale that the painting's rarity was difficult to overstate. For years it was presumed to have been destroyed, emerging only in 2005 when it was purchased from a US estate. "For auction specialists, this is pretty much the Holy Grail," Loic Gouzer, co-chairman of Christie's Americas postwar and contemporary art department, has said. "It doesn't really get better than that." — AFP

Dutch woman with a trumpet takes Colombian salsa by storm



Dutch musician and trumpet player Maite Hontele performs on stage at Colon Theatre in Bogota. — AFP photos



A woman playing trumpet in a salsa band in traditionally macho South America is a rare thing. It's rarer still when that woman is Dutch. Since arriving on Colombia's salsa scene, Maite Hontele has been blasting her horn to full houses from Bogota to Seoul and has gradually won the respect of salsa's greats. "I was born on the wrong continent," says Hontele, a tall, blonde 37-year old from the central Netherlands. She insists she's "Colombian at heart."

Her love affair with the country began when she played Bogota's Teatro Colon while visiting from the Netherlands in 2003 with the Rumbata Big Band. The audience loved her and the feeling was mutual. "I fell in love with Colombia, with its

Album at the Latin Grammys, and she shared the limelight with such stars as Marc Anthony and Tito Nieves.

She has just returned to Colombia from Havana, where she spent two months recording her fifth album, "Cuba linda" (Beautiful Cuba) with the Orquesta Aragon. Her latest single, "Casi Muero" (I nearly died), from the album of the same name, came out on November 3. That evening, Maite was back where it all started, at Bogota's "big, beautiful" 800-seat Teatro Colon.

On their feet

The sell-out crowd was on its feet from the opening notes of the third song in her set, "Maria Cristina me quiere gobernar" (Maria Cristina wants to control me). From the stage right down to the cheap seats, fans danced between the red velvet seats while Hontele grooved on stage with her musicians. The crowd took up the chorus of some of her best known tunes, "Que bonito" (How Nice) and "Nonchecita." Like many in the crowd that night, Jaime Ospino, 49, knew all the material. "This is a great concert," he said.

In early October, Hontele was playing to another full house at the Cafe Libro, the Colombian capital's top spot for tropical music. Long-time fan Angela Ramirez was there celebrating her 38th birthday. "I've always loved salsa. But the idea of a Dutch woman who plays the trumpet in Colombia gives me chills!" Ramirez said.

Salsa from the cradle

Hontele laughs about a certain irony in her life story: "I never chose the trumpet," she says. The instrument chose her. She first held a trumpet as a nine-year old when playing in a local brass band in her home village of Haafden. She was immersed in Latin American music as a child, raised to the rhythms of her father's collection of Caribbean vinyl records.

"I grew up with these sounds," she says. "He would go to Paris to look for records, just off the presses. Celia Cruz, the Gran Combo of Puerto Rico, etc." No surprise then that as a 14-year-

old, she preferred to play Latin American music. She convinced the Rotterdam Conservatory to bring in a specialized Latin music teacher rather than be forced to go the usual route of classical or jazz training.

She began playing in Dutch nightclubs as a teenager, "until six in the morning—the only woman in a group of men, playing merengue, bachata, and Cuban salsa." Looking back, getting out on the club scene was "the best education." For her, the secret of rhythm lies "not only in the technique, but where the flavor is, and the flavor is in the street—that's where you have to



people, its cities, its energy, its diversity," she says in an interview at her apartment in Bogota's bohemian La Macarena quarter. Hontele followed her heart and her trumpet to Colombia, settling in Medellin for seven years and churning out record after record as well as touring with her own band.

Now she plays regularly with the greats of the genre—people like Panama's Ruben Blades, Venezuela's Oscar D'Leon and the Buena Vista Social Club from Cuba. In 2014, official recognition came when her album "Dejame asi" (Leave Me Like This) was nominated for Best Salsa



look for it." These days, she finds that flavor in Bogota's streets, which she moves through in true Dutch style—by bicycle.

She claims to be a vegan, listens to Cuban sounds as much as Bach or pop, and even as she prepares for a European tour, she says she just wants to be the "the neighbor who plays the trumpet." "It doesn't interest me to be famous, to ride in a limousine," Hontele says. She's already played with some of South America's greats, but apart from Sting, her biggest dream is to play with Carlos Vives. "It would close the circle," she says. As a kid, already steeped in the music but without a word of Spanish, she sang along to the Colombian singer's hit at the time, "Pa' Mayte" (For Mayte), reading into it a kind of musical destiny. — AFP



A woman walks through the "Impact of the Bible in America" section at Museum of the Bible November 15, 2017 in Washington, DC. — AFP photos



The Children's Experience section is seen at the Museum of the Bible.

WASHINGTON'S BIBLE MUSEUM AIMS TO SKIRT POLITICAL WEEDS

Washington's new Museum of the Bible will take a leap of faith this weekend, opening its massive bronze, Latin-inscribed gates to visitors eager to browse ancient relics and interactive exhibits—as well as to critics skeptical of the institution's "non-sectarian" mission. The privately funded \$500-million museum tells the story of the Bible by blending archaeology with history and a hint of whimsy, offering everything from antiquities and biblical curio to an amusement ride, all intended to "celebrate" the good book. But since its genesis the 430,000 square-foot museum has raised eyebrows, as much for its location—mere blocks from the US Capitol building—as its creator and major financial backer, billionaire evangelical Christian Steve Green.

Green's Oklahoma City-based arts and crafts retail chain Hobby Lobby burst into the public sphere when it won a 2014 Supreme Court case permitting companies on religious grounds to opt out of contraceptive coverage mandated by an Obama-era health care law. And just months ago the company came under fire for illegally importing more than 5,500 artifacts, including ancient clay cuneiform tablets that had been smuggled out of Iraq. Attributing the purchase to naivete, Hobby Lobby agreed to forfeit the pieces and pay a \$3-million settlement.

The Green family's Christian convictions and the smuggling debacle had skeptics questioning both the museum's ideological aim and the provenance of its antiquities, more than 500 of which are on view on the institution's "history" floor. But Green, who chairs the museum's board, insists it aims only to "present the facts." "This is a journalistic view of the Bible. It's not about espousing our faith," he told reporters at a preview ahead of the museum's grand opening. "We're inviting all people to engage with this book, so we embrace all that will come and celebrate the Bible."

'Not about evangelizing'

Situated just south of Washington's National Mall esplanade that houses the Smithsonian museum complex, the sprawling eight-floor institution—which includes a ballroom, performing arts hall and biblical garden—lets visitors tour a theatrical exhibit recreating what Nazareth may have looked like in the time of Jesus.

Another area explains the evolution of the Old



An exhibit discussing slavery in the United States is displayed inside the Museum of the Bible.



Blending
archaeology
with history

Testament, displaying artifacts and manuscripts from the Green family as well as the Israel Antiquities Authority. The museum also shows items on loan from institutions including the British Museum and Paris Louvre. The "Washington Revelations" theater ride takes museum-goers on a simulation "flight" over the nation's capital, pointing out biblical references throughout the city, while the "impact" floor traces the Bible's societal influence—particularly stateside—on politics, edu-



Visitors watch an animation film about King David as they go through an exhibit on the Old Testament.

cation, music, movies and fashion. A large-scale mural depicts pilgrims reading the Bible to Native Americans, weaves through portraits of suffragists and anti-slavery activists, and ends with an image of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr delivering his "I Have a Dream" speech, which contains a number of biblical references. Small placards also explain how the Bible was used to justify both sides of the Civil War and opposing views on African-American slavery, as well as the enslavement of Native Americans. The museum does not, however, include references to hot-button topics like abortion or access to contraception.

"We try to avoid anything that's controversial," said Tony Zeiss, the museum's executive director. "We're not about evangelizing, we're about piquing people's curiosity." But Candida Moss—religious scholar at the University of Birmingham and co-author of the book "Bible Nation: The United States of Hobby Lobby"—says the museum missed a chance to delve into more complex aspects of biblical history.

'Rise above' the controversy

"You can't just tell the story; you're always interpreting," she said. "I think what's really curious is what's not in the Bible Museum." Moss argues the museum focuses too narrowly on American history, making scant reference to the Mormon branch of Christianity, the Ethiopian Christian Churches, or the Bible's ties to the Quran. She also voiced concern over the authenticity of a number of the museum's relics, including fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which she said "many scholars believe to be almost entirely forged." One of the institution's advisors Lawrence Schiffman, a professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, acknowledged the fragments "may or may not be real" — but said accompanying placards made clear research is underway. Gordon Campbell, a University of Leicester professor and lead historian at the museum, says he hopes Washington's newest cultural institution will "rise above" the controversy. "I aspire to make it encourage debate centered on the Bible and not centered on the Greens," he said. "I hope we can succeed." For museum members Jim King and his wife Pam, a sexagenarian couple from Austin, Texas invited to the previews, the free museum is "world-class" and its location near federal government offices "a very great statement." — AFP

China's futuristic library

More fiction than books

A futuristic Chinese library has wowed book lovers around the world with its white, undulating shelves rising from floor to ceiling, but if you read between the lines you'll find something is missing. Those rows upon rows of book spines are mostly images printed on the aluminium plates that make up the backs of the shelves.

Pictures of the sleek Tianjin Binhai Library have gone viral on Chinese social media and abroad since its opening last month, with headlines trumpeting it as the "world's best library" and a "book lover's dream". On weekends, an average of 15,000 visitors flock to the six-storey space in the eastern port city of Tianjin. Designed by Dutch architectural firm MVRDV, the building looks like an eye when viewed from the still unfinished park outside, with a spherical auditorium as the iris at its centre.

The library contains 200,000 books and it has grand ambitions to grow its collection to 1.2 million. But readers expecting to pluck tomes from most of the terraced shelves are in for a surprise. Most books are in other rooms with



Average of 15,000 visitors flock to the six-storey space

more classic library bookshelves. "There's quite a big difference between the photos and reality," said Jiang Xue, a 21-year-old medical student left perusing one of the more robustly stocked sections: propaganda about the ruling Communist Party's recent congress.

'Give it a soul'

An essential part of the original concept was for the upper bookshelves to be accessible via rooms placed behind the atrium, MVRDV told AFP, but a fast-tracked construction schedule



General views of the Tianjin Binhai Library.

forced them to drop the idea. The decision was made "locally and against the MVRDV's wishes," its spokeswoman Zhou Shuting said. But Liu Xiufeng, the library's deputy director, blamed the design for putting them in a bind.

Liu said the plan finally approved by authorities stated that the atrium would be used for circulation, sitting, reading, and discussion, but omitted a request to store books on shelves. "We can only use the hall for the purposes for which it has been approved, so we cannot use it as a place to put books," Liu laughed, adding that they would likely soon have to remove all those temporarily on display.

There's another quirk: The irregular white stairs have proven hazardous for selfie-snappers with



This picture taken on November 14, 2017 shows a woman taking pictures at the Tianjin Binhai Library. — AFP photos



eyes glued down to their phones or up at the stylish ceiling. "People trip a lot. Last week an old lady slipped and hit her head hard. There was blood," said one guard, who yells warnings at visitors. China is notorious for building astronomically expensive cultural facilities that open to great fanfare, only to end up standing empty without concerts or programming to fill them. It is also no stranger to controversy over book faking.

Last month, Beijing's Liyuan Library, a non-profit space internationally recognized for its beautiful wooden reading spaces and design, suspended operations after its books were found to contain pirated and explicit content. But the Binhai library's viral image has boosted readership, with checkouts quadrupling since the opening.

The children's rooms downstairs bustled with families flipping through illustrated stories. "The

architecture they completed is like a newborn infant delivered into our hands. Now it's up to us to give it a soul," said Liu.

Building membership, however, may prove a challenge for Liu in a country where readers increasingly flip through novels on smartphone apps. The popularity of reading apps has led to a boom in online publishing. Shares in China Literature—the country's biggest player in the business, comparable to Amazon's Kindle Store—shot up more than 60 percent on their debut on the Hong Kong stock exchange last week, after raising \$1.1 billion in an IPO.

Yuan Jiwen, an e-commerce major fond of online novels set in the Three Kingdoms period, held an unread paperback like a prop as he people-watched in the atrium. "I don't usually touch real books," he said. "But it feels appropriate to be holding one here." — AFP



Ingredients

Servings: 6
 Start to finish: 30 minutes
 2 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, plus more for garnish
 6 garlic cloves, minced
 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
 4 anchovy fillets (optional)
 2/3 cup dry white wine
 2 cups clam broth
 2 cups fish stock
 12 shrimp (21/25 count), heads and tails on, if desired
 1/4 pound of squid, tubes and tentacles, tubes sliced into 1/4-inch rings
 1 1/2 pound small clams
 1 lb mussels, debearded and scrubbed
 1/2 pound bay scallops
 1 pound king crab leg, cracked into 6 portions (or 1/4 pound lump crab meat)
 1/4 pound white flesh fish, such as haddock, cod, or halibut
 1/2 cup diced Roma tomatoes
 1 lb linguine, cooked, for serving
 1/4 cup chopped parsley

Christmas Eve the Italian way means fish, fish and more fish

For a holiday so widely celebrated, the traditions surrounding Christmas are as unique as the ornaments that decorate your tree. From decor, songs, stories and gifts, Christmas looks a little bit different in every home across the world, but of course, here at The Culinary Institute of America, we're especially interested in what's on the table.

The Feast of the Seven Fishes is an Italian-American tradition to ring in Christmas Eve, when Roman Catholics celebrate the midnight birth of Jesus, known in Italian as "La Vigilia." Fish is a traditional ingredient in the Christmas Eve dinner because custom calls for the eschewing of red meat leading up to the holiday.

Though today the feast is commonly referred to as the "seven fishes," the origin of that number is unclear, and in fact, many Italian and American homes may serve upwards of 10 dishes to celebrate the feast. Recipes vary from region to region, but

common ingredients can include salted cod, calamari, shellfish, and shrimp, which may be stewed, fried, sautéed, or even served raw. Of course, you're likely to find a pasta dish in the mix. This can lead to a long day in the kitchen, but it doesn't have to be a struggle. If you want to celebrate Christmas Eve the Italian way, try this quick and easy Seven Fishes Sauce recipe.

This simple sauce is a traditional mix of aromatic ingredients, white wine, and fish broth that will lightly coat the fish(es) and pasta. For our main ingredients, we've chosen the seafood heavy hitters: crab, shrimp, calamari, clams, mussels, scallops, and white fish. You can serve the shellfish in their shells for a dramatic presentation, or serve them shucked for a more user-friendly experience.

Depending on where you live, your fish markets may be buzzing in anticipation of the holiday, but don't be tempted to secure your catch too early. Your ingredients should be as fresh as possible, kept cold

and over ice, if your refrigerator is especially crowded. Make sure you give your clams and mussels some breathing room if they came packed in plastic.

While we've added it to the Christmas Eve menu, you can use this recipe as a base for week-night dinners all year long. Add Thai-style aromatics to the broth, like ginger and lemon grass, and a squeeze of lime juice for a Tom Yum-style broth. Or, during the summer, add chopped fresh tomatoes, cilantro, and some hot chilis for a Latin flair.

We like serving this sauce over pasta (because everything is better with pasta), but you will also love it over creamy polenta, roasted vegetables or potatoes, or steamed rice. You can even serve it on its own, alongside some crusty bread for dipping. Depending on how you serve it, this can be a decadent first course or satisfying entrée, but we think however you fill your table, your guests will be lucky to share a buon Natale with you and your loved ones.

SEVEN FISH SAUCE

Preparation

Heat oil in a sauce pot over medium heat. Add garlic, pepper flakes, and anchovies, if using. Cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add wine and cook until it reduces by about half, about 5 minutes. Add clam broth and fish stock and bring to a light simmer. Add the shrimp, squid, clams, mussels, and scallops and slowly poach until the fishes become firm and the mussels open, about 5 minutes. Add the crab, white fish, and tomatoes and cook gently, lowering the heat as needed to maintain a simmer, until firm, about 3 minutes. Take care not to overcook the fish, or it will flake apart when served. Remove from the heat and ladle into serving dishes over the pasta. Garnish with parsley and peppers, if using, and drizzle with olive oil before serving.

IT'S TIME TO EMBRACE AN UNDERAPPRECIATED FRUIT – PERSIMMON



By Melissa d'Arabian

You've likely seen persimmon in the grocery store and then shied away from it, not quite sure what to do with it. The most common variety in the US is the fuyu persimmon, also called Japanese persimmon, and it looks similar to a slightly flatter orange tomato.

The skin is thin and edible like the tomato, but texture is firmer, more like a cantaloupe. The flavor falls somewhere in between the two: not quite as acidic as a tomato and slightly less sweet than a melon.

The persimmon's sweetness means an average fruit is about 115 calories - a bit higher than many other grab-and-go options like an apple - but the high fiber content means it's a filling snack choice. In addition to the fiber, persimmons are excellent purveyors of antioxidant vitamins C and A, with a medium piece of fruit providing 20 percent and 50 percent of our daily requirements, respectively. Use the per-

simmon as a creative alternative to raw tomatoes or melon in your recipes. Dice persimmon into tiny cubes and add to a bruschetta, serve slices on a cheese platter, wrap persimmon wedges with salty prosciutto, or chop and toss in salad.

Or, just polish a persimmon on your shirt and bite into it like an apple. In today's recipe for Avocado and Goat Cheese Toast, I replace the trusty tomato slice on my avocado toast with a slice of persimmon, with its cheery orange color and star-

shaped pattern etched into the flesh by nature. I took the liberty of swapping part of the avocado for herbed goat cheese which makes the persimmon truly sing, making this a perfect entry into loving this underappreciated fruit.

AVOCADO AND GOAT CHEESE TOAST WITH PERSIMMON

Ingredients

Servings: 4

Start to finish: 10 minutes

4 slices of whole grain bread, toasted

1/4 cup soft herbed goat cheese (or herb and garlic cream cheese)

1/2 small avocado

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 medium Fuyu, persimmon, sliced (also called Japanese persimmon)

2 tablespoons chopped mint

2 tablespoons chopped pistachios

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon dried red pepper flakes or paprika, optional
1 teaspoon olive oil

Preparation

Spread the soft cheese onto half of each bread slice. Lightly mash the avocado with the lemon juice in a small bowl, and spread gently onto the remaining half of each bread slice. Top each slice of bread with a slice or two of persimmon. Sprinkle with a little mint, pistachio, salt and red pepper flakes or paprika, if using. Drizzle a few drops of olive oil onto each toast, or use a mister to spray a little olive oil on each slice. Enjoy open-faced.

