



NOTICE TO OUR READERS

On the occasion of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) today, Friday Times will not be published tomorrow (Dec 1, 2017). The next issue of Kuwait Times will hit the newsstands on Sunday (Dec 3, 2017).

2 Amir attends Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Informatics Award



8 N Korea 'breakthrough' puts US within range of nuclear weapons



20 Bubble or brave new world? Bitcoin breaks \$11,000 barrier



GCC summit in Kuwait to go ahead despite row: Officials

Ghanem invites govt to 'special session' over sports law

KUWAIT: An annual summit of Gulf Arab heads of state will convene in Kuwait on Dec 5 and 6, Gulf officials said yesterday, despite an ongoing dispute between some members of the group. A rift between the Gulf Cooperation Council members Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), on one side, and Qatar on the other has put this year's annual meeting in doubt. A senior Kuwaiti official confirmed yesterday that the meeting would take place on Dec 5 and 6, but said the level of representation was not clear yet. Two Gulf diplomats also said Kuwait, which had led unsuccessful mediation efforts between the two sides, would try again to use the meeting to resolve the rift.

The crisis, which began in June, revolves around allegations by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt that Qatar supports terrorism, a charge Doha denies. Qatar says the four countries are trying to force Doha to fall in line with their own foreign policy views. The US-allied council was founded in 1980 as a bulwark against bigger neighbors Iran and Iraq. Bahrain said last month it will not attend the summit if Qatar does not change its policies and Qatar should have its membership in the six-nation group suspended.

Separately, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem has invited lawmakers and the government to a special parliamentary session on Sunday in which a new

FIFA-approved sports law will be drafted. In a press conference yesterday, Ghanem cited time constraints as the reason for the "immediate invitation", revealing that the new law should take effect no later than Sunday.

"I have made it clear to the government that attendance in this session is compulsory given the urgent nature of the issue," the chief lawmaker said. While Ghanem refused to divulge further details, he commended the government's "outstanding efforts" to ensure that the ban on Kuwaiti sports federations is ultimately lifted.

In separate remarks, Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Faleh Al-Azab confirmed the government's attendance in Sunday's special ses-

sion. "The government will do everything possible to ensure that the new sports law is enacted," the minister told the press.

Underlining the enormity of the issue, Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said the new sports law represents a significant step towards rendering the FIFA suspension null and void. Once the new sports law is drafted, Roudhan, who is also Minister of State for Youth Affairs, maintained that "substantial work remains to be done to make sure that the sports ban on Kuwait is lifted," saying that things are headed in the right direction after some "positive feedback" from FIFA. — Agencies

NBC fires star anchor Lauer over sexual misconduct



Matt Lauer

NEW YORK: NBC News fired popular "Today" show host Matt Lauer after receiving what it called a detailed complaint from a colleague about inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace, the network said yesterday. NBC News chairman Andrew Lack said that, after serious review, the complaint received on Monday night represented "a clear violation" of the company's standards. "As a result, we've decided to terminate his employment," Lack said in a statement. "While it is the first complaint about his behavior in the over twenty years he's been at NBC News, we were also presented with reason to believe this may not have been an isolated incident."

Lauer's agent Ken Lindner did not respond to a request for comment. The news was announced by "Today" co-anchors Savannah Guthrie and Hoda Kotb at the start of the talk show, a staple of US morning television for more than six decades that, NBC says, averages more than 4 million viewers. "We

just learned this moments ago just this morning," Guthrie said, visibly shaken. "As I'm sure you can imagine we are devastated." Lack's statement did not say who made the accusation. Lauer, 59, is married. "We are deeply saddened by this turn of events," the statement said. "But we will face it together as a news organization - and do it in as transparent a manner as we can."

The New York Times quoted Ari Wilkenfeld, a civil rights lawyer with the firm Wilkenfeld, Herendeen & Atkinson in Washington, who said he represented the woman who made the complaint to NBC but declined to publicly identify her.

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Bosnian war criminal dies after drinking poison in UN court drama

THE HAGUE: In shocking scenes, a Bosnian Croat war criminal took his own life yesterday in front of UN war crimes judges, apparently drinking poison just after they upheld his 20-year jail term for atrocities committed during the Balkans conflict. Slobodan Praljak, 72, died in hospital, after drinking from a small brown glass bottle in full glare of the cameras at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

As the judges handed down their very last verdict at the court, Praljak, a former military commander of a breakaway Bosnian Croat statelet, shouted out angrily: "Praljak is not a criminal. I reject your verdict." He then raised a small brown bottle to his lips, and tipped it into his mouth. "I just drank poison," he said. "I am not a war criminal. I oppose this conviction." The hearing was quickly suspended as Praljak's lawyer shouted out: "My client says he has taken poison."

Immediately after sentence was passed on Praljak "he drank a liquid while in court and quickly fell ill", court spokesman Nenad Golceviski told reporters. He could not confirm what was in the bottle. Efforts were made to give the former film director some medical treatment and he was "transported to the hospital where he passed," Golceviski added.



THE HAGUE: Video-grabs taken from live footage show Croatian former general Slobodan Praljak swallowing what is believed to be poison during his judgement at the UN war crimes court yesterday. — AFP

Resuming the hearing a few hours later, presiding judge Carmel Agius revealed Dutch authorities had already launched an investigation, adding "courtroom one is now a crime scene". Hearings at the ICTY are held amid tight security, with all defendants and visitors undergoing strict searches. So it was not clear how Praljak had managed to get the bottle of liquid into the

courtroom. Croatia's Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic slammed the "injustice" of the UN tribunal and expressed his condolences. "His act, which we all unfortunately witnessed today, speaks mostly about the deep moral injustice towards six Croats from Bosnia and the Croatian people," he told reporters.

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Militants go to rehab at '5-star' Saudi center

RIYADH: With its indoor swimming pool, sun-splashed patios and liveried staff, the Saudi complex has the trappings of a five-star resort, but it is actually a rehab center - for violent militants. Riyadh's Mohammed bin Nayef Counseling and Care Center, a cushy halfway house between prison and freedom, spotlights a controversial Saudi strategy for tackling homegrown extrem-

ists. While the global fight against terrorism is often associated with drone strikes and torture, the philosophy that underpins the center's approach is that extremism requires not coercion but an ideological cure.

Overseen by clerics and psychologists, it works to prevent convicts who have served their sentences from returning to jihad, through what it calls religious counseling and ideological detoxification. "Our focus is on correcting their thoughts, their misconceptions, their deviation from Islam," Yahya Abu Maghayed, a director at the center, said while giving AFP a golf cart tour of the sprawling, palm tree-lined complex.

The convicts are housed in a series of low-slung buildings, outfitted with large-screen televisions and

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RIYADH: The swimming pool of the Mohammed bin Nayef Center for Counseling and Advice, a rehab center for militants, is seen on Oct 4, 2017. — AFP

Trump pilloried for retweeting anti-Muslim videos

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump drew fierce condemnation yesterday after he retweeted three anti-Muslim videos posted by the deputy head of a British far-right group who has been convicted of a hate crime. Trump's actions drew criticism from many quarters, including the British government at 10 Downing Street, which said Trump was "wrong" to promote the group's "hateful narratives".

The White House scrambled to limit the fallout, saying even if the anti-Muslim videos were misleading, Trump was pointing out a real problem. "The threat is real, and that's what the president is talking about," said Trump's spokeswoman Sarah Sanders. One of the videos claims to show a Muslim beating up a Dutch boy on crutches. Another is described as showing an Islamist mob pushing a teenager of a rooftop. The veracity of both is in doubt. The third allegedly depicts a Muslim throwing down and smashing a statue of the Virgin Mary.

The footage was originally posted by Jayda Fransen, deputy leader of the far-right group Britain First, which hailed Trump for his support. "THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, DONALD TRUMP, HAS RETWEETED THREE OF DEPUTY LEADER JAYDA FRANSEN'S TWITTER VIDEOS!" the group tweeted in triumph. "DONALD TRUMP HIMSELF HAS RETWEETED THESE VIDEOS AND HAS AROUND 44 MILLION FOLLOWERS! GOD BLESS YOU TRUMP! GOD BLESS AMERICA!"

Fransen was found guilty last year of a hate crime after hurling abuse at a Muslim woman wearing a hijab.



Donald Trump



Jayda Fransen

Britain First, which was formed in 2011 and is known for picketing outside mosques, has run and lost in several British and European parliament elections. Brendan Cox, widower of MP Jo Cox who was murdered by a rightwing extremist last year, said: "Trump has legitimized the far right in his own country, now he's trying to do it in ours. Spreading hatred has consequences & the president should be ashamed of himself."

David Lammy, an MP for the opposition Labour Party, said: "The president of the United States is promoting a fascist, racist, extremist hate group whose leaders have been arrested and convicted. He is no ally or friend of ours." Stephen Doughty, another Labour MP, called the videos "highly inflammatory" and his colleague Yvette Cooper said Trump had given Fransen a "huge platform". Opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn said the retweets were "abhorrent, dangerous and a threat."

Fransen and Britain First leader Paul Golding were due to appear in court yesterday for a pre-trial review on charges of "threatening, abusive or insulting words or behavior" over a speech she made in Belfast. Trump's interventions in British politics and controversial foreign policy have strained the so-called "special relationship".

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Amir patronizes, attends Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Informatics Award

Sheikh Salem keen on developing human resources within informatics: Sheikha Aydah



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrives to attend the 17th Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Informatics Award yesterday. —Amiri Diwan photos



(From left) Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and other top state officials attend the 17th Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Informatics Award.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah patronized and attended the 17th Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Informatics Award held at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir was received at the event by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, in addition to other senior officials of the state.

Human resources

Delivering her speech to the event, head of the Award's board of trustees, Sheikha Aydah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah said that Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah was keen on developing human resources within the informatics domain.

The Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Award is supported by the highest authority in the country exemplified by the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf, said

Sheikha Aydah who thanked both leadership figures for their continuous encouragement. She affirmed that the informatics award would continue to encourage people to partake in the development of the nation, the region, and the world through technology and science.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the award's organizing committee Bassam Al-Shimmeri said that the event had pushed the technological boundaries not only in Kuwait but also in the region and the world. Also during his speech, Shimmeri touched on an Emirati initiative named Smart Dubai.

This regional project aims at making Dubai one of the happiest cities in the region through the use of technology, said the official who affirmed that the informatics award was very keen to provide assistance.

Strong commitment

Speaking further about the initiative, head of the Smart Dubai Office Dr Aisha Bin Bishr said that the Informatics Award honoring of the initiative showcased Kuwait's strong commitment to the development of the technological sector. The official thanked His Highness the Amir and Sheikh Salem Al-Ali for their uncondition-

al support, saying that the honoring truly reflects the strong ties between Kuwait and the UAE.

The highest authorities in Dubai support the plan, she affirmed, adding that some 137 and 1,129 smart initiatives and services will be launched to make sure that the level of satisfaction amongst citizens will increase from 90 percent in 2016 to 95 percent by 2021.

Bin Bishr also indicated that the initiative aims making all government transactions in Dubai 100 percent online by 2020. Meanwhile, in a speech of his own, Hassan Al-Hamadi, a member of the award's organizing committee, said that the projects were thoroughly evaluated based on three criteria, which are quality, comprehensiveness and diversity. He revealed that nine projects scooped awards, six

of which belonged to the government sectors of the UAE, Qatar and Oman, respectively; while a pair of Saudi-designed projects won top honors in the private sector. A Kuwaiti civilian project also clinched an award. Hamadi pointed out, announcing that a smart gateway project by the UAE's interior ministry topped the list in the government sector.

In the private sector, a Saudi-composed information technology program was chosen as the top project, while an electronic education program designed by Amar Al-Hajj and Majda Al-Doussari won the award for best project in the civilian community category. To close the ceremony, His Highness the Amir bestowed upon the director general of 'Smart Dubai's' Office Aisha bin Bishr an honorary order, while His Highness the Amir was given a commemorative plaque in return.

KUNA chief honored

The Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award honored KUNA's Chairman Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah for patronizing the ceremony. Sheikha Aydah expressed gratitude for participants who took part in the activities of the award's 17th session. Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij noted meanwhile that the award is a chance to see different skills and expertise in the world of informatics and digital industries. He also thanked organizers and participants alike for their efforts to develop this vital field in Kuwait.

He added that the award is the first of its kind in the Arab World and is vital to develop the use of technology in different sectors in Kuwait. Meanwhile, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij affirmed that KUNA is continuously supporting the award, adding that the agency hosts some of the award's events as well. He hoped to see more events in the future to develop the skills of Arab youth in the field and encourage them to make the best out of using social media and smartphones. —KUNA



Smart Dubai initiative honored



Head of the award's board of trustees Sheikha Aydah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah honors His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah honors Head of the Smart Dubai Office Dr Aisha Bin Bishr.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah honors one of the winners of the 17th Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Informatics Award.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah honors one of the winners of the 17th Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Informatics Award.



Head of the award's board of trustees Sheikha Aydah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah delivers her speech.



Head of the Smart Dubai Office Dr Aisha Bin Bishr speaks during the event.



Chairman of the award's organizing committee Bassam Al-Shimmeri.



Hassan Al-Hamadi, a member of the award's organizing committee.



Chairperson of the award's board of trustees Sheikha Aydah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah honors KUNA's Chairman Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah.

Local

Amir, Crown Prince meet top officials



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



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

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Khaled Al-Roudhan, as well as Ministry of Defense Undersecretary Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Ministry of Defense Undersecretary Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

UK-Kuwaiti Steering Group to mull boosting cooperation: Official

KUWAIT: The biannual UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group is set to tackle various security and judiciary cooperation dossiers in its upcoming meeting in Kuwait in December 6-7, a senior foreign ministry official stated Tuesday. In statements to reporters on the sidelines of his participation in the Georgian embassy's function to mark Georgia's national day, Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Waleed Al-Khubaizi disclosed that the Kuwaiti and UK ministries of justice were expected to ink an agreement for exchanging experience during the Steering Group meeting.

He also pointed out that the Kuwaiti and UK officials would mull beefing up

commercial, educational, security and defense cooperation to reach new levels. On a separate issue, the official noted that Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah would visit Belgium next month to partake in the inauguration of a bureau for Kuwait in the NATO HQs. During his visit, he would hold talks with EU and Belgian officials, Khubaizi said, adding that Jarallah would have a chance to reopen Kuwait's bid to waiver Schengen visa.

Khubaizi said that he would start an official visit to Italy today to represent First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah in the Mediterranean Dialogue forum. He added that the Kuwaiti-Italian consultation meeting at the level of senior officials would be held during his stay in Italy. The conferees would discuss preparation for the supreme joint committee meeting, he said.

On Kuwaiti-Georgian relations, Khubaizi said the diplomatic relations between the two countries dated back to 1992. He unveiled that Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled is expected to pay a visit to Georgia in the near future to head Kuwait's delegation of the joint Kuwaiti-Georgian committee meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Georgia to Kuwait Roland Beridze (left) and Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Waleed Al-Khubaizi cut the cake during a reception hosted to celebrate Georgia's independence day. — Photo by Joseph Shagra



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Albania Saimir Bala hosted a reception on the occasion of his country's national day. State officials, diplomats and media persons attend the event, which took place recently at Regency Hotel. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

Kuwait Times

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A group of students participate in a recent campaign to clean up the Sulaibekhat beach. —KUNA

Kuwaiti arts, crafts expo gathers 45 nationalities

KUWAIT: In an atmosphere of joy and happiness, an arts and crafts exhibition was held yesterday in Kuwait with the participation of 45 Arab and foreign diplomatic mis-

sions. The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) and the International Women's Group (IWG) organized the event. — KUNA



Greece's pavilion.



Armenia's pavilion.



Russian Ambassador Alexey Solomatn visits Yemen's pavilion.



Vietnam's pavilion.



KUWAIT: Ambassadors inaugurate the event. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



Nepal's pavilion.



Jordan's pavilion.



Sudan's pavilion.

Local

Kuwaiti ambassador confident Amir's effort will lead to bridging GCC gaps

GCC needs unity at this critical phase to face challenges: Sheikh Azzam

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Kuwait's Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah said international powers have an agreement to resolve regional political disputes on a win-win basis, which is clearly evident in Syria and is likely to be used in other parts of the Middle East. Sheikh Azzam expressed hope that such a policy will succeed in stopping bloodshed, killing and displacement in various parts of the region.

"The GCC is one of the entities that needs consolidation and unity the most at this critical phase to face various challenges and be up to its effective political and economic responsibilities," he said in an interview with Bahraini daily 'Al-Watan,' expressing his trust that efforts exerted by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will succeed in uniting and protecting GCC and bridging the gaps. "The region is currently witnessing an arms race which would only lead into endless drainage of its wealth and powers in the long run, as this is usually done at the expense of development, economy and human existence," Sheikh Azzam added.

Responding to a question about GCC-Iran relations, Sheikh Azzam stressed that GCC states seek good relations with Iran to make it a partner in creating regional peace and development. "This is why

Tehran has to take positive steps towards building trust and showing good intentions based on international laws and relations," he said, underscoring that Saudi Arabia is a strategic cornerstone in the region and has played a major role in maintaining regional stability.

First hearing

The Court of Cassation set Sunday for the first hearing of a petition challenging an appeal's court verdict which sentenced 67 opposition figures, including sitting and former MPs, to prison for storming the National Assembly building six years ago. In other news, the Court of Misdemeanor yesterday sentenced a real estate company owner to four years in jail after he was found guilty of fraud in cases filed by investors who bought properties outside through his company in deals that turned out later to be fake.

Fingerprint devices

Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh again denied reports that the cost of importing fingerprint devices will be KD 67 million. Responding to an inquiry filed by MP Adel Al-Damkhi, Saleh stressed that Civil Service Commission's decision to use fingerprint systems at various government bodies to register staff attendance did not cost most of these bodies extra sums

and stressed that the estimated cost of these devices will be only KD 2.2 million.

Saleh explained that the fingerprint devices needed for the education ministry would cost KD 832,000, in addition to KD 650,000 for the Awqaf ministry and KD 770,000 for the health ministry. He added that the finance ministry's role is only to provide the needed sums and monitor how they are spent. He also noted that the names of the companies contracted to supply and install those devices are available in various ministries.

Free gas

Within its strategic plans, Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) predicts producing one billion cubic feet of free gas by 2022-2023. It said that the production rate of light oil and gas will remain at 40,000 barrels and 100 million cubic feet of gas respectively once the Jurassic gas fields to the north are developed. In its annual report, KOC also noted that it aspires to develop heavy oil reservoirs in the north by getting the needed technology and training company staff on using it to reach a daily production of 60,000 barrels from Al-Ratqa field by 2018, in addition to 25,000 barrels a day from Um Naga field.

Reports required

A government report advised relevant bodies concerned with managing public debts to regularly report developments to both legislators and the public. The report also stressed that such regular reports will enhance transparency as well as accountability of public officials in the event of making any mistakes.

In addition, the report explained that the aim of such reports will be to ensure that public debts are

managed according to the goals set and approved by lawmakers and executives. "The reports should be comprehensive to allow auditors to assess how far borrowing would succeed in achieving its goals," the report states, stressing the need that the reports should include statistics about foreign outflows and local debts.



Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah

Khaitan infrastructure

A committee entrusted with developing the infrastructure in blocks 3 and 4 in Khaitan met at the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) premises and was chaired by undersecretary Awatif Al-Ghunaim, who said that the committee discussed a detailed report about the contract of building and maintaining the roads and rain drainage in the area.

Ghunaim said that MPW coordinates with other ministries on providing current and future services needed for the project, expecting to offer its tender for public bidding by the first quarter of 2019. She added that the project's total area is 154 hectares, including 1,448 plots of 400 sq m each. She added that public buildings will also be built over an area of 3.168 hectares, including a park, a power plant, a bank, stores, a clinic, a department store and a mosque. "The area will also include around 30 kilometers of roads, in addition to rain drainage grids and manholes," Ghunaim said.

Ministry spreads safe camping awareness

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior's (MOI) relations and security media department yesterday said that various security sectors had finished preparations for the camping season with the aim of maintaining securi-

ty and fighting campers' negative practices. In collaboration with the civil defense, an awareness campaign will be launched in three phases at the northern camping areas in Jahra, southern camping areas in Ahmadi and in the central area.

Special lectures and seminars will be held for campers to enhance their security as well as environmental awareness about precautions to be used to prevent campfires and maintain cleanliness. The department urged campers to avoid camping near military zones, oil facilities, high voltage power lines and near highways and to carry their civil IDs at all times, avoid leaving camps unguarded with their valuables inside, avoid reckless driving and leaving campfires on while sleeping. Campers were also urged to keep first aid

kits handy, avoid using shotguns to hunt birds, or the use of fireworks, while also preventing minors from driving.

Municipality campaigns

Farwaniya municipality cleaning teams leader Mubarak Al-Khurainej said that 2,020 cubic meters of waste and 12 abandoned and scrap vehicles were removed from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Sabah Al-Nasser, Abdullah Al-Mubarak and Dajeej. He added that 13,001 cubic meters of wastes and an abandoned vehicle were removed from Ferdous, Andalas and Ardhiya industrial area. In addition, 1,826 cubic meters of waste and five abandoned vehicles were removed from Farwaniya, Omariya, Rabiya, Ashbeliya and Rehab.

local spotlight

Rain in Kuwait



By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

On Tuesday, meteorologist Issa Ramadan said rains will begin to descend on Kuwait and continue until today, as cold weather arrives in Kuwait. A little rain fell this week to free us from the summer heat. But, are we ready for it? Rain is beautiful in most countries of the civilized world, which have many ways to deal with it regardless of the amount, except here in Kuwait. Rain is a problem for all of us, except for those who use the wet streets to race, which is really frightening.