Nutrition information per serving

223 calories; 108 calories from fat; 12 g fat (4 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 11 mg cholesterol; 401 mg sodium; 23 g carbohydrate; 6 g fiber; 7 g sugar; 8 g protein.

Ireland: A tale of four cities

Spread roughly about the four main compass points, the cities of Dublin, Cork, Galway and Belfast are remarkably different from each other, despite all sharing a pretty small island.





Dublin

Ireland's capital may be small, but it has more personality than a city twice its size. Within the hotchpotch collection of architecture that makes up the city centre - medieval flying buttresses, late 20th-century grey boxes and row upon row of 18th-century expressions of Georgian elegance - is an intoxicating mix of heritage and hedonism. Dublin is home to many of Ireland's national treasures, carefully displayed in the three branches of the National Museum - archaeology; decorative arts & history; and natural history.

And don't forget the Book of Kells, part of Trinity College's Old Library that also includes the stunning Long Room. For more chilling bits of Irish history, look no further than Kilmainham Gaol, which played a central role in the struggle for independence. Fancy high quality art? There's the National Gallery, of course, but the Dublin City Gallery - Hugh Lane and the Irish Museum of Modern Art have top-drawer modern and contemporary art collections.

Cork

'The Real Capital of Ireland' - as Cork is

known to those who live there - might be one-fifth the size of Dublin, but that is part of the appeal, as most of its charms are stacked on a small island in the middle of the River Lee - although you'll have to go beyond it to explore its historical sights, like the fascinating Cork City Gaol. Cork is a city best explored on foot and with only a vague sense of destination. You should deliberately lose yourself in the tangled grid of 17th-century alleys and narrow streets that run off the grand Georgian thoroughfares.

Although Cork has its fair share of modish joints where you can sup artisanal coffee while sitting on a crate or drink a cocktail out of a jam jar, the city remains happily traditional and the best places to enjoy a good night out are its fine collection of old-school pubs, like An Spailpin Fanac, the 'Wandering Laborer,' which has regular traditional music sessions to go along with the open fires and flagstone floors. Other popular bars include the tiny Mutton Lane Inn (get in early to bag a snug) and E (the live music is sensational), while if you're into micro-brews, the award-winning Rising Sons and the Franciscan Well Brewery are both producers of superb local brews - the former's Mi Daza stout is good enough to make you forget



Lifestyle | Travel



about Guinness.

Galway

Everybody loves Galway City, and it's easy to see why. Maybe it's the multi-colored buildings on the pedestrianised streets of the city centre, the abundance of alternative lifestyle shops - Galway embraces all kinds of spiritual pursuits - or maybe it's because this is a city that knows how to party. The summer is festival time: show up anytime between June and Sep-

tember and you'll fall into a celebration of film, the arts, horse racing and even oysters.

Galway has some of the most famous pubs in Ireland. Neachtain's and Tigh Coili are invariably always packed with locals and visitors, who come for the atmosphere of a classic pub and - in the latter - the superb traditional music, but you can also find both in O'Connor's and the Crane, which are popular but not always as packed as their more famous brethren. And if you like your music a little more con-

temporary, Galway can take care of that too: the Roisin Dubh is the place to hear some of the best rock music in town.

Belfast

Northern Ireland's capital and biggest city by far, Belfast is very much an international city with a dynamic young population focused on moving on from its past. This is a burgh on the up - a busy hive where the headlines these days are about the latest fancy restaurant or

the opening of a new interactive museum.

This is the city that birthed the Titanic, so it's hardly surprising that the top museum in town is a bells-and-whistles, high-tech tribute to the world's most famous shipwreck, but Belfast's other history is as compelling: a Black Taxi Tour will reveal West Belfast's political legacy through its colorful murals and the infamous Peace Wall. For added interest, a visit to the notorious Crumlin Road Gaol is also worthwhile. -www.lonelyplanet.com



Comic

WORD SEARCH

Basketball

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 39 letters spell a piece of Basketball trivia.

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

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| ASSIST | FOUL | PASSING | SHOOTING GUARD |
| BACKBOARD | FREE THROW | PLAYER | SHOT |
| BALL | GAME | POINT GUARD | SLAM DUNK |
| BASKET | HALF-TIME | POINTS | SMALL FORWARD |
| BENCH | HOOP | POWER FORWARD | SNEAKERS |
| BLOCK | JERSEY | QUARTER | SUBSTITUTIONS |
| CENTER | LAY-UP | REBOUND | TEAM |
| CLOCK | NET | REFEREE | THREE POINTER |
| COACH | OUT OF BOUNDS | RIM | TIME-OUT |
| COURT | OVERTIME | SCOREBOARD | TRAVELING |
| DRIBBLING | | | |

Yesterday's Solution

Baseball

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

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| APPEAL | FAIR TERRITORY | INTERFERENCE | RETOUCH |
| BALK | FLY BALL | LEAGUE | RUN DOWN |
| BASE | FORCE PLAY | LINE DRIVE | RUNNER |
| BATTER | FORFEITED GAME | LIVE BALL | SCOREBOARD |
| BUNT | FOUL BALL | MOUND | SHORTSTOP |
| CATCH | FOUL TERRITORY | OBSTRUCTION | STRIKE |
| COACH | FOUL TIP | OFFENSE | TAG |
| DEAD BALL | GROUND BALL | OUTFIELDER | THROW |
| DEFENSE | IN FLIGHT | OVERSLIDE | TIE GAME |
| DOUBLE HEADER | INFIELD FLY | PENALTY | TRIPLE PLAY |
| DUGOUT | INFELDER | PITCHER | UMPIRE |
| FAIR BALL | INNING | PIVOT FOOT | WILD PITCH |

Hidden sentence: A HOT DOG AT THE BALL PARK IS BETTER THAN STEAK AT THE RITZ

CROSSWORD 1764



ACROSS

- Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
- A curved piece above the wheel of a bicycle or motorcycle to protect the rider from water or mud thrown up by the wheels.
- Experiencing or showing sorrow or unhappiness.
- The United Nations agency concerned with international maritime activities.
- Not identified with a band.
- South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
- Marked by or showing unaffected simplicity and lack of guile or worldly experience.
- United States inventor who manufactured the first elevator with a safety device (1811-1861).
- King of Saudi Arabia since 1982 (born in 1922).
- English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
- Not equal in amount.
- The location of something surrounded by other things.
- A United Nations agency created to assist developing nations by loans guaranteed by member governments.
- Any member of Athapaskan tribes that migrated to the southwestern desert (from Arizona to Texas and south into Mexico).
- South American cavy.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- Not the same one or ones already mentioned or implied.
- Nocturnal mouse-like mammal with

- Forelimbs modified to form membranous wings and anatomical adaptations for echolocation by which they navigate.
- The use of bacteria or viruses of toxins to destroy men and animals or food.
- National capital of Solomon Islands.
- An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
- Jordan's port.
- A widely distributed system consisting of all the cells able to ingest bacteria or colloidal particles etc, except for certain white blood cells.
- Type genus of the Apidae.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Lower in esteem.
- Long-tailed brilliantly colored parrot of Central and South America.
- Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
- A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
- A period of time containing 365 (or 366) days.
- A blood group antigen possessed by Rh-positive people.
- Chinese tree cultivated especially in Philippines and India for its edible fruit.
- A short labored intake of breath with the mouth open.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Increase in extent or intensity.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- Being five more than one hundred fifty.
- A hypothetical continent that (according to plate tectonic theory) broke up later into North America and Europe

- and Asia.
- A light touch or stroke.
- The dialect of Chinese spoken in Canton and neighboring provinces and in Hong Kong and elsewhere outside China.
- A radio receiver that combines a locally generated frequency with the carrier frequency to produce a supersonic signal that is demodulated and amplified.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- Of or relating to or supporting Hinduism.
- At full speed.
- Of silk fabric.
- The 12th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- A transuranic element.
- A logarithmic unit of sound intensity.
- A correctional institution used to detain persons who are in the lawful custody of the government (either accused persons awaiting trial or convicted persons serving a sentence).
- In a natural state.
- A Hindu goddess who releases from sin or disease.
- Any plant of the genus Reseda.
- A doctor's degree in religion.
- The process of becoming softened and saturated as a consequence of being immersed in water (or other liquid).
- A dull persistent (usually moderately intense) pain.
- An informal term for a father.
- A Muslim or Hindu mendicant monk who is regarded as a holy man.
- Spicy fruit of the cubeb vine.
- Late time of life.
- A member of a widespread group of Amerindians living in northeastern South America.
- (prosody) Of or consisting of spondees.
- French filmmaker (1908-1982).
- Green algae common in freshwater lakes of limestone districts.
- Any opinions or doctrines at variance with the official or orthodox position.
- An implement used to erase something.
- An informal term for a father.
- The principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group.
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.
- A cap with a flat circular top and a visor.
- Formed like a bacillus.
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- Forces that provide energy and direction.
- French composer noted for his experimentalism and rejection of romanticism (1866-1925).
- (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
- An Eskimo hut.
- An underground enclosure with access from the surface of the ground or from the sea v.l.
- (Old Testament) The eldest son of Isaac who would have inherited the Covenant that God made with Abraham and that Abraham passed on to Isaac.
- An agenda of things to do.
- Money in the form of bills or coins.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
- A United States liquid unit equal to 8 fluid ounces.
- Take in solid food.

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 5 | | | 7 | | | |
| | 4 | 2 | | | 6 | | | |
| | 9 | | 2 | | | | 8 | |
| 4 | | | | 6 | 3 | 5 | | |
| | 6 | | | | | | 9 | |
| | | 7 | 5 | 1 | | | | 8 |
| | 7 | | | | 4 | | 1 | |
| | | | 1 | | | 9 | 2 | |
| | | | 7 | | | 6 | | |

Yesterday's Solution

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 1 |
| 3 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 2 |
| 9 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| 2 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| 7 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| 4 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 7 |
| 5 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| 6 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| 1 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 3 |

TV Listings

MOVIES HD
ACTION

- 01:15 Nick Of Time
- 02:55 Larceny
- 04:25 X-Men: First Class
- 06:45 Tekken: Kazuya's Revenge
- 08:20 Spooks: The Greater Good
- 10:15 Larceny
- 11:50 The Net
- 13:50 X-Men: First Class
- 16:05 Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes
- 18:00 Frontera
- 19:55 Warcraft: The Beginning
- 22:00 Universal Soldier: The Return
- 23:25 Assassins Tale
- 00:50 Lone Star Law
- 01:45 Treehouse Masters
- 02:40 Bad Dog

MOVIES
FESTIVAL

- 00:35 Carol
- 02:40 Lorenzo's Oil
- 05:00 The Beat Beneath My Feet
- 06:40 The Inevitable Defeat Of Mister & Pete
- 08:35 The Last King
- 10:25 Lorenzo's Oil
- 12:45 The Wave
- 14:40 Waiting For Superman
- 16:40 The Manchurian Candidate
- 18:55 A Birder's Guide To Everything
- 20:30 Bulworth
- 22:25 Danny Collins

MOVIES HD
THRILLER

- 00:55 The Ghost And The Darkness
- 02:55 The Blackcoat's Daughter
- 04:40 Escape
- 06:10 Edge Of Winter
- 07:50 Glass Chin
- 09:25 Edge Of Winter
- 11:05 The Blackcoat's Daughter
- 12:50 Escape
- 14:20 Falsely Accused
- 15:50 The Field
- 17:50 Pressure
- 19:30 Runaway Jury
- 21:45 Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension
- 23:25 Mirrors

MOVIES
KIDS

- 01:15 Legend Of The Sea
- 02:40 The Apple & The Worm
- 04:05 Space Dogs 2: Adventure To The Moon
- 05:30 Pacific Pirates
- 07:00 Azur & Asmar: The Prince's Quest
- 08:45 Izzie's Way Home
- 10:10 The Adventures Of The American Rabbit
- 11:40 Micropolis
- 13:10 Legend Of The Sea
- 14:35 The Apple & The Worm
- 16:00 Oops Noah Is Gone
- 17:35 The Adventures Of The American Rabbit
- 19:05 The Incredible Adventures Of Professor Branestawm
- 20:15 Amila's Secret
- 21:30 Oops Noah Is Gone
- 23:05 Izzie's Way Home

MOVIES HD
FAMILY

- 01:00 The Dog Lover
- 02:45 The Wild Thornberrys Movie
- 04:15 Snow Day
- 05:50 The Great Gilly Hopkins
- 07:30 The Dog Lover
- 09:15 The Tale Of Despereaux
- 10:50 The Wild Thornberrys Movie
- 12:20 Swan Princess: Royally Undercover
- 13:50 Rio
- 15:30 Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip
- 17:05 The Sound Of Music Live!
- 19:25 True Heart
- 21:00 Swan Princess: Royally Undercover
- 22:30 Rio

MOVIES HD

- 00:45 V/H/S 2
- 02:25 Sahara
- 04:35 Miss You Already
- 06:30 Steve Jobs
- 08:40 The Theory Of Everything
- 10:50 Baby's Day Out
- 12:35 Sahara
- 14:40 National Security
- 16:15 Nacho Libre
- 17:55 Hail, Caesar!
- 19:50 Dreamgirls
- 22:05 Training Day

MOVIES HD
FIRST

- 00:00 Underworld: Blood Wars
- 01:35 Bravetown
- 03:30 Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children
- 05:40 After Words
- 07:15 Aloha
- 09:00 Spotlight
- 09:30 Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children
- 11:40 Now You See Me 2
- 13:50 Center Stage: On Pointe
- 15:25 Nerve
- 17:05 Deepwater Horizon
- 18:55 Suicide Squad
- 21:00 A Monster Calls
- 22:50 Split



- 01:15 Saving Private Ryan
- 04:00 Hollywood On Set
- 04:25 Hollywood On Set
- 04:55 Hollywood On Set
- 05:20 Hollywood On Set
- 05:50 Hollywood On Set
- 06:15 Hollywood On Set
- 06:45 Whitney
- 08:15 True Colors
- 10:10 Days Of Our Lives
- 10:50 Days Of Our Lives
- 11:30 Days Of Our Lives
- 12:10 Days Of Our Lives
- 12:50 Days Of Our Lives
- 13:30 Shall We Dance?
- 15:15 Adventureland
- 17:00 Coach Carter
- 19:15 Cop Land
- 21:00 Saving Private Ryan
- 23:45 Good Will Hunting

MOVIES COMEDY HD

- 01:15 Hit By Lightning
- 02:50 Barbershop 2: Back In Business
- 04:40 Barbershop: The Next Cut
- 06:35 Fierce Creatures
- 08:10 Wayne's World 2
- 09:50 Life Or Something Like It
- 11:40 Fierce Creatures
- 13:20 Barbershop: The Next Cut
- 15:15 The Grand Seduction
- 17:10 Cops And Robbers
- 18:45 Meet Dave
- 20:20 The House Bunny
- 22:00 Vacation
- 23:40 The Overnight



- 00:45 One Day
- 02:30 Cypher
- 04:15 Cold Mountain
- 06:45 The Machinist
- 08:20 Jane Eyre
- 10:20 Shattered Glass
- 12:00 Silver Linings Playbook
- 14:15 Cypher

- 16:00 Hollywoodland
- 18:15 One Day
- 20:00 Disconnect
- 22:00 You Again

SUNDANCE TV

- 00:00 Rake
- 01:00 Vernon, Florida
- 02:00 Hap And Leonard: Mucho Mojo
- 03:00 The Code
- 04:00 Francine
- 05:20 Rendezvous
- 05:35 Five Star
- 07:00 Ping Pong Summer
- 08:30 Miss Firecracker
- 10:15 Orbit Ever After
- 10:40 Discovering: Coldplay
- 11:30 Music For Mandela
- 12:50 Ping Pong Summer
- 14:20 Close Up With THR
- 15:20 Miss Firecracker
- 17:00 Discovering: Coldplay
- 17:55 Music For Mandela
- 19:15 Cole
- 21:00 Movie Talk Legends: Marilyn Monroe
- 21:30 Hollywood's Best Film Directors
- 22:00 It's Not Yet Dark
- 23:20 Copenhagen

SERIES HD
COMEDY

- OSN Series Comedy HD
- 00:15 Malcolm In The Middle
- 00:40 Malcolm In The Middle
- 01:05 According To Jim
- 01:30 According To Jim
- 01:55 Fresh Off The Boat
- 02:20 Fresh Off The Boat
- 02:45 Trial & Error
- 03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 05:40 Mad Love
- 06:05 Til Death
- 06:30 2 Broke Girls
- 06:55 Superstore
- 07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 09:50 Young & Hungry
- 10:15 Young & Hungry
- 10:40 Mad Love
- 11:05 Til Death
- 11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 12:20 2 Broke Girls
- 12:45 Superstore
- 13:10 Malcolm In The Middle
- 13:35 Malcolm In The Middle
- 14:00 According To Jim
- 14:25 According To Jim
- 14:50 Mr. Sunshine
- 15:15 Young & Hungry
- 15:40 Young & Hungry
- 16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 17:00 2 Broke Girls
- 17:30 Superstore
- 18:00 Malcolm In The Middle
- 18:30 Malcolm In The Middle
- 19:00 According To Jim
- 19:30 According To Jim
- 20:00 Marlon
- 20:30 Fresh Off The Boat
- 21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 22:00 Family Guy
- 22:30 Better Things
- 23:00 Trial & Error
- 23:25 Late Night With Seth Meyers

FIRST HD
Home of HBO

- 00:00 The Knick
- 01:00 Girls
- 01:30 Girls
- 02:00 Snowfall
- 03:00 Mr. Robot
- 03:50 The Sinner
- 04:40 State Of Play: Culture Shock
- 05:25 Nixon By Nixon: In His Own Words
- 06:40 Path To War
- 09:25 White Mile
- 11:00 John Adams

- 12:05 Hysterical Blindness
- 13:45 In The Gloaming
- 14:50 Clear History
- 16:30 Dirty War
- 18:05 John Adams
- 19:30 Superheroes
- 21:00 Chance
- 22:00 Berlin Station
- 23:00 Dane Cook: Vicious Circle

SERIES HD

- 00:00 Grimm
- 01:00 Once Upon A Time
- 01:50 Stan Lee's Lucky Man
- 02:40 Lethal Weapon
- 03:30 S.W.A.T.
- 04:20 Grimm
- 05:20 Chicago Med
- 06:10 Criminal Minds
- 07:00 Good Morning America
- 09:00 The View
- 09:45 The Chew
- 10:30 Supergirl
- 11:20 Chicago Med
- 12:10 Criminal Minds
- 13:00 Once Upon A Time
- 13:45 Lethal Weapon
- 14:30 The View
- 15:15 The Chew
- 16:00 Criminal Minds
- 17:00 Good Morning America
- 19:00 Chicago Med
- 20:00 Once Upon A Time
- 21:00 Survivor: Heroes v. Healers v. Hustlers
- 22:00 The Amazing Race
- 23:00 WWE Experience

Syfy HD

- 00:20 The Heroic Legend Of Arslan
- 00:45 The Heroic Legend Of Arslan
- 01:15 Dark Matter
- 02:05 Warehouse 13
- 02:55 Stargate SG-1
- 03:40 Sanctuary
- 04:30 Warehouse 13
- 05:15 Smallville
- 06:00 Warehouse 13
- 10:25 Stargate SG-1
- 13:50 Face Off
- 15:40 Evan Almighty
- 17:20 Pokemon VII: Destiny Deoxys
- 19:10 Equilibrium
- 21:00 Men In Black
- 22:50 Channel Zero: No-End Game
- 23:40 The Heroic Legend Of Arslan

STAR WORLD HD

- 00:00 Married At First Sight
- 02:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
- 02:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker
- 03:00 MAFS: The First Year
- 04:00 Black Box
- 05:00 House Of DVF
- 06:00 Married At First Sight
- 08:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
- 09:00 MAFS: The First Year
- 10:00 Black Box
- 11:00 House Of DVF
- 12:00 Married At First Sight
- 14:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
- 15:00 MAFS: The First Year
- 16:00 Black Box
- 17:00 Mistresses
- 18:00 Project Runway
- 20:00 Making Mr. Right
- 21:00 Grey's Anatomy

TLC HD

- 00:20 Say Yes To The Dress UK
- 00:42 Say Yes To The Dress UK
- 01:05 90 Day Fianc?: Happily Ever After?
- 01:50 Say Yes To The Dress
- 02:35 Oprah: Where Are They Now?