Rainfall is undoubtedly cool, but in March, the underpass on the intersection of Mangaf and Sabahiya on Fahabeeh Road was deluged due to the rains, causing severe damage to many vehicles. More than 10 vacuum tanks worked on suction operations under the bridge. The fire department lifted over more than 26 vehicles submerged in the underpass. It was said at the time that the cause of rainwater collecting in the underpass was due to a drainage malfunction. Question: Is this issue fully addressed, so that the problem does not recur?

The director of the public information department at the fire department said at the time that the department had received more than 30 calls involving car accidents - most of them about submerged vehicles. He said the department used all its resources to deal with the accidents caused by the rainstorm.

The problem is that the beautiful rain reveals faults in road maintenance. In 2014, the rains saw serious and dangerous road accidents that caused the asphalt to erode, panicking drivers. This problem left vehicles under heavy shelling from loose gravel. It was good business for some as repair and replacement of windshields increased - especially since the price of a windshield is at least KD 15 and higher.

In 2015, the interior ministry received more than 2,000 calls during a short rainstorm, ranging from inquiry to assistance. The storm halted navigation at Shuwaikh and Shuaiba ports. This is big for a small country. A lack of awareness among the public is one reason for this mess and ignorance. The requirements of security and personal safety are essential.

I see some people thirsting for rain because of the length of the summer and extreme heat, but this does not mean going out amid a storm. The solution is that the ministry of interior and the fire department need to provide messages of awareness and serious warnings to people explaining what to do during storms and heavy rain.

Even auto insurance companies should have an effective role, as the submersion of cars is harmful to drivers. I do not know if a car sinking in rainwater is covered by insurance companies or not. The protection of people and their properties from the possible damage of storms and rain is the duty of state agencies, and public awareness is one of the means that must be taken into account.

Winter is coming and caution is a must.

Jordanian King honors Kuwaiti military attache

AMMAN: Jordanian King Abdullah II honored yesterday military attache at the Kuwaiti embassy Brigadier General Turki Al-Meshal with the military medal of the second degree. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Dr Hamad Al-Duaij said that the honoring reflected the strong ties linking the two countries. The Kuwaiti diplomat also lauded the role played by the military staff at Kuwait's embassy, affirming that Brigadier General Meshal made his country proud. Meanwhile, Brigadier General Meshal said that he was very honored to have received the medal from the Jordanian King, adding that he dedicated this achievement to the Kuwaiti people and leadership. —KUNA



AMMAN: Jordan's Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mahmoud Fraihat (right) awards military attache at the Kuwaiti embassy Brigadier General Turki Al-Meshal with the military medal of the second degree. —KUNA

Gulf heritage festival kicks off tomorrow



KUWAIT: The Gulf Popular Heritage Festival will kick off tomorrow at the Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village, as several heritage activities will take place for three months. Visitors of this edition of the annual festival will enjoy new expansions and developments recently executed in the village. These include new buildings for entertainment, tourism and cultural events, as well as old Kuwaiti town with all details, big theater and new rest areas.

The village is perfect for all family members as it includes lakes, green spaces, cinemas, restaurants, coffee shops, museums and a hotel. The festival's deputy supervisor and head of competitions committee Sheikh Sabah Fahad Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah said yesterday that the event is seeing growing number of visitors each year, adding that the village is now fully prepared for the opening tomorrow. He noted that the festival will also include competitions for different types of camels, horses, birds and others, focusing on speed, color and beauty. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Archive photos showing activities held during previous Gulf Popular Heritage Festivals. —KUNA



Islamic State silent on Egypt massacre

Pope preaches forgiveness in landmark mass

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YUMBE: A South Sudanese refugee washes clothes at the Bidibidi refugee settlement in the Northern District of Yumbe, Uganda. The vast Bidibidi settlement in far northern Uganda has sprung up over the past year as people flood out of South Sudan, fleeing civil war and severe food shortages. —AFP

50 dead in South Sudan tribal raids

S Sudan war seeps into homes, spurring domestic violence

JUBA: Fifty people were killed in raids by a tribal militia in eastern South Sudan, a local official said yesterday, the latest in a series of attacks between rival communities. Dut Achuek, a state minister, said eight people died in an attack on Monday in Jonglei state, while a follow-up raid on Tuesday left “23 women killed and... 19 men killed.” Most of the victims were civilians whose homes were burned and livestock stolen, Achuek said. Both attacks, by armed men from the Murle ethnic group, targeted Dinkas living in villages around 150 kilometers north of Bor, the state capital.

Kudumoc Nyakurono, information minister for neighboring Boma state, confirmed the involvement of Murle militia from the area. “We know that these youth went there from Boma State,” he said, adding that investigations were underway to work out the exact circumstances of the attacks. Rival pastoralist communities in South Sudan have a long and bloody history of tit-for-tat raids in which cattle are rustled and property looted, and women are commonly raped and children abducted,

adding fuel to revenge attacks. In one of the worst such cases, over 3,000 people were killed when members of a well-armed Nuer militia attacked the Murle in 2012.

Civil war in South Sudan is generating unseen levels of domestic violence, according to a study released yesterday showing a reported increase in the brutality and frequency of assaults. Tens of thousands of people have been killed and a third of the East African country’s 12 million residents have been forced to flee since civil war broke out in 2013. More than half of the South Sudanese women inter-

viewed said they have suffered domestic abuse in their lives, according to the study by George Washington University (GW) and the International Rescue Committee.

But in wartime, the assaults have grown more brutal and frequent, they told researchers. Most of the victims pointed to their husbands or partners as the culprit, while a third said they had suffered violence as part of warfare such as during raids or in refugee camps. Overall, the rates of violence against women in South Sudan was double the global average and among the highest in the world, the research found. “We are tired of being raped,” one woman was quoted as saying.

“We met with the chiefs and raised our concerns - we have had no response yet.” But half of the women who reported suffering harm said they kept it to themselves rather than seek medical help or support. Researchers attribute their silence to stigma and distrust in the legal system. “If there is ever going to be long-term peace in South Sudan, violence against women and girls must be addressed,” said Mary Ellsberg, lead researcher of the study and director of GW’s Global Women’s Institute, in a statement.

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after protracted bloodshed, then fell into civil war in late 2013. The study, which included interviews with about 2,700 women and men, shows a need to supplement aid such as food and medical supplies with domestic violence prevention, the researchers said. Globally, one in three women is estimated to have experienced violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by others, according to World Health Organization estimates.—Agencies



Report shows increase in brutality

South Sudan was double the global average and among the highest in the world, the research found. “We are tired of being raped,” one woman was quoted as saying.

Indian serial thief steals 120 hotel TVs

NEW DELHI: Indian police have detained a man who stole 120 TV sets from hotels over four months, officials said yesterday. Vasudev Nanaiah booked into budget hotels in states across southern India with oversized bags to put the televisions in when he left. If the room television did not fit his bag, the 34-year-old Nanaiah would go out to a local market to buy a bigger suitcase, police alleged. Hotel staff never suspected him as he was very well behaved. Nanaiah also paid a small advance sum and told staff he would be staying for several days but generally left early. Chetan Singh Rathor, deputy commissioner of Bangalore police said.

“We arrested him earlier this month when he was trying to sell TV sets to a shopkeeper, who alerted the police,” he added. The police say that they recovered around 20 stolen TVs and found that he had left about two dozen cases in neighboring Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh states believed to have been used in the theft of about 100 other TVs over the past four months. Nanaiah told officials that he stole TVs because it was “relatively low risk and easy”, according to police. “He said that his recent thefts went to fund his lawyer and legal fees for previous TV theft charges in different courts,” Rathor said.—AFP

Hamas’ weapons may block path to Palestinian unity

GAZA: Their faces covered with black balaclavas, AK-47s in hand, militants from Hamas’s armed wing have become a familiar presence in the Gaza Strip—and for many that remains a key problem. Hamas, the Islamist movement that has run the Gaza Strip for a decade, has been seeking to end its long feud with Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas’s Fatah, but its powerful armed wing may prove to be a deal-breaker.

The Palestinian Authority is due to take control of Gaza by Friday under a reconciliation agreement signed in October, but Hamas is flatly refusing to disarm. Security control could derail the long-awaited accord, with Abbas warning he will not accept a situation akin to Hezbollah in Lebanon, where the Shiite group’s militia wields major power. “The weapons of the resistance are a red line that is non-debatable,” Khalil Al-Hayya, deputy head of Hamas in Gaza, said at a press conference on Monday.

“These weapons will be moved to the West Bank to fight the (Israeli) occupation. It is our right to resist the occupation until it ends.” The size and strength of Hamas’s armed wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, has been a source of speculation. Hamas, which seized control of Gaza in 2007 in a near civil war with Fatah, does not comment on such details. Al-Qassam membership has been estimated at 20,000-25,000 - roughly the size of the

Czech Republic’s active military personnel, according to figures cited by the World Bank. Before a devastating 2014 war with Israel, militant groups in Gaza were believed to have a total of some 10,000 rockets, including 6,000 for Hamas, an Israeli military analysis at the time said.

‘With flowers, with roses’

Most were short- and medium-range rockets with a range of between 20 and 45 kilometers (about 12 to 28 miles), the analysis said. But there were also a number of longer-range rockets that could reach up to 200 kilometers, it said. It is thought that around half to two-thirds of the rockets were fired during the war, said Neri Zilber of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, who often writes on defense issues.

Zilber said it is believed that rocket arsenals in Gaza have since been rebuilt to around 10,000 - though with a greater focus on shorter-range weapons since they are more difficult for Israel’s missile-defense system to shoot down. Beyond those and small arms, militants in the Gaza Strip are thought to have other weapons including rocket-propelled grenades, he said. Many were likely smuggled through tunnels. In August, Hamas’s leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar said newly improved relations with Iran had made it the “biggest supporter” of Hamas’s military wing.

The weapons are key to Hamas’s ideology, with officials from the group, labeled a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union, saying they are needed for defense against Israel.

It does not recognize Israel—unlike the Abbas-led Palestine Liberation Organization—and has fought three wars against it since taking power in the Gaza



BEIT HANUN: A Palestinian boy walks past the damaged minaret of a mosque in Beit Hanun in the northern Gaza Strip, which was damaged during the 50-day war between Israel and Hamas militants in the summer of 2014. —AFP

Strip. “When Israel occupied Palestine, Israel did not come with flowers, with roses,” said Gaza-based academic Asad Abu Shark. “We have to have arms in order to defend.” Israel says that Hamas is determined to attack it, and in October its forces blew up a tunnel stretching from Gaza into its territory, resulting in the deaths of 12 Palestinian militants. Such tunnels have been previously used for attacks.

‘Division will remain’

But Hamas’s armed resistance has recently run up against other pressures in the Palestinian enclave of some two million

people. Under an Israeli blockade for more than a decade and with its border with Egypt kept largely closed in recent years, Gaza has seen worsening humanitarian conditions. Abbas has piled further pressure with punitive measures against Hamas, including cutting electricity payments, worsening an already severe power shortage. Hamas has sought help from Cairo—hoping to have the Rafah border with Egypt opened—and has faced pressure to pursue reconciliation in return. A deal mediated by Egypt was signed on October 12, though it lacks details on security control.—AFP

International

IS silent on Egypt massacre decried even by supporters

Gunmen massacre more than 300 worshippers

CAIRO: The gunmen who massacred more than 300 worshippers in an Egyptian mosque made no effort to conceal their identity—they showed up raising the black banner of the self-styled “Islamic State”, authorities and witnesses said. The group’s militants had previously warned the North Sinai mosque associated with Sufis to end the mystical practices IS calls heretical, even visiting the mosque in person a few weeks before the attack, a Sufi sheikh said.

But almost a week after the Friday massacre, IS has yet to claim the attack in a sign, officials and analysts say, that their gunmen might have gone too far even by the extremists’ standards. For all the indiscriminate carnage IS has perpetrated on almost every continent, never before has an attack shocked even its supporters who now insist the group is innocent. As the scale of the attack percolated in jihadist social media channels, pro-IS users denied the group’s involvement.

Every militant group known to operate in Egypt, including the Al-Qaeda-linked Jund Al-Islam in Sinai that opposes IS, condemned the massacre. IS supporters on social media were livid when a purported audio recording of wireless communications between an IS member boasting about the attack, and another noting down details, spread on pro Al-Qaeda Telegram channels.

IS supporters in denial

IS had targeted mosques before—usually Shiite—and Sufis. The jihadists bombed a Manchester concert on May 22 in which they were certain to kill children who had come to watch pop star Ariane Grande perform. At the time, British jihadist Omar Hussein—who may have been killed in the takeover of the group’s erstwhile cap-

ital of Raqa in Syria—said killing “disbeliever” children rested comfortably on his conscience. “As for the killing of little girls then it is permissible 2 kill the kuffaar as they kill us,” he wrote in response to an AFP query.

But the attack on the Egyptian mosque, packed during communal Friday prayers with hundreds of worshippers, Sufis and non-Sufis, appears to have been a step too far for IS supporters. At least 27 children died in the massacre. “Something of this scale, that killed more than ‘just Sufis’ would be hard to justify,” said analyst Amarnath Amarasingam, senior research fellow with counter terrorism group ISD Global. “It could be that the Egyptian or Sinai context makes this kind of attack more abhorrent and makes the group less likely to earn local support,” said a Western official.

Islamic State has yet to claim the responsibility

After the attack, another jihadist who regularly defends IS atrocities flatly denied IS involvement. “Not at all. Your analysis is wrong. You’ve been influenced by media reports,” he wrote in a message responding to an AFP query. IS in Egypt, based in the north of the Sinai peninsula bordering Israel and the Gaza Strip, has killed hundreds of security personnel in attacks, and more than a hundred Christians in church bombings and shootings over the past year.

“It does appear to be in line with a gradual shift over the last four years,” said another Western official. IS went “from a violent campaign by the terrorists in Sinai that was very local... and in the beginning careful not to alienate the local population... to something that seems to be much more affected by global jihadi motivations of Daesh,” the official said, referring to IS with a derogatory Arabic acronym. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has warned that IS foreign fighters will try to settle in his region as they lose ground in Iraq and Syria.



EL-ARISH: Photo shows the Rawda mosque, roughly 40 kilometers west of the North Sinai capital of El-Arish, after a gun and bombing attack. —AFP

No central agreement

But it may have been a local initiative by the increasingly pressed jihadists in Sinai that was badly received by IS’s leadership in Iraq and Syria, a third Western official said. It is “possible that the attack was coordinated without central agreement. Hence the absence of a claim,” said the diplomat. Another possibility is that it was an attack meant to send a message to Sufis and villagers seen as pro-government, without granting it the imprimatur of an official IS claim. The Western officials agreed to speak to AFP on condition of anonymity. Hassan Hassan, a leading expert on IS, said the jihadists had called the Sufis “taghuts” in a publication, a word used in the Koran to describe the devil and tyrants. “Nothing is off limits when they call them taghut,” said

Hassan, a senior fellow at the TIMEP think tank and author of the book “ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror”.

IS fighters, however, had gone too far in the past and been punished for it, he said. “When they killed the Al-Shaitat, they removed the (attackers) after that,” he said of a 2014 massacre of up to 700 tribesmen in Syria’s eastern Deir Ezzor region. “Either because they wanted to distance themselves from it or they thought they went too far,” Hassan said. Still, with IS’s media operation continuing to baffle observers, it remains possible but unlikely that the group may yet claim the attack. After an attack on a military toll booth south of Cairo in June, IS issued a claim three weeks later—not through the usual statement on its Telegram accounts but in its weekly Nabaa newsletter.—AFP

With N Korea missile reach global, focus falls on defenses

WASHINGTON: North Korea’s latest rocket launch saw it shoot an intercontinental ballistic missile higher than ever before, prompting US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to warn that Pyongyang could soon threaten “everywhere in the world.” The worrying assessment once again calls into question America’s anti-missile capabilities, and whether it and its allies can protect themselves from the threat of a nuclear-tipped ICBM.

How high?

Defense officials did not elaborate on Mattis’s remark about the missile’s elevation, but on July 4, in a test that Kim Jong-Un called a gift for the “American bastards,” a North Korean rocket soared to an altitude of 2,802 kilometers and flew 933 kilometers. According to David Wright, a co-director and senior scientist at the Union of Concerned Scientists, news reports the missile reached more than 4,500 kilometers in altitude would give it a massive range. “If these numbers are correct, then if flown on a standard trajectory rather than this lofted trajectory, this missile would have a range of more than 13,000 kilometers (8,100 miles),” Wright wrote on his organization’s blog. “Such a missile would have more than enough range to reach Washington, DC, and in fact any part of the continental United States.” After the July 4 launch, experts had said Alaska was in range, so the latest test marks a dramatic and rapid increase in North Korea’s potential reach.

Missile defenses

The United States has spent decades and billions of dollars developing technologies to stop an incoming ballistic missile, and the US military still has faith these systems can protect against a North Korean missile attack. “The (South Korea)-US alliance remains confident that we can still defend against any North Korean threat,” Pentagon spokesman Colonel Rob Manning said shortly after Tuesday’s launch. America and its allies have several technologies at their disposal, none of which is infallible. To take out an ICBM, America has the Ground-based



PAJU: South Korean army’s K-55 self-propelled howitzers take a position at a military training field in the border city of Paju yesterday. —AFP

Midcourse Defense (GMD) system at its disposal.

Installed at Fort Greely, about 100 miles outside Fairbanks in Alaska, and California’s Vandenberg Air Force Base, the GMD can hit an incoming missile in space. It was put to the test in May, when the military successfully launched a GMD interceptor from the California base. The missile blasted outside Earth’s atmosphere and smashed into a dummy ICBM target, destroying it in a direct collision. But the GMD system has had a checkered record in previous tests—failing in earlier launches against slower-moving targets—and it could be overwhelmed by a barrage of incoming missiles.

What other defenses?

Aside from the GMD, the United States and its allies also have at their disposal what is known as the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System (AEGIS). The ship-based system’s

highly sensitive radars and sensors feed ICBM-tracking data to the GMD facilities in California and Alaska, and AEGIS is itself capable of intercepting shorter-range missiles. Some experts say the AEGIS system may also one day have a limited ability to intercept ICBMs. In the meantime, the US military this year began deploying the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system to South Korea, capable of destroying short, medium and intermediate-range missiles in their final phase of flight. That move infuriated China, which has argued the deployment would further destabilize the situation on the Korean peninsula. The US and its allies South Korea and Japan also have Patriot Advanced Capability-3 interceptor batteries. But these are designed to protect against a regional threat and would have limited effect against an ICBM. In Europe, nations have an array of missile defenses but these are primarily focused against shorter range missiles that could come from Russia or the Middle East.—AFP

‘We are in danger’: Translators left behind to Taliban

KABUL: The Taliban have tried to kill Zainullah, a former translator for the French Army, twice already, he says, warning that the insurgents have expanded their territory in Afghanistan to just five minutes from his door. He and fellow translators who once aided international forces say they are increasingly fearful, with the Taliban now controlling or influencing some 40 percent of Afghanistan’s 407 districts.

“We are in danger,” says another, Bashir, who served the French Army for four years. “Nobody knows when but it’s going to happen one day, for the situation is getting worse. They will get us.” Last Wednesday, Zainullah was wounded in a suicide motorcycle attack in front of his home just north of Kabul, as he spoke to a NATO patrol. One of the soldiers was killed, and several others wounded. Zainullah, 28, said he was sure the bomber had wanted to kill two birds with one stone: the Westerners, and him.

It was their second attempt, he said. In June he received a threatening phone call and, shortly after, was shot in his garden by

two gunmen on motorbikes. More telephone threats have followed, voices speaking to him in the accents of Kandahar, the Taliban’s birthplace in Afghanistan’s south. Previously he felt safe at home. “There were no Taliban here. Now they are in the (neighboring) village,” just a five minute drive away. Zainullah spoke to the police. He displayed the official complaint he made, stored in a plastic bag with his translator contracts and pay stubs from the NATO-controlled International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). He even has his access badges to the French bases in Kabul and in Surubi.

“The district police chief told me, ‘We know you’ve been targeted but we can’t protect you. We don’t have enough guards. You are not high profile people.’ He was sorry,” Zainullah said. Embattled police are themselves increasingly targeted in devastating attacks and short on time and resources. “Of course, we don’t have enough forces to protect every individual but we are doing our best,” says Abdul Fatah, a senior police official in Kapisa, an unstable province north of the capital where French troops once had a heavy presence. He spoke generally as he was not involved in Zainullah’s case. There are 152 Afghans, mainly former translators but also cooks, drivers, mechanics and others who worked for international forces, whose requests for relocation have been rejected by France, according to their lawyer

Caroline Decroix, based in Paris. One hundred others have seen theirs accepted. They live now in France with their families, 371 people in total. Among those denied, many have gone clandestinely to Turkey, Europe or neighboring countries, says Bashir.

Infidels and spies

“The insurgents, they call us infidels, or spies,” Bashir explained. He said he had become so paranoid that he was even suspicious of his own tribe, people he grew up with who, even unintentionally, could divulge information leading the Taliban to him. “I’ve changed my address many times,” he said, adding that virtually none of his fellow translators can live in their own villages any more. Some even travel wearing burqas to disguise themselves, he said. “We feel we didn’t make the right choice. We are left behind.” Hajji Mirdad Mirjabi, an MP for Kapisa, confirmed the climate of fear. “Almost all the interpreters had to take their families out of the provinces to live in Kabul and in city centers, where they are jobless... They hardly survive in the cities,” he said. Zainullah says he does not have the means to keep moving. His older brother worked as a translator for British troops and now lives in the UK with his family. Zainullah’s relatives are panicked. “My father told me, ‘We wish you had never worked with the coalition.’ It hurts, it’s disap-



KABUL: Zainullah, a 28-year-old Afghan who was working as an interpreter with French troops, talks to an AFP reporter during an interview in Kabul. —AFP

pointing.” In early October, the Council of State, France’s highest court, found that there had been a “miscalculation” in the management of some of the translators’ applications for relocation packages. “Zainullah has been waiting for protection for two years and has not received an answer,” says the lawyer Decroix, who claims to receive “alarming information almost daily” from Afghanistan. She hopes the Council of State’s ruling will prompt the government to “finally realise the shortcomings and flaws of the relocation mechanism.”—AFP

News in brief

Bulgaria, Iran face off

SOFIA: Bulgaria said yesterday that an aircraft taking its prime minister and former king to Saudi Arabia was denied permission by Iran to enter its airspace, forcing them to fly via Iraq. “The refusal is inexplicable,” Bulgarian Foreign Minister Ekaterina Zaharieva was quoted by Bulgarian media as saying from Riyadh a day after the incident. She said Iran’s ambassador in Sofia has been summoned for an explanation. Iran had initially given the flight permission before it took off, she said. The plane was carrying former king Simeon Saxe Coburg, Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, Zaharieva and four other ministers. It was the first visit by a Bulgarian prime minister to Saudi Arabia since the former communist country, now a member of the European Union, and the kingdom established relations 20 years ago.

Israel bars Swiss diplomats

JERUSALEM: Israel will refuse Swiss diplomats access to the Gaza Strip until further notice after recent meetings were held with Hamas leaders, an Israeli official said yesterday. Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman issued the order to prevent the diplomats from traveling to the Palestinian enclave from Israeli territory, the official said on condition of anonymity. The order will remain in place “until clarifications occur,” said the official, without providing further details. Israel controls all access into Gaza apart from the strip’s sole crossing with Egypt. On Tuesday, Switzerland’s envoy to the Palestinian Authority, Julien Thoni, met Hamas’s chief in the Gaza Strip, Yahya Sinwar. At least one other recent meeting was also held with Hamas leaders. Hamas, the Islamist movement that has controlled the Gaza Strip for a decade, is considered a terrorist organization by the United States and European Union.

Salman pleads ‘not guilty’

DUBAI: Bahrain’s jailed Shiite opposition leader Sheikh Ali Salman pleaded not guilty yesterday to new charges of working with the kingdom’s Gulf rival Qatar to overthrow the Sunni minority government. The trial comes amid a bitter diplomatic spat now approaching its seventh month pitting Bahrain and its allies against Qatar, which is accused of being too close to Iran. Salman, who has been behind bars since 2014 serving a nine-year sentence on charges of inciting hatred, had refused to appear in court for a first planned hearing in the new trial on Monday. “Sheikh Ali denied the charges leveled against him,” a judicial source said. The court set the next hearing for December 28. Salman and two members of his banned Al-Wefaq movement, Hassan Sultan and Ali Al-Aswad—neither of them in custody—are charged with “communicating with a foreign state to commit acts hostile to the state of Bahrain”.

4 Cameroon troops killed

YAOUNDE: Four Cameroonian soldiers were killed by suspected separatists in a restive English-speaking region yesterday, army and government sources said. “Four soldiers were killed around 2am around Mamfe,” a city in the country’s Southwest Region, according to an army source. “They murdered our soldiers. If that’s not terrorism, what is it?” the source said angrily. The deaths were confirmed by a government source, although the circumstances were not given. The bloodshed is the latest episode in an escalating crisis in the Southwest and Northwest regions, home to a large minority of English-speakers in the francophone-majority nation. Eight members of the security forces have been killed this month alone.

International

Kim Jong Un declares N Korea a nuclear power

New ICBM puts US mainland within the range

SEOUL: North Korea said it successfully tested a new intercontinental ballistic missile yesterday in a "breakthrough" that puts the US mainland within range of its nuclear weapons whose warheads could withstand re-entry to the Earth's atmosphere. North Korea's first missile test since mid-September came a week after US President Donald Trump put North Korea back on a US list of countries it says support terrorism, allowing it to impose more sanctions.

North Korea, which also conducted its sixth and largest nuclear test in September, has tested dozens of ballistic missiles under its leader, Kim Jong Un, in defiance of international sanctions. The latest was the highest and longest any North Korean missile had flown, landing in the sea near Japan. North Korea said the new missile reached an altitude of about 4,475 km - more than 10 times the height of the International Space Station - and flew 950 km during its 53-minute flight.

"After watching the successful launch of the new type ICBM Hwasong-15, Kim Jong Un declared with pride that now we have finally realized the great historic cause of completing the state nuclear force, the cause of building a rocket power," according to a statement read by a television presenter. State media said the missile was launched from a newly developed vehicle and that the warhead could withstand the pressure of re-entering the atmosphere. Kim personally guided the missile test and said the new launcher was "impeccable", state media said. He described the new vehicle as a "breakthrough".

North Korea also described itself as a "responsible nuclear power", saying its strategic weapons were developed to defend itself from "the US imperialists' nuclear blackmail policy and nuclear threat". The UN Security Council was scheduled to meet to discuss the launch. Many nuclear experts say the North has yet to prove it has mastered all technical hurdles, including the ability to deliver a heavy nuclear warhead reliably atop an ICBM, but it was likely that it soon would. "We don't have to like it, but we're going to have to learn to live with North Korea's ability to target the United States with nuclear weapons," said Jeffrey Lewis, head of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Middlebury Institute of Strategic Studies.



Missile lands in Japan exclusive economic zone

'Threaten everywhere'
US, Japanese and South Korean officials all agreed the missile, which landed within Japan's exclusive economic zone, was likely an ICBM. The test did not pose a threat to the United States, its territories or allies, the Pentagon said. "It went higher, frankly, than any previous shot they've taken, a research and development effort on their part to continue building ballistic missiles that can threaten everywhere in the world, basically," US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told reporters at the White House.

Trump spoke by phone with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Moon Jae-In, with all three reaffirming their commitment to combat the North Korean threat. "It is a situation that we will handle," Trump told reporters. Trump, who was briefed on the missile while it was in flight, said it did not change his administration's approach to North Korea, which has included new curbs to hurt trade between China and North Korea. Abe and Moon, in a separate telephone call, said they would "no longer tolerate" North Korea's increasing threats and would tighten sanctions, the South's presidential office said.

All options

Washington has said repeatedly that all options, including military ones, are on the table in dealing with North Korea while stressing its desire for a peaceful solution. "Diplomatic options remain viable and open, for now," US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said. Other than enforcing existing UN sanctions, "the international community must take additional measures to enhance maritime security, including the right to interdict maritime traffic" travelling to North Korea, Tillerson said in a statement.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the launch. "This is a clear violation of Security Council resolutions and shows complete disregard for the united view of the international community," his spokesman said in a statement. China, North Korea's lone major ally, expressed "grave concern" at the test, while calling for all sides to act cautiously. In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov also urged all sides to stay calm, saying this was necessary to avoid a worst-case scenario on the Korean peninsula.



North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) shows the test-fire of the intercontinental ballistic missile Hwasong-14 at an undisclosed location. —AFP

US East Coast in range?

The new Hwasong-15, named after the planet Mars, was a more advanced version of an ICBM tested twice in July. North Korea said it was designed to carry a "super-large heavy warhead". Based on its trajectory and distance, the missile would have a range of more than 13,000 km (8,100 miles) - more than enough to reach Washington D.C. and the rest of the United States, the US-based Union of Concerned Scientists said. However, it was unclear how heavy a payload the missile was carrying, and it was uncertain if it could carry a large nuclear warhead that far, the nonprofit science advocacy group added.

Minutes after the North fired the missile, South Korea's military said it conducted a missile-firing test in response. Moon said the launch had been anticipated. There was no choice but for countries to keep applying pressure, he added. "The situation could get out of control if North Korea perfects its ICBM technology," Moon said after a

national security council meeting. "North Korea shouldn't miscalculate the situation and threaten South Korea with a nuclear weapon, which could elicit a possible pre-emptive strike by the United States."

The test comes less than three months before South Korea hosts the Winter Olympics at a resort just 80 km from the heavily fortified border with the North. North Korea has said its weapons programs are a necessary defense against US plans to invade. The United States, which has 28,500 troops in South Korea as a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean war, denies any such intention.

Last week, North Korea denounced Trump's decision to relist it as a state sponsor of terrorism, calling it a "serious provocation and violent infringement". Trump has traded insults and threats with Kim and warned in September that the United States would have no choice but to "totally destroy" North Korea if forced to defend itself or its allies. — Reuters

News in brief

'Butt selfie' at temple

BANGKOK: Thai authorities have fined two American tourists for public indecency for posing for a "butt selfie" in front of a famous Buddhist temple, police said yesterday. The two, who police identified as Joseph Dasilva, 38, and Travis Dasilva, 36, were arrested late on Tuesday at an airport in the capital, Bangkok. They were each fined 5,000 baht (\$154) for baring their buttocks for a picture taken last week at Bangkok's Wat Arun, or Temple of the Dawn. "The two American citizens have admitted taking the picture," district police chief Jaruphat Thongkomol said. While Thailand has a reputation for racy night life, the predominantly Buddhist country is deeply conservative and revealing clothing is frowned upon while public nudity is considered offensive.

Passenger train derails

MADRID: A passenger train derailed in the Spanish province of Seville yesterday, leaving 21 people injured, one seriously, according to the Andalusia emergency services. The medium-distance train was travelling between Malaga and Seville and slid off the tracks in the municipality of Arahal due to adverse conditions caused by heavy rain, a spokeswoman for the national transporter Renfe said. Andalusia emergency services said earlier yesterday that they had attended more than 100 incidents caused by severe weather conditions in the Seville region, mostly on the roads. Four people were killed and 47 injured after a train derailed in Galicia in northwestern Spain last year while some 80 people were killed in Spain's worst rail disaster in decades when a high-speed train went off the tracks and slammed into a wall, also in Galicia.

Turkey hunts 333 soldiers

ISTANBUL: Turkish police have launched raids in 49 cities to detain over 300 soldiers accused of links to the group blamed for last year's attempted coup, state media reported yesterday. The Istanbul public prosecutor issued arrest warrants for 360 people as part of a probe into followers of US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen in the Turkish armed forces, state-run news agency Anadolu said. Those targeted include 333 soldiers, as well as 27 civilians suspected of being so-called "secret imams" who are alleged to be in charge of Gulenists in the military. Two of the soldiers were detained in the northern city of Zonguldak, Anadolu said. It said they will be taken to Istanbul where the investigation into the Gulen "structure" in the military is taking place. Of the 360 sought, 216 were soldiers on active duty, the private Dogan news agency said. Seven of the suspects sought are pilots.

US 'serial killer' nabbed

TAMPA: US police arrested a suspected serial killer on Tuesday who faces charges of murdering four people over a period of several weeks in Tampa, Florida. The murders took place between October 9 and November 14 in a seven-block area of the city's working-class Seminole Heights neighborhood, prompting the offer of a \$100,000 reward for information to help solve the case. Howell Emmanuel Donaldson III, aged 24, was arrested after police received a tip that he had a firearm at a McDonald's fast food restaurant where he worked. Police Chief Brian Dugan said Donaldson handed a co-worker a handgun and left the McDonald's to go to a check-cashing business.

Anger in UK over reported Brexit divorce package

LONDON: Brexiters and europhiles reacted angrily to reports yesterday that Britain will pay up to 55 billion euros to leave the European Union, putting pressure on British negotiators ahead of key talks. London and Brussels have agreed that Britain will pay between 45 and 55 billion euros (\$53-63 billion), according to the Daily Telegraph. The Financial Times reported Britain would cover EU liabilities worth as much as 100 billion euros, but when structured as net payments over many decades that could drop to less than half that amount.

EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier refused to confirm the reports, calling them "rumors". "There is a subject on which we are continuing to work despite the claims or rumors in the press today, that's the issue of financial engagements," he told a security conference in Berlin. Pro-Brexit supporters reacted with anger to the reports, with leading campaigner Nigel Farage calling the reported figure "utterly unacceptable". "For a sum of this magnitude to be agreed in return for nothing more than a promise of a decent settlement on trade represents a complete and total sellout," he wrote in the Daily Telegraph.

Meanwhile, pro-EU Labor lawmaker Chuka Umunna said the government's apparent climbdown dispelled pro-Brexit campaign claims. "This is a whopping great symbol for the impossibility on delivering Brexit on the terms it was sold to the British people," he told BBC Radio 4's Today program. Investors were more optimistic that the reports heralded a breakthrough, sending the pound 0.5 percent higher against the dollar, a two-month high. The newspapers said negotiators, headed on the British side by leading Brexit official Olly Robbins, reached the understanding at meetings in Brussels last week.

Deal 'is there'

An agreement would be a major breakthrough as Britain prepares for an EU summit in December where it is

Trump, Democrats spar; government shutdown looms

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump clashed with Democratic leaders in dramatic fashion Tuesday, heaping pressure on Congress to craft a compromise on federal spending or face a crippling government shutdown in 10 days. Hours after the president suggested a funding deal with Democrats may be impossible, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer pulled out of a planned White House meeting with Trump that they said would be fruitless.

"Given that the president doesn't see a deal between Democrats and the White House, we believe the best path forward is to continue negotiating with our Republican counterparts in Congress

instead," the pair said in a statement. Trump shot back that he was not surprised the Democrats rejected his offer, saying they were "very far apart" on several issues like immigration. "They've been all talk and they've been no action. And now it's even worse, now it's not even talk," Trump declared during the meeting, which went ahead with Republican congressional leaders—an empty chair on either side of the president underscoring the absence of their Democratic counterparts.

Later, after a new North Korean missile launch, Trump said on Twitter: "it's more important than ever to fund our gov't & military! Dems shouldn't hold troop funding hostage for amnesty & illegal immigration. I ran on stopping illegal immigration and won big. They can't now threaten a shutdown to get their demands." The rare public rejection of White House talks ratcheted up tensions in Washington over a 2018 spending bill that must pass by a December 8 deadline, and served as a stinging rebuke to a president who often mocks his rivals on Twitter.—AFP



BERLIN: The EU's chief negotiator for Brexit Michel Barnier gestures as he gives a speech during the Deutscher Arbeitgebertag congress of German Employers' Associations (BDA) yesterday in Berlin. —AFP

hoping to get the go-ahead to start the next phase of talks on future trade ties with the EU. It would leave two major areas on which the two sides still do not agree—expatriate citizens' rights after Brexit and the future of the Irish border. "The deal on the money is there," a senior source involved in the negotiations told the Telegraph. "It's now the ECJ (European Court of Justice) question and Northern Ireland that are the outstanding issues ahead of the Council," the source said. One key area of contention is whether the 3.2 million EU citizens living in Britain will continue to be allowed to appeal to ECJ jurisdiction or if their rights will be governed by British courts, as London insists.

So far both sides have avoided publicly declaring a clear-cut number for what Britain owes the rest of the EU. Prime Minister Theresa May had offered to cover Britain's contributions to its budget in 2019 and 2020 - a total of around 20 billion euros. That pledge was reportedly doubled to 40 billion euros at a ministerial meeting in London last week. The Telegraph quoted an EU source with knowledge of the talks said the text of the financial agreement would allow a "low figure" to be generated for the British public but would also give the EU the certainty it is looking for. Asked about the reports, a spokesman for Britain's Department for Exiting the European Union said "intensive talks" are taking place in Brussels this week, and did not address the divorce bill directly. —AFP

Fractured French Right struggles

PARIS: A year ago, France's conservatives appeared headed for the presidency. Now the French right is more fractured than at almost any point in the modern-day Fifth Republic, leaving one clear winner: President Emmanuel Macron, a centrist. Over the weekend, a group of Macron-friendly lawmakers cemented their split from the centre-right The Republicans party, forming a new party, Agir (Act). In a further blow to The Republicans, three other party heavyweights defected to Macron's Republic on the Move party.

This comes at a time the far-right National Front party is riven by internal divisions and fighting a new rival movement set up by one of its own. In two weeks, The Republicans will elect a new party chief. The task of whoever wins will be to heal divisions and rebuild a party blown apart by Macron's election triumph. "The Right is in the process of breaking apart ... if this goes on we will be in opposition for 20 years," Mael de Calan, a rising star in The Republicans and candidate for party leader, told television channel France 2.

De Calan hit out at those deserting the party. He also said the frontrunner in the party leadership race, 42-year-old Laurent Wauquiez, was advocating policies that would push The Republicans too far to the right—an outcome which could prompt others to leave. Macron, 39, dynamited France's traditional political landscape in the summer, winning the presidency without ever having held office before and securing a commanding majority in parliament with a party just over a year old. Macron poached cabinet ministers from both the Socialist Party and The Republicans, leaving both scrambling for an answer to the former investment banker's stunning rise to power. The Socialists of former President Francois Hollande were particularly hurt.

"Macron destroyed the Left with the presidential election and now the target is the Right," said Frederic Dabi of pollster Ifop. Both far-left 'France Unbowed' leader Jean-Luc Melenchon and far-right National Front chief Marine Le Pen are viewed as stronger opponents to Macron, an Odoxa poll showed at the weekend. —AFP



WASHINGTON: US Senate Minority Leader Sen Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and House Minority Leader Rep Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) participate in a news conference at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in Washington, DC. —AFP

International

Pope appeals to Buddhist monks to overcome 'intolerance and hatred'

Radical monks accused of fanning Islamophobia

YANGON: Pope Francis called on Myanmar's top Buddhist monks to conquer "prejudice and hatred" in a country ravaged by communal divisions, after holding the nation's first-ever papal mass attended by 150,000 Catholics yesterday. The pontiff's four-day visit has so far been marked by his avoidance in public of the crisis in northern Rakhine state and Myanmar's treatment of its Rohingya Muslim community.

Pope Francis has previously spoken out strongly in defense of the Muslim group, whom the UN and US say are victims of an ethnic cleansing campaign by Myanmar's military that has driven 620,000 of them into Bangladesh since late August. "If we are to be united, as is our purpose, we need to surmount all forms of misunderstanding, intolerance, prejudice and hatred," the pope told the orange-robed monks of Myanmar's highest Buddhist body, called the Sangha Maha Nayka.

Radical monks have played a key role in fanning Islamophobia in Myanmar and hardening attitudes towards the Rohingya. In recent months the Sangha has moved to rein them in, especially in banning sermons by Wirathu—a monk whose vitriolic rants were widely disseminated via social media. Welcoming the pope Sangha chairman, Kumarabhivamsa, who oversees Myanmar's estimated 600,000 monks, expressed sadness at "extremism and terrorism" conducted in the name of religion.

Latin songs by nuns

Earlier yesterday the pope delivered a message of for-

giveness in an open-air mass before a sea of Catholics in Yangon, many wearing colorful costumes from the country's myriad ethnic groups.

"I never dreamed I would see him in my lifetime," said Meo, an 81-year-old from the Akha minority in Shan state. A choir of Myanmar nuns sang in Latin, accompanied by organ music, as Francis delivered a homily urging compassion-opening his speech with "minglabar", Burmese for "hello". "I can see that the Church here is alive," he said of a Catholic community numbering around 700,000 — a tiny fraction of the country's 51 million people. The pontiff noted that many Myanmar people "bear the wounds of violence, wounds both visible and invisible". But he urged his audience to forgo anger and respond with "forgiveness and compassion".

His visit has been as much political as religious in a country on the defensive after the global outrage over the plight of the Rohingya. He held private talks with both civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the powerful army chief Min Aung Hlaing, who are part of a delicate power-sharing arrangement as the country emerges from decades of junta rule. His caution so far will bring relief to Myanmar's Catholic leaders, who had urged the pontiff not to wade into the treacherous issue for fear of sparking a backlash from Buddhist hardliners. Even the mention of the name Rohingya is incendiary to many among the majority-Buddhist population, who deny the group are a distinct minority and insist on calling them "Bengalis".



YANGON: Pope Francis (centre right) presents a gift to Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa (centre left), Chairman of state Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, during their meeting in Yangon yesterday. —AFP

Diplomatic dance

Reactions to the pope's handling of the issue have been mixed, with some Rohingya expressing disappointment that he did not directly confront his hosts in public on their suffering or even mention their name. But Kyaw Min, a for-

mer MP and prominent Rohingya activist, said he understood the pressures the pope was under and applauded his nuanced approach. "He said there were some people who have been bullied and need to get their rights ... this was about the Rohingya," Kyaw Min said.—AFP



Pope preaches forgiveness in landmark mass

Bangladesh's priest disappearance casts pall over pope visit

DHAKA: A Catholic priest has disappeared in Bangladesh, police said yesterday, as the Muslim-majority country stepped up security ahead of a landmark visit by Pope Francis that follows a rise in Islamist attacks on religious minorities. Walter William Rosario, a 40-year-old priest and headmaster of a Catholic school, went missing on Monday in a village in northern Bangladesh where suspected Islamist extremists last year hacked a Catholic grocer to death. Gerves Rosario, bishop of the nearby city of Rajshahi, said he believed the priest had been kidnapped and that Catholics in the region were deeply worried. "He was organizing for around 300 Catholics to travel to Dhaka to see the Pope and attend his holy mass. But his disappearance has marred their joy. They don't want to go to Dhaka any more," he said.

News of his disappearance comes as Bangladesh tightens security in the capital Dhaka ahead of the arrival today of the first pontiff to visit Bangladesh in more than three decades. Police in Natore district said they had launched a major search for Rosario after his family reported him missing. "He has been missing since late Monday. His mobile has been switched off," local police chief Biplob Bijoy Talukder said. The family received a phone call from someone using the missing man's number to demand a ransom, but Talukder said police believed this was a hoax. They have not ruled out the possibility he was abducted by Islamist extremists, who have carried out attacks on religious minorities in the region in the past four years.

'Our joy is gone'

Since 2015 at least three Christians, including two converts from Islam, have been hacked to death in attacks blamed on the militant Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). Bikash Hubert Rebeiro, the priest in Bonpara village where Rosario grew up, described him as a "good man" whose disappearance had cast a pall over the pope's visit. "Our joy is gone," he told AFP by phone. "Everyone in the village is shocked. His elderly mother has been crying non-



DHAKA: Bangladeshi nuns and Christian devotees leave after a mass service at the Holy Rosary church in Dhaka yesterday. —AFP

stop," Rebeiro said Rosario's family was friendly with the relatives of Sunil Gomes, the Catholic grocer murdered outside his shop last year. Christians make up less than 0.5 percent of Bangladesh's 160 million people and have for centuries lived in harmony alongside the Muslim majority.