- 03:20 Our Little Family
- 04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 04:50 Your Style In His Hands
- 05:35 Say Yes To The Dress UK
- 06:00 Our Little Family
- 08:15 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 09:00 Say Yes To The Dress UK
- 09:25 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 10:55 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:10 Oprah's Master Class
- 13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 14:40 Cake Boss
- 17:00 7 Little Johnstons
- 17:50 Cake Boss
- 18:20 Cake Boss
- 18:50 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 19:40 Cake Boss
- 20:10 Say Yes To The Dress UK
- 20:35 Say Yes To The Dress UK
- 21:00 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 21:50 Sister Wives
- 23:30 Return To Amish



- Food Network HD
- 00:00 Siba's Table
- 00:30 Siba's Table
- 01:00 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy
- 01:30 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:30 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa
- 06:25 Barefoot Contessa
- 06:50 Anna Olson: Fresh
- 07:15 The Kitchen
- 08:05 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:55 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 09:25 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 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
- 19:00 Iron Chef America
- 20:00 Extreme Cake Wars
- 21:00 Paul Hollywood - City Bakes
- 22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 23:00 Chopped

BBC FIRST

- 00:10 Holby City
- 01:05 Bad Move
- 01:35 Cold Feet
- 02:25 Last Tango In Halifax
- 03:15 Call The Midwife
- 04:10 Doctors
- 04:40 EastEnders
- 05:10 Cold Feet
- 06:00 Doctors
- 06:30 EastEnders
- 07:00 Casualty
- 07:50 Holby City
- 08:45 Doctors
- 09:15 Doctors
- 09:45 Doctors
- 10:15 Doctors
- 10:45 Doctors
- 11:15 Casualty
- 12:10 Holby City
- 13:00 EastEnders
- 13:35 EastEnders
- 14:05 EastEnders
- 14:35 EastEnders
- 15:10 Casualty
- 16:00 Doctors
- 16:30 Doctors
- 17:00 Doctors
- 00:05 Another Period
- 00:30 Idiotsitter
- 00:55 Detroiters
- 01:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 01:48 Inside Amy Schumer
- 02:10 Broad City
- 02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
- 03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 03:25 Dara O Briain - Crowd Tickler
- 04:20 Urban Tarzan
- 04:45 Framework
- 05:30 Hungry Investors
- 06:20 Disaster Date
- 08:30 Tosh.0
- 10:35 Kroll Show
- 12:40 Impractical Jokers VII Special - Practically Live!
- 13:30 Catch A Contractor
- 14:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 15:35 Impractical Jokers VII Special - Practically Live!
- 16:20 Lip Sync Battle UK
- 16:45 Lip Sync Battle UK
- 17:10 Impractical Jokers
- 19:15 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 19:45 Detroiters
- 20:07 Workaholics
- 20:30 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 21:30 South Park
- 22:00 Josh Widdicombe - And Another Thing
- 22:50 Lip Sync Battle UK
- 23:15 Idiotsitter
- 23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 00:00 Island Life
- 00:30 Island Life
- 01:00 Renovation Raiders
- 02:00 Beachfront Bargain Hunt
- 02:30 Island Life
- 03:00 Caribbean Life
- 03:30 Caribbean Life
- 04:00 Island Life
- 04:30 Island Life
- 05:00 Caribbean Life
- 05:30 Hawaii Life
- 06:00 Extreme Homes
- 07:00 House Hunters
- 07:30 House Hunters
- 08:00 House Hunters
- 08:30 House Hunters
- 09:00 Giada At Home
- 09:30 Giada At Home
- 10:00 World's Most Extreme Homes
- 10:30 World's Most Extreme Homes
- 11:00 Killer Kitchen Makeover
- 11:30 Killer Kitchen Makeover
- 12:00 Flea Market Flip
- 12:30 Flea Market Flip
- 13:00 Tiny House, Big Living
- 13:30 Tiny House, Big Living
- 14:00 House Hunters
- 14:30 House Hunters
- 15:00 Beachfront Bargain Hunt
- 15:30 Beachfront Bargain Hunt
- 16:00 The High Low Project
- 16:30 The High Low Project
- 17:00 Flea Market Flip
- 17:30 Flea Market Flip
- 18:00 Going Yard
- 18:30 Going Yard
- 19:00 Daphne Dishes
- 19:30 Daphne Dishes
- 20:00 Beachfront Bargain Hunt
- 20:30 Beachfront Bargain Hunt
- 21:00 Yard Crashers
- 21:30 Yard Crashers
- 22:00 House Hunters
- 22:30 House Hunters



TV Listings



Animal Planet HD
 00:50 Lone Star Law
 01:45 Treehouse Masters
 02:40 Biggest And Baddest
 03:35 Going Ape
 04:00 Gorilla School
 04:25 Whale Wars
 05:15 Whale Wars
 06:02 North America
 06:49 Lone Star Law
 07:36 Meet The Orangutans
 08:00 Meet The Orangutans
 08:25 Going Ape
 08:50 Gorilla School
 09:15 Treehouse Masters
 10:10 Biggest And Baddest
 11:05 North America
 12:00 Going Ape
 12:28 Gorilla School
 12:55 Whale Wars
 13:50 Whale Wars
 14:45 Biggest And Baddest
 15:40 North America
 16:35 Lone Star Law
 17:30 Treehouse Masters
 18:25 Keeping Up With The Kruger
 19:20 Dogs 101: New Tricks
 19:48 Dogs 101: New Tricks
 20:15 Biggest And Baddest
 21:10 Gorilla School
 21:38 Gorilla School
 22:05 Keeping Up With The Kruger
 23:00 Dogs 101: New Tricks
 23:28 Dogs 101: New Tricks
 23:55 North America



00:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
 01:00 The First 48
 02:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
 03:00 Bill Cosby: The Women Speak
 04:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
 05:00 The First 48
 06:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
 07:00 Homicide Hunter
 08:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
 09:00 It Takes A Killer
 09:30 It Takes A Killer
 10:00 Homicide Hunter
 11:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
 12:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
 13:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
 14:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
 15:00 It Takes A Killer
 15:30 It Takes A Killer
 16:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
 17:00 The First 48
 18:00 The First 48
 19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
 20:00 It Takes A Killer
 20:30 It Takes A Killer
 21:00 Homicide Hunter
 22:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
 23:00 When Life Means Life



00:30 Pick A Puppy
 00:55 Pick A Puppy
 01:20 Weather Gone Viral
 02:10 Curiosity: Megastorm
 03:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
 03:50 Now That's Funny
 04:40 How It's Made
 05:05 How It's Made
 05:30 Pick A Puppy
 05:55 Pick A Puppy
 06:20 Mythbusters
 07:00 Pick A Puppy
 07:25 Pick A Puppy
 07:50 Storm Chasers
 08:40 How It's Made
 09:05 How It's Made
 09:30 Mythbusters
 10:20 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
 11:10 Deception With Keith Barry
 12:00 Guinness World Records
 Smashed New Zealand
 12:25 Guinness World Records
 Smashed New Zealand
 12:50 How It's Made
 13:15 How It's Made

13:40 Mythbusters
 14:30 Pick A Puppy
 14:55 Pick A Puppy
 15:20 Storm Chasers
 16:10 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
 17:00 Deception With Keith Barry
 17:50 Guinness World Records
 Smashed New Zealand
 18:15 Guinness World Records
 Smashed New Zealand
 18:40 Mythbusters
 19:30 How It's Made
 19:55 How It's Made
 20:20 Now That's Funny
 21:10 Deception With Keith Barry
 22:00 Guinness World Records
 Smashed New Zealand
 22:25 Guinness World Records
 Smashed New Zealand
 22:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
 23:40 Storm Chasers



00:00 How 2 Win
 01:00 United Stuff Of America
 02:00 History's Greatest Blunders
 02:30 History's Greatest Blunders
 03:00 Serial Killer Earth
 03:50 Ancient Aliens
 04:40 True Monsters
 05:30 How 2 Win
 06:20 United Stuff Of America
 07:10 The Universe
 08:00 History's Greatest Blunders
 08:30 History's Greatest Blunders
 09:00 Serial Killer Earth
 10:00 Ancient Aliens
 11:00 True Monsters
 12:00 How 2 Win
 13:00 United Stuff Of America
 14:00 History's Greatest Blunders
 14:30 History's Greatest Blunders
 15:00 Serial Killer Earth
 16:00 Ancient Aliens
 17:00 True Monsters
 18:00 The Universe
 19:00 Ultimate Guide To The...
 20:00 History's Greatest Blunders
 20:30 History's Greatest Blunders
 21:00 Serial Killer Earth
 22:00 Ancient Aliens
 23:00 How To Lose The Presidency



00:20 Monster Croc Hunt
 01:10 Prehistoric Predators
 02:00 Cougar v. Wolf
 02:50 Wild 24
 03:45 Wild Case Files
 04:40 Animals Gone Wild
 05:35 Cougar v. Wolf
 06:30 Wild 24
 07:25 Wild Case Files
 08:20 Animals Gone Wild
 09:15 Snakes In The City
 10:10 Mystery Of The Giant Cave Spider
 11:05 Sea Of Hope: America's Underwater Treasures
 12:00 Dolphin Dynasty
 12:55 Puma: Lion Of The Andes
 13:50 Wild 24
 14:45 Wild Case Files
 15:40 Animals Gone Wild
 16:35 Snakes In The City
 17:30 China's Wild Side
 18:25 Photo Ark
 19:20 Wild Case Files
 20:10 Animals Gone Wild
 21:00 Snakes In The City
 21:50 China's Wild Side
 22:40 Photo Ark
 23:30 Dolphin Dynasty



00:40 Mythbusters
 01:30 How Do They Do It?
 01:55 Food Factory
 02:20 Evil Knows! In The Name Of Science
 03:10 Nextworld
 04:00 Futurescape With James Woods
 04:48 Mythbusters

05:36 How Do They Do It?
 06:00 Food Factory
 06:24 Evil Knows! In The Name Of Science
 07:12 Junkyard Wars
 08:00 How Do They Do It?
 08:26 Junkyard Wars
 09:14 Nextworld
 10:02 Futurescape With James Woods
 10:50 How Do They Do It?
 11:14 Food Factory
 11:38 Mythbusters: The Search
 12:26 Junkyard Wars
 13:14 Mythbusters
 14:02 Nextworld
 14:50 Futurescape With James Woods
 15:38 How We Invented The World
 16:26 Man Made Marvels China
 17:14 Building The Biggest
 18:02 Mega Builders
 18:50 Gamechangers: Inventing The World
 19:40 Gamechangers: Inventing The World
 20:30 Nextworld
 21:20 Futurescape With James Woods
 22:10 Gamechangers: Inventing The World
 23:00 How The Universe Works
 23:50 Kings Of Construction



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 The Hive
 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 The Hive
 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 The Hive
 06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
 07:00 Jessie
 07:25 Tangled: The Series
 07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
 07:55 The Zhuzhus
 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
 08:45 Bunk'd
 09:10 Stuck In The Middle
 09:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 10:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 10:25 Lolirock
 10:50 Lolirock
 11:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 11:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 12:05 Hank Zipzer
 12:30 Alex & Co.
 12:55 Alex & Co.
 13:20 Lolirock
 13:45 Lolirock
 14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 15:00 The Zhuzhus
 15:15 K.C. Undercover
 15:40 Stuck In The Middle
 16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
 16:10 Elena Of Avalor
 16:35 Bizaardvark
 17:00 Tangled: The Series
 17:25 Bizaardvark
 17:30 The Swap
 19:00 The Zhuzhus
 19:15 Stuck In The Middle
 19:40 Best Friends Whenever
 20:05 Descendants Wicked World
 20:10 Liv And Maddie
 20:35 Jessie

21:00 Tangled: The Series
 21:25 K.C. Undercover
 21:50 K.C. Undercover
 22:15 Bizaardvark
 22:40 Bunk'd
 23:05 Rolling With The Ronks
 23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 23:45 Lolirock



05:00 Bali
 05:15 Chuck And Friends
 05:40 Kit 'n' Kate
 05:50 Kit 'n' Kate
 05:55 Boj
 06:10 Lucky Fred
 06:25 Thomas And Friends
 06:40 Chirp
 06:55 My Little Pony
 07:20 Qumi Qumi
 07:35 Sandra, The Fairytale Detective
 07:50 Playdate
 08:00 Barney And Friends
 08:30 What's The Big Idea?
 08:40 What's The Big Idea?
 08:45 Transformers: Rescue Bots
 09:10 Om Nom Stories
 09:20 Kids Crafting
 09:25 Littlest Pet Shop
 09:50 Franny's Feet
 10:15 Mouk
 10:30 Boj
 10:45 Kit 'n' Kate
 10:55 Kit 'n' Kate
 11:00 Chuck And Friends
 11:25 Bali
 11:40 My Little Pony
 12:05 Lucky Fred
 12:20 Thomas And Friends
 12:35 Qumi Qumi
 12:50 Transformers: Rescue Bots
 13:15 Barney And Friends
 13:45 Om Nom Stories
 13:55 Kids Crafting
 14:00 Chirp
 14:15 Kit 'n' Kate
 14:25 Kit 'n' Kate
 14:30 Littlest Pet Shop
 14:55 Mouk
 15:10 My Little Pony
 15:35 Sandra, The Fairytale Detective
 15:50 Playdate
 16:00 Thomas And Friends
 16:15 Chuck And Friends
 16:40 Franny's Feet
 17:05 What's The Big Idea?
 17:15 What's The Big Idea?
 17:20 Barney And Friends
 17:50 Qumi Qumi
 18:05 Lucky Fred
 18:20 Om Nom Stories
 18:30 Kids Crafting
 18:35 Bali
 18:50 Chirp
 19:05 What's The Big Idea?
 19:15 What's The Big Idea?
 19:20 Transformers: Rescue Bots
 19:45 Mouk
 20:00 Boj
 20:15 Playdate
 20:25 Littlest Pet Shop
 20:50 Sandra, The Fairytale Detective
 21:05 Franny's Feet
 21:30 Little Duck's Dream



00:16 Shimmer And Shine
 00:38 Shimmer And Shine
 01:01 Max & Ruby
 01:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 01:35 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 01:45 The Day Henry Met
 01:50 The Day Henry Met
 01:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 02:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 02:40 Zack & Quack
 03:01 Shimmer And Shine
 03:24 Nella The Princess Knight
 03:36 Paw Patrol
 03:58 Little Charmers
 04:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 04:22 Dora The Explorer

04:44 Max & Ruby
 05:06 The Day Henry Met
 05:12 Nella The Princess Knight
 05:35 Shimmer And Shine
 05:58 Wallykazam!
 06:21 Zack & Quack
 06:32 The Day Henry Met
 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
 08:23 Bubble Guppies
 08:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 09:07 Paw Patrol
 09:31 Shimmer And Shine
 09:54 Nella The Princess Knight
 10:04 Nella The Princess Knight
 10:15 The Day Henry Met
 10:21 Paw Patrol
 10:43 Rusty Rivets
 11:06 Wallykazam!
 11:29 Bubble Guppies
 11:52 Team Umizoomi
 12:15 Shimmer And Shine
 12:38 Shimmer And Shine
 13:01 Max & Ruby
 13:23 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 13:34 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 13:45 The Day Henry Met
 13:50 The Day Henry Met
 13:55 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 14:17 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 14:40 Zack & Quack
 15:01 Shimmer And Shine
 15:23 Nella The Princess Knight
 15:35 Paw Patrol
 15:58 Little Charmers
 16:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 16:21 Dora The Explorer
 16:44 Max & Ruby
 17:06 The Day Henry Met
 17:11 Nella The Princess Knight
 17:22 Nella The Princess Knight
 17:35 Shimmer And Shine
 17:59 Wallykazam!
 18:22 Zack & Quack
 18:32 The Day Henry Met
 18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 19:00 Rusty Rivets
 19:13 Paw Patrol
 19:37 Dora The Explorer
 20:00 Nella The Princess Knight
 20:23 Bubble Guppies
 20:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 21:08 Paw Patrol
 21:31 Shimmer And Shine
 21:54 Nella The Princess Knight
 22:15 The Day Henry Met
 22:21 Paw Patrol
 22:43 Rusty Rivets
 23:06 Wallykazam!
 23:29 Bubble Guppies
 23:52 Team Umizoomi