But community leaders say a rise in Islamist extremism has strained relations. Bangladesh authorities have escalated security in Christian areas of Dhaka in recent days as tens of thousands descend on the capital for an open-air mass on Friday. On Tuesday police said they had killed three suspected Islamist militants in a raid on a house where they found hand grenades, pistols and bomb-making materials. "The pope's visit is a matter of honor for us. We are organizing the highest level of security for him,"

police spokeswoman Sahely Ferdous said. The three-day visit will be dominated by the plight of more than 620,000 Rohingya Muslims who have fled ethnic unrest in Myanmar and taken refuge in Bangladesh. Their arrival has added to the huge challenges already facing the poor, overpopulated country, which has seen a substantial rise in Islamist extremism in recent years. In July last year Islamist militants stormed a Dhaka cafe and massacred 22 hostages including 18 foreigners in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group. The government has denied the international group's involvement. Since the attack, security forces have killed more than 70 alleged militants in a crackdown condemned by rights activists and opposition parties.—AFP

Outcry as Beijing evicts migrants onto cold streets

BEIJING: Two dozen police swept through the pitch-black frigid hallways of tenement buildings in a ramshackle neighborhood of northern Beijing, posting eviction notices on every door with heavy thumps of their fists. The blunt warning gave residents just six hours to pack up and leave, as part of a city-wide campaign that has thrown throngs of migrant workers onto the freezing streets in recent days.

The harsh tactics have sparked a public outcry, but officials have argued that they are taking people out of unsafe homes in the wake of a fire that killed 19 people including eight children earlier this month. Bulldozers and diggers have torn down buildings deemed to be fire hazards, reducing swathes of neighborhoods to rubble. When Pi Village resident Xiang Shaoping arrived at his home, he found a jarring message on the door. "If you have not left the premises, moved out and completely emptied the space by 6:00 pm, all your belongings will be considered forfeited, and you will be responsible for all consequences," read the letter posted around noon on Monday, without an official seal.

Xiang, a construction worker from

Sichuan province, paid 700 yuan (\$105) a month for his two-room flat—all he could afford as he struggled to support his wife and three children on an income of 4,000 yuan (\$600) a month. He moved there in September after authorities kicked migrants out of his former and more central residence. "If this house is unfit to live in, you should have told us before we moved in, or not let them build it in the first place," he said. "China is saying on the international stage that it's improved human rights, but do we low-end people have any rights?"

'Act mercilessly'

The labor of hundreds of millions of migrants who moved from China's countryside to its cities has fuelled the economic boom in recent decades, though legally they are not allowed access to social services outside their home towns. But authorities in overcrowded Beijing have been getting rid of many of them for the past year as they seek to cap its population at 23 million by 2020 and demolish 40 million square metres of illegal structures.

The deadly apartment fire prompted officials to intensify the evictions with a 40-day campaign to clear Beijing of safety threats. Authorities do not say how many people have been evicted in recent days, but the scope of the operation and demolitions likely affected tens of thousands. Critics say the campaign pushes for rapid gentrification and targets the "low-end population", a term used in past official



BEIJING: A man cycle past buildings which were destroyed by the municipality on the outskirts of Beijing. —AFP

documents. Beijing mayor Cai Qi has denied such intentions.

Online video footage showed Wang Yongxian, the top official of Beijing's Fengtai district, urging cadres to "act hard, mercilessly, and quickly" and charge those who resist with the crime of "endangering public safety". "Demolish what you can demolish today, don't wait until tomorrow," he said. "Tonight there could be another fire." Last

Friday more than 100 scholars, lawyers and artists signed an open letter to authorities protesting at the evictions, calling them a "serious violation of human rights". Internet censors have since deleted it as well as photos and comments about the fire's aftermath. Pi Village is some 50 kilometers from the fire's location, but authorities still shut off water, power and heat there without explanation on the day of the blaze.—AFP

News in brief

Police foil school attack

SYDNEY: Two teenagers have been charged with planning an attack using guns and explosives on a Australian school and police said yesterday they intended to kill multiple people. The plot targeting the school in South Australia's fruit-producing Riverland region, northeast of Adelaide, came to the attention of authorities earlier this month and the two young men were arrested soon afterwards. Detective Superintendent Des Bray said they were accused of planning "an attack at a school involving the use of firearms and explosives which could have led to multiple deaths". "There is no doubt in my mind that we prevented a catastrophe," he said. "We believe most likely the attack would have occurred, if not stopped, before the end of the current school term (in mid-December)." The two boys—aged 16 and 18 — are in custody, with the younger one charged with a count of solicit to murder, while the older one faces threatening to kill offences. The

15 rebels die in clash

MANILA: Fifteen suspected communist guerrillas including six women have been killed in a gunbattle, the Philippine military said yesterday, days after President Rodrigo Duterte called off peace talks. Duterte last week vowed to go to war with the rebels and threatened to categorize them a "terrorist" group over deadly attacks against soldiers and police. Late Tuesday residents reported seeing armed men boarding a van and a truck in the town of Nasugbu 65 kilometers south of Manila, prompting authorities to send troops, said local military spokesman Colonel Teody Toribio. When soldiers tried to flag down the vehicles on a highway, a gunbattle broke out that left 15 suspected guerrillas dead, including a female university student, while five soldiers were wounded, added Toribio. One suspect was captured while an undetermined number escaped. Thirteen firearms were recovered, he said. Regional military chief Brigadier General Ernesto Ravina said the operation was "anchored on the pronouncement of the president on the termination of peace talks".

Cyclone Cempaka kills 19

JAKARTA: A tropical cyclone which hit Indonesia's main island of Java has triggered severe flooding and landslides which left 19 dead, an official said yesterday. Landslides claimed 15 lives in east and central Java, while four others perished in floods unleashed by Cyclone Cempaka. "Thousands of homes, hectares of agricultural land and public facilities are also flooded," said Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman for Indonesia's disaster agency. The destruction from the cyclone comes as the rumbling Mount Agung volcano on the neighboring resort island of Bali threatens to erupt, forcing tens of thousands to flee their homes. Cempaka is expected to move away from Indonesia later Thursday, but more flooding and landslides could follow in its wake, the agency said, adding that it urgently needs blankets, clothes and inflatable boats. Indonesia is prone to natural disasters and is often hit by floods and landslides.

Singaporean charged

SINGAPORE: A Singaporean activist was charged yesterday for organizing public protests without a permit, sparking calls for the tightly controlled city-state to stop treating peaceful demonstrations as crimes. Jolovan Wham, 37, appeared in court accused of organizing three small protests between November last year and July. These were a candlelight vigil outside a prison for a death row convict, a protest on a subway train and a demonstration at which a Hong Kong democracy activist spoke via video link. Police described Wham in a statement as "recalcitrant" and said he had "repeatedly shown blatant disregard for the law". While it is one of Asia's safest and wealthiest countries, Singapore has faced criticism for its tough laws. It is illegal to hold a public protest in most of Singapore without police approval, but permits are rarely granted and the only place where demonstrations can be held without one is the corner of one downtown park. People convicted of organizing such protests face a fine of up to Sg\$5,000 (\$3,713).

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian GulfTHE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYANEditor-in-Chief
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E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
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shouldn't send
arms to Ukraine

The US National Security Council is reported to be on the verge of recommending the export of \$47 million worth of defensive arms to Ukraine. The package will reportedly include a cache of Javelin anti-tank missiles, weapons that would reliably and efficiently disable the hundreds of tanks that the Russian-supported separatists in the country's east have acquired since the conflict began.

To advocates who believe that sending weapons to the Ukrainian government will bloody Russia's nose and send President Vladimir Putin a message, this pending decision couldn't have come soon enough. Arming Kiev is a popular prescription supported by top military officers and many lawmakers in both parties. Popular, however, doesn't mean smart. Opening up America's stockpile to Ukraine is not in Washington's national security interest. In fact, it is bound to make a conflict that is mostly frozen into a more deadly one and it complicates any reasonable chance of a diplomatic resolution.

While it may be uncomfortable to admit, the political orientation of Ukraine and how Ukrainians choose to manage (or mismanage) their economy and political system doesn't directly affect the United States. As Rajan Menon and William Ruger wrote in Foreign Affairs magazine last month, "Ukraine matters more to Russia than it does to the United States."

To Washington, Ukraine is a post-Soviet state whose oligarchic politics and systemic corruption have severely handicapped the country's economic outlook. US security interests in Europe are not wedded to whether Kiev succeeds in establishing a more democratic and accountable form of government. At best, Ukraine is a peripheral country that the United States doesn't have a treaty obligation to defend if its territory is invaded.

Integral puzzle

To Putin, however, Ukraine is an integral puzzle in his grand strategy of making Russia as relevant a global player as it was during the Cold War. A wholesale Westernization of Ukrainian politics, from associations with the European Union (EU) to a possible membership in NATO, would destroy that ambition and ruin a significant portion of Putin's political legacy.

Indeed, the possibility of Ukraine increasing its trade relationship and political direction with the United States and Europe was enough of a national security threat to Putin that he was willing to deploy Russian soldiers, paratroopers, and special forces on Ukrainian territory to carve out a zone of influence there. Putin's belief that a Russian-friendly Ukraine is a national security imperative for Moscow won't be changed by a couple dozen anti-tank missiles from the United States.

The second concern for the Trump administration is how Putin might respond to any escalation. As former National Security Council official Charles Kupchan argued in the Washington Post: "The notion that Russian President Vladimir Putin would give up his hold on Donbass [Eastern Ukraine] if a few more Russians come home in body bags is to dramatically misread the Kremlin." Yet this false assumption is what undergirds the arguments from proponents of lethal assistance to the Ukrainians.

Ruthless

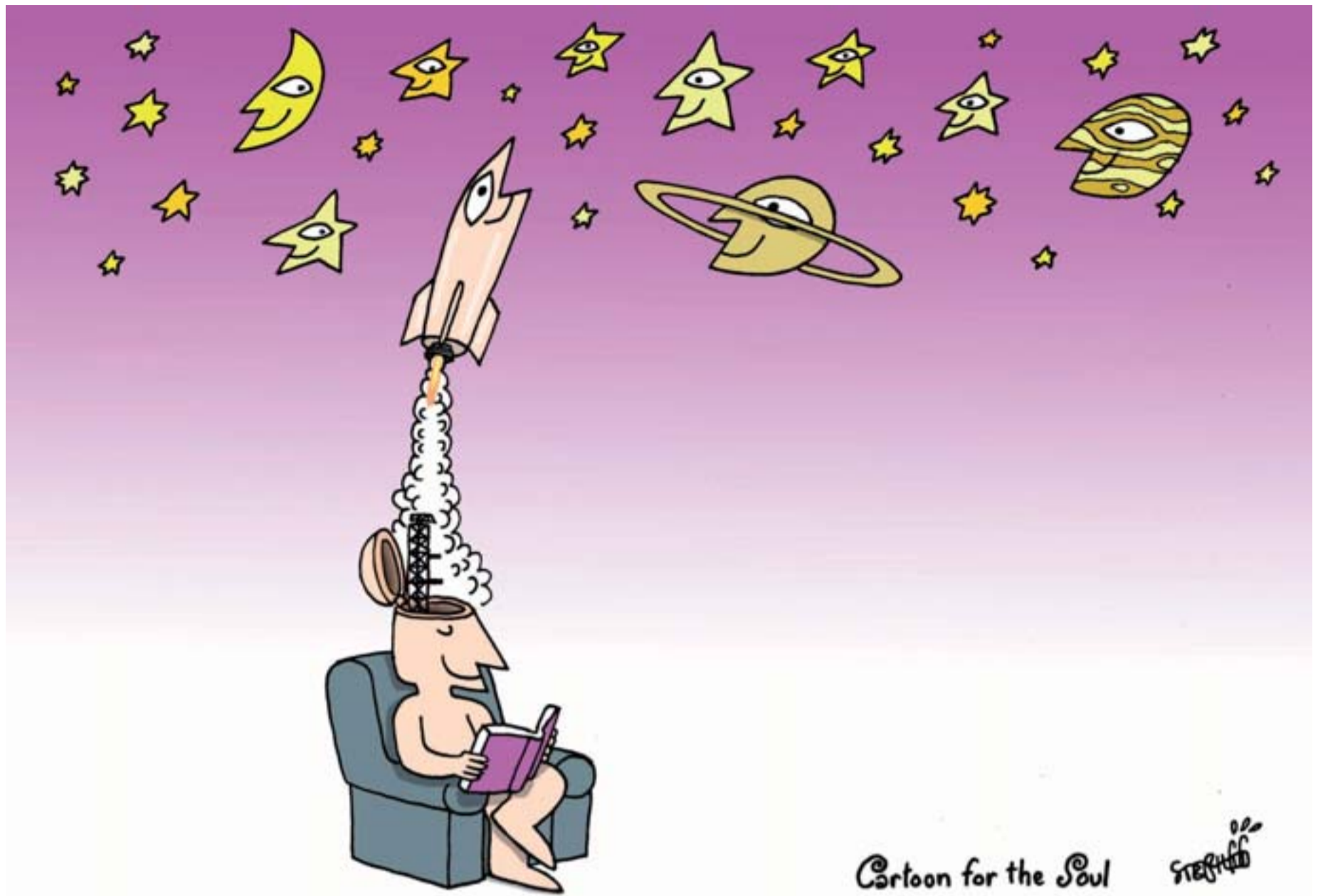
It's impossible to understand why some US legislators are so confident that Moscow will react in the way they expect. The three-and-a-half year long war has shown that Russia is ruthless in escalating its involvement and investment in the conflict to prevent a military victory for Kiev. In fact, to expect that Moscow would respond to more Russian casualties by suing for a peace settlement is to ignore completely how Putin has behaved since Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine.

When separatist units in Donetsk and Luhansk were losing ground to pro-Kiev forces early in the war, Russia came to their rescue. In the summer of 2014, when pro-Ukrainian troops were retaking towns that Kiev previously lost, columns of Russian tanks, artillery, heavy weapons, and soldiers crossed the border into Ukraine to ensure that there were no more Ukrainian territorial advances in strategic areas. When the stalemate battle in the city of Ilovaisk was slowly moving Kiev's way, conventional Russian soldiers and weapons were fast-tracked to the frontline in what would turn out to be one of the deadliest days for Ukrainian troops in the war.

Months later, when the separatists were in jeopardy of retreating from the strategic town of Debaltsevo, Russian tanks were deployed and quickly forced an undermanned, disorganized, demoralized, and tired contingent of Kiev forces to withdraw. There's no reason to think that Putin would respond less violently now if Washington sent defense shipments to Ukraine.

The most negative impact of additional US involvement is that it will likely spoil Moscow's willingness to cooperate on a Ukrainian peacekeeping proposal. While Moscow has insisted that the 2014 and 2015 Minsk protocols are the only way the war in Ukraine can end peacefully, Putin has openly acknowledged that there may need to be greater international involvement if that peace is to be sustainable. He broached the subject of deploying UN troops along the contact line this September and even agreed to explore greater access to peacekeepers in separatist-controlled territory after a call with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The concept is now being discussed within the Trump administration and between the US and Russian special envoys to the conflict, suggesting sincerity on the Russian side.

A White House authorization to send equipment to Kiev could stop that dialogue. It's difficult to understand why the United States would escalate the war when there may finally be an opening to explore a UN-enforced cessation of hostilities that could lead to a political settlement to the conflict. The Russians could respond to increased US involvement in Ukraine in other ways too. Moscow could, for example, use its veto power in the UN Security Council to block US-led efforts to stop North Korea's nuclear program. Putin could expand military and intelligence cooperation with Iran to undermine the Trump administration's policy of containing Iranian expansionism. —Reuters



Algeria independent press fears for survival

Stifled by the Internet and 24-hour news channels as well as political pressures, Algeria's independent press born only 25 years ago is struggling in a crisis that has already killed off dozens of titles. Algeria's "democratic spring" that followed widespread protests in Oct 1988 put an end to a quarter century of single party rule and a state monopoly of the media, with independent newspapers emerging on the scene.

Some of them have built up large circulations and are still going, such as the Arabic-language Echorouk and El-Khabar and French-language papers El-Watan, Liberte and Le Soir d'Algerie. But since 2014, 26 dailies and 34 weeklies have vanished, Communications Minister Djamel Kaouane said last month. The sales figures of the remaining 140 daily and weekly papers have slumped, and total circulation of the dailies has declined by 40-60 percent in the past five years, according to a study by Algiers University professor Redouane Boudjemaa.

For El-Khabar, as a leading example, circulation ran as high as 1.2 million in 2000 and has since plunged to the current figure of around 200,000 a day, said a former chief of the daily, Ali Djeri. Boudjemaa said the launch of high-speed Internet access in Algeria since 2014 has sparked an explosion in smartphone and tablet computer sales, while "the number of readers of the printed press has crumbled".

Newspapers have failed to adapt to their readership

jumping ship to the free contents of online media, he said. As for lifeline advertising, the lion's share has migrated to the rising number of private television channels, especially those offering round-the-clock news. The government has promised to unblock next year a six-million-euro (\$7-million) rescue fund for "financially troubled" media that has been frozen since the start of the decade because of dis-

Calls for end
to monopoly
on institutional
advertising

putes between management and journalists. However, rights and press freedom activists accuse the authorities of putting an economic squeeze on papers through institutional ads that the communications ministry says account for 20 percent of the advertising sector.

Advertising a political 'tool'

"Public" advertising for administrative and state-run companies is managed by ANEP, an agency which critics say is used as a tool to reward or sanctions newspapers according to political criteria. Hadda Hazem, director of El-Fadlr newspaper, staged a week-long hunger strike this month in protest at her newspaper being "asphyxiated" and deprived of advertising following critical remarks about President Abdelaziz Bouteflika she had made on French television. Several other publications have complained of similar treatment and called for the end to the state agency's monopoly over institutional advertising. El-Watan director Omar Belhouche said private companies have also come under pressure over their advertising allocations because their businesses often depend on maintaining good relations with the authorities. "Since the presidential election of 2014, the paper's private advertising revenues have fallen by 60 percent," Belhouche, who opposed a fourth term for Bouteflika, told AFP.

His paper's circulation has fallen to 90,000 from more than 160,000 in 2012, and it has had to hike its cover price by 50 percent in the past three years because of the decline in advertising revenues. Media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which ranks Algeria 134rd out of 180 countries on its press freedom index, charged in June that the North African country used "harassment" and "threats" to pressure journalists. —AFP

Delhi can learn
from other cities
to clear smog

Delhi must adopt anti-pollution steps taken by other megacities like Beijing and Mexico City if the Indian metropolis is to get serious about tackling its annual smog crisis, experts say. A toxic cloud covered India's capital, New Delhi, and surrounding areas this month, causing respiratory problems among residents and leading to school closures, flight cancellations and the declaration of a public health emergency. The causes of the problem include the poor quality of diesel used to generate electricity and to power the vehicles clogging the streets, dust and smoke thrown out by a thriving construction industry, and biomass and kerosene used by the poor for heating and cooking.

Stubble-burning on farmland around the city, described by local officials this month as a "gas chamber", is also cited by experts as a major cause. "At the moment, Delhi is the most polluted city in the world in terms of air quality," Sarah Colenbrander, a researcher at the London-based International Institute for Environment and Development, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Similar to other megacities, poorer residents are often worst-hit by air pollution, as they are most likely to live along busy highways or near power plants. They also tend to take jobs that are done outside, like street vending or labouring, providing little relief from the toxic fumes.

Making a start

Delhi residents breathe in three times as many fine particles that cause the greatest risk to health than the people of Beijing, another city notorious for high pollution levels that has begun to make strides in tackling its air problems. The Chinese capital - which is home to about 22 million people compared to Delhi's 18 million - still suffers from chronic pollution and congestion. But Beijing officials have created an air pollution action plan ushering in strict traffic curbs and regulations on the city's construction industry from November until March.

By limiting building work across and around Greater Beijing, dust levels have fallen, said Mukesh Khare, professor of environmental engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). Delhi officials also took action to stop construction when pollution levels rose this month, but they acted after the smog arrived not before, as Beijing now does. "The structure of Beijing city, though much larger than Delhi, is similar," said Khare, an expert in urban air pollution. "Beijing has very successfully tackled this issue. It is do-able for India as well."

Beijing leaders and city administrators are, however, free to take action against pollution spikes without having to worry about political consequences or possible court action, he noted. For every \$1 spent on improving air quality in cities, \$30 is returned to an economy, said Khare. Despite this, Indian authorities have failed to get the message across to the poor about the health risks and causes of air pollution, he said.



An Indian man signs a billboard during a signature campaign against pollution in New Delhi on Nov 27, 2017. —AFP

Stop the gridlock

Lists of the world's most polluted cities are usually dominated by Indian and Chinese cities. But 25 years ago, Mexico City would always rank near the top. Over the past decade, the high-altitude city - which still suffers from pollution and congestion - has tried different and unique ways to improve life for the 21 million people in its metropolitan region.

Efforts to boost mobility in Mexico City really took off after the roll-out of a plan to connect the airport with the city center - a journey of about 6.5 km that used to take more than three hours - by expanding its bus rapid transit system, said Jimilah Magnusson of the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy in New York. Fixing that problem showed people the relative ease and potential benefits of enlarging the city's limited public transport network, she said.

Mexico City has also created more bicycle lanes alongside a popular bike-sharing scheme. And it has introduced groundbreaking parking reforms, including restricting the amount of parking buildings can provide, whereas before they were required to offer a minimum. This measure aims to discourage the use of cars and free up more space for housing, making it cheaper.