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 00:36 Rabbids Invasion
 01:00 Rabbids Invasion
 01:24 Sanjay And Craig
 01:48 Sanjay And Craig
 02:12 Winx Club
 02:36 Winx Club
 03:00 Harvey Beaks
 03:24 Harvey Beaks
 03:48 The Loud House
 04:12 The Loud House
 04:36 Breadwinners
 05:00 Breadwinners
 05:24 Get Blake
 05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
 06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
 06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 07:00 The Loud House
 07:24 Rabbids Invasion
 07:48 Get Blake
 08:12 Harvey Beaks
 08:36 Sanjay And Craig
 09:00 Rank The Prank
 09:24 Harvey Beaks
 09:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
 10:12 Game Shakers
 10:36 Regal Academy
 11:00 Rags

12:36 Rabbids Invasion
 13:00 Breadwinners
 13:24 Sanjay And Craig
 13:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
 14:12 The Thundermans
 14:36 100 Things To Do Before High School
 15:00 Big Time Movie
 16:12 School Of Rock
 16:36 School Of Rock
 17:00 School Of Rock
 17:24 School Of Rock
 17:48 School Of Rock
 18:12 Henry Danger
 18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
 19:00 School Of Rock
 19:24 Game Shakers
 19:48 The Thundermans
 20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
 20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 21:00 The Loud House
 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 Alvin!!! And The Chipmunks
 00:25 Alvin!!! And The Chipmunks
 00:38 The Fairly OddParents
 01:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
 01:20 Toon Marty
 01:30 Toon Marty
 01:40 Bunsen Is A Beast
 02:00 Pig Goat Banana Cricket
 02:20 Rabbids: Invasion
 02:31 Sanjay & Craig
 02:53 Sanjay & Craig
 03:14 The Penguins Of Madagascar
 03:36 The Penguins Of Madagascar
 03:58 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 04:20 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 04:43 Mysticons
 05:05 Alvin!!! And The Chipmunks
 05:14 Alvin!!! And The Chipmunks
 05:25 Toon Marty
 05:35 Toon Marty
 05:49 Bunsen Is A Beast
 06:11 The Fairly OddParents
 06:35 SpongeBob SquarePants
 06:58 Rabbids: Invasion
 07:00 Back At The Barnyard
 07:22 Back At The Barnyard
 07:44 Harvey Beaks
 07:55 Alvin!!! And The Chipmunks
 08:08 The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius
 08:30 Hey Arnold!
 08:54 Kung Fu Panda: Legends Of Awesomeness
 09:16 The Penguins Of Madagascar
 09:27 The Penguins Of Madagascar
 09:50 The Fairly OddParents
 10:12 T.U.F.F. Puppy
 10:33 Get Blake
 11:00 Hey Arnold!
 11:24 Back At The Barnyard
 11:50 Back At The Barnyard
 12:00 The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius
 12:25 The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius
 12:48 Alvin!!! And The Chipmunks
 13:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
 13:22 SpongeBob SquarePants
 13:34 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 14:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 14:22 Avatar: The Legend Of Aang
 14:45 Avatar: The Legend Of Aang
 15:07 The Penguins Of Madagascar
 15:38 Alvin!!! And The Chipmunks
 15:38 The Fairly OddParents
 16:02 The Fairly OddParents
 16:25 Bunsen Is A Beast
 16:48 T.U.F.F. Puppy
 17:10 Hey Arnold!
 17:35 Get Blake
 17:57 The Legend Of Korra
 18:18 The Legend Of Korra
 18:39 Mysticons
 19:03 Rabbids: Invasion
 19:24 Harvey Beaks
 19:48 Alvin!!! And The Chipmunks
 20:00 Alvin!!! And The Chipmunks
 20:08 SpongeBob SquarePants

Stars

**Aries (March 21-April 19)**

On the professional level, you seem able to magically make things happen. If you are in sales, there are new contacts to be made. If you are in art, design or some other artistic field, there are new color schemes and ideas, etc. If you are in some creative writing field, there will be an opening of opportunities in which you will be able to excel. You have a natural sense of what the public wants and your path to success is open and clear.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**

A part-time job may be in order to afford you the purchase power you want for the winter events ahead. Financial matters are emphasized throughout the rest of this month. Before you spend a dollar—think about the energy it takes to earn a dollar—time and effort. Your protection from income loss is to be cautious, think ahead and plan for the future. You may be especially dynamic and assertive just now.

**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**

There are plenty of opportunities to go in just about any direction you want to go, particularly when it comes to your future professional life. You take your work more seriously than usual; a lot of energy goes into getting things organized. You are clever and seem to enjoy testing yourself to the maximum in how you handle most difficult situations and time limits as well as difficult people.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**

There's a huge difference between being nice and being kind. Usually, being nice involves saying 'yes' to too much stuff that you don't actually want to do in order to get people to like you. Being kind, on the other hand, involves thinking independently and long-term, and saying 'no' to things when you know they're just going to be more trouble for everyone in the future. You need to make the distinction soon.

**Leo (July 23-August 22)**

You have a keen interest in what makes things tick. Who or what pulls the strings in your life is the hallmark of the mental cycle that now begins for you. An unsolved problem piques your interest this afternoon. Sex, death and life's other ultimate mysteries and taboos arouse your curiosity. This could involve the work you do—teaching, sales, etc. Others learn by following your lead. Be very careful not to turn your curiosity into gossip. Later today check out an investment plan before letting go of your money.

**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**

Your mind may be very clear now and you have a good handle into what may be causing some puzzling episode today. It is easy to organize your ideas and plans in the direction of solving the problem. Right now, the key to career moves involves attending to nagging details as well as whatever you have neglected. Attention to matters such as health and efficiency are also important.

**Libra (September 23-October 22)**

You may have to learn more conversational tools when it comes to a difficult person today. Do not take someone's words too personally; he or she may be testing your staying power. This person could also just want attention, whether it is negative or positive, it does not matter. Smile; if you disagree, find the positive in what is said. There is a greater appreciation for things of value and the idea of value itself.

**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**

Things seem to fall into place and progress is easy. Your career direction gets some encouragement and life's problems seem to have easy solutions. You may find yourself pulling more on the imagination today in order to stay in front of the pack, so to speak. You are the one that will set the example. You experience life mostly through your emotions and how you feel about someone or something.

**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**

Feeling successful and prosperous is the first step toward becoming those things. Picture your life the way you want it to be and lead yourself and those you love into a better life condition. Work is productive this afternoon. You and your co-workers work well together in some project all day long. Friends who are planning a celebration ask for your help. It is easy for you to love and be compassionate and to value what life offers.

**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**

This morning, others may disagree with what you say or think, or in some way oppose your ideas and thoughts. Your current situation may demand some reevaluation or otherwise challenge your ideas. Take some time to regroup your thoughts or ideas and keep trying to communicate—this is a good challenge—it will teach you to slow down, rephrase and to back up your ideas with facts.

**Aquarius (January 20-February 18)**

You are responsible to the extreme and take on obligations as though you just cannot get enough. You enjoy discipline and any limitations are seen as opportunities rather than as handicaps. Make sure your life is fairly balanced so that the additional duties that you pile on yourself do not add up to a negative. You would make a good teacher of others in matters of organization, practical competence, etc.

**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**

You may prefer to be a bit more direct this day. You want to get things accomplished and interruptions may not be on your list of acceptable behavior from others. Be careful in your response—let them know up front your plans for the day so they will understand you are involved in some project. You are able to cut through to the real business at hand. Unique and unconventional approaches to study or research, any kind of inquiry, are soon to appear.

COUNTRY CODES

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------|---------------------------|--------|
| Afghanistan | 0093 | Jordan | 00962 |
| Albania | 00355 | Kazakhstan | 007 |
| Algeria | 00213 | Kenya | 00254 |
| Andorra | 00376 | Kiribati | 00686 |
| Angola | 00244 | Kuwait | 00965 |
| Anguilla | 001264 | Kyrgyzstan | 00996 |
| Antigua | 001268 | Laos | 00856 |
| Argentina | 0054 | Latvia | 00371 |
| Armenia | 00374 | Lebanon | 00961 |
| Australia | 0061 | Liberia | 00231 |
| Austria | 0043 | Libya | 00218 |
| Bahamas | 001242 | Lithuania | 00370 |
| Bahrain | 00973 | Luxembourg | 00352 |
| Bangladesh | 00880 | Macau | 00853 |
| Barbados | 001246 | Macedonia | 00389 |
| Belarus | 00375 | Madagascar | 00261 |
| Belgium | 0032 | Majorca | 0034 |
| Belize | 00501 | Malawi | 00265 |
| Benin | 00229 | Malaysia | 0060 |
| Bermuda | 001441 | Maldives | 00960 |
| Bhutan | 00975 | Mali | 00223 |
| Bolivia | 00591 | Malta | 00356 |
| Bosnia | 00387 | Marshall Islands | 00692 |
| Botswana | 00267 | Martinique | 00596 |
| Brazil | 0055 | Mauritania | 00222 |
| Brunei | 00673 | Mauritius | 00230 |
| Bulgaria | 00359 | Mayotte | 00269 |
| Burkina | 00226 | Mexico | 0052 |
| Burundi | 00257 | Micronesia | 00691 |
| Cambodia | 00855 | Moldova | 00373 |
| Cameroon | 00237 | Monaco | 00377 |
| Canada | 001 | Mongolia | 00976 |
| Cape Verde | 00238 | Montserrat | 001664 |
| Cayman Islands | 001345 | Morocco | 00212 |
| Central African Republic | 00236 | Mozambique | 00258 |
| Chad | 00235 | Myanmar (Burma) | 0095 |
| Chile | 0056 | Namibia | 00264 |
| China | 0086 | Nepal | 00977 |
| Colombia | 0057 | Netherlands (Holland)0031 | |
| Comoros | 00269 | Netherlands Antilles | 00599 |
| Congo | 00242 | New Caledonia | 00687 |
| Cook Islands | 00682 | New Zealand | 0064 |
| Costa Rica | 00506 | Nicaragua | 00505 |
| Croatia | 00385 | Nigar | 00227 |
| Cuba | 0053 | Nigeria | 00234 |
| Cyprus | 00357 | Niue | 00683 |
| Cyprus (Northern) | 0090392 | Norfolk Island | 00672 |
| Czech Republic | 00420 | Northern Ireland (UK)0044 | |
| Denmark | 0045 | North Korea | 00850 |
| Diego Garcia | 00246 | Norway | 0047 |
| Djibouti | 00253 | Oman | 00968 |
| Dominica | 001767 | Pakistan | 0092 |
| Dominican Republic | 001809 | Palau | 00680 |
| Ecuador | 00593 | Panama | 00507 |
| Egypt | 0020 | Papua New Guinea | 00675 |
| El Salvador | 00503 | Paraguay | 00595 |
| England (UK) | 0044 | Peru | 0051 |
| Equatorial Guinea | 00240 | Philippines | 0063 |
| Eritrea | 00291 | Poland | 0048 |
| Estonia | 00372 | Portugal | 00351 |
| Ethiopia | 00251 | Puerto Rico | 001787 |
| Falkland Islands | 00500 | Qatar | 00974 |
| Faroe Islands | 00298 | Romania | 0040 |
| Fiji | 00679 | Russian Federation | 007 |
| Finland | 00358 | Rwanda | 00250 |
| France | 0033 | Saint Helena | 00290 |
| French Guiana | 00594 | Saint Kitts | 001869 |
| French Polynesia | 00689 | Saint Lucia | 001758 |
| Gabon | 00241 | Saint Pierre | 00508 |
| Gambia | 00220 | Saint Vincent | 001784 |
| Georgia | 00995 | Samoa US | 00684 |
| Germany | 0049 | Samoa West | 00685 |
| Ghana | 00233 | San Marino | 00378 |
| Gibraltar | 00350 | Sao Tome | 00239 |
| Greece | 0030 | Saudi Arabia | 00966 |
| Greenland | 00299 | Scotland (UK) | 0044 |
| Grenada | 001473 | Senegal | 00221 |
| Guadeloupe | 00590 | Seychelles | 00284 |
| Guam | 001671 | Sierra Leone | 00232 |
| Guatemala | 00502 | Singapore | 0065 |
| Guinea | 00224 | Slovakia | 00421 |
| Guyana | 00592 | Slovenia | 00386 |
| Haiti | 00509 | Solomon Islands | 00677 |
| Holland (Netherlands)0031 | | Somalia | 00252 |
| Honduras | 00504 | South Africa | 0027 |
| Hong Kong | 00852 | South Korea | 0082 |
| Hungary | 0036 | Spain | 0034 |
| Ibiza (Spain) | 0034 | Sri Lanka | 0094 |
| Iceland | 00354 | Sudan | 00249 |
| India | 0091 | Suriname | 00597 |
| Indian Ocean | 00873 | Swaziland | 00268 |
| Indonesia | 0062 | Sweden | 0046 |
| Iran | 0098 | Switzerland | 0041 |
| Iraq | 00964 | Syria | 00963 |
| Ireland | 00353 | Taiwan | 00886 |
| Italy | 0039 | Tanzania | 00255 |
| Ivory Coast | 00225 | Thailand | 0066 |
| Jamaica | 001876 | Toga | 00228 |
| Japan | 0081 | Tonga | 00676 |

Health

To keep girls in school, Ethiopians opening up about menstruation

Girls are left to muddle through puberty

SHENO: There's one room at the Sheno primary school in rural Ethiopia that's different from all the others, starting with the sign over the door reading: "Menstruation is a gift from God." Inside this converted classroom, boys and girls gather in what some pupils call the "girls' club" to break one of the country's most enduring taboos: talking about periods.

In Ethiopia, adolescent girls are generally left to muddle through puberty on their own without guidance or the means to buy sanitary pads. Only 54 percent of Ethiopian girls finish primary school, according to the United Nations children's fund, UNICEF, and many abandon it because of cramps or embarrassing mishaps during their periods. With child marriage prevalent in rural areas, local beliefs link menstruation to sexual activity, and so an accidental blood stain could see girls relentlessly teased by their classmates.

When 14-year-old Yordanos Tesfaye first got her period, she was "shocked and frightened". "I went home and told my father but he couldn't afford to buy me a pad. Then I told my friend and she suggested I use a rag. However, I didn't know how to use it and dropped it on the street and I was very embarrassed," she said. Like many teenage girls, she was tempted to drop out

of school, but support from the girls' club convinced her to stay.

The clubs—officially called "menstrual hygiene management" clubs and open to pupils aged 11 and older—began as a collaboration between local health officials and UNICEF, based on the idea that adolescent girls won't stay in school if they can't effectively manage their transition to womanhood. "That (time) of the girls' lives is absolutely critical to manage well in order to improve the sort of academic performance and reduce the dropouts in school," said Samuel Godfrey, UNICEF's sanitation chief in Ethiopia. The program has been implemented in 65 schools and UNICEF is planning to expand it further.

'Not a disease'

Children attend primary school in Ethiopia from the age of seven to 14 but many stay longer if they were late to enroll or have repeated a class. At Sheno school, which has more than 760 pupils and lies some 80 kilometers from the capital Addis Ababa, sanitary pads are given out for free and boys and girls work together to demystify the female menstrual cycle.

Since the girls' club opened three years ago, Sheno's rate of dropouts due to period woes has



SHENO: This file photo taken on October 18, 2017 shows Zenashe Fantahun telling her experience about menstruation in front of a class at the Sheno primary school. —AFP

been reduced to zero. The year before it opened, 20 girls left, according to the school. Clad in a white coat, biology teacher Tafesech Balemi guides girls through the changes their bodies are experiencing,

while also educating the boys. She hands out reusable sanitary pads to girls who can't afford to buy them and also offers a shower and a mattress where they can lie down if they don't feel well. —AFP

CLINIC

PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199



Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
 د. فهد علي المخيزيم



Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
 M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAF. PEM



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

Kuwait Times Classifieds

Friday, November 17, 2017

Kuwait Times
Established 1961



Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
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



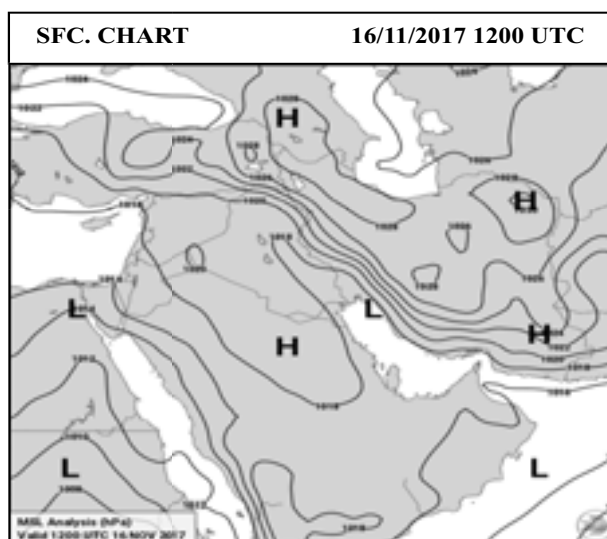
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Cool with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY DAY: Mostly Sunny with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h.

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| WEATHER WARNING | No Current Warnings |
|------------------------|---------------------|

| STATION | MAX. REC. | MIN. EXP. |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| KUWAIT CITY | 30 °C | 15 °C |
| KUWAIT AIRPORT | 29 °C | 11 °C |
| ABDALY | 29 °C | 12 °C |
| BUBYAN | 28 °C | 10 °C |
| JAHRA | 30 °C | 15 °C |
| FAILAKA ISLAND | 28 °C | 13 °C |
| SALMIYAH | 28 °C | 20 °C |
| AHMADI | 27 °C | 23 °C |
| NUWAISIB | 31 °C | 14 °C |
| WAFRA | 29 °C | 11 °C |
| SALMY | 27 °C | 12 °C |



| 4 DAYS FORECAST | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|---|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| DAY | DATE | WEATHER | Temperatures | | Wind Direction | Wind Speed |
| | | | MAX. | MIN. | | |
| Friday | 11/17 | Mostly Sunny | 28 °C | 11 °C | NW-VRB | 06 - 28 km/h |
| Saturday | 11/18 | Mostly Sunny | 28 °C | 09 °C | VRB | 06 - 26 km/h |
| Sunday | 11/19 | Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain | 28 °C | 11 °C | VRB-SE | 08 - 30 km/h |
| Monday | 11/20 | Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered rain rain that might be thundery at | 30 °C | 14 °C | S-SE | 15 - 40 km/h |

| TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Fajr | 04:51 |
| Sunrise | 06:13 |
| Zuhr | 11:33 |
| Asr | 14:32 |
| Sunset | 16:52 |
| Isha | 18:12 |

| RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| MAX. Temp. | 28 °C |
| MIN. Temp. | 10 °C |
| MAX. RH | 40 % |
| MIN. RH | 12 % |
| MAX. Wind | NW 21 km/h |
| TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR. | 0 mm |



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

| GOVERNORATE | PHARMACY | ADDRESS | PHONE |
|-------------|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Ahmadi | Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan | Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd | 23915883 23715414 23726558 |
| Jahra | Modern Jahra Madina Munawara | Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92 | 24575518 24566622 |
| Capital | Ahlam Khaldiya Coop | Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop | 22436184 24833967 |

CHANGE OF NAME

I Silveira Natividade Custodio S/o of Custodio Felipe Silveira, holder of Indian Passport No. G7279123 & Civil ID No. 266092503366, hereby changed my name to Natividade Silveira hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5361)
15-11-2017

inafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5360)
13-11-2017
Muhammed Ashiq P.V. hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5360)
13-11-2017

ACCOMMODATION

I, Anil P.V. Perumprethu Veedu son of Varghese, holder of Indian Passport No. H4169325 & Civil ID No. 284052405349 has changed my name to Muhammed Ashiq P.V. here-

One room available for rent in C-AC flat airport road Khaitan for couple/ working lady/ one bachelor. Rent KD 85. Contact: 66253647, 51614467. (C 5359)
13-11-2017



AIRLINES

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| American Airlines | 22087425 |
| Kuwait Airways | 22087426 |
| Jazeera Airways | 171 |
| Jet Airways | 177 |
| FlyDubai | 22924455 |
| Qatar Airways | 22414400 |
| KLM | 22423888 |
| Air Slovakia | 22425747 |
| Olympic Airways | 22434940 |
| Royal Jordanian | 22420002/9 |
| Reservation | 22418064/5/6 |
| British Airways | 22433388 |
| Air France | 22425635 |
| Emirates | 22430224 |
| Air India | 22921555 |
| Sri Lanka Airlines | 22438184 |
| Egypt Air | 22424444 |
| Swiss Air | 22421578 |
| Saudia | 22421516 |
| Middle East Airlines | 22426306 |
| Lufthansa | 22423073 |
| PIA | 22422493 |
| Alitalia | 22421044 |
| Balkan Airlines | 22414427 |
| Bangladesh Airlines | 22416474 |
| Czech Airlines | 22452977/8 |
| Indian Airlines | 22417901/2433141 |
| | 22456700 |

Business

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2017

39 PDVSA, Venezuela's oil gem far from its golden age



40 Few banks seen queuing for China's red carpet invite



41 Amid global electric-car buzz, Toyota bullish on hydrogen



TRIPOLI: A man displays Libyan Dinar bank notes in a jewelry store in the old city of Tripoli, Libya. —Reuters

Libyans swap jewelry for medical treatment

Inflation, cash crisis hit ordinary Libyans

TRIPOLI: In a square behind Libya's central bank, black market dealers, some of them armed, carry small plastic bags filled with dollars and larger ones with dinars in and out of one of many informal exchanges. Traders buy food and other goods from abroad at the official rate and sell them at the unofficial one, pocketing vast profits; others make equally large sums by smuggling out heavily subsidized fuel.

In the back streets of the old city meanwhile, ordinary people have resorted to selling jewelry or dollars hidden at home as six years of post-dictatorship chaos take their toll. "I haven't been paid for four months," said Fatima, 40, from the southern city of Sabha as she sold three small gold charms to pay for diabetes treatment for her sister, Hasina, who added: "We're helpless, there's nothing else we can do." In other signs of rising poverty, elderly women beg motorists for cash on Tripoli's streets and families queue for charity food handouts.

The UN estimated that about 1.3 million people in Libya need humanitarian assistance this year. Their situation took another turn for the worse in the past two weeks after the black market rate of the dinar, which has long languished at record lows, slid again, fuelling inflation that is already around 25-30 percent. The central bank blamed the audit bureau and the UN-backed

government for restricting letters of credit that fund basic supplies to a divided country where a security vacuum and smuggling networks have destabilized the wider region.

Officials had come across suspect requests - one to import tuna worth \$120,000, more than the country consumes in a year, according to a Libyan entrepreneur who declined to be named, fearing retribution from Libya's powerful armed groups. Just \$2.5 billion of an expected \$7.4 billion of credit has been allocated, the trader said, helping knock the dinar from around 8.5 to 9.25 against the dollar on the black market. Its value has fallen by more than 600 percent since early 2014.

The economy ministry was not immediately available for comment on a complex credit system that passes through commercial banks and where the audit bureau had documented earlier abuses and lack of oversight. "We're talking about an extremely bad economic and financial situation," Central Bank Governor Sadiq al-Kabir said in a rare news conference on

Tuesday. "Everyone, whether legislative or executive, holds responsibility equally."

Elusive peace

Traders and economists say political uncertainty is a major factor weakening the currency, with U.N. talks to broker a deal between rival factions currently suspended. Libya is struggling to fund food imports

and defend its foreign reserves, which the World Bank estimates will stand at \$67.5 billion at the end of this year, compared to \$123.5 billion in 2012. International experts say the only way to resolve the issue is to devalue the dinar from the official exchange rate of 1.37 to the dollar,

but agreeing an economic strategy in a country dominated by armed factions with rival governments and no budgets is no simple task.

A powerful or well-connected minority who are profiting from a flourishing shadow economy have little interest in change. The central bank did not comment on devaluation, but economists and diplomats

say the bank is reluctant to devalue without a policy plan in place to deal with the resulting shock. Libya managed this year to lift oil production to about 1 million barrels a day, but output is stuck well below the levels before the 2011 uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi.

Revenues that normally account for about 80 percent of gross domestic product are largely used to pay salaries, including those of armed factions added to the state payroll for their role in the uprising. Subsidies include a \$4 billion-plus annual fuel subsidy that is among the most generous in the world. Premiums on the official exchange rate and subsidized fuel make Libya "a criminal and terrorist cross-border funding paradise", said Husni Bey, chairman of HB Group, one of Libya's biggest private firms. "Most instability in Libya today is of a criminal nature... due to the lack of equitable exchange rate for the Libyan dinar and the subsidies that must be changed from goods to direct cash contributions."

Last year Libya spent around \$26 billion, but earned just \$6 billion. "This year we estimate that revenues should increase to around \$14 billion, but spending will likely be more than double this," said Mark Griffiths, Libya Mission Chief for the International Monetary Fund. "This is not sustainable." —Reuters

“We’re helpless, there’s nothing else we can do”

Business

Europe's longest stocks sell-off of the year abates

Nikkei rallies after six-day losing streak

LONDON: Investors tentatively returned to world stock markets yesterday, looking for bargains after Europe's longest losing streak of the year and the worst run since March for the top global indices. After five consecutive daily losses on the MSCI index of world stocks and seven straight falls in Europe, there was a bounce of sorts. Benchmark indices in Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong and Seoul all rallied overnight, while London, Frankfurt and Paris started 0.3-0.4 percent higher as cyclical stocks which had driven the sell-off made a comeback.

There was some relief too that oil prices had pulled out of what had been a near 5 percent drop and that upbeat US data on Wednesday had helped the dollar halt the euro's sharp recent rise. "After five or six days of steady selling you have got people coming back in looking for bargains," said CMC Markets senior analyst Michael Hewson. "I think it's temporary though. We haven't had a significant sell off this year and the fact of the matter is that equity markets have done so much better than anyone dared to envisage."

Bond markets, meanwhile, were seeing a broad rise in yields after mostly upbeat US economic news on Wednesday had added to expectations the Federal Reserve will hike interest rates

again next month as well as multiple times next year. Two-year Treasury yields crept to fresh nine-year peaks in European trading, though significantly the US yield curve remained at its flat-test in a decade. European yields nudged higher too but the standout there was a fall in the premium investors demand to hold French debt over German peers to its lowest in 2-1/2 years, and almost to record lows, on optimism about reforms under Emmanuel Macron. "The fact that the ECB extended QE by nine months helps create the appetite for semi-core debt and also it looks very attractive for Japanese investors as an alternative to US Treasuries," said ING strategist Martin van Vliet.

Nikkei rally

The liveliest moves in Asia had come in Japan, where the Nikkei turned around early losses to surge 1.5 percent as investors returned after a six-day losing streak there. There were 0.6-

0.8 percent gains for Shanghai and Hong Kong and Seoul, while Australian stocks added 0.2 percent as data showed the country's unemployment rate at its lowest since early 2013. Wall Street EMini futures for the S&P 500 also pointed to a rebound in US markets later. All the major indices had dropped on Wednesday with the energy sector suffering a four-day decline of 4 percent, its

“Equity markets have done so much better”

Solid US data lifts emerging stocks, currencies

LONDON: Emerging stocks snapped a five-day losing streak yesterday as investors found solace from solid US data in the wake of the recent global equity sell off while currencies advanced despite a slightly stronger dollar. MSCI's emerging market index rose 0.9 percent thanks to solid gains in Asian heavyweight bourses Hong Kong and Seoul, and Chinese mainland stocks. Emerging Europe also opened higher, with Hungary leaping 1.2 percent, and Turkey and the Czech Republic up 0.8 percent.

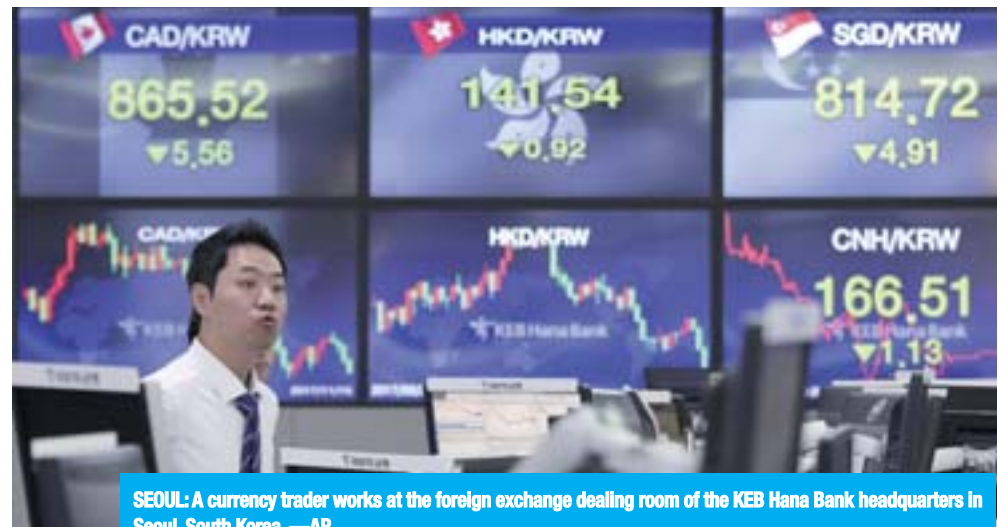
The broad-based move higher came after US data showed a rise in core inflation, bolstering the view that a recent disinflationary trend worrying the US Federal Reserve had probably come to an end. A rise in retail sales also showed consumer spending was cruising at a healthy clip. This confirmed expectations that the Fed would not only hike in December—which is now almost fully priced in—but multiple times next year as well.

"Markets have caught a breather—the inflation data from the US came in line with what was expected and markets are fully priced for a Fed hike

in December," said Kiran Kowshik, a strategist at UniCredit. "US Treasury prices are rallying, so yields are going down, and that provides a bit of a breather for emerging markets." US 10-year yields edged higher yesterday but were still lower than recent peaks. However, Saudi Arabian stocks remained under pressure, easing 0.4 percent on the day, having lost more than 4 percent since the start of the year. Some other bourses across the Gulf region also headed lower.

Since the announcement of Saudi's anti-corruption probe at the start of last week, state-linked funds have been buying stocks towards the close of each day to prevent Riyadh's market from falling significantly, asset managers say. However, this petered out on Wednesday, when the funds' activity appeared to decrease, raising concerns that the bourse may be vulnerable to more selling. Political tensions across the region remain high, with top Lebanese officials accusing Riyadh of holding its Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri hostage, while France's President Emmanuel Macron has invited Hariri and his family to come to France.

Lebanon's dollar-denominated bonds were mainly lower across the curve, with the 2028 issue down 1.4 cents but still off the lows it hit on Nov 10. Lebanon five-year credit default swaps also rose 4 basis points (bps) from Wednesday's close to 598 bps, still some way off the Nov 10 peak. —Reuters



SEOUL: A currency trader works at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea. —AP

weakest such period in 14 months.

Investor concern over the progress of a massive US tax reform plan showed no sign of abating as two Republican lawmakers on Wednesday criticized the Senate's latest proposal. US President Donald Trump hit back, tweeting that "Tax cuts are getting close!" "If we look at what the markets are focusing on, it's still very much the tax cut debates in the US, and how much progress there's going to be on this front," said Mitul Kotecha, head of Asia macro strategy for Barclays in Singapore.

The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against a basket of six major rivals, was slightly higher on the day at 93.828 having hit four- and five-week lows against the yen and euro. The euro was down around 14 ticks at \$1.1777, retreating from a one-month top of \$1.1860 on Wednesday. Doubts that the latest round of talks on the North American Free Trade Agreement will make much headway in the face of tough US demands saw Mexico's peso sink to an eight-month low, though it steadied in Asian and European trade. —Reuters

Japan Motegi eyes higher productivity

TOKYO: Japan's economy minister says policy needs to focus on raising productivity and wages to ensure an escape from deflation as the government prepares to announce a stimulus package next month. The economy, in the midst of its longest unbroken run of growth in more than 15 years, is showing positive signs that it can shake off the risk of deflation due to an improving output gap, said Economy Minister Toshimitsu Motegi.

However, consumer prices have been slow to rise, and Motegi says the key is encouraging more corporate investment and more spending on training workers so they can secure higher-paying jobs. "The situation is starting to change," Motegi said after a meeting of the government's top advisory panel. "There are a lot of improvements in the economy that point toward an end to deflation. To make sure this happens, we need to focus on productivity and wages."

Vanquishing deflation, or a state of falling prices that has weighed on Japan for more than 15 years, has been among the top goals of the



TOKYO: A pedestrian looks at an electronic stocks indicator showing the closing numbers on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in the window of a securities company in Tokyo. —AFP

Bank of Japan and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe since he came to power in late 2012. Recent positive economic signs suggest Japan is breaking out the grip of deflation that has stunted growth for years, according to analysis the government submitted to the advisory panel yesterday.

Private-sector members of the panel expressed concern that prices for services were sluggish and that improvements in productivity for some manufacturers had not lifted wages, according to a government official. Abe has urged companies to raise salaries 3 percent next year, when companies and unions hold annual wage negotiations, but a recent Reuters poll shows that most companies will keep wage increases to between 2 and 2.5 percent. —Reuters

PDVSA, Venezuela's oil gem far from its golden age

Country seeks to restructure its foreign debts

CARACAS: A pillar of Venezuela's economy, PDVSA was in its heyday one of the five top oil companies on the planet. The state-owned enterprise has now failed to make interest payments on some of its debt, meaning it's entered "selective default," just like the government. The fate of the company, founded in 1976, is closely tied to that of Venezuela, which is dependent on oil and sales of its heavy crude for some 96 percent of its export earnings. Its bonds represent 30 percent of Venezuela's external debt—estimated at around \$150 billion—which the government is seeking to renegotiate.

President Nicolas Maduro owes the difficulties to a fall in oil prices—which have halved since 2014—and US government sanctions, which prohibit any US person or bank from buying the country's debt. But many economists, like Cesar Aristimuno, blame a drop in production, which is at its lowest level since the 1990s, excluding a strike observed between December 2002 and February 2003. Currently Venezuela produces 1.9 million barrels per day, compared with 2.3 million barrels in 2016. Before the late President Hugo

Chavez came into power in 1999, that figure stood at 3.1 million barrels per day. Revenues mirrored the decline, from \$122 billion in 2014 to \$72 billion in 2015—to \$48 billion in 2016. It's a stark contrast from a decade prior, when the industry newsletter Petroleum Intelligence Weekly ranked PDVSA as one of the world's leading companies, with even more power than giants Shell or Chevron.

So why such a tumble? Experts point fingers at a lack of investment and exploration and inadequate maintenance of oil installations. "PDVSA is virtually the only source of foreign exchange in the Venezuelan economy,

and the government has spent everything without looking at oil investments," said Risa Grais-Targow, the Eurasia research group's Latin America director.

PDVSA is ruined

The group's windfall was primarily used to finance huge public spending and a budget deficit of around 20 percent of its GDP. "PDVSA is ruined. Why? Because it has become a bank," said Jose Gonzales, director of the consulting firm

“ PDVSA, only source of foreign exchange ”



CARACAS: Picture of the logo of Venezuelan state-owned oil company PDVSA, seen at a gas station in Caracas.—AFP

GCG Advisors. Beginning in 2005, the enterprise has fed a government fund to the tune of some \$130 billion, according to economist Orlando Ochoa. To build up the fund the budget was prepared using an oil base price lower than in real-

ity, Ochoa told AFP. According to oil services company Baker Hughes, Venezuela has only 39 active wells, compared with 83 in October 2013. This threatens the "ability to improve production," said expert Jesus Casique.—AFP

Siemens layoff plan promises showdown with unions

BERLIN: German industrial conglomerate Siemens is expected yesterday to announce a massive restructuring plan in its limping energy business that could see thousands of employees lose their jobs. Unions have vowed to resist any layoffs, as they would follow on the heels of flourishing annual results for the sprawling group. "We have to tackle structural issues in some individual businesses" in the coming financial year, chief executive Joe Kaeser said last week—even as Siemens reported 11-percent growth in net profit for 2016-17, to 6.2 billion euros.

The Munich-based group—whose products range from trains to wind turbines to medical equipment—has already announced some 6,000 job cuts in its wind power unit. Falling prices in major markets like India and the US bore most of the blame for the layoffs, Siemens said of the division, which merged with Spain's Gamesa earlier this year. Meanwhile, German weekly Manager Magazin reported that Siemens' fossil fuels division, one of Siemens' largest with some 30,000 employees, could shutter 11 of its 23 sites worldwide.

Markets for the unit's products such as natural gas turbines were shrinking as a result of "global energy trends" away from fossil fuels, the group said. Powerful union IG Metall fears managers could slash a four-digit number of jobs, most of them in Germany. Kaeser, who has already presided over massive changes at Siemens since taking the reins in 2013, said only that "painful cuts" would be announced at yesterday works council meeting.