'Things will get worse'

As Delhi's air quality deteriorated this month, authorities tried using fire trucks to spray water to keep dust and other air parti-

cles down, halting construction work, increasing car parking charges, and implementing an emergency odd-even license plate policy to limit the use of private vehicles. The effect was limited, but experts say there are other short-term measures that could be taken by Delhi officials to stop the smog in future.

As in most Indian cities, the vast majority of residents do not drive cars, so improving the bus and pedestrian infrastructure would help, alongside implementing a bike-sharing scheme, introducing a permanent odd-even system, parking reforms and basic street redesign, experts said. Connecting low-income households to the electricity grid would also ease pollution problems, coupled with providing cleaner energy alternatives like solar lamps.

Longer term, a national environment agency should be established with the power to make quick decisions on pollution control and to punish states for inaction, said IIT's Khare. Delhi would also benefit from large-scale investment in a mass transit system and the creation of an air pollution action plan using forecasts provided by the Indian meteorological department to prevent smog, experts said.

Meanwhile, the central government should enforce existing anti-pollution regulations and standards, and push for a shift to more energy-efficient and cleaner vehicles, they said. "If we don't have a good action plan, things will get worse because Delhi is increasingly a growing city (and) our economy is getting better and better," said Khare. —Reuters

News

Saudi prince freed in \$1bn settlement agreement

RIYADH: Senior Saudi Arabian prince Miteb bin Abdullah, once seen as a leading contender to the throne, was freed after agreeing to pay over \$1 billion to settle corruption allegations against him, a Saudi official said yesterday. Miteb, 65, son of the late King Abdullah and former head of the elite National Guard, was among dozens of royal family members, high officials and senior businessmen rounded up this month in a crackdown on graft that has strengthened the power of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The official, who is involved in the crackdown and spoke on condition of anonymity, said Miteb was released on Tuesday after reaching "an acceptable settlement agreement". The official said he believed the agreed sum to be the equivalent of over \$1 billion. "It is understood that the settlement included admitting corruption involving known cases," the official said, without giving details. According to the official, Prince Miteb was accused of embezzlement, hiring ghost employees and awarding contracts to his own firms, including a deal for walkie-talkies and bulletproof military gear.

Trump pilloried for retweeting...

Continued from Page 1

Fransen was found guilty last year of a hate crime after hurling abuse at a Muslim woman wearing a hijab. Britain First, which was formed in 2011 and is known for picketing outside mosques, has run and lost in several British and European parliament elections. Brendan Cox, widower of MP Jo Cox who was murdered by a rightwing extremist last year, said: "Trump has legitimized the far right in his own country, now he's trying to do it in ours. Spreading hatred has consequences & the president should be ashamed of himself."

David Lammy, an MP for the opposition Labour Party, said: "The president of the United States is promoting a fascist, racist, extremist hate group whose

Bosnian war criminal dies after...

Continued from Page 1

It is not the first time that defendants have taken their own lives at the ICTY. Former Croatian Serb leader Milan Babic killed himself at the UN detention center in 2006, after another Croatian Serb, Slavko Dokmanovic, in 1998.

In the complex ruling, the judges upheld the jail terms against all six defendants, including a 25-year sentence imposed on Jadranko Prlic, the former prime minister of the breakaway Bosnian Croat statelet, known as Herzog-Bosna. Prljak was specifically charged with ordering the destruction of Mostar's 16th-century bridge in November 1993, which judges in the first trial had said "caused disproportionate damage to the Muslim civilian population". A symbol of Bosnia's devastation in the war, the Ottoman-era bridge was later rebuilt. But in their ruling, the judges in fact allowed part of Prljak's appeal, saying the bridge had been "a military target at the time of the attack". They also overturned some of his convictions, but refused to reduce his overall sentence.

The bloody 1992-1995 war in Bosnia, in which 100,000 people died and 2.2 million were displaced, mainly pitted Bosnian Muslims against Bosnian Serbs, but also saw some brutal fighting between Bosnian

Prince Miteb is the first senior figure known to be released among those detained. Around 200 people in total have been questioned in the crackdown, authorities said earlier this month. The allegations, which include kickbacks, inflating government contracts, extortion and bribery, could not be independently verified. Saudi authorities, who estimate they could eventually recover around \$100 billion of illicit funds, have been working on reaching agreements with suspects detained at Riyadh's luxurious Ritz Carlton hotel, asking them to hand over assets and cash in return for their freedom.

Apart from Miteb, the Saudi official said that at least three other suspects had finalized settlement agreements and that the public prosecutor had decided to release several individuals. The prosecutor has decided to put at least five people on trial, the official said without disclosing their identities. The fate of billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, chairman of investment firm Kingdom Holding and one of Saudi Arabia's most prominent international businessmen, was not known.

Kingdom issued a statement earlier this month saying it was continuing to operate normally but has not responded to queries about his status since he was detained early this month. Two Saudi sources told Reuters that Prince Alwaleed has so far refused to reach a settlement and had asked for access to his lawyer in order to fight allegations against him. Relatives, his lawyer and officials in his office could not be contacted to comment. — Reuters

leaders have been arrested and convicted. He is no ally or friend of ours." Stephen Doughty, another Labour MP, called the videos "highly inflammatory" and his colleague Yvette Cooper said Trump had given Fransen a "huge platform". Opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn said the retweets were "abhorrent, dangerous and a threat."

Fransen and Britain First leader Paul Golding were due to appear in court on Wednesday for a pre-trial review on charges of "threatening, abusive or insulting words or behavior" over a speech she made in Belfast. Trump's interventions in British politics and controversial foreign policy have strained the so-called "special relationship". He has infuriated British authorities with his tweets on terrorism in Britain, including highly publicized run-ins with London's Muslim mayor Sadiq Khan.

Yesterday's retweets were part of an early morning burst in which Trump again dismissed CNN as "Fake News" and insisted the US economy was in "record territory" by many measures. Trump also said consumer confidence was at an all-time high. "I guess somebody likes me (my policies)!" the president wrote. — AFP

Muslims and Bosnian Croats after an initial alliance fell apart. The appeal judges said all six men, who had been found guilty of taking part in a scheme to remove Bosnian Muslims from the territory, "remained convicted of numerous and very serious crimes."

In statements sure to anger Zagreb, the judges upheld the original trial finding that the men had been part of a joint criminal enterprise whose "ultimate purpose was shared" by late Croatian president Franjo Tudjman, and other leaders. The aim of the scheme was to set up "a Croatian entity that reconstituted area borders and that facilitated the reunification of the Croatian people".

Following the verdict, Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kotarovic interrupted an official visit to Iceland to return for talks. A 20-year term was upheld against former military leader Miroslav Petkovic, 68, while a 16-year sentence was confirmed against ex-military police chief Valentin Coric, 61, and 10 years for former police official Berislav Pusic, 65.

Yesterday's verdict comes a week after the judges imposed a life sentence on former Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladic, whose ruthlessness in the conflict earned him the title the "Butcher of Bosnia". His judgement had also descended into confusion when he accused the judges of lying and had to be dragged away into a nearby room to watch the end of the proceedings. The ICTY charged Prlic and his co-defendants in 2004. The six surrendered with Croatia under pressure to comply with the court in return for joining the European Union. The ICTY closes its doors on Dec 31, having indicted and dealt with 161 people. — AFP

Militants go to rehab at '5-star'...

Continued from Page 1

king-size beds, all framed by manicured lawns. Many linked to groups such as Al-Qaeda and the Taleban walk around freely in flowing white robes, and have access to a spacious gym, a banquet hall and furnished apartments reserved for visits from spouses. "We make the 'beneficiaries' feel they are normal people and still have a chance - a chance to return to society," Abu Maghayed said, insisting the center refrained from calling them prisoners or inmates.

Saudi Arabia, long accused of exporting its ultra-conservative Wahhabist Sunni doctrine around the world, is itself a victim of domestic terror attacks. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has sought to roll back the influence of the ultra-conservative religious establishment, this week jump-started a 41-nation military coalition to combat Islamist extremism, vowing to wipe terrorism from the face of the Earth.

But the rehab facility, founded in 2004, is one of the centerpieces of Saudi Arabia's strategy to expunge violent extremism at home. It claims to have treated more than 3,300 men convicted of terrorism-related crimes, including repatriated Guantanamo Bay detainees. The center boasts of a "success rate of 86 percent", Abu Maghayed said, measured by those men who did not return to jihad for at least a decade after graduating from the center. Of the remainder, he said, most only showed signs of "deviant behavior" and only a minuscule number relapsed into violent jihad.

An American terrorism expert who has closely studied the Saudi program said the recidivism rate was higher, pointing out media reports of graduates from the center who have showed up on battlefronts. "Saudis are

to be applauded for trying something different - they were one of the first to try a 'talking cure' for terrorists," John Horgan, another expert at Georgia State University, told AFP. "(But) without greater transparency about its participants... it's impossible to know what value added, if any, this program brings in reducing the threat of re-engagement in terrorism."

AFP was given a chance to interview "beneficiaries" if they agreed, but when two bearded, gym-buffed men were approached in their living quarters, they declined to talk. Critics say there is a moral hazard of treating militants, many with blood on their hands, with lavish facilities and financial incentives. But Saudi officials say the threat of sanction is always hanging over them. Those who refuse to reform after a minimum stay of three months at the center are returned to "the judicial process", Abu Maghayed said.

But more than coercion, the center pushes for increasing familial bonds, encouraging marriage and children, a psychological tether meant to make it harder to return to violent ways. "You cannot counter terrorism by force," said Ali Al-Afnan, an educational psychology specialist at the center. "Only ideas can fight ideas." The center uses art therapy as one of its tools. Comparisons between portraits in the early days of incarceration and those at later stages are used as a metric to study inmates' frame of mind.

Abu Maghayed showed AFP one early painting, which he said depicted a gloomy "Guantanamo mentality" - with splashes of orange, the color of jumpsuits at the infamous prison. Another canvas painted weeks later showed bold brushstrokes and sparks of color, depicting hope. As Afnan spoke to AFP, he fielded an abrupt telephone call from a former "beneficiary" who once travelled to Afghanistan to fight alongside the Taleban. Now married and with children, he was seeking advice from Afnan over returning to university for a graduate program. "This man is our role model," Afnan said after hanging up. "A shining example of how people deserve a second chance." — AFP

NBC fires star anchor Lauer...

Continued from Page 1

"My client and I met with representatives from NBC's Human Resources and Legal Departments at 6 pm on Monday for an interview that lasted several hours. Our impression at this point is that NBC acted quickly, as all companies should, when confronted with credible allegations of sexual misconduct in the workplace," Wilkenfeld said in a story published by the Times yesterday. The law firm representing Lauer's accuser did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The complaint said the sexual misconduct occurred while Lauer and the female colleague were covering the 2014 Sochi winter Olympics in Russia. NBC News reporter Stephanie Gosk said on-air. The misconduct continued after the Games, Gosk said. An NBC representative did not respond to a request for more details. Fellow NBC News anchor Willie Geist, who hosts the "Today" show's Sunday program, told MSNBC's "Morning Joe" that he was stunned, especially given Lauer's role. "Matt Lauer is the most powerful person at NBC News, arguably," Geist said, referring to Lauer as a friend and mentor who he said had always led by example on the show's set.

US President Donald Trump responded with messages on Twitter calling for some of Lauer's colleagues to be fired too, and adding to his recent attacks against multiple US news outlets for their reporting on his administration. "Wow," Trump wrote about the Lauer announcement. "But when will the top executives at NBC & Comcast be fired for putting out so much Fake News. Check out Andy Lack's past!" he added, without further explanation. An NBC spokeswoman did not respond to questions about Trump's comments.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, then-Republican candidate Trump was accused by 13 women who publicly said that in the past he had physically touched them inappropriately in some way, the

Washington Post reported. Trump denied the accusations, accused rival Democrats and the media of a smear campaign, and went on to win the election.

Trump was also famously embarrassed in the final stretch of last year's presidential campaign by the release of audio in which he is heard boasting that his fame allows him to grab women's genitals and get away with it. At the time he acknowledged the veracity of the so-called "Access Hollywood" tape and apologized publicly. It was initially thought the revelation could derail his bid for the White House. Trump has since changed his tone, and told a Republican senator shortly after his election victory that "we don't think it was my voice", the New York Times reported yesterday, quoting a person familiar with that conversation. And Trump has continued to suggest that the voice on the tape was not his, the Times said, quoting three people close to the president.

Just last week, Lauer co-hosted with Guthrie NBC's Thanksgiving Day coverage of the Macy's parade in Manhattan. Since Lauer took over the anchor chair in 1997, "Today" has dominated morning show ratings. It earned \$509 million in advertising revenue last year, more than any other morning show, New York-based analysts Kantar Media said. Lauer signed a two-year deal in 2016 that would pay him \$20 million per year, according to Fortune Magazine. He joined "Today" in Jan 1994 and has interviewed presidents George Bush and Barack Obama and broadcast from seven Olympic games.

There were reports that journalists from multiple outlets had been investigating complaints against Lauer. Elizabeth Wagemeister and Ramin Setoodeh, two Variety reporters, said they had been working for months on a story about sexual harassment allegations by multiple women against Lauer. "NBC was aware that Variety was working on a bombshell story about sexual harassment allegations against Matt Lauer," Setoodeh wrote on Twitter.

"This is not a Hollywood media problem, this is a problem across all industries including the US government," said Bob Bakish, CEO of Viacom Inc, when asked about the Matt Lauer firing, at the Business Insider IGNITION Conference in New York yesterday. "Secondly, this is not a US problem, it is a global problem." — Agencies



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Sports

New Zealand trip Stokes suspicion in Australia

All-rounder declines to comment on cricket

WELLINGTON: Ben Stokes's arrival in New Zealand on a "private" trip has been viewed with suspicion in neighbouring Australia, where pundits smelled a plot to recall the exiled cricketer to England's Ashes squad. New Zealand-born Stokes was omitted from England's touring party following his arrest on suspicion of causing actual bodily harm in an incident outside a Bristol nightclub in September.

He remains suspended by the England and Wales cricket board (ECB), pending the result of a police investigation. Stokes greeted his parents after touching down at Christchurch airport yesterday but batted away questions from a media throng about his hopes of a quick Ashes recall.

He also stayed silent on a possible plan to play for Canterbury after the provincial side revealed on Tuesday it had been in talks with him about a possible short-term deal. "Working on my golf swing," Stokes quipped, when asked by a reporter about bringing cricket gear with him.

"Just looking forward to seeing mum and dad," he said. "Just catch up with everyone I haven't seen in a long time." Australia hold a 1-0 lead in the five-test

Ashes after beating England in the opener in Brisbane on Monday. The second Test starts in Adelaide on Saturday.

England distanced itself from Stokes's return to the country of his birth, with the ECB saying on Tuesday that it was a "private" trip to see his parents and organised outside of its auspices. However, British media reported that the ECB had given Stokes a "no objection certificate" as early as last week to allow him to play in New Zealand.

ECB director of cricket Andrew Strauss offered no update on Stokes during a media briefing on Monday, prompting accusations of a cover-up from former Australia opener Michael Slater.

"Of course (Strauss) knew that Ben Stokes was going to Canterbury to play," the Channel Nine pundit told Sky

Sports Radio. "Of course he knew because he was going to give a tick. He might as well come and join the England squad now.

"If you're allowing him to play cricket, you're allowing him to play cricket. They have the power and obviously it tells us the stance they're taking with him."

WORLD CLASS CRICKETER

The news of Stokes's arrival Down Under was encouraging to his fellow England all-rounder Chris Woakes, however. "Ben's a world class cricketer and he'd make any team in the world better so it'd be silly of us to not open it up for him to come into the squad," he told BBC radio. Canterbury coach Gary Stead told Australian radio the province's board would meet to discuss Stokes yesterday but there was no guarantee the 26-year-old would play.

"Ultimately, if our board says 'no', it won't happen," he told RSN927. "From my point of view I think if you get someone like that then let's do it." New Zealand coach Mike Hesson, who has been preparing his team for the home series against West Indies, also welcomed the prospect of Stokes turning out for Canterbury.

"From a cricket point of view he's a world class player and would add a lot of talent to the competition," he told local media. "If it improves the standard of the competition, which I'm sure it will, then great."

But former New Zealand cricketer and Canterbury stalwart Peter Fulton struck a note of dissent, comparing Stokes's situation with Ken McClure, a local player who voluntarily stood down last week after pleading guilty to an assault charge during a pre-season trip.

"You've obviously got someone else, a young Canterbury player, who's been dealing with something similar," Fulton told local media. "It's not anything Canterbury would ideally like to be associated with." —Reuters



BIRMINGHAM: File photo taken on August 19, 2017 shows England's Ben Stokes preparing to bowl during play on day 3 of the first Test cricket match between England and the West Indies at Edgbaston. — AFP



Private trip viewed dimly in Australia

India cricket board fined \$8 million by anti-trust panel

NEW DELHI: India's competition watchdog on yesterday fined the country's powerful cricket governing body \$8 million over a multi-billion dollar broadcasting deal for the Indian Premier League. The Competition Commission ruled that the Board of Control for Cricket in India, the world's wealthiest national cricket body, abused its position by agreeing to broadcasters' demands that it would not allow a rival to the IPL. The commission ordered the BCCI to

pay 520 million rupees (\$8 million) within 60 days.

Sony Pictures Networks has held the rights since the IPL started in 2008. But in a major coup, Rupert Murdoch's Star India channel in September bought the rights for 2018-22 for \$2.55 billion—a 150 percent increase on the previous deal—confirming the league as one of the world's hottest sports properties.

The anti-trust commission made an initial ruling in 2013 that the BCCI's deal with Sony was illegal because of a clause which prevented the BCCI from allowing any other 20-over league to compete with the IPL. The cricket body won a court order forcing a review of the case. But the commission's new ruling came to the same conclusion and ordered the same fine.

The BCCI had pleaded that bidders for the television deal had insisted on the no-competition clause. "BCCI has not provided any justification as to how

this self-imposed restriction of not organising, sanctioning, approving or supporting another T20 cricket event that will be competing with IPL, is connected to the interest of cricket," the competition commission said however. The commission said that "in the absence of any plausible explanation" it had found that the clause was intended to "enhance the commercial interest of the bidders of broadcasting rights" and the revenues received by BCCI. In addition to the fine, the commission said the BCCI must not place any "blanket restriction" on the organisation of professional leagues to rival the IPL.

The BCCI made no immediate comment on the fine. But the ruling is a new blow to the body that has been managed by a panel appointed by the Supreme Court in 2016 to reform it. The BCCI has in recent years been riven by infighting and allegations of shady dealings. —AFP

Windies target Williamson, Taylor to end 22-year New Zealand drought

WELLINGTON: The West Indies harbour hopes of their first away win over New Zealand in 22 years as the loss of Tim Southee and BJ Watling put pressure on the Blacks Caps ahead of tomorrow's first Test in Wellington.

Without strike bowler Southee, and a lack of experience among the New Zealand middle order batsmen, West Indies captain Jason Holder sees the key to success as the swift removal of senior batsmen Kane Williamson and Ross Taylor. New Zealand are returning to the Test arena after an eight-month break while the battle-hardened West Indies are coming off a 2-1 series loss to England, including a dramatic victory at Headingley, and a 1-0 win over Zimbabwe.

"We've been on the road together for a while (and) we're doing some good things but we need to be pushing the consistency button more to keep heading in that upward direction," Holder said. New Zealand have delayed making a decision on whether Lockie Ferguson, with his extreme pace, or the consistent Matt Henry will replace the 57-Test new-ball bowler Southee, who will miss the Test due to the impending birth of his second child.

Tom Blundell has already been confirmed to make his debut as wicketkeeper with Watling failing to recover from a thigh injury. New Zealand coach Mike Hesson expects whoever wins the toss at the Basin Reserve to bowl.

"Same as always," he said when viewing a wicket that was greenish on Wednesday but expected to brown off before the Test begins. "Everyone gets a bit excited about that. I always think it's a bowl first up here anyway but it's always a good cricket wicket."

BEING PATIENT

Unlike the West Indies, who have had a recent diet of Test cricket, New Zealand are fresh from a limited overs series in India and have not worn their whites since the 1-0 series loss to South Africa in March. Openers Jeet Raval and Tom Latham did play for New Zealand A in the West Indies warm-up match with Raval's unbeaten 32 in the second innings their best score.

Ferguson, who could replace Southee, used his pace to worry the West Indies with figures of five for 67 and two for 24. The tourists dominated the first two days of that match, posting 451 for nine declared when they batted first, with Shai Hope posting 110 while Sunil Ambris, pushing for his first Test selection, made 157. But in their second innings they were rolled for 186 with Kraigg Braithwaite's unbeaten 88 the only score of note. With Watling out of contention and a middle order of Henry Nicholls, Mitchell Santner, Colin de Grandhomme and Blundell having only 35 Tests and 48 innings among them, the West Indies quicks will be keen to make early inroads. Holder said they will be formulating plans to remove Williamson and Taylor cheaply.

"We know the calibre player both of them are. It's just a matter of us being patient and sticking to our plans. Over the next few days, we'll sit down and have some discussion around those two players," he said. "I think they're their main players, but you can't rule out a guy like Tom Latham. He's done well in the past for New Zealand and he's carrying some current form as well."

The West Indies have not tasted a Test victory in New Zealand since February 1995 when they won by an innings and 322 runs at the Basin Reserve on the back of a 660 for five declared first innings headed by Brian Lara (147) and Jimmy Adams (151). —AFP

Aussie 'adults' don't need curfew: Lehmann

ADELAIDE: Australian coach Darren Lehmann says he can't envisage ever slapping a curfew on his players, who were "grown men", after England opted to ban their team being out after midnight. The England decision followed Jonny Bairstow's headbutt on Australian opener Cameron Bancroft in a Perth bar late last month, which only came to light over the weekend.