He added that he would try to "soften the blow" by reassigning or retraining workers. "We will have to start a discussion of creative forms of resistance" if bosses press on with site closures and layoffs, IG Metall board member Juergen Kerner warned in a Wednesday interview with WirtschaftsWoche magazine.



MUNICH: This file photo in Munich, southern Germany shows the headquarters of German industrial conglomerate Siemens.—AFP

Discontent and doubts

Many of the sites that could be on Kaeser's hit-list are in Germany's generally poorer eastern states, still not recovered from decades of Communist mismanagement and an arduous reunification with the west since 1990. Among them is the famous "Dynamowerk" in Berlin's Spandau district, where Siemens was founded in the early 20th Century and which now employs 11,000 of its 351,000 workers. Closing eastern sites "could stoke the discontent and the doubts" that helped far-right party Alternative for Germany into parliament with 12.6 percent of the vote in September elections, outgoing economy minister Brigitte Zypries wrote to Kaeser in a letter seen by Bild newspaper. For its part, IG Metall accuses Siemens of being "irresponsible" by showing thousands of employees the door while the group as a whole is turning healthy profits—and by failing to consult closely with workers, as was the norm at big German conglomerates for decades.—AFP

Google's Missouri problem mirrors woes in EU

SAN FRANCISCO: As an aggressive antitrust investigation plays out in Europe against Google, its practices have drawn comparatively little scrutiny from regulators on the US side of the Atlantic. But the midwest state of Missouri wants to change that. The state's Attorney General Josh Hawley has launched an investigation which appears to mirror the probe by EU authorities, demanding information on how Google uses data gathered on consumers, and examining whether the internet giant abuses its dominant position in search.

"No entity in the history of the world has collected as much information about you as Google. My office wants to know what Google is doing with this information," said a tweet from Hawley, a Republican who is running for the US Senate. Hawley added that he sees "substantial evidence" that Google manipulates search results to list affiliated websites higher than those of rivals. "If true, these actions may reflect an unlawful attempt to leverage Google's monopoly power in the search-engine market to stifle competition," he said.

In the US, the Federal Trade Commission in 2013 dropped a two-year antitrust investigation of Google after the company agreed to make changes to some practices to ease competition concerns. But a number of Google critics and competitors have argued the US probe did not go far enough. They point to the European Commission's three-pronged inquiry into Google's dominance in search, its advertising platform and its Android mobile operating system.—AFP

Business

Few banks seen queuing for China's red carpet invite

Foreign banks will be allowed to take larger stakes

HONG KONG: China stunned the finance world last week when it unveiled plans to allow foreign control of its financial institutions. Few bankers thought their long-held dream of better access to the world's largest banking market was within reach. The likelihood, however, is that even fewer will rush to take advantage of that opening. In theory, foreign banks will be allowed to take larger stakes in their Chinese commercial peers - currently capped at 20 percent - while investment banks will be able to take control of their securities joint ventures.

In practice, a combination of well-entrenched local companies and an opaque regulatory regime means global banks will move only very cautiously to exploit the new rules, bankers and lawyers said. Besides its stringent ownership limits, China has for decades carefully controlled the range of activities open to foreign banks in an effort to protect domestic players, they say, and few expect that to change soon.

"Lifting shareholding limits is just one part of the problem, the bigger concern is whether the foreigners will get a level-playing field in the country," said a Beijing-based lawyer, who works with Chinese banking and securities regulators. "The

global financial industry has changed a lot in the last few years and there's a lot more scrutiny happening on capital allocation, compliance and risks," he said, he said referring to bank managements. "The impact of this move would have been very different four, five years ago."

Before the 2008 global financial crisis, many western banks took stakes in Chinese peers. But most of the banks were forced to sell them after the crisis as global regulators tightened capital standards. The banks also found that their investments did not give them the solid foothold they had hoped for in China. Tighter capital regulations are also likely to curb interest this time around by making already costly acquisitions even tougher.

Since the global financial crisis, "most foreign banks have refocused on home markets, serving key customers overseas and, for some, had to repair balance sheets," said Paul McSheaffrey, head of banking at KPMG. With a 19 percent equity holding in Bank of Communications, HSBC, is one of the few global banks to still hold a substantial stake in a Chinese bank. China's banking system has also grown rapidly, along with the Chinese economy in the last few years. Ten years ago, for-



Foreign banks refocus on home markets



SHANGHAI: This file photo shows a woman looking at goods on an electronic screen at a T-Mall exhibition during the Singles Day shopping festival in Shanghai.—AFP

foreign lenders held 2.4 percent of the country's banking assets, according to KPMG. In spite of those foreign-held assets growing at 20 percent a year for the past decade, today foreigners hold just 1.4 percent of what has become a 181.7 trillion yuan market. Foreign entrants also face a banking

market dominated by China's big five state-backed lenders who themselves face a tough environment due to rising bad loans and the country's hard-to-read regulatory regime. "It would be very difficult for them to change the (business) landscape," said a banker with an European bank.—Reuters

Head of US consumer agency to step down

NEW YORK: The head of a US agency established to protect banking consumers after the financial crisis announced his resignation Wednesday, clearing the path for another pro-business appointment by President Donald Trump. Richard Cordray, who was the first chief of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and an appointee of President Barack Obama, plans to leave the agency by the end of the month, he said in an email to staff.

"Together we have made a real and lasting difference that has improved people's lives," Cordray said, noting the agency recovered \$12 billion for consumers after the agency was created in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. The announcement came less than three weeks after the Senate, in a 51-50 vote settled by Vice President Mike Pence, killed a CFPB rule that permitted lawsuits against banks or credit card companies.

The measure was championed by consumer advocates, but loathed by Wall Street. News of Cordray's impending departure drew contrasting reactions from banking policy leaders in both political parties. Cordray "held big banks accountable. He is a dedicated public servant and a tireless watchdog for American consumers," said Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. "The new director of the CFPB must be someone with a track record of protecting consumers and holding financial firms responsible when they cheat people," Warren added.—AFP

US jobless claims unexpectedly rise

WASHINGTON: The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits unexpectedly rose last week in part as a backlog of applications from Puerto Rico continued to be processed, but the underlying trend pointed to tightening labor market conditions. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits increased 10,000 to a seasonally adjusted 249,000 for the week ended Nov 11, the Labor Department said yesterday. It was the second straight weekly increase.

The claims backlog in Puerto Rico is being cleared as some of the infrastructure damaged by hurricanes Irma and Maria is restored. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims falling to 235,000 in the latest week. A labor department official said while the backlog in Puerto Rico was being processed, claims-taking procedures continued to be severely disrupted in the Virgin Islands.

Last week marked the 141st straight week that claims remained below the 300,000 threshold, which is associated with a strong labor market. That is the longest such stretch since 1970, when the labor market was smaller. The labor market is near full employment, with the jobless rate at a 17-year low of 4.1 percent. The four-week moving average of initial claims, considered a better measure of labor market trends as it irons out week-to-week volatility, rose 6,500 to 237,750 last week.

US financial markets were little moved by the data. The low level of claims suggests strong job growth despite hurricane-related disruptions in September. Employment gains could, however, slow as companies struggle to find qualified workers, which economists expect will boost sluggish wage growth. The claims report also showed the number of people still receiving benefits after an



NEW YORK: A live feed of US President Donald Trump speaking is projected on the floor at the closing bell of the Dow Industrial Average at the New York Stock Exchange in New York.—AFP

initial week of aid dropped 44,000 to 1.86 million in the week ended Nov 4, the lowest level since December 1973.

The four-week moving average of the so-called continuing claims fell 9,000 to 1.89 million, the lowest reading since January 1974. In another report yesterday, the Labor Department said import prices gained 0.2 percent last month as an increase in the cost of imported petroleum and capital goods was offset by a decline in food prices. That followed a 0.8 percent jump in September. In the 12 months through October, import prices increased 2.5 percent, slowing after a 2.7 percent rise in September. Last month, prices for imported petroleum increased 1.7 percent after surging 6.3 percent in September. Import prices excluding petroleum edged up 0.1 percent after shooting up 0.4 percent the prior month.—Reuters

Business

Amid global electric-car buzz, Toyota bullish on hydrogen

Japan's top automaker banking on hydrogen

TOKYO: At a car factory in this city named after Toyota, the usual robots with their swinging arms are missing. Instead, workers intently fit parts into place by hand with craftsmanship-like care. The big moment on the assembly line comes when two bulbous yellow tanks of hydrogen are rolled over and delicately fitted into each car's underside. While much of the world is going gung-ho for electric vehicles to help get rid of auto emissions and end reliance on fossil fuels, Japan's top automaker Toyota Motor Corp. is banking on hydrogen.

Toyota sells about 10 million vehicles a year around the world. It has sold only about 4,000 Mirai fuel cell vehicles since late 2014, roughly half of them outside Japan. The Mirai, which means "future," is not cheap at \$57,500, but Toyota loses money on each one. Still, the company's goal is to sell 30,000 fuel-cell vehicles a year by about 2020. Hydrogen fuel cells don't suffer the EVs' main drawback of limited range. The Tesla Model S can go about 300 miles on a single charge, although that varies depending on driving conditions, and that's quite a distance for an EV.

Other models run out of juice quicker, at about half that, because the longer the range, generally the heavier the batteries. And electric vehicles usually take hours to charge. The Mirai

can run for 312 miles per fueling, under US EPA conditions, and fuels as quickly as a regular car. Toyota's chairman, Takeshi Uchiyamada, believes hydrogen is an ideal, stable fuel for a future low-carbon society. "In this light, hydrogen holds tremendous potential," Uchiyamada, known as "the father of the Prius," the world's top-selling hybrid car, said during a tour of the factory.

"Hydrogen doesn't exist in the natural world on its own, but you can create hydrogen from various materials," he said. The Prius turned out to be a good bet for Toyota. The Mirai could be the same. But not everyone shares Uchiyamada's enthusiasm for hydrogen. A fuel cell mixes hydrogen with the oxygen in the air to generate electricity that can power a motor. Producing the highly flammable gas and getting it into the vehicles requires energy.

Ultimately, the idea is to convert energy from renewables like wind and solar power into hydrogen, or even make hydrogen from sewage waste. Unlike a gas-powered internal combustion engine, the only byproducts from a fuel cell are electricity, heat and water. There are no emissions of pollutants that can cause global warming. Yet the energy unleashed is powerful: Hydrogen is the fuel that sends NASA rockets into space.

So fuel cells could be used to power cars, trains, buses, trucks and forklifts, and to pro-

Toyota
sells about
10 million
vehicles a year



TOKYO: In this photo, a worker and a driver stand next to a Toyota Mirai fuel cell vehicle while it is filled hydrogen into at a hydrogen fuelling station in Tokyo. —AP

vide electricity and heat for homes. Detroit-based General Motors Co., Mercedes-Benz of Germany, Japan's Honda Motor Co. and Hyundai of South Korea have also developed fuel cell vehicles that are on the roads in extremely limited numbers. The global stock of electric vehicles will soon surpass 2 million, according to the International Energy Agency. It's projected to climb to between 9 million-20 million by 2020. Fuel cell vehicles are scarcely a presence.

The Hydrogen Council, made up of 28 companies that are promoting hydrogen fuel, said in a report this week that it expects hydrogen to power about 10 to 15 million cars and 500,000 trucks by 2030. It also forecasts it will be widely used for industries, heating and power and power storage. The group met this week in Bonn, on the sidelines of the COP23 U.N. meeting on the environment. Toyota and other manufacturers pursuing hydrogen fuel cells face some significant hurdles. —AP

Volkswagen China to invest billions in new energy cars

BEIJING: Volkswagen will invest more than 10 billion euros along with its partners in China to build new energy vehicles in the country, the company said yesterday. Volkswagen is also establishing a new joint venture with state-owned JAC Motors to make electric vehicles, with an aim to get the first electric car to market by next year, the company said in a press release on the eve of the Guangzhou Auto Show. The move comes as China has put in place a series of carrots and sticks to compel carmakers to produce more fuel efficient and eventually petrol-free cars.

Volkswagen has been a laggard in the area so far, selling just a few hundred "green" cars among sales of four million vehicles in China last year. The investment and partnership will help the German manufacturer reach its goal of introducing dozens of new energy models and delivering 1.5 million new energy vehicles in the country by 2025. "China is leading the way to the final breakthrough in the adoption of e-mobility and Volkswagen Group China is determined to be at the forefront," said Jochem Heizmann, president and chief execu-



WOLFSBURG: In this file photo Volkswagen cars are lifted inside a delivery tower of the company in Wolfsburg, Germany. —AP

tive of Volkswagen Group China.

China will implement a complex quota system in 2019 requiring automakers to produce a minimum number of electric cars. Beijing originally wanted to start enforcing the rule in 2018, but it delayed it by a year after Germany and some foreign firms raised concerns. For electric car buyers, China has introduced subsidies and in some cities like Beijing, where getting a valid license plate is near impossible, authorities have allocated thousands of plates for electric cars.

Beijing has plans to phase out petrol vehicles entirely, though it has yet to set a date for the ban. Volkswagen now faces one of the biggest challenges for electric carmakers: batteries—and it said it was looking for partners to ramp up battery production capacity for its vehicles. —AFP

EU car sales rev up despite Brexit and 'dieselgate'

PARIS: Car sales returned to growth in Europe last month, the latest industry data showed yesterday, but that Brexit and the so-called dieselgate scandal are making their impacts felt. Sales of new vehicles climbed 5.9 percent in October compared to the same month last year, according to data from the European Automobile Manufacturers Association, recovering from a 2.0 percent dip in September. Over the first ten months of the year, sales of passenger vehicles have risen by 3.9 percent.

Car sales were up nearly everywhere on the continent, but not in Britain where consumer confidence has been undermined by uncertainty over the terms of the country's impending exit from the European Union. They tumbled by over 12 percent last month, and are down 4.6 percent in January through October. Car sales are down even more sharply in Ireland, which is probably the EU nation most directly vulnerable to Brexit as Irish exports

make up 11 of the top 15 European Union goods most exposed to the British economy, according to the Irish finance ministry.

They fell by nearly 14 percent in October and are down 10.3 percent in the first ten months of the year. "Brexit related uncertainty and the weakness of sterling are impacting negatively on the industry," the Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI) said earlier this month. The lower value of the pound has caused a surge of attractively priced used cars from Britain going on sale in Ireland, which is also a left-side drive country. SIMI said that "with an increase in used imports of less than 3 years old, it is likely that some of these are displacing new car sales."

Consumers need urgent reassurance

The dieselgate scandal, sparked by Volkswagen's 2015 admission that it fitted out millions of cars with software that enabled them to cheat pollution tests, appears to be having an impact on sales as consumers are shifting to petrol engines over environmental concerns or to stay clear of taxes and regulations being considered or imposed by EU countries. In Germany last month, according to the nation's vehicle licensing authority KBA, diesels accounted for 34.9 percent of the 272,855 cars registered. A year ago diesels accounted for 44.2 percent. —AFP

Sports

Russia 'not compliant' over doping as Olympics loom

WADA has partially lifted its ban on RUSADA

SEOUL: Russia moved a step closer to being barred from the Winter Olympics in February when the World Anti-Doping Agency declined to lift its suspension of Moscow's national anti-doping body yesterday.

In a blow to Russia, the World Anti-Doping Agency maintained its suspension of the Russian body, RUSADA, which it first imposed in 2015 as evidence emerged of widespread cheating. WADA's decision comes before the International Olympic Committee's executive board meets next month to consider whether Russia can compete at the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. The independent McLaren report has detailed a state-sponsored doping conspiracy from 2011 to 2015, culminating at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, where the hosts topped the medals table.

"We do not have the right to decide who takes part in international competition," WADA president Craig Reddie told reporters following a Foundation Board meeting in Seoul. "The major event-holder has that right. We regret that RUSADA is not yet compliant. Technically, they have improved hugely since compliance was removed.

"But having set a road map for compliance, there are two issues that have to be fulfilled and we can't walk away from the commitments we have from that road map." WADA has demanded that Russia accept the findings of the McLaren report and allow access to urine samples stored

at its Moscow laboratory as part of its "road map" back to compliance. The report by Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren accuses Russia's secret service and sports ministry of orchestrating a plot that included using a "mousehole" to switch dirty samples at the Sochi doping laboratory.

'WE DENY STATE-SPONSORED DOPING'

Russia admits failings in its doping system but denies any state involvement, instead blaming officials at RUSADA and the Moscow laboratory. "We accept the fact our national anti-doping system has failed... (but) we absolutely deny a state-sponsored doping system," Russian Olympic Committee president Alexander Zhukov said in Seoul. He added that an unconditional recogni-

tion of the McLaren report "is impossible". Russian Sports Minister Pavel Kolobkov pointed to improvements within RUSADA, and insisted it was independent of state control as he pleaded for the agency to be reinstated.

"RUSADA performs all functions within the World Anti-Doping Code," he said. "I guarantee RUSADA will be fully independent, it is a totally new organisation." "We are ready to go forward and work openly in the full standards of WADA.

Please let us be compliant." Progress has been made and WADA has already partially lifted its ban on RUSADA, giving it the right to

“ We do not have the right to decide ”

team \$913,497 on top of the base fee and there is still next week's finale in Abu Dhabi to come.

That is a tidy sum for a team counting every penny, with a staff of 400 and an annual budget of around \$100 million compared to rivals with double the workforce and three times the financial clout.

Force India cannot overhaul third-placed Red Bull, who are 181 points ahead, and nor are they in any danger from fifth-placed Williams on 82. They will still be pushing hard, however.

Mexican Sergio Perez and French team mate Esteban Ocon are free to race each other, after being reined in as a result of earlier clashes, and will be hoping to wrap up on a high.

MORE INTENSE

Formula One is far from a level playing field and Szafernauer, who works with deputy principal Bob Fernley to steer the team at the track in the absence of embattled co-owner Vijay Mallya, knows 2018 will be another tough battle.

When it comes to discretionary spend—the amount left over after engine bills, travel costs and staff wages are deducted from the budget—Force India have far less than their main rivals. "For us that's probably one tenth of what some of the others have," said Szafernauer. —Reuters

Force India count the cost of success

LONDON: Force India are enjoying their highest-scoring Formula One season, the team punching above their weight to secure fourth place in the constructors' championship for the second year in a row.

But, as chief operating officer Otmar Szafernauer wryly observes, there is a point at which success is a bit of a mixed blessing. "Every point we gain now, it doesn't help us to secure fourth but it does cost us in entry for the championship next year, another \$5,000 per point to the FIA," the Romanian-born American told Reuters.

"We can't afford that," he added, before a hasty "only joking". Every point costs \$5,161, on top of a basic sum of \$516,128, when it comes to calculating a team's 2018 entrance fee. The rate for champions Mercedes is even greater — \$6,194 per point and they have 625 so far.

Force India's 177 — four points more than last year's haul will cost the Silverstone-based



SEOUL: World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) President Craig Reddie, right, talks with IOC member Richard Pound from Canada before the start of the WADA's foundation board meeting in Seoul. — AP

collect samples. It also audited the body in September.

But suspicions remain. Foundation Board member Adam Pengilly asked how WADA could "trust" Russia's new anti-doping regime "until there is a real acknowledgement of what happened?"

Last week, WADA also said it had obtained an "enormous" internal database of Russian drug test results from 2012-2015. Despite

WADA's refusal to readmit Russia, it may not be fatal to the country's chances of competing in Pyeongchang.

In 2016, the IOC ignored WADA's calls to ban Russia from the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro over the McLaren report, instead leaving the decision to individual sports bodies. Kuwait, Equatorial Guinea and Mauritius were also declared non-compliant at the WADA meeting.— AFP

Farrell, May, Launchbury start for England, Itoje on bench

LONDON: Owen Farrell, Jonny May and Joe Launchbury will start for England against Australia tomorrow, with Anthony Watson switching to fullback and Maro Itoje named among the replacements by coach Eddie Jones yesterday.

After a slow-paced victory over Argentina last week and only Samoa to come after this weekend, Jones was always likely to return to his strongest-looking side. Farrell was rested last week but comes in at inside centre, with Henry Slade dropping to the bench. May has recovered from injury to start on the right wing with Watson starting at fullback, where he played for an hour after Mike Brown went off with concussion which has ruled him out of Saturday's game.

The only change in the pack sees Launchbury in for George Kruis at lock alongside Courtney Lawes, with Itoje, also rested last week, on the bench. England will need to be much sharper this week against an Australia team who have won five and drawn one of their last six games, in-

cluding a rare success against New Zealand. However, the Wallabies have lost four in a row against England and their only win in the teams' last seven meetings was in the Rugby World Cup pool game that ended the hosts' interest in the tournament two years ago.

England team to face Australia tomorrow:

15 Anthony Watson (Bath Rugby 27 caps)
14 Jonny May (Leicester Tigers 27 caps)
13 Jonathan Joseph (Bath Rugby 34 caps)
12 Owen Farrell (Saracens 52 caps)
11 Elliot Daly (Wasps 14 caps)
10 George Ford (Leicester Tigers 38 caps)
9 Ben Youngs (Leicester Tigers 71 caps)
1 Mako Vunipola (Saracens 43 caps)
2 Dylan Hartley (Northampton Saints 87 caps)
captain 3 Dan Cole (Leicester Tigers 75 caps) 4 Joe Launchbury (Wasps 45 caps)
5 Courtney Lawes (Northampton Saints 59 caps)
6 Chris Robshaw (Harlequins 57 caps)
7 Sam Underhill (Bath Rugby 2 caps)
8 Nathan Hughes (Wasps 11 caps)
Replacements
16 Jamie George (Saracens 18 caps)
17 Joe Marler (Harlequins 51 caps)
18 Harry Williams (Exeter Chiefs 3 caps)
19 Maro Itoje (Saracens 12 caps)
20 Sam Simmonds (Exeter Chiefs 1 cap)
21 Danny Care (Harlequins 74 caps)
22 Henry Slade (Exeter Chiefs 8 caps)
23 Semesa Rokoduguni (Bath Rugby 3 caps). — Reuters

Sports

Embiid's career-high 46 lead 76ers past Lakers 115-109

Hawks rout Kings by team-record 46 points

LOS ANGELES: Joel Embiid recorded career highs with 46 points, seven blocks and seven assists, and Ben Simmons added 18 points and 10 assists as the Philadelphia 76ers defeated the Los Angeles Lakers 115-109 on Wednesday night. Philadelphia won its second straight and concluded a five-game road trip 3-2. Robert Covington scored 12 points and J.J. Redick added 11. Los Angeles lost for the fourth time in five contests. Brandon Ingram and Kyle Kuzma established career-high with 26 and 24 points, respectively, for the Lakers. Los Angeles was an eye-popping 3 for 27 from beyond the arc. Embiid established the career high in points on 14-for-20 shooting from the field, 16-for-19 from the foul line and added 15 rebounds. His previous high was 33 points against Brooklyn on Dec 18, 2016.

HAWKS 126, KINGS 80

Dennis Schroder had 21 points and eight assists, and Dewayne Dedmon scored a career-high 20 points to go with 14 rebounds as the Hawks handed Sacramento its 11th straight loss in Atlanta. It was the largest victory margin for Atlanta since a 141-97 victory over Detroit in March 1994. The Hawks, who have lost their first four home games, shot 63.3 percent overall and made 16 of 32 3-point attempts. Zach Randolph scored 16 points and George Hill had 12 points as the Kings lost their eighth straight road game after winning their first away from Sacramento this season. The Kings have lost 16 of the past 18 games against Atlanta.

CAVALIERS 115, HORNETS 107

LeBron James scored 31 points and Cleveland continued its mastery of Charlotte. The Cavaliers have won the past seven meetings and 11 of the last 12. James has a career record of 44-6 over the Hornets and Bobcats in his 15 seasons in the NBA. Cleveland also got 22 points and 10 rebounds from Kevin Love. Michael Kidd-Gilchrist led the Hornets with 22 points and Kemba Walker scored 20. Nicolas Batum finished with 16 in his first game of the season after missing the first 12 because of elbow surgery as Charlotte dropped its fifth straight. Timberwolves 98, Spurs 86 Karl-Anthony Towns had 26 points and 16 rebounds for his 12th double-double of the season, and Jeff Teague added 16 points and six assists as Minnesota defeated San Antonio. Nemanja Bjelica added 11 points off the Timberwolves' bench, which outscored the Spurs' reserves 29-26 and keyed a second-quarter run to give Min-

nesota the lead after a sluggish start.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 15 points and 10 rebounds for San Antonio, which had won five of their previous six games. Pau Gasol added 13 points as the Spurs continue without injured Kawhi Leonard and Tony Parker.

WIZARDS 102, HEAT 93

John Wall provided 27 points and Bradley Beal added 26 to lead Washington over Miami. Washington made 29 of 31 from the free throw line, breaking a string of five consecutive losses to the Heat. Miami made 16 of 19 free throws. Hassan Whiteside had 14 points and 21 rebounds to lead the Heat. It was his third 20-plus rebound game of the season. Goran Dragic (21 points) and Dion Waiters (19) led Miami in scoring.

BUCKS 99, PISTONS 95

Eric Bledsoe scored eight of his 14 points in the fourth quarter, including four in the final minute, as Milwaukee won its fourth straight.

Bledsoe added six rebounds, eight assists, three steals and two blocks. All five Bucks starters scored in double figures, led by 27 from Khris Middleton. Giannis Antetokounmpo added 21. Avery Bradley scored 28 points to pace the Pistons, whose five-game winning streak was snapped.

Bucks starters scored in double figures

tons, whose five-game winning streak was snapped.

PACERS 116, GRIZZLIES 113

Darren Collison scored a season-high 30 points as Indiana held on to defeat Memphis. Victor Oladipo had 21 points with six rebounds, three assists and two blocks for Indiana. Bojan Bogdanovic scored 16 points and Domantas Sabonis contributed 13 points, six rebounds and four assists off the bench for the Pacers. Pao Gasol finished with 35 points, 13 rebounds, five blocks and five assists for the Grizzlies. Tyreke Evans contributed 18 points, nine assists, six rebounds, and Chandler Parsons scored 13 for Memphis.

RAPTORS 125, PELICANS 116

DeMar DeRozan scored 17 of his team-high 25 points in the third quarter and Toronto placed six other players in double figures in defeating New Orleans. The Raptors won their sixth consecutive game over the Pelicans. Toronto also has defeated New Orleans in 14 of its last 17 meetings. Kyle Lowry scored 22 points and Jonas Valanciunas added 21 points for the Raptors. The Pelicans were led by DeMarcus Cousins with 25 points and Anthony Davis with 19.—Reuters



LOS ANGELES: Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid, right, of Cameroon, watches his shot go in, next to Los Angeles Lakers forward Julius Randle during the second half of an NBA basketball game. —AP

Three UCLA basketball players suspended after theft in China

LOS ANGELES: Three UCLA basketball players detained for shoplifting at three high-end stores in China publicly apologized Wednesday before coach Steve Alford announced they were being suspended indefinitely.

Freshmen LiAngelo Ball, Jalen Hill and Cody Riley won't be allowed to suit up, practice or travel with the team while the university continues to sort out the circumstances of last week's incident in Hangzhou, China, Alford said during a news conference at Pauley Pavilion. "These are good young men who have exercised an inexcusable lapse of judgment and now they have to live with that," Alford said. "They let a lot of people down in the process." "I'm confident that they have already begun to use this experience as a life lesson," he added.

The No. 23 Bruins edged Central Arkansas 106-101 in overtime in their home opener on Wednesday night. Ball, Hill and Riley took turns confessing to the theft and apologizing while also thanking President Donald Trump for intervening on their behalf with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping. The players had returned to Los Angeles on Tuesday after Chinese authorities withdrew the charges

against them. "I'm sorry for stealing from the stores in China," said Ball, the younger brother of Los Angeles Lakers rookie Lonzo Ball, who played last season at UCLA. "I've learned my lesson from this big mistake and I'm a hundred percent sure I'll never make a mistake like this again. It's going to make me a better person from here on out."

Lonzo Ball said, "That's up to UCLA to decide what they're going to do with the situation. I'm just happy he's home." When it was his turn, Hill said, "I'm sorry for shoplifting. What I did was stupid. I don't want to be known for this dumb mistake."

"I hope you can forgive my stupid, childish actions," he added. Riley was the first to speak and he thanked the Pac-12 Conference, several UCLA administrators and his teammates. "You guys mean so much to me," Riley said of his teammates. "I'm sorry for letting you down." Athletic director Dan Guerrero also spoke at the news conference, but no one took questions from a large group of media.

Alford didn't specify what the indefinite suspensions mean, saying only that the three players would have to earn their way back onto the team. He said that once the office that reviews student conduct has completed its work, the athletic department would "make the best judgment we can about the length of that suspension." Alford said at some point, the trio may be permitted to join team workouts, meetings and practices, but that timeline has yet to be decided. "We will come to a resolution in short order," Guerrero said. Earlier Wednesday, Trump tweeted: "Do you think the three UCLA Basketball Players will say thank you President Trump? They were headed for 10 years in jail!" All three players did. —AP

Sports

Grigor Dimitrov storms into last four at ATP Finals

Dimitrov has never quite lived up to his billing

LONDON: Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov raced into the semi-finals of the ATP Finals with a 6-0, 6-2 demolition of David Goffin on Wednesday. Dimitrov has never quite lived up to his billing as the heir to Roger Federer's throne, but the world number six's eye-catching rout of Goffin was a reminder he is still young and gifted enough to finally make the breakthrough. The 26-year-old unloaded 18 winners to dismiss the Belgian world number eight at London's O2 Arena and seal his spot in the last four with one match to play.

In the day's other Pete Sampras group match, Austrian fourth seed Dominic Thiem beat Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 to remain in the hunt for a semi-final berth.

Dimitrov, who defeated Thiem in three sets in his group opener, has already made history as the first Bulgarian to qualify for the season-ending Tour finals. And while Federer remains the title favourite following Rafael Nadal's injury withdrawal, Dimitrov will fancy his chances of becoming the first debutant winner since Alex Corretja in 1998.

"You get a few days out of the year that whatever you touch turns to gold and that was the first set," Dimitrov said. "You work for those days, it's nice when it comes in such an occasion.

"It's a special win for me. My goal was to reach the weekend." Goffin, another first

time Tour Finals qualifier, had made a flying start with his dramatic three-set victory over Nadal on Monday. But that victory was slightly devalued as the world number one, who was struggling with a knee injury, pulled out of the tournament after the match. Now Goffin faces Thiem in their final group match with a semi-final place awaiting the winner.

"It was not easy for me to lose my serve at the start. It was tough for my confidence after that," Goffin said. World number two Federer, aiming for his seventh Tour Finals title, has already qualified for the last four from Boris Becker group after winning his first two matches.

One of Alexander Zverev or Jack Sock, who face each other on Thursday after Federer takes on Marin Cilic, will advance with the Swiss as the second qualifier from the Becker group.

DOMINANT DIMITROV

Dimitrov had won three of his four previous meetings with Goffin and he was quick to establish control once again. Goffin had a strapping around his left knee and Dimitrov immediately tested his mobility, moving Goffin around the court with some deft groundstrokes, and landed an early blow with a break in the second game of the first set. Dimitrov dominated from the baseline, breaking twice more to take the set in just 27 minutes, and carried his dominance into the second set,

“It was not easy for me to lose my serve”

”



LONDON: Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria returns to David Goffin of Belgium during their singles tennis match at the ATP World Finals at the O2 Arena in London. —AP

racing into a 3-0 lead after winning nine games in a row.

The Belgian avoided the embarrassment of a total whitewash and drew mocking cheers from the crowd in the 10th game as he finally held his serve. After losing to Dimitrov in his opener, Thiem had little margin for error when he faced Carreno Busta,

who was drafted in to replace the injured Nadal. Thiem had won all four of their previous meetings and he extended that unblemished streak in a bruising baseline battle lasting over two hours. "It got very tight at the end, luckily I got the deciding break," Thiem said. "I'm happy I'm still playing for the semi-finals." —AFP

Serena set to tie the knot in New Orleans

WASHINGTON: Tennis superstar Serena Williams is used to hoisting trophies, but yesterday, it looks like she'll be carrying a wedding bouquet. Music royalty Beyonce and Jay Z, along with actress Eva Longoria are among the A-listers reportedly convening in New Orleans for Williams' wedding to Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian.

People and The Daily Mail, citing unnamed sources, have reported that about 250 guests will be invited to the cere-

mony at the Contemporary Arts Center in the Big Easy. The Daily Mail said the wedding planning has been shrouded in secrecy and guests would not learn the details until yesterday morning.

It said the event would cost more than \$1 million and guests would be asked not to bring their cell phones because an exclusive photo deal has been signed with Vogue. Williams, 36, a 23-time Grand Slam champion, and Ohanian, 34, welcomed their first child, daughter Alexis Olympia, on September 1.

They announced their engagement in December after meeting in 2015 in Rome. Williams won this year's Australian Open while pregnant, and is expected to defend her title in Melbourne in 2018 — just four-and-a-half months after giving birth to her baby girl. —AFP

Anisimov has hat trick, Blackhawks beat Rangers

CHICAGO: Artem Anisimov scored a hat trick in the third period, and the Chicago Blackhawks pulled away for a 6-3 victory over the New York Rangers on Wednesday night. Alex DeBrincat, John Hayden and Jonathan Toews also scored for the Blackhawks. Chicago's Corey Crawford made 25 saves to snap a three-game skid.

Mika Zibanejad, Kevin Hayes and Rick Nash scored for the Rangers, who had a six-game winning streak snapped. New York's Henrik Lundqvist allowed four goals on 34 shots before Ondrej Pavelec replaced him in the third period.

RED WINGS 8, FLAMES 2

Anthony Mantha scored two power-play goals, added an assist and had a fight to lead Detroit past Calgary. Andreas Athanasiou had two goals and an assist, and Dylan Larkin added a goal and two assists for the Red Wings. Gustav Nyquist, Justin Abdelkader and Luke Glendening also scored. Mike Green had three assists and goalie Jimmy Howard made 26 saves. Michael Ferland and Johnny Gaudreau had a goal and an assist each for the Flames and Eddie Lack allowed five goals on 10 shots before being pulled early in the second period.

DUCKS 4, BRUINS 2

Kevin Roy scored his first NHL goal and Anaheim continued its mastery over goaltender Tuukka Rask and Boston. Josh Manson, Nick Ritchie and Derek Grant also scored for the Ducks, who won for the second time in their last seven games (2-3-2). John Gibson made 39 saves. Danton Heinen scored for the Bruins, who lost their fourth straight game and fell to 1-11-1 against Anaheim since the start of the 2009-10 season. Rask (23 saves) dropped to 1-6-1 in his career against the Ducks. —Reuters

Sports

Sri Lanka's Lakmal rattles India on rain-hit day

Kohli, out for a rare duck in his glowing career

KOLKATA: Sri Lanka paceman Suranga Lakmal jolted India with three wickets, including skipper Virat Kohli, to leave them reeling at 17-3 on a rain-hit opening day of the first Test yesterday. Lakmal claimed Lokesh Rahul with the first ball of the match at Kolkata's Eden Gardens and bowled six overs without conceding a run.

Put in after a long rain delay that washed away the first session, India batted for only 11.5 overs before bad light ended the day. Cheteshwar Punajara, on eight, and Ajinkya Rahane, yet to open his account, were at the crease after India suffered early blows on a green wicket that offered bounce to the seamers.

Rahul edged a rising delivery from Lakmal to wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella before the crowd had even settled. The paceman then took Shikhar Dhawan for eight, after the left-hander dragged a moving delivery on to his stumps. That left the hosts on 13-2. Sri Lankan fast bowling coach Rumesh Ratnayake lauded Lakmal's efforts on a pitch he said was a "nightmare" for the batsmen. "I am not sure if it's the best spell I have seen but (it is) one of the finest I have seen for a long, long

time," Ratnayake told reporters.

"Saying that the wicket was very receptive, it was very helpful and it's going to be a big challenge... But the job isn't finished. It has only started." "I believe it's a 50-50 chance for both teams and if that's the option one wants to take as a fast bowler, as a fast bowling coach, I would like to play on wickets like this. But it might be a nightmare for the batsmen," the former paceman added. Pujara, who was beaten by the moving ball on a few occasions, and Kohli tried to establish themselves before bad light forced the umpires to call an early tea. The break did India no good as Lakmal returned to trap Kohli lbw for an 11-ball zero.

Kohli, in a desperate bid to avoid a rare duck

in his glowing career, reviewed the dismissal but replays suggested the ball would have clipped his leg stump. Soon Pujara, who played 43 of the 71 balls bowled in the day, and Rahane complained of low visibility against the seamers and the umpires halted play for the day.