It came with sensitivity within the England camp about off-field behaviour after the controversy surrounding suspended star all-rounder Ben Stokes, who is facing a police inquiry into a fight outside a Bristol nightclub in September. Lehmann said it was not something he would consider. "We wouldn't have curfews but that's our decision and that

(having them) is theirs," he told reporters in Adelaide late Tuesday ahead of the second Test starting Saturday.

"We have faith in the blokes to do the right thing. They're grown men, they're adults." Former Australian captain and selector Greg Chappell suggested curfews were ineffective. "If someone is determined to get out and do silly things they're probably going to do it whether there's a curfew or not," he told Melbourne radio station SEN.

"Curfews are pretty useless really. If you treat people like adults, most of them will behave like adults. Those who don't probably don't last very long." England cricket chief Andrew Strauss was cited by cricket.com.au on Tuesday as saying there was no drinking culture in his team, but he imposed a midnight curfew on the five-Test Ashes tour regardless. In laying down the law after the Bairstow incident, he said his players "need to be smarter". "That's the reality, they are adults, intelligent adults, and at times they are not using that intelligence in the right way," he said. "It is a distraction to the team and none of us want that distraction." Despite the Stokes controversy and the Bairstow incident, Strauss



Darren Lehmann

insisted the team were "good, honest, hardworking cricketers".

"They've done some great things in

an England shirt and I will back them on that to the hilt because I know them," he said. —AFP

Lyon challenges England's batsmen to go after him

MELBOURNE: Australia spinner Nathan Lyon threw down the gauntlet to England's batsmen yesterday, challenging them to hit him out of the attack at Adelaide Oval in the second Ashes Test.

The 30-year-old has returned to his former home ground in top form ahead of the Test, which starts on Saturday, after taking five wickets in Australia's easy win at the Gabba. Lyon took on a big workload in the series-opener but bowled with impressive economy, conceding less than 2.5 runs an over to stifle the tourists' scoring.

With none of England's batsmen taking the attack to the offspinner at the Gabba, Lyon invited them to go on the offensive at Adelaide Oval, where he helped bowl Australia to victory against South Africa a year ago.

"I think if they did do that, it does

definitely play into my hands," Lyon told reporters at the stadium. "I like it when opposition guys try to attack me and try to whack me out of the attack. "But it's a part of the game ... No doubt England will come prepared and they'll have a different plan for me compared to what they had in the first test. But it is what it is."

"It's about adapting, it's about enjoying the challenge and embracing the game of cricket." Lyon was criticised in the leadup to the Gabba test for saying he hoped Australia could end careers during the Ashes series, including that of his former club team mate and England captain Joe Root.

The plain spoken offspinner was more generous yesterday, saying Root's team were a "classy" side and that the Yorkshireman's bowlers would be favoured by the conditions in the first day-night Ashes Test.

"I think with the pink ball, it's going to suit their bowlers," said Lyon. "We know they're going to come back bigger and better and stronger. "It's not going to be a walk in the park ... We need to make sure that we respect them."

Born in rural New South Wales, Lyon was famously a groundsman at Adelaide Oval before being fast-tracked into the test team, so he knows the venue well.



Nathan Lyon

Drop-in wickets are now used at the ground since a major refurbishment from 2012-13 and the pitch for Saturday is likely to feature a layer of grass to slow the wear of the pink ball. Lyon, however, was relishing the prospect of more turn and bounce in Adelaide after extracting plenty from the surprisingly slow and

spongy Gabba pitch.

"Damian Hough in my book is probably one of the best curators in the world. So, I had a look briefly at it then. It looks pretty exciting," he said. "I've never seen a bad one here if I'm being brutally honest. It'll spin and bounce, (that's) always good." — Reuters

Sports

Sharks open four-game road trip with 3-1 win over slumping Flyers

New York remains red-hot with victory over Vancouver

PHILADELPHIA: Chris Tierney and Marc-Edouard Vlasic scored even-strength goals, and Joe Thornton added a power-play tally as the San Jose Sharks opened a four-game road trip with a 3-1 win over the slumping Philadelphia Flyers on Tuesday night at the Wells Fargo Center. Goaltender Aaron Dell, who filled in for injured starter Martin Jones, stopped 22 shots for the Sharks. San Jose extended its points streak to five games (3-0-2). Claude Giroux scored for the Flyers, who lost for the ninth consecutive time (0-4-5). The Flyers have blown leads in seven of those nine games, including a 1-0 lead against the Sharks. The Flyers are riding their longest losing streak since the 2007-08 season, when they lost 10 in a row and still made the playoffs.

PANTHERS 5, RANGERS 4

Florida squandered a three-goal lead, but Denis Malgin's goal with 1:09 remaining proved to be the difference in a victory against New York. Aleksander Barkov, Jamie McGinn and Micheal Haley staked the Panthers to a 3-0 lead in the first period. Jonathan Huberdeau had the Panthers' fourth goal. James Reimer earned the win by making 33 saves. Chris Kreider recorded two goals and an assist. Pavel Buchnevich had a goal and two assists, and David Desharnais had three assists for New York. J.T. Miller had the Rangers' other goal. Ondrej Pavelec took the loss in relief despite stopping 19 of 21 shots after replacing Henrik Lundqvist during the first period.



Andrei made 34 saves to lead Tampa Bay

.500 (4-4-4) on home ice this season.

PREDATORS 3, BLACKHAWKS 2

In their first trip to Bridgestone Arena since getting swept by Nashville in last season's Western Conference playoffs, Chicago was once again stymied by Pekka Rinne. The Nashville goalie turned away 37 shots, including at least five point-blank chances, to lead his team to victory. Austin Watson, Filip Forsberg and Roman Josi scored for the Predators and Tommy Wingels and Lance Bouma had the Blackhawks' goals.

OILERS 3, COYOTES 2 (OT)

Matt Benning scored with 5:35 left in regulation to tie the game, and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins scored on a breakaway with 39.8 seconds left in overtime to lift Edmonton past Arizona. Zack Kassian scored in the first period for Edmonton. Benning also had an assist. Christian Fischer scored in the first period and Oliver Ekman-Larsson scored in the second for the Coyotes, and Max Domi had two assists.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, FLAMES 1

Roman Polak, Nikita Zaitsev, Nazem Kadri and Leo Komarov scored as Toronto topped Calgary. Maple Leafs goalie Frederik Andersen made 19 saves to improve his record to 14-7-1. Michael Stone scored the lone goal of the game for the Flames, who will have a chance to avenge the loss when the same two teams meet in Toronto on Dec. 6. Netminder Mike Smith did his best to keep the Flames in the game by stopping 26 of 29 shots he faced.

STARS 3, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 0

Radek Faksa scored his first career hat trick and Ben

Streaking Cavaliers survive LeBron James' first career ejection

LOS ANGELES: Kevin Love scored a season-high 38 points, LeBron James was tossed from the game, and Dwyane Wade put a hurting on his old team in the Cleveland Cavaliers' 108-97 win over the Miami Heat on Tuesday. Love added nine rebounds and shot 14 of 17 from the foul line in 26 minutes. The Cavs, who led the game by as many as 34 points, have won nine straight for their longest regular-season winning streak since Jan. 15-Feb. 5, 2015. James was ejected with 1:59 left in the third quarter for arguing a non-call with referee Kane Fitzgerald. James screamed at Fitzgerald for not calling a foul against Hassan Whiteside on James' drive to the hoop. James, who was ejected for the first time in his career, finished with 21 points, 12 rebounds, six assists and five steals. Wade, who like James once starred with the Heat, scored 17 points off the Cleveland bench. Dion Waiters led Miami with 21 points.

WIZARDS 92, TIMBERWOLVES 89

Otto Porter Jr scored 22 points, including the go-ahead jump shot with 25 seconds remaining, to give Washington a come-from-behind win. Porter scored 17 of his points in the second half as Washington erased a 13-point deficit and won for the second time in six games. Leading scorer Bradley Beal was held to eight points on 2-of-11 shooting, but the bench was pivotal with the Wizards missing John Wall for the second straight game due to an injured knee. Karl-Anthony Towns had 20 points and 17 rebounds to post his league-leading 17th double-double for the Timberwolves. Making his second NBA start in place of injured Minnesota point guard Jeff Teague, Tyus Jones had season highs of 12 points and seven assists.

SUNS 104, BULLS 99

Devin Booker scored 33 points and TJ Warren added 25 as Phoenix snapped a three-game losing streak. Tyler Ulis finished with 14 points for the Suns, who built a 15-point lead in the fourth quarter and then had to hold on to beat the Bulls for the second time in nine days. Alex Len grabbed 18 rebounds for the Suns to go along with 13 points. Justin Holiday led the Bulls with 25 points. Kris Dunn scored 24 points for Chicago, which dropped its sixth straight game.

BUCKS 112, KINGS 87

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 19 of his game-high 32 points in the third quarter, and Milwaukee also got contributions from Khris Middleton and Eric Bledsoe in a win over



PHILADELPHIA: Joe Thornton #19 of the San Jose Sharks heads for the net as Ivan Provorov #9 of the Philadelphia Flyers defends at Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia. — AFP

NHL results/standings

Detroit 1, Los Angeles 4; Las Vegas 0, Dallas 3; Calgary 1, Toronto 4; Edmonton 3, Arizona 2 (OT); Nashville 3, Chicago 2; Buffalo 0, Tampa Bay 2; NY Islanders 5, Vancouver 2; NY Rangers 4, Florida 5; Philadelphia 1, San Jose 3; Columbus 3, Carolina 2 (SO).

Eastern Conference							Western Conference						
Atlantic Division							Pacific Division						
PLW	L	OT	GF	GA	PTS								
Tampa Bay	17	5	2	88	62	36	St. Louis	17	6	1	84	63	35
Toronto	16	9	1	92	78	33	Winnipeg	15	6	3	80	64	33
Detroit	10	10	5	70	74	25	Nashville	15	6	3	76	68	33
Boston	10	8	4	60	66	24	Dallas	13	10	1	70	69	27
Montreal	10	12	3	60	81	23	Chicago	12	9	3	76	63	27
Ottawa	8	8	6	67	74	22	Minnesota	11	10	3	72	74	25
Florida	10	12	2	72	83	22	Colorado	11	9	2	73	71	24
Buffalo	6	15	4	55	85	16							
Metropolitan Division							Central Division						
Columbus	16	8	1	72	60	33	Las Vegas	15	7	1	81	69	31
NY Islanders	15	7	2	89	76	32	Los Angeles	14	8	3	73	57	31
New Jersey	14	6	4	78	74	32	San Jose	13	8	2	61	51	28
Washington	14	10	1	74	75	29	Calgary	13	10	1	70	76	27
Pittsburgh	13	10	3	74	90	29	Vancouver	11	10	4	68	73	26
NY Rangers	13	10	2	82	77	28	Anaheim	10	10	4	65	73	24
Carolina	10	8	5	68	70	25	Edmonton	10	13	2	67	81	22
Philadelphia	8	10	7	70	78	23	Arizona	6	17	4	66	98	16

Bishop stopped 34 shots for his second shutout of the season as Dallas defeated Vegas. The loss snapped a five-game win streak and also an eight-game home win streak for the Golden Knights, both of which had tied the NHL record for a team in its inaugural season. The

Stars snapped a four-game road losing streak and won for the fourth time in five games. Dallas also became the first team to shut out Vegas, which entered the contest second in the NHL in scoring with an average of 3.7 goals per game. — Reuters

Putin takes fight to hooligans ahead of World Cup

MOSCOW: Andrei and his fellow Russian football hooligans flew to France for the Euro 2016 tournament with only one goal in mind: to give England's supporters a good kicking before the World Cup.

"It was like winning against Brazil in football," Andrei told AFP of the orchestrated violence. "It was our last chance to show ourselves before the World Cup because we knew Putin would crack down hard to make sure nothing like that happens in Russia," he added, speaking on condition that his last name is withheld for his personal safety.

The headline-grabbing brawls in the southern French city of Marseille in June 2016 were bloody. The clashes on the streets of the touristy old port neighbourhood left 35 people—mainly England fans—injured, a handful of them seriously.

There were more ugly scenes when nearly 200 Russians rushed the English supporters' section during their teams' 1-1 draw at the Stade Velodrome. It was the worst violence to hit international football since the 1998 World Cup, also held in France.

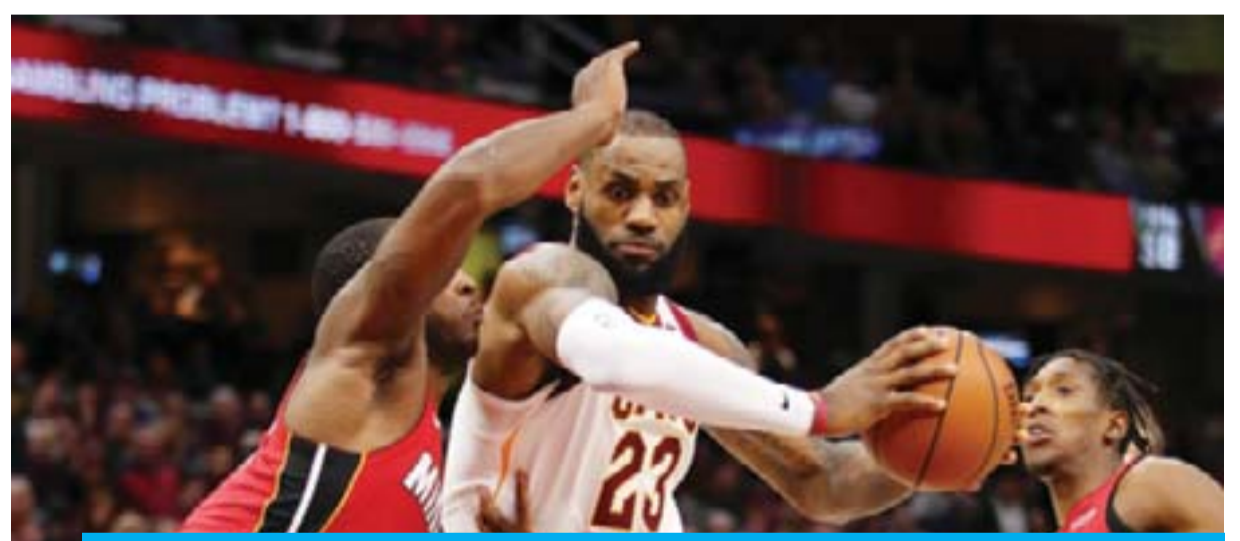
KINGS OF THUG WORLD

The Russians' hatred for the English stemmed in part from their bitter 2010 battle for the right to host next year's edition of the global competition—England's high hopes were crushed by Russia.

The World Cup draw will be held in the State Kremlin Palace tomorrow and once the groups fall into place, there is nothing preventing the two nations from facing each other again on the pitch.

But the fighting was also driven by the Russians' desire to take the crown of the world's toughest thugs away from the English, traditionally seen as the original football hooligans. "Those guys were kings in the 1990s before the police took action," Andrei said.

"In Marseille, the English behaved very provocatively, but they had become soft by that point. All the Russians came down to Marseille specifically to show the English who we were." —AFP



CLEVELAND: LeBron James #23 of the Cleveland Cavaliers drives between Dion Waiters #11 and Josh Richardson #0 of the Miami Heat during the second half at Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland. — AFP

Sacramento. Bledsoe amassed 21 points and five assists, and Middleton had 12 points and four rebounds for the Bucks, who continued their recent domination of the Kings. Milwaukee has won three straight against Sacramento by an average of 21 points per game. The Kings, coming off a season-best 55 percent shooting in a 110-106 road win over the Golden State Warriors on Monday, made only 5 of 20 shots in the second quarter and only 7 of 24 in the third while being outscored 60-33 over the middle two quarters. Garrett Temple led Sacramento with 18 points.

JAZZ 106, NUGGETS 77
Derrick Favors scored 24 points on 12-of-16 shooting and collected nine rebounds to lead Utah's rout of Denver. Donovan Mitchell scored 16 points and Jonas Jerebko added 15 for the Jazz. Utah won its third straight game after holding the Nuggets to just 28 second-half points, a season-low for a Jazz opponent. Utah guard Rodney Hood did not play because of ankle soreness. Gary Harris had 18 points to lead Denver. Kenneth Faried added 11 points and eight rebounds. — Reuters

NBA results/standings

Utah 106, Denver 77; Sacramento 87, Milwaukee 112; Chicago 99, Phoenix 104; Minnesota 89, Washington 92; Cleveland 108, Miami 97.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
Boston	18	4	.818	—	Portland	13	8	.619	—
Toronto	12	7	.632	4.5	Minnesota	12	9	.571	1
Philadelphia	11	8	.579	5.5	Denver	11	9	.550	1.5
New York	10	10	.500	7	Utah	10	11	.476	3
Brooklyn	7	13	.350	10	Oklahoma City	8	11	.421	4
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Detroit	13	6	.684	—	Golden State	15	6	.714	—
Cleveland	14	7	.667	1	LA Clippers	8	11	.421	6
Indiana	12	9	.571	2	LA Lakers	8	12	.400	6.5
Milwaukee	10	9	.526	3	Phoenix	8	14	.364	7.5
Chicago	3	16	.158	10	Sacramento	6	15	.286	9
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Washington	11	9	.550	—	Houston	16	4	.800	—
Miami	10	10	.500	1	San Antonio	13	7	.650	3
Charlotte	8	11	.421	2.5	New Orleans	11	9	.550	5
Orlando	8	13	.381	3.5	Memphis	7	12	.368	8.5
Atlanta	4	16	.200	7	Dallas	5	16	.238	11.5

Sports

Grand champion Harumafuji retires over assault incident

Minister urges ancient sport to eradicate violence

TOKYO: Sumo grand champion Harumafuji announced he would retire yesterday to take responsibility for injuring a junior wrestler in an incident that has threatened to taint the image of Japan's national sport just as it was regaining popularity.

The 33-year-old Mongolian-born "yokozuna" (grand champion) had already apologised earlier this month after media reported he had beaten junior wrestler Takanoia while drinking at a restaurant-bar with other wrestlers.

"As 'yokozuka' I feel responsible for injuring Takanoia and so will retire from today," a stern-faced Harumafuji told a news conference carried live by several Japanese broadcasters in Fukuoka, southern Japan, site of the most recent tournament.

"I apologise from my heart to the people, sumo fans, the Japan Sumo Association, to supporters of my 'stable' (gym) and my 'oyakata' (coach) and his wife for causing such trouble." Harumafuji gave no details of the incident—still under investigation by police—which media reports said occurred when he got angry because the younger wrestler was checking his smartphone after being chastised for a bad attitude.

Takanoia, 27, did not take part in the latest tournament due to his injuries, which the sumo association said included a fractured skull and concussion. "I had heard that he was lacking in manners and civility and thought it was my duty as a senior wrestler to correct and teach him," Harumafuji said. "But I went too far," he said, adding that the incident did not occur because he had been drinking.

The incident has highlighted sumo's struggle to reform harsh conditions that can breed violence in its closed, hierarchical world, although some wrestlers say

there have been improvements in the decade since a trainee was beaten to death.

"Sumo, recognising its responsibility as the sport with the longest history in Japan, must stamp out violence so that the expectations of the people, including youth, are not again betrayed," Education Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, whose ministry oversees sports, said in a parliamentary committee meeting.

STRUGGLE WITH VIOLENCE

The head of an advisory body to the JSA, the Yokozuna Deliberation Council, had said this week the affair warranted "extremely harsh punishment" but did not issue a final decision because both the JSA and police were still investigating.

"There is almost no doubting that an act of violence was carried out," Masato Kitamura, chairman of the panel, told a news conference after a council meeting on Monday.

"The general feeling within the council is that a strict disciplinary measure is

required," he added.

A former oyakata was sentenced to five years in prison in 2010 after a court found he had ordered wrestlers to beat 17-year-old trainee Takashi Saito, who had tried to run away, in 2007. Saito died from his injuries. Mongolian yokozuna Asashoryu, who often found himself at odds with sumo authorities over his behaviour, quit the sport that same year after a probe into reports of a drunken scuffle in Tokyo.

Those incidents and increased competition from other sports eroded the popularity of sumo, in which giant wrestlers clad in silk loin-cloths seek to topple, throw or push each other out of a raised ring.

However, January's promotion of Japanese wrestler



DAZAIFU: Mongolian-born yokozuna, or grand champion, Harumafuji leaves the room after a press conference to announce his retirement in Dazaifu. — AFP

Kisenosato to grand champion, the first home-grown yokozuna in 19 years, helped to rebuild the sport's fan base. Harumafuji, one of many Mongolian wrestlers to dominate sumo in recent years, started his career in Japan at the age of 16 and was promoted to yokozuna in 2012. He has won nine grand tournaments in all.

Reflecting on his 17-year career in sumo, Harumafuji said: "I really love sumo. The way of sumo is not simply to be strong, but through sumo... I wanted to inspire the

people and give them courage and hope.

The assault affair has grabbed headlines since the news broke earlier this month and on Wednesday was the second top news story on public broadcaster NHK, after the launch of a North Korean ballistic missile that splashed down near Japan.

Harumafuji's retirement leaves three yokozuna including fellow Mongolian Hakuho, but two have been sidelined by injuries. — Reuters

S Arabia target return to past glories in Russia

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia make their return to the World Cup finals for the first time since 2006 aiming to recapture the country's glory days. The Saudis reached the knockout phase in their first appearance at the tournament in the United States in 1994 when Saeed Owairan's 80-yard run culminated in a remarkable goal against Belgium that helped take the country into the last 16.

Saudi Arabia's fortunes at the World Cup have been diminishing ever since, however, with none of their appearances in 1998, 2002 — when they were thrashed 8-1 by Germany—and 2006 seeing them advance beyond the group phase.

The last decade witnessed a marked decline, with the Saudi team failing to make a sustained impact at any level until Bert van Marwijk took over as coach in 2015, with the Dutchman rebuilding confidence and steering them to Russia.

Van Marwijk's side was built on the foundations of the Riyadh-based Al Hilal club, where Osama Hawsawi is an imposing presence in defence, and Abdullah Otaif controls midfield alongside the creative fulcrum of Salman Al Faraj and Salem Al Dawasari.

None of the squad that qualified for the World Cup finals plays professionally outside Saudi Arabia, with Al Nassr and Al Ahli from the domestic league also contributing key players such as Yahya Al Shehri and Taisir Al Jassim.

But the Dutchman was ousted from his role just days after qualification was sealed when he failed to agree an extension to his contract and he was replaced by Argentina's Edgardo Bauza.

Bauza, who was fired by Argentina during their difficult qualifying campaign, was sacked by Saudi Arabia after five matches in charge. He had made a disappointing start to his tenure, losing friendlies to Portugal and Bulgaria in November.

The Saudi football federation said on Wednesday that they were "working on finishing the details with another manager to replace Bauza and lead the national team in the World Cup in Russia." — Reuters

Modric accused of tax fraud

MADRID: Real Madrid midfielder Luka Modric became the latest football star in Spain accused by prosecutors of committing tax fraud on revenue from his image rights, a court filing revealed yesterday.

Prosecutors believe the Croatian, whose wife Vadja is also cited in the accusation, evaded 870,728 euros (\$1.03 million) in 2013 and 2014 via a shell company set up in Luxembourg.

However, that figure could rise once details of financial holdings belonging to the player in the Isle of Man are revealed to Spanish authorities. Modric, 32, joined Madrid from Tottenham Hotspur for a reported fee of £30 million (\$40 million) in 2012.

He is just the latest in a series of star players based in Spain to be accused of tax fraud on income related to image rights in the past few years. On Tuesday, Madrid left-back Marcelo admitted to a 490,917 euro tax fraud via his image rights in 2013. — AFP

Germany brimming with confidence ahead of title defence

BERLIN: World champions Germany expect nothing less than a fifth World Cup triumph in Russia next year, with coach Joachim Loew pointing to an abundance of player choices as his main weapon. The Germans are reaping the healthy rewards of their 15-year-old youth investment plan with more than three dozen high-calibre contenders vying for a place in Loew's World Cup squad. His team no longer depends solely on a spine of 2014 World Cup winners such as Manuel Neuer, Toni

Kroos, Mats Hummels, Sami Khedira and Thomas Mueller. Having rested many of those stalwarts for next year's tournament, a second-strong Germany oozed class as they won the Confederations Cup in July to stake claims for inclusion in the World Cup squad heading to Russia a year later.

With young guns, including Timo Werner, Joshua Kimmich, Emre Can and Leroy Sane earning regular starts along with players like Lars Stindl and Sandro Wagner, the Germans also recorded a perfect qualification campaign with 10 wins in as many games.

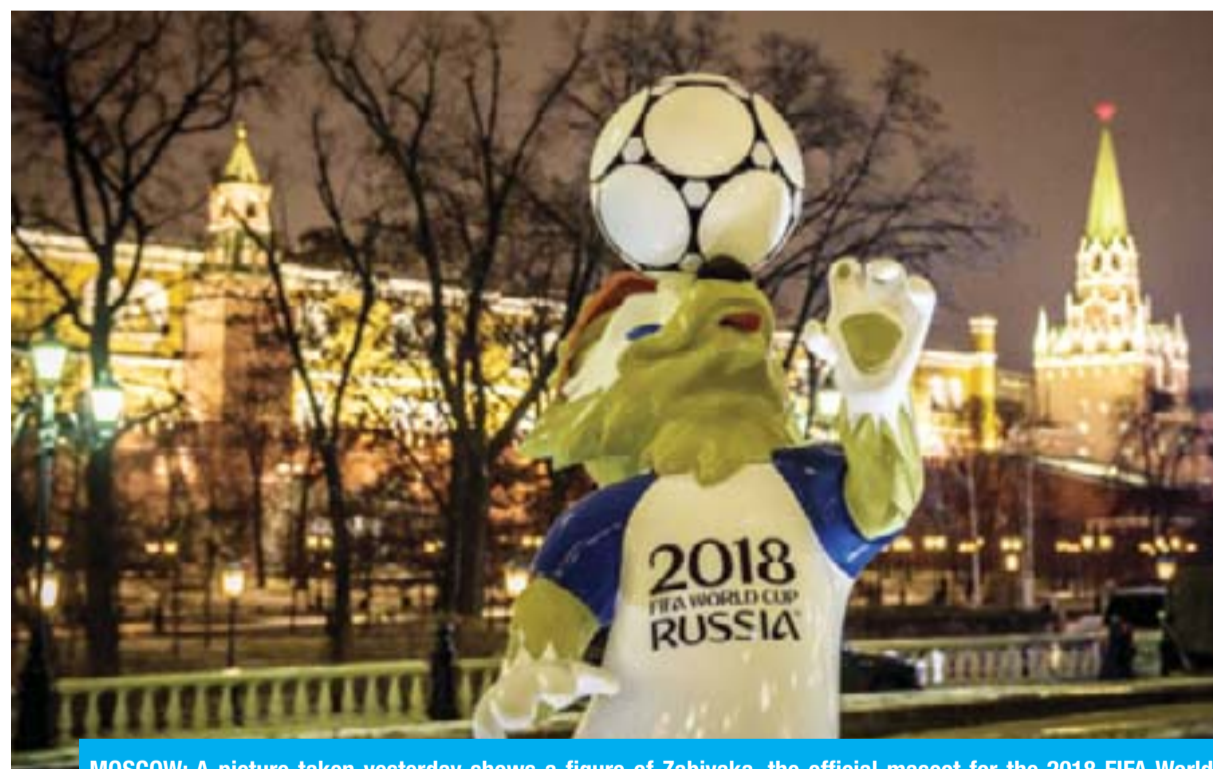
They have also notched a 21-game unbeaten run since their Euro 2016 semi-final defeat to France. "Only we as world champions have something to lose in Russia," Loew said. "We have a very big goal and that is to defend the title."

Loew, in charge since 2006, had always wanted at least two equally skilled players for each position and

he is guaranteed that wish for next year. First choice keeper Neuer will be back from injury early next year but even without him, Loew has top options with Paris St Germain's Kevin Trapp and Barcelona's Marc Andre ter Stegen among others.

His backline is equally crowded with talent, with Joshua Kimmich quickly emerging as retired Philipp Lahm's successor in the rightback position, albeit with an attacking edge. Germany's midfield reads like a "Who's Who" of top European football with a dozen players, including rising star Leon Goretzka as well as Ilkay Guendogan, back from injury, vying for half those spots.

The 21-year-old Werner will lead the attack with the striker having pushed past Mario Gomez in the pecking order, with seven goals in 10 internationals as Germany set out to become the first team to retain the title since Brazil in 1962. — Reuters



MOSCOW: A picture taken yesterday shows a figure of Zabivka, the official mascot for the 2018 FIFA World Cup, at Manezhnaya square in downtown Moscow. — AFP

As lowest-ranked team, WCup hosts Russia hope for upset

MOSCOW: World Cup hosts Russia, the lowest-ranked team in next year's tournament, hope to get past the group stage for the first time in post-Soviet history but, with a tepid attack, inconsistent goalkeeping and stiff competition, the odds are slim.

The country, competing as Russia and the Soviet Union, has made 10 World Cup appearances and will host the tournament for the first time next June and July.

In their three appearances since the collapse of the Soviet Union, in 1994, 2002 and 2014, Russia have failed to reach the knockout stage. Doing so on home turf at the 2018 tournament would represent a significant accomplishment for Stanislav Cherchesov's side.

Appointed manager after Russia's early exit from the 2016 European championship, Cherchesov has few options to add depth to the team.

Unlike other teams in the World Cup finals, Russia have not had the chance to gauge their strength in qualifying, relying on international friendlies to prepare for the tournament.

Critics say Russian players, most of whom play in their country's domestic league, have been cocooned from high-calibre competition, hindering their development. Russia are heavily dependent on game-changing saves by veteran goalkeeper and captain Igor Akinfeev, who has a chequered history in international matches. At the 2014 World Cup, a jittery Akinfeev fumbled the ball on a harmless shot to give South Korea a goal and a 1-1 draw, a gaffe that contributed to Russia's group-stage exit without a win.

The team will be looking for a spark from strikers Alexander Kokorin and Fedor Smolov, who lead the Russian Premier League scoring list this season with nine and eight goals respectively.

Kokorin, who plays for Zenit St Petersburg, seems to have regained his form after recently being recalled to the national team for the first time in nearly a year. The 26-year-old had been excluded over poor play and participation in a champagne-fuelled party in Monaco after Russia crashed out of the Euros. — Reuters

Argentina aim to end trophy drought but goals a problem

RIO DE JANEIRO: Argentina came close to ending their long trophy drought by reaching the World Cup final in Brazil ago but there has been little progress since then and the burden of improvement is now firmly on the shoulders of new coach Jorge Sampaoli.

The South Americans went down to an extra-time goal against Germany in the showpiece match at the Maracana in 2014 and then followed that heart-breaking loss with two consecutive defeats in the finals of the 2015 and 2016 Copa America.

Their last major success was the Copa America in 1993 but if three finals in three years from 2014 made most Argentines think the trophy drought would soon end, the South American qualifiers provided a rude awakening.

Qualifying for next year's tournament was a struggle, only made possible by Lionel Messi's last-gasp hat-trick in the final game against Ecuador. A five-time World Player of the Year, Messi is the enigma at the heart of Argentina's long run of disappointment.

The Barcelona forward has appeared disillusioned playing for his country, retiring from international football in 2016 only to reverse his decision soon after. He is the first name on the team sheet but if Argentina are to add to the World Cups they won in 1978 and 1986 he will need support from his ageing team mates, particularly up front.

Argentina struggled to score in the qualifiers, netting just 19 goals in 18 qualifiers, with only Bolivia scoring fewer. Since taking over in May, Sampaoli has dropped the team's other proven scorer, Gonzalo Higuain; Juventus' Paulo Dybala has yet to score in 12 internationals; and Sergio Aguero, Manchester City's record scorer, has spent much of his time on the bench.

Those decisions have heaped more pressure on the former Chile manager, who became Argentina's third coach in three years when he replaced Edgardo Bauza. They have won just four of their eight games in Sampaoli's tenure and, most worryingly, only one of their competitive fixtures, that 3-1 win over Ecuador. — Reuters

Sports

Young sparkles as United close gap, Spurs' title bid in tatters

Guardiola looking to make it 12 successive league victories

LONDON: Manchester United cut Manchester City's lead at the top of the Premier League to five points as Ashley Young inspired a 4-2 win against Watford, while Tottenham's fading title hopes were extinguished by a 2-1 defeat at Leicester on Tuesday. Young's first United goals since May 2016 were followed by an Anthony Martial strike as United produced a scintillating first half at Vicarage Road. United's third consecutive league win was only secured after a late wobble as Troy Deeney and Abdoulaye Doucoure struck for Watford before Jesse Lingard settled the visitors' nerves with a fine solo effort. "It was an easy match to win comfortably, but at 3-2 the game is in the balance," United manager Jose Mourinho said. "We should be smoking cigars but then we were in trouble before Jesse Lingard had the initiative to kill the game." Although United have closed the gap on City, Pep Guardiola's side, looking to make it 12 successive league victories, can reestablish their eight-point lead when they host Southampton on Wednesday.

Having provoked the Lewis Dunk own goal that clinched United's win over Brighton on Saturday, Young opened the scoring against his old club in the 19th minute. Picked out on the edge of the Watford penalty area by Lingard's pass, Young smashed his shot into the bottom corner. Young wasn't finished yet and the wing-back doubled United's lead with another sumptuous strike six minutes later as his 25-yard free-kick flashed past Watford goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes.

Martial netted United's third in the 32nd minute with a cool finish from Romelu Lukaku's pass for his eighth goal of the season. Deeney's 77th-minute penalty, awarded for Marcos Rojo's foul on Roberto Pereyra, was followed by Doucoure's strike in the 84th minute,

but Lingard notched United's fourth two minutes later.

At the King Power Stadium, Tottenham succumbed to a damaging defeat that leaves them with just one win in their last five league games. England left-back Danny Rose was back in the Tottenham team after being dropped for their previous two league games.

But Rose's presence did little for Tottenham, who fell behind in the 13th minute when Jamie Vardy bagged his 100th career league goal. The Leicester striker's milestone moment arrived with a superb volleyed finish from Marc Albrighton's pass. Riyad Mahrez made it two majestic strikes for Leicester in first half stoppage-time when the Algeria winger drilled an unstoppable shot into the top corner.

“It was an easy match to win comfortably”

IMMEDIATE IMPACT

Tottenham winger Erik Lamela came on for his first appearance in 13 months and made an immediate impact as his pass teed up Harry Kane to blast in his 16th club goal of the season in the 79th minute.

But Mauricio Pochettino's fifth-placed team couldn't muster an equaliser and last season's runners-up remain 13 points behind City. "The first half was a poor performance and it was difficult to get back into the game," Pochettino said. "We feel very disappointed. We started the game not in the right way. We need to improve the way we start." Crystal Palace missed a chance to move off the bottom of the table as Roy Hodgson's side settled for a 0-0 draw at rivals Brighton. Palace would have climbed to 18th place with a win, but they were unable to break down Brighton in the first Premier League meeting between clubs who have a fierce rivalry despite being separated by 45 miles. In their first meeting for over four years, south Londoners Palace picked up their first away league point this sea-



LEICESTER: Leicester City's English midfielder Demarai Gray (L) vies with Tottenham Hotspur's English midfielder Dele Alli by Leicester City's Danish goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel during the Premier League football match.— AFP

son, while south coast-based Brighton are now without a win in their last three league games.

West Bromwich Albion blew a two-goal lead as Newcastle rescued a 2-2 draw at the Hawthorns to leave the relegation-threatened hosts without a win in 12 league games. West Brom forward Hal Robson-Kanu broke the deadlock in first half stoppage-time when he

nodded in his first goal since August.

Sam Field got the second in the 56th minute, finishing off Matt Phillips' cross for his first Albion goal. But Ciaran Clark's header reduced the deficit three minutes later and Newcastle avoided a fifth consecutive defeat thanks to a Jonny Evans own goal from Matt Ritchie's 83rd-minute free-kick.—AFP

Four Arab countries to feature in FIFA World Cup draw

DOHA: All eyes will be on the 2018 FIFA World Cup draw in Russia tomorrow, as the build up to the world's biggest sporting event continues. As always, beIN will have you covered from every angle through its unrivalled coverage of the draw live from the State Kremlin Palace in the heart of the country's capital.

This edition of the draw will be a historic one with



For the first time in history

the inclusion of Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia. The qualification of four Arab countries is an achievement unprecedented in the 88-year history of the tournament.

A total of 32 teams will be placed in four pots based on their world rankings. Pot 1 will include the seven best teams in the world along with host nation Russia. Pot 2 will feature the next best eight teams, and so on. A team will then be drawn from each pot, making up eight groups.

beIN will bring you all the action as it happens with its live and unparalleled coverage available in three different languages. On beIN SPORTS HD11, you can



catch Jan Aage Fjortoft, David Platt and Trevor Francis who will join presenter Angus Scott in the English studio starting at 5 pm Mecca time. Arabic coverage will be on beIN SPORTS HD1 with French on HD14. On digital, make sure to follow beIN's Instagram page, which will upload a story that takes you through every step of the journey from start to finish. beIN will provide fans with 360-degree coverage from the heart of all the action, including an exclusive look behind the

scenes. Updates can also be found on beIN's other social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter, as well as on the main website and mobile application.

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Swiss generation approaching its peak but doubts remain

ZURICH: One of the finest generations of players Switzerland has ever produced will be at its peak at the World Cup in Russia, raising hopes that the team can reach the last eight of a major tournament after a wait of more than 60 years.

Players such as Ricardo Rodriguez, Fabian Schär, Xherdan Shaqiri, Granit Xhaka and Haris Seferovic are all in their mid-twenties and already have experience at a World Cup and a European championship behind them.

Swiss football is now reaping the rewards of the hard work done in youth development a decade ago which tapped into the potential offered by second-generation immigrants, many from the former Yugoslavia.

The first signs were there in 2009 when Switzerland improbably won the world under-17 championship in Nigeria, and three members of that squad—Rodriguez, Xhaka and Seferovic—are regulars in the current team.

Meanwhile, the old defensive tactics which bored fans rigid at the 2006 and

2010 World Cups have been thrown out of the window. Coach Vladimir Petkovic, himself born in Sarajevo, always sets out to dominate the opposition, whoever they maybe. Doubts remain, however. Although Switzerland won 10 out of their 12 World Cup qualifiers, they were flattered by being in a group which included Andorra, Faroe Islands, Latvia and a Hungarian side which imploded during the campaign. They were soundly beaten by Portugal in Lisbon in one of the only qualifiers that offered a genuinely stiff challenge and needed a hugely controversial penalty to scrape past Northern Ireland 1-0 on aggregate in their play-off. Xhaka, their midfield general known as Little Einstein, has a worrying tendency for misplaced passes and red cards, captain Stephan Lichtsteiner is permanently on a short fuse and striker Haris Seferovic often misfires.

The Swiss have reached the last 16 at their last two major tournaments but have not made the quarter-finals since the 1954 World Cup which the country hosted.—Reuters

Portugal still cautious, efficient, dependent on Ronaldo

LISBON: European champions Portugal can be expected to be cautious, efficient and dependent on Cristiano Ronaldo at the World Cup, and they will be making no apologies for that. With the likes of Ricardo Quaresma, Bernardo Silva, Nani, Joao Moutinho, and Goncalo Guedes to call on—not to mention the five-times world player of the year—there is no shortage of flair in the squad.

But proudly pragmatic coach Fernando Santos prefers efficiency to entertainment and with only one defeat in 24 competitive matches since he took over in September 2014, not to mention the Euro 2016 title in the bag, he makes a persuasive case.

"You can only win the European championship and the World Cup by playing well. The concept of what is pretty or not is something else," he told Reuters in an

interview earlier this year. At Euro 2016, his charges they drew all three group stage matches, beat Croatia in extra-time, squeezed past Poland on penalties and finally overcame Wales and France.

After beginning their qualifying campaign for Russia with a 2-0 defeat in Switzerland, but they ground out nine successive wins to finish top of their group on goal difference, beating the Swiss by the same score in their final game. Fifteen of their goals came from Ronaldo who will be competing in his fourth and, at the age of 33, possibly final World Cup. Portugal remain hugely dependent on the Madeira-born forward, who is their most capped player, with 145 appearances, and their record scorer with 79 goals.

With his insistence on taking every free kick and penalty, and his often angry reactions when team mates fail to pass him the ball, Ronaldo is can appear to be a burden for his team. But statistics suggest otherwise.

Since he made his international debut in 2003, Portugal have reached two European championship finals, one semi-final, one quarter-final and a World Cup semi-final, a remarkable performance for a relatively small country.—Reuters

Resurgent Spain showing signs of a reconquista in Russia

BARCELONA: Spain's dramatic fall from champions to a group stage exit was one of the main stories of the last World Cup but under Julen Lopetegui they look more like the side that won three straight international tournaments between 2008 and 2012. The old guard of Xavi Hernandez, Xabi Alonso and Iker Casillas, who led Spain to their only World Cup success in 2010 but had to suffer the team's fall from grace at the 2014 finals in Brazil, are gone though the backbone of their triumph remains. Andres Iniesta, Sergio Busquets, David Silva, Sergio Ramos and Gerard Pique bring a wealth of major tournament experience to Lopetegui's side, which has been revitalised by a new generation of talent including Isco, Thiago Alcantara, Alvaro Morata plus Real Madrid hotshot Marco Asensio.

Lopetegui was the outside choice to succeed Vicente del Bosque in 2016 due to his limited experience, earning the job on the strength of his achievements with the under-21 side he led to glory at the 2013 European Championship.

He has proved an inspired choice, however, building a new-look team with a potent mix of experience and youthful hunger which swaggered its way through qualifying, winning nine out of 10 games, scoring 36 times and remaining unbeaten.—Reuters

12 New Zealand trip Stokes suspicion in Australia



13 Sharks open four-game road trip with win over Flyers



14 Grand champion Harumafuji retires over assault incident



BANGKOK: Syria and Al-Hilal player Omar Khrbin (R) receives the Asian Football Confederation Men's Player of the Year award at the AFC Annual Awards in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP



BANGKOK: Australia and Sky Blue FC player Samantha Kerr (R) receives the Asian Football Confederation Women's Player of the Year award at the AFC Annual Awards in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP

Khrbin named Asia's Player of the Year

Australia's Samantha Kerr took the women's award

BANGKOK: Omar Khrbin became the first player from Syria to be crowned Asia's Player of the Year yesterday when the Al Hilal striker was presented with the Asian Football Confederation's most prestigious individual award.

The 23-year-old claimed the title ahead of last year's winner, Omar Abdulrahman of the United Arab Emirates, and China's Wu Lei, who missed out for the second year in a row. Khrbin has had an impressive season, scoring 10 times in the Asian Champions League to finish as the tournament's top scorer while also playing a major role as his war-torn

nation narrowly missed out on qualifying for their first-ever World Cup. "We play and fight to bring happiness to our people, this is our main target," said Khrbin. "We have determination when we play football, but this is stronger when we have people who are very hungry for happiness and joy."

"From here I would like to promise Syria fans we will bring happiness and joy for them at the Asian Cup finals next year because our people deserve to be happy." The award was some consolation after Al Hilal finished as runners-up to Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds in the Asian Champions League final last

weekend, while Syria's World Cup hopes were ended by Australia in a playoff.

Australia's Samantha Kerr took the women's award to make up for the disappointment of not being nominated for the global award by the game's governing body, FIFA, earlier in the year. Kerr, who plays club football for Perth Glory in Australia and Sky Blue in the United States, finished ahead of Japan's Saki Kumagai and Sung Hyang-sim of North Korea.