India's assistant coach Sanjay Bangar said the world's number-one team was keen to challenge itself in every condition possible. "We are happy

“Wicket was very receptive, it was very helpful”

Sumgong banned for four years for doping

NAIROBI: Olympic marathon champion Jemima Sumgong was banned for four years after a doping tribunal rejected her explanation that blood-boosting hormone EPO was in her system from being treated at a hospital in Kenya days before her failed test.

The tribunal found no legitimate record of the hospital visit and treatment for an ectopic pregnancy claimed by Sumgong, it said Tuesday in a decision released by the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya.

The panel ruling on her case said the 32-year-old Sumgong's hospital story was "inconsistent at best." "We might go so far as to state that the athlete's attempt to explain how the substance entered her body bordered on an attempt to deceive the panel," the ruling said.

Sumgong became the first Kenyan woman to win Olympic gold in the marathon when she triumphed at last year's Rio de Janeiro Games. She failed an out-of-competition test on Feb. 28 and was banned for four years from April 3, the date her provisional suspension was announced.

It makes her ineligible for the 2019 world

championships and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Sumgong is the highest-profile athlete on a long list of Kenyans to be banned for doping in recent years. Her case follows that of Rita Jeptoo, who was the top women's marathon runner in the world when she also tested positive for EPO in an out-of-competition test in Kenya in 2014. Jeptoo also received a four-year ban.

Sumgong waived her right to have her backup "B" sample tested and said she had taken EPO unintentionally after visiting Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi six days before her doping test to be treated for an ectopic pregnancy. She claimed she was suffering from severe abdominal pain and was given a blood transfusion and unidentified medication by an unnamed doctor.

The Olympic champion couldn't provide the name of the doctor who supposedly treated her or reliable documents showing she was admitted to the hospital, the tribunal said. It said documents she provided were denounced as fake by the hospital. The hospital visit was not disclosed by Sumgong at the time of the doping test. She said that was because of the "taboo" surrounding ectopic pregnancies and she wanted to hide it from her husband, who is also her manager.

The only record the hospital had of a visit by Sumgong was in April, when she inquired about treatment for ectopic pregnancies. The Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya said it believed Sumgong was taking EPO ahead of the defense of her London Marathon title in April.

Sumgong has also won the Rotterdam and Las Vegas Marathons and finished runner-up in the Boston, Chicago and New York races. —AP



KOLKATA: Sri Lanka's Suranga Lakmal celebrates after taking the wicket of India's Shikhar Dhawan during the first day of the first Test between India and Sri Lanka at the Eden Gardens cricket stadium in Kolkata.—AFP

to play on wickets like this. A team doesn't really want to play on easy conditions," Bangar said.

"We challenge ourselves and most players are open to such challenges. We want to continue improving as a team," the former batsman

said. Sri Lanka, who lost three Tests, five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 international in a home series against India from July to September, are searching for their first Test win in India. —AFP

Harris backs Starc as next England tormentor

MELBOURNE: The spirit of Mitchell Johnson could return to haunt England's batsmen during the Ashes in the form of another left-arm pacer, Mitchell Starc, according to former Australia fast bowler Ryan Harris.

A rampaging Johnson took 37 wickets at an astonishing average of 13.97 to fire Australia to a 5-0 whitewash in the 2013-14 series Down Under, leaving mental scars on a number of the tourists' batters.

Australia spearhead Starc had a similar volatile mix of pace, swing and bounce to be a Johnson-style wrecking ball in the series that started in Brisbane next week, said Harris.

The 27-year-old has also been in ominous form, capturing 17 wickets for New South Wales in his two Sheffield Shield warmup matches. "He's definitely got it in him. I've just spent some time with him. He's bowling fast," Harris told Reuters in an interview from Brisbane.

"He probably had a little bit of an issue over the last few months with not swinging the ball as much as he'd like. But giving him that red ball, he's probably as consistent as I've seen him for a while as well.

"He's got the pace of Johnson, he moves it

both ways, exactly like Johnson does, and doesn't even know he's doing it. "He's also got that brutal yorker that he can pull out when he wants. So, I'd love to see that happen again, someone rip through the English again and put a bit of fear in the back of their minds."

Along with Peter Siddle, Harris was on hand to witness Johnson at his destructive best as a member of the pace trio in Michael Clarke's Australia that captured all 20 English wickets in each of the five tests.

Johnson set the tone early in the opener at the Gabba, taking nine wickets in a short-pitched blitz that set up a 381-run battering against the shell-shocked touring party. The mustachioed Queenslander remained a problem throughout the series for England's batsmen, who tried in vain to adjust but ultimately had few answers. "Once Mitch got on a roll it was very hard for them to stop him," said Harris, now a high performance coach at the National Cricket Centre in Brisbane. "I reckon it put a little bit of fear in their minds and fair enough. It was bloody fast bowling. Fast bowling at it's best.

"That was genuine pace and they had no way of combating it. Even talking to their old bowling coach (David Saker) who was there at the time, they just didn't know how to stop the rot."

Harris was the second highest wicket taker of the series with 22 victims, while Siddle grabbed 16 in vital support roles. It was a triumph built on excellent camaraderie between the three quicks, said Harris, a quality he was confident Starc would share with his fellow test pacemen and New South Wales team mates Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood.—Reuters

Sports

Peru beat New Zealand 2-0 to capture last World Cup berth

It's a big emotion, beyond making history: Christian Cueva

LIMA: Emotional Peru advanced to the World Cup for the first time since 1982 by defeating New Zealand 2-0 on Wednesday, goals by Jefferson Farfan and Christian Ramos sealing the last ticket to Russia. Farfan struck in the 27th minute and Ramos scored in the 65th to give "Los Incas" their fifth overall World Cup finals appearance and the first in 35 years.

"It's a big emotion, beyond making history," tearful Peru midfielder Christian Cueva said. "It's a child's dream. We have not broken this bad streak for so long. Now I'm going to celebrate."

The second-leg match at Lima's Estadio Nacional was the decider after New Zealand and Peru played to a 0-0 draw in the first leg of their Oceania-South America playoff on Saturday at Wellington.

Peru President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski tweeted his joy after the match, posting the message: "We waited more than 35 years to be in a World Cup again. Thank you warriors for giving us this joy."

New Zealand, ranked 122nd in the world, was seeking a third World Cup berth after appearances in 1982 and 2010. Peru attacked the "All-Whites" from the start, Incas defender Luis Advincula slamming a left-footed shot off the crossbar in the third minute

to delight a full-throated capacity crowd of 40,000.

The opening goal came after Cueva raced down the left wing and flicked a pinpoint center pass with the outside of his right foot to Farfan. The 33-year-old forward for Lokomotiv Moscow blasted a right-footed shot from the edge of the penalty area past New Zealand goalkeeper Stefan Marinovic and into the back of the net.

We waited for 35 years to be in a World Cup

In celebrating the goal, Farfan covered his head with the jersey of suspended Peru teammate Paolo Guerrero, unavailable after failing a doping test last month. "Thanks for the support, Paolo. This is for you," Farfan said.

After dedicating the match to Guerrero, Farfan gestured to the delighted crowd and said, "Paolo is all around." Farfan had another chance in the 42nd minute when Marinovic surrendered a rebound chance, but the sprawled Kiwi made a left-hand save from point blank range and finally clutched the ball to end the threat.

New Zealand's Kip Colvey gave the Kiwis a dangerous chance in the 50th minute with a centering pass from the right wing to second-half substitute Chris Wood, but the English Premier League striker for Burnley saw his header from six meters de-



LIMA: Peru's Christian Ramos (R) celebrates with teammates, after scoring against New Zealand during their 2018 World Cup qualifying play-off second leg football match, in Lima. —AFP

nied by Peru goalkeeper Pedro Gallese. Still vulnerable to a New Zealand away goal, 10th-ranked Peru's insurance policy came off the foot of Ramos after a corner kick glanced off Farfan's head.

The ball struck Kiwi defender Winston Reid to land in front of Ramos, who fired it into the goal. "The people deserve this and much more," Ramos said. "They supported us when we were bad." —AFP

Somalia, Sudan pull out of CECAFA Cup

NAIROBI: Somalia and Sudan have pulled out of next month's CECAFA Challenge Cup in Kenya, reducing the field to only 10 teams from the central, northern and southern African zones.

Organisers of the Council for East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) tournament said Somalia, which has been mired in internal conflict, was having difficulty getting a team together for the December 3-17 championships. Three-time champions Sudan have asked to be left out of the competition because their national football league is still in progress.

North African team Libya has been invited to take part for the first time as a guest team, alongside five-time Council of Southern African Football Associations (COSAFA) champions, Zimbabwe. Libya have been drawn to play hosts Kenya in a tough Group A, alongside Rwanda, Tanzania and Zanzibar. Defending champions Uganda have been drawn in the relatively easier Group B against Burundi, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.

Kenya are hosting the CECAFA Challenge Cup as a consolation after losing the right to stage the 2018 African Nations Championships due to concerns around the uncertain political situation in the country. The CECAFA organisers hope the two-week tournament—to be played in the towns of Kisumu, Kakamega and Nakuru — might help unite Kenya after a drawn-out and divisive presidential election period. —AFP

Kurds find joy in Swedish football team's success

STOCKHOLM: Weary of war, persecution, and statelessness, Kurds rejoiced as a Swedish football club founded just 13 years ago by Kurdish immigrants won promotion to the top division. Scores of cheering fans ran onto the pitch, dancing and waving Kurdish flags last week when Dalkurd FF beat Gothenburg's GAIS 1-0 to earn a seat in next season's Allsvenskan.

Midfielder Rawez Lawan, 30, hit the only goal 59 minutes into the game at the Domnarvsvallen Stadium in the central Swedish city of Borlange on October 28. "Millions of Kurds are dancing with joy... it's so wonderful to give them this happiness," Lawan told TT news agency after the match.

"This means more than just football." Dalkurd's victory lifted spirits among Kurds disheartened by the continued violence in Kurdish populated areas of Turkey and the aftermath of the controversial independence referendum in Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. "I was very happy when I saw their great results," Ahmed Karim, a 35-year-old resident in Arbil, the capital of autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan, told AFP. The Kurds are a non-Arab ethnic group numbering between 25 and 35 million spread across four countries—southeast Turkey, northern Syria, Iraq and Iran—without a recognised state of their own.

"I hope they will represent Kurdish sport globally, because we in the Middle East do not have our own Kurdish (national) team," Karim added. The fallout from last month's vote caused weeks of armed clashes in which Baghdad reasserted control over swathes of oil-rich Kurdish-held territory and triggered the region's pres-

ident Massud Barzani to step down. Arslan Abdallah, a sports journalist at the Kurdish Rudaw television channel based in Arbil, said the team's success is "a huge victory for Kurdish athletes in Europe" and in his region.

'DRIVEN BY PRESSURE'

The remarkable rise of the squad, which includes Americans, a Palestinian and a Gambian, is built on their defiant personalities, according to their assistant coach Amir Azrafshan.

"They all have something in common when it comes to enjoying a challenge... they're driven by pressure," he told AFP. The club was formed in 2004 in the central Swedish province of Dalarna, around 300 kilometres northwest of Stockholm, as a social project to help troubled youth integrate into society.

It "gives hope to us immigrants in Sweden that we can succeed," author and social commentator Kurdo Baksi said. Swedish daily Aftonbladet reported in February 2016 that 49 percent of the club was bought by the two Kurdish "billionaire brothers" Kawa and Sarkat Junad. "We want to win and be in the highest division as quickly as possible. I would love to see Dalkurd in the Champions League," Sarkat Junad told Aftonbladet at the time.

'NO FRIENDS BUT THE MOUNTAINS'

With more than 1.5 million followers on Facebook, the club has become a symbol for Swedish and Kurdish cohesion. Its logo is a football-shaped version of the Kurdish flag in red, white and green with a yellow star, but with the addition of two horses, a reference to the traditional carved and painted wooden horses of Dalarna. "Sweden gave us the possibility to feel freedom and receive an education that we didn't have in our (country of origin)," the club's chairman Ramazan Kizil said.

"We've been given a lot and we will give it back to this society," he added. Dalarna means "dales" in English and the name refers to the breathtaking valleys of the region. —AFP

Saudi, UAE, Bahrain out of Gulf Cup amid Qatar crisis

DOHA: Gulf Cup organisers yesterday said Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain had “withdrawn” from the Qatar-hosted tournament, amid a deepening political crisis in the region. Tournament bosses said they had received no response from the three federations to questions about their participation in the competition, scheduled to start on December 22.

A deadline for Saudi, UAE and Bahrain to accept a written invitation from the Gulf Cup Football Federation (GCOFF) passed earlier this week. “There was no response to our letter and they are withdrawn from the tournament,” said Jassim al-Rumaihi, GCOFF general secretary. Doubts have hung over the Gulf Cup because of a bitter dispute involving Qatar and its neighbours, including Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain, which threatens to destabilise the region.

The crisis erupted on June 5 when Qatar was politically and economically boycotted by a quartet of neighbouring countries over its alleged support for terrorist groups and relations with Iran.

The 2022 World Cup host denies the charges. Thursday’s decision, taken at a meeting in Doha, means the tournament has become the first high-profile sporting victim of the diplomatic dispute. The only chance that it will go ahead now rests with Kuwait, which was given a November 30 deadline on Thursday to say if they will play in the competition.

If that deadline cannot be met, then the tournament will be cancelled, said the GCOFF. Although Kuwait is not part of the political dispute—it has acted as a regional mediator since the crisis began back in June—its football association has its own problems and remains suspended by FIFA, which means it is unclear if its team is eligible to play in the tournament. “We have given 15 days for Kuwait to solve their problems,” said Rumaihi.

“We can make a tournament with five teams.” If the Gulf Cup goes ahead on December 22 it will be played between Qatar, Iraq, Oman, Kuwait and Yemen.

Qatar are the current holders. Usually played every two years, the Gulf Cup was originally meant to be hosted by



DOHA: Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed al-Thani (C), the president of Qatar’s football federation, holds a meeting with the executive board of the Gulf Cup in the Qatari capital Doha. —AFP

Kuwait in 2016 but was moved to Qatar because of the FIFA ban. Any cancellation of the Gulf Cup could cause embarrassment to Qatar, as it continues its \$500 million-

a-week preparations for 2022. The final is due to be played in the Khalifa International Stadium, which will host matches in 2022. —AFP

What’s lurking beyond the usual suspects?

PARIS: Lionel Messi knows the teams he fears most at the 2018 World Cup: champions Germany, Brazil, France and Spain. “I think that at the moment, they’re the strongest teams who look the best, are playing the best, with the best individuals,” Messi told TyC Sports, an Argentine TV channel, last week.

The five-time Ballon d’Or winner identified the key criteria that will spearhead their challenges: strong squads, star players, a team identity and looking the part. But while naming the would-be contenders isn’t hard, what is in store for the rest of the 32-team field?

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

The five giants have won 13 of the last 16 World Cups between them. Spain and Germany both qualified without losing, while Brazil sealed first place in the South American group with four rounds to play. France won their group but, as in the Euros last year, were alternately brilliant and toothless, such as in a shocking 0-0 draw at home to Luxembourg. Argentina squeaked

through by winning their last game, away to Ecuador, and inevitably it was Messi who hit a hat-trick to save his nation when staring into the abyss of elimination. How Italy wish they had a Messi in their ranks. But that near miss hardly bodes well for a country dreaming of emulating the Diego Maradona inspired victory of 1986.

Yet form can be misleading, as Spain and Brazil’s crushing losses to the Dutch and Germans four years ago showed.

SLEEPING GIANTS

England won in 1966, but since then the nation that invented the sport and boasts the richest league in the world, has reached just one semi-final. Gareth Southgate, the England manager, has been bleeding youngsters from the successful youth teams and there is reason for optimism in England, but maybe 2018 will come too soon.

According to FIFA, Mexico has the third highest number of registered footballers—behind only Brazil and Germany—amongst World Cup finalists, yet in 15 finals appearances, they have never gone past the quarters. With 142 million people, Russia have the biggest population of any of the finalists. The Soviet Union once reached a semi-final, but that was a long time ago and in a different world. Recent scandals surrounding Russian sport mean that success for the hosts might be greeted with more suspicion than acclaim.

SMALL NATIONS WITH BIG HOPES

With a population of just over three million and two World Cup titles, Uruguay are again following their own successful template. They have produced enough top-end talent, led by Luis Suarez, Diego Godin and Edinson Cavani, to give them a chance of beating anyone.

Croatia have Luka Modric, Ivan Rakitic and Ivan Perisic, which is good, but they finished second to Iceland in their qualifying group, which is not. Portugal have Cristiano Ronaldo, but their greatest success—winning the 2016 Euros—came despite playing without the world player of the year for three-quarters of the final.

Belgium are enjoying a golden generation, but Switzerland and Denmark have only silver and bronze ones.

Poland, not such a small nation in population terms, have the prolific Robert Lewandowski, the top scorer in global qualifying with 16 goals.

UNDERDOGS WITH SHARP TEETH

In 2002, as joint hosts, Japan and South Korea ran deep into the knockout rounds. This time, along with Australia, they lack world-class talent but bring a work ethic that makes them teams to avoid.

Colombia, Senegal and Nigeria bring skill, pace and power and a bad habit of agonising exits caused by careless errors or bad luck. Serbia and Morocco both qualified impressively but

lack the star man who can make a difference. Iceland will strive to continue to defy gravity.

HAPPY TO BE BACK

Peru, once regulars, had not qualified since 1982 until they beat New Zealand on Thursday. They prepare for Russia ranked an unlikely 10th in the world.

Sweden, former finalists, smothered Italy in a play-off but if the smell of glory draws Zlatan Ibrahimovic out of retirement, a blunt instrument would acquire a sharp edge.

Egypt have won more African titles than any other nation but their World Cup record is miserable, and this is only their third appearance.

THOSE THAT MAKE A DRAW KIND

Costa Rica reached the last eight in 2014 and are ranked 22nd but alongside Iran and Tunisia will still be the teams in the third pot everyone wants to draw.

Tunisia and Saudi Arabia both won games in the first of their four finals appearances but neither has won since and their last points came when they drew 2-2 in Stuttgart in 2006.

Panama may already have used up their miracle, scoring two minutes from the end of their qualifying campaign to beat Costa Rica, eliminate the United States and qualify for their first finals. —AFP



LIMA: Peru's Christian Ramos (L) celebrates with teammates, after scoring against New Zealand during their 2018 World Cup qualifying play-off second leg football match, in Lima. — AFP

Peru beat NZ to capture last World Cup berth