"A lot of Australians have previously won the award, so I'm very humbled to win not only because

the Australians have done well but also because it's a great award and I'm very excited," said Kerr. Tottenham Hotspur's Son Heung-min won the International Player of the Year title, which is presented to players from the confederation who play outside the continent, for the second time in three years.

Japan took both of the coaching awards, with Takafumi Hori claiming the men's award after guiding Urawa to their first Asian Champions League title in a decade, while Japan national team coach Takakura Asako took the women's award. — Reuters

Everton appoint Allardyce as boss: Reports

LONDON: Everton have appointed Sam Allardyce as their new manager, ending a long hunt since they sacked Ronald Koeman last month, the British press reported yesterday.

The Daily Mail reported Allardyce had signed an 18-month deal and quoted owner Farhad Moshiri as saying: "We need a strong leader, he gives us that."

The former England boss ruled himself out of the running earlier this month, saying he did not feel the Toffees were convinced he was the right man.

But after Everton's pursuit of Watford boss Marco

Silva was met with a firm rebuttal from Vicarage Road, the club returned to Allardyce.

This will be the 10th English club managerial position of the 63-year-old's career, with Allardyce most recently having guided Crystal Palace to safety last season. When he left Selhurst Park in May, Allardyce said he had no ambitions to take another managerial job but the chance to turn around the fortunes of the Merseyside club has apparently lured him back.

Everton are 17th in the table, two points ahead of West Ham in 18th. David Unsworth has been in temporary charge since Koeman was sacked on October 23 and the under-23s boss had made clear his desire to take on the job permanently. But during his seven-game tenure Everton have lost five and won just one.

Everton invested heavily following last season's impressive seventh-place finish.

Allardyce has previously led Palace and Sunderland to safety from precarious situations. His achievements at the Stadium of Light earned him his



Sam Allardyce

dream job with England but that turned sour after only one match, with Allardyce stepping down in September 2016 following a newspaper sting. — AFP

La Liga aims to close income gap with Premier League

BRUSSELS: La Liga, which runs the top two divisions of Spanish soccer, believes it can close the gap in revenues between it and the English Premier League in the next 10 years with an ambitious plan to expand its international audience.

Javier Tebas, La Liga's president, said the Premier League earned about 40 percent more than the Spanish league, which draws in some 1.7 billion euros (\$2 billion) a year in television rights. "I have no doubt that within 10 years we will practically be equal to the Premier League or at least within 10

percent," he said at the opening of a La Liga office in Brussels.

The main difference for now was that the British market itself was bigger than Spain's. "On an international level there is less of a difference, but that's our main objective—to get closer to the Premier League," Tebas said. La Liga, which already dominates in Latin America, has now set its sights on gaining ground in key markets China, India and the United States, with another eye focused on Africa.

In the past four years, it has set up offices in Shanghai, Delhi, New York, Johannesburg and Dubai and had representatives in over 40 countries. It has also changed the times of fixtures, so that one match was played earlier to catch viewers in Asia and one late on Sunday for an audience in the Americas.

Tebas said La Liga's biggest advantage relative to the Premier League was the quality of its clubs and players. Barcelona's Lionel Messi and Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo have won the Ballon d'Or for world's best player for the past nine years and their clubs the Champions League for the past four years, with Atletico Madrid also in the final twice.

"This is an aspect we're working on. We didn't have a strategy before," Tebas said. La Liga was also looking into the possibility of playing one or two of its 380 matches per season outside Spain, noting the success of a pre-season Barcelona-Real Madrid game in Miami in July.

"We are thinking about it... The first match abroad would probably be in the United States," Tebas said, adding he hoped a first such match could take place within two years. While La Liga dreams of greater foreign riches, Tebas expressed concern that competition in Europe was being skewed by what he called state-owned clubs, singling out Qatar-owned Paris St Germain.

Tebas said the French club could not have paid the world-record 222 million euro fee to buy striker Neymar from Barcelona with their own funds, with state capital distorting the market.

If European governing body UEFA did not take measures by the end of 2017, Tebas said La Liga would address its complaint to the European Commission, which governs competition issues across the bloc. — Reuters

West Brom appoint Pardew as manager

LONDON: West Bromwich Albion yesterday appointed Alan Pardew as their new manager following the sacking of Tony Pulis as the Chinese-owned club seek to pull away from the Premier League danger zone. The former West Ham, Newcastle and Crystal Palace boss has agreed a two-and-a-half-year contract at the club, languishing just two points above the relegation places.

The West Midlands club sacked Pulis last week after they went 10 Premier League games without a win—the fifth managerial casualty in the English top flight this season.

Pardew, who took Crystal Palace to the FA Cup final in May 2016, has not managed since being sacked by the Selhurst Park club just seven months later. "I'm thrilled with the opportunity Albion have provided and looking forward to getting to work with what I consider to be a talented group of players," Pardew told the club's official website.

"The immediate challenge will be to get the results we need to pull ourselves up the table. But I'm aware that while I'm joining one of the great, traditional clubs of English football, it is one determined to go forward in the Premier League." "It's an exciting opportunity to play a part in that ambition."

The 56-year-old, who is adding his former assistant at Newcastle, John Carver, to his backroom staff at The Hawthorns, had widely been expected to be named Albion's new manager and he takes over with the club winless in their past 13 games in all competitions. The Baggies threw away a 2-0 lead to draw 2-2 with Newcastle on Tuesday, although Pardew was not in attendance. Chairman John Williams said Albion's board had reached a unanimous decision to appoint Pardew following a thorough recruitment process.

"Alan brings the experience of more than 300 Premier League games and the kind of dynamic leadership from which our club can benefit," he said. "We were impressed with what he had to say and what he has to offer and we are looking forward to an exciting new era under his charge." Pardew, the Premier League manager of the year in 2012, has a history of explosive touchline bustups. In 2014, when Newcastle boss, he was fined and given a formal warning for headbutting an opposition player and he had a furious row with Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger during his time at West Ham. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2017

20 Bubble or brave new world?
Bitcoin breaks \$10,000 barrier**21** Kuwait's Jazeera Airways sets course for Kochi, Ahmedabad**22** Toyota unveils humanoid robot that mirrors user

HYDERABAD: (Left to right) Karen Quintos, Chief customer officer of Dell EMC, Cherie Blair, Founder of Cherie Blair foundation for women, K T Rama Rao, Minister for IT E&C, Industries and Commerce of Telangana, Ivanka Trump, Advisor to US President and Chanda Kochhar, Managing Director and CEO of ICICI Bank limited during a panel discussion at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit at the Hyderabad Convention Centre yesterday.—AFP

Ivanka a 'rockstar' in India, despite flak

Trump's daughter pushes business leaders to change attitude towards women

HYDERABAD: Ivanka Trump yesterday pushed business leaders to change their attitudes toward women at an Indian summit where she has drawn mixed reviews amid criticism over her White House role and clothes brand. US President Donald Trump's eldest daughter stole the show at the summit in Hyderabad, where Indian officials feted the 36-year-old presidential adviser with a grand reception usually reserved for heads of state.

Trump, in her biggest foreign mission yet, urged India to seize the untapped potential in women and promoted growing ties between the US and the South Asia powerhouse in a keynote speech on Tuesday before Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

She returned to the theme yesterday, stressing businesses needed to stop thinking about gender considerations in the workplace as "women's issues".

"We are half the population so we need to start thinking about them as critical issues. We're seeing an explosion in women entrepreneurs," Trump said.

Many attendees at the three-day Global Entrepreneurship Summit embraced her message, including calls for India to boost its woefully low rate of female employment in the fast growing economy.

"She is one of the most powerful women in the world at the moment so whatever she says does have an impact," said Indian social entrepreneur Nishita Manne. The tech hub of Hyderabad, home to the

Indian operations of Google, Facebook and Amazon, was bowled over by Trump's star power, decking the city in festive lights, colorful murals and billboards bearing her image.

"Ivanka Trump has a rockstar quality. She oozes glamour and class," 19-year-old student Raj Shekhar told AFP in the southern Indian city. "She has lit up our city with her presence. She has put Hyderabad on the global map."

Too much politics

The visit was clouded by US media reports questioning Trump's clothing line and its supply chain as well as a snub by Rex Tillerson, the US secretary of state, who has reportedly refused to send senior staff with Trump to India. Trump had "failed to address the brutal reality (that) clothes and shoes produced by her brand's suppliers, which outsource all their production overseas, are often manufactured under abusive conditions," Robert Weissman, head of US-based nonprofit Public Citizen, posted on Twitter.

Others questioned Trump's credentials to lead such a summit, disapproving of some overt political messaging about her father's presidency in scripted remarks. "I felt she has been talking more about politics than

the real issues that women entrepreneurs have to face. We are not interested in American politics or her father's policies," Norma Uazengisa, an entrepreneur from Namibia, said.

A US businesswoman, who asked not to be named, said: "I feel I can't relate to her as an entrepreneur because I don't think she has faced any real obstacles in her life."

But start-up founder Upasana Makati said it was crucial to "focus on the positives and leave aside the controversies for once". "Her coming here means everyone is talking about women and entrepreneurship. A dialogue has been set in motion which in itself is a great start," she told AFP. Trump left India yesterday after a tour of a historic fort built by medieval rulers on the outskirts of Hyderabad.—AFP



HYDERABAD: Ivanka Trump speaks during a panel discussion at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Hyderabad yesterday.—AFP

OPEC, Russia set for oil cut extension

VIENNA: OPEC and Russia look set to prolong oil supply cuts until the end of 2018 this week while signaling that they may review the deal when they meet again in June if the market overheats. With oil prices rallying above \$60 per barrel, Russia has questioned the wisdom of extending existing cuts of 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) until the end of next year as such a move could prompt a spike in US production. Russia needs much lower oil prices to balance its budget than OPEC's leader Saudi Arabia, which is preparing a stock market listing for national energy champion Aramco next year and would hence benefit from pricier crude.

Six ministers from OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers including Saudi Arabia and Russia were meeting in Vienna yesterday - one day ahead of a full OPEC gathering - to review recommendations by their delegates. On Tuesday, a joint OPEC/non-OPEC com-

mittee recommended extending cuts until the end of 2018 with an option of reviewing the arrangement at the next OPEC meeting in June, three sources from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said.

"In reality it would be only a three-month true extension with the review in June," said Olivier Jakob from Petromatrix consultancy. The existing cuts expire in March. Benchmark Brent and US crude prices declined yesterday for a third consecutive day although Brent remained above \$63. The United Arab Emirates energy minister said on the eve of a meeting of OPEC and its allies on extending an oil production cap that he is hopeful a deal will be reached.

"I am optimistic that this group of committed countries will come up hopefully today with a decision that is good for the market," UAE Energy Minister Suhail Al-Mazrouei said yesterday in Vienna. Twenty four countries agreed at the end of last year to limit their crude output, which has led to a recovery of oil prices that fell under \$30 per barrel at the beginning of 2016.

The deal that reduced production by 1.8 million barrels per day has already been given more time once, and discussions are about extending it beyond March 2018. Mazrouei, who met with his Saudi and Kuwaiti counter-

parts earlier yesterday, did not comment on his discussions. Gulf nations traditionally meet ahead of OPEC meetings to agree a common policy. "We need to meet, there's nothing I can tell you now. We need to wait for the meeting," he told journalists, referring to the important technical meeting to be held yesterday afternoon. That meeting involving ministers from several nations, including major producers Saudi Arabia and Russia, was due to give a recommendation for the main gathering today. Saudi Arabia may have difficulty, however, in convincing Russia to agree to extend the production cuts to the end of 2018, as Moscow has made it known it feels the rise in the price of oil is mostly benefiting US companies. Iraqi Oil Minister Jabar Al-Luaibi told reporters yesterday he also supported a nine-month extension. Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih told the opening of the monitoring meeting yesterday that cuts needed to be extended as the rebalancing of oil markets was not yet complete.

Novak told reporters after meeting Falih: "We understand that we need to take further steps to rebalance the market ... We have a common understanding (with Falih)."

Debate on Nigeria, Libya

Two sources familiar with OPEC talks said



VIENNA: (Left to right): Russian energy minister Alexander Novak, Kuwait's Oil minister Essam Al-Marzouk, OPEC Secretary General Mohammed Barkindo and OPEC Conference President Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih attend the informal meeting of the OPEC yesterday.—AFP

the group may debate capping Nigerian and Libyan output at 1.8 million bpd and 1 million bpd respectively, having exempted the two countries so far due to unrest and lower-than-normal production volumes. The production cuts have been in place since the start of 2017 and helped halve an excess of global oil stocks although those remain at 140 million barrels above the five-year average, according to OPEC.

Russia has signalled it wants to understand better how producers will exit from the cuts as it needs to provide guidance to its private

and state energy companies.

"It is important ... to work out a strategy which we will follow from April 2018," Novak told the monitoring committee. Iraq's Luaibi said there had been little discussion so far on any exit strategy.

Some Russian producers including Rosneft, run by an ally of President Vladimir Putin, Igor Sechin, have questioned the rationale of prolonging the cuts, saying it will lead to a loss of market share to US firms, which are not reducing output. OPEC, which comprises 14 countries, —Agencies

Business

Small Catalan firms forced to move out of region

Bid to skirt boycott of goods by angry Spaniards

BARCELONA: Small Catalan firms are moving their headquarters outside of the region or setting up parallel companies to skirt a boycott of goods from Catalonia by Spaniards angry over its separatist push. While tensions have eased somewhat since Spain's central government last month took direct control of the northeast region and has scheduled regional elections in December, many businesses in Catalonia still feel the need to guard against uncertainty.

The head of a small family-run wine and spirits business said he believes setting up a duplicate distribution firm for his goods in Madrid was the right move. His company's sales have plunged by over 30 percent since Catalonia went ahead with a banned referendum on October 1 followed by the Catalan parliament unilaterally declaring independence.

The new distribution company allows him to slap his products—which continue to be made in Catalonia—with a Madrid address that he hopes will help sales recover. "We won't sell anymore if we don't do this," said the businessman, who like other executives in Catalonia did not want to be identified due to the sensitivity of the independence issue.

"This is a decision you take when you have no other choice," he told AFP. Over 2,700 companies have moved their headquarters outside of Catalonia since the referendum because of the uncertainty caused by the separatist drive and the boycott campaign, according to Spain's commercial registrar's office.

The moves are mainly administrative for now, but many fear the companies could eventually relocate staff and production outside of the region as well. While the departure of listed multinationals, including Catalonia's two big banks, CaixaBank and Sabadell, have grabbed the media spotlight, the exodus also includes small and medium sized firms.



Businesses still guarded against uncertainty

'Never happened'
In an upscale Barcelona neighborhood a small drug distribution company with just 12 employees has accelerated a move of its headquarters which had already been planned to Seville, the capital of the southwestern region of Andalusia.

The company says its sales in Andalusia, where it earns the bulk of its turnover, have dropped 10-20 percent since the referendum. "Patients say 'give me a product that is not Catalan'. This has never happened before," the company's director told AFP.

The headquarters move also aims to ensure the company remains within the European Union's legal framework if Catalonia were to become independent one day. "We would go bankrupt because the medicines we import would be subject to customs duties," the director said.

The majority of firms that have changed their headquarters were "afraid of a boycott", said Enric Rius, a tax expert who has helped several companies make the move. But he also pointed out that these are not complete relocations. The companies "keep factories, the management and jobs" in Catalonia, he said.

'Anger and pain'
"If it affected me, I would leave but for now my business does not feel the effects," said Francisco Castillo, the head of a transport firm near Barcelona "Business is slow though, no one makes decisions, buys machines, in this context," he added.

The decision to move headquarters is not always well received in Catalonia.

Aleix Pons i Coll, the vice president of mutual insurance firm Previsio, said he felt "anger and pain" when Catalonia's two big banks announced last month that they were moving their headquarters out of the region.

Previsio used to work closely with the two lenders but is now looking into other options, he said at his



BARCELONA: This file photo taken on October 03, 2017 shows people walking past a closed store during a general strike in Catalonia called by Catalan unions in Barcelona. More than 2,700 companies have moved their headquarters out of Catalonia and the list continues to grow, including small and medium enterprises. —AFP

company's headquarters in Terrasa, about 30 kilometers (18 miles) north of Barcelona.

"Even reluctantly we may decide to no longer work with (banks) that leave, and to focus on those that remain," said Pon i Coll. He said he started to support independence in 2010 after Spain's Constitutional Court annulled parts of a statute that had granted Catalonia greater autonomy.

'Political pressure'
A decree passed by Spain's central government in early October that makes it easier for companies to move their headquarters out of Catalonia has also

fueled resentment in the region. But Madrid appears to be sending mixed signals. During a visit to Barcelona last week, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy urged businesses not to abandon Catalonia. "We see clearly that there was political pressure. How can we tell them not to go when everything was done for them to do so," said Pons i Coll.

Few expect the regional elections called for December 21 in Catalonia will lead companies to move their headquarters back to the region. "There is a perception that this society will continue to ignore laws, and that is dangerous for business activity," said the head of the drug distribution company. —AFP

German inflation outstrips forecasts in November

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Inflation in Germany grew faster than expected in November, official data showed yesterday, welcome news for the European Central Bank as it begins to wind down its price growth-stoking policies. Prices in Europe's largest economy increased 1.8 percent year-on-year, federal statistics authority Destatis said in preliminary figures, slightly faster than the 1.7-percent pace predicted by analysts and the 1.6 percent recorded in October.

Energy costs grew the fastest, at 3.7 percent, while food costs grew 3.2 percent.

There were slower price increases for services and home rental costs. Inflation also picked up to 1.8 percent when measured using the ECB's preferred yardstick, the harmonized index of consumer prices, from 1.5 percent last month. Central bank policymakers target price growth of close to, but below 2.0 percent, believed to be most favorable to growth.

The ECB has intervened massively in the eurozone economy in pursuit of its goal, with his-



BERLIN: Social Democratic Party (SPD) Chairman Martin Schulz (center) speaks to journalists on the sidelines of the Deutscher Arbeitgebertag congress of German Employers' Associations (BDA) yesterday in Berlin. —AFP

toric low interest rates, cheap loans to banks and tens of billions of euros in government and corporate bond purchases per month. The schemes are intended to pump cash through the financial system and into the real economy of businesses and households.

Economic growth has picked up in the 19-nation single currency area since the central bank's unprecedented measures, prompting it to

announce last month that it will halve its monthly bond-buying from January, to 30 billion euros (\$35.5 billion).

Critics, especially in Germany, have long warned that too much easy money risks creating bubbles in some economic sectors and softening the market discipline that would usually prevent states, companies and households from borrowing too much. —AFP

Mexico gets new central bank chief

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's president named US-trained policymaker Alejandro Diaz de Leon to head the central bank Tuesday, a figure analysts said would likely continue the hawkish policies of widely respected incumbent Agustin Carstens.

Carstens, who led the Bank of Mexico for nearly eight years, is leaving on December 1 to head the Bank for International Settlements in Switzerland.

Greece claims success in second market test

ATHENS: Greece said yesterday a successful swap of bonds means the thrice bailed out nation has now passed another test on international debt markets ahead of its debt support exit next year.

"The bond swap was very successful," government spokesman Dimitris Tzanakopoulos told reporters.

dubbed the "central bank of central banks."

News of his departure had rattled the markets, as he was seen as a steady hand at the tiller-weathering the global financial crisis and Donald Trump's election as US president, which battered the Mexican peso because of his threats to scrap the North American Free Trade Agreement.

But Diaz de Leon, currently Catalonia's deputy governor, is seen as a choice of continuity.

The 47-year-old economist, who has a master's degree in public policy from Yale, first joined the central bank in 1991, and has also worked at the finance ministry and Mexico's development bank for international trade, President Enrique Pena Nieto's office said in a statement. —AFP

"It was the second successful market exit...which aimed to reprofile Greek debt and render it more easily negotiable in international markets," he said. In July, Athens made a symbolic return to debt markets after a three-year hiatus, selling three billion euros worth of five-year bonds.

This month it was seeking to swap nearly 30 billion euros (\$36 billion) in debt, consisting of bonds of many different maturities issued as part of the 2012 write-down of its bonds as part of its second international bailout. Around 25.5 out of 29.6 billion euros were exchanged, a voluntary participation rate of 86.1 percent, Tzanakopoulos said. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.714
Indian Rupees	4.695
Pakistani Rupees	2.866
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.965
Nepali Rupees	2.923
Singapore Dollar	225.620
Hongkong Dollar	38.761
Bangladesh Taka	3.577
Philippine Peso	6.009
Thai Baht	9.301

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.734
Qatari Riyal	83.152
Omani Riyal	786.253
Bahraini Dinar	803.910
UAE Dirham	82.427

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.900
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.020
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.215
Tunisian Dinar	123.110
Jordanian Dinar	426.910
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.017
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.532

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	302.550

Euro	360.190
Sterling Pound	406.930
Canadian dollar	237.200
Turkish lira	77.280
Swiss Franc	309.040
Australian Dollar	231.300
US Dollar Buying	301.350

GOLD

20 Gram	260.520
10 Gram	133.180
5 Gram	67.430

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.000
Canadian Dollar	238.315
Sterling Pound	404.200
Euro	361.675
Swiss Frank	297.460
Bahrain Dinar	801.535
UAE Dirhams	82.615
Qatari Riyals	83.440
Saudi Riyals	81.390
Jordanian Dinar	427.230
Egyptian Pound	17.132
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.965
Indian Rupees	4.669
Pakistani Rupees	2.862
Bangladesh Taka	3.663
Philippines Peso	5.957
Cyprus pound	17.970

Japanese Yen	3.705
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.926
Malaysian Ringgit	74.385
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.200
Thai Bhat	10.230
Turkish Lira	77.050

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.398423	0.405923
Czech Korune	0.006053	0.018053
Danish Krone	0.044102	0.049102
Euro	0.352904	0.360404
Georgian Lari	0.134754	0.134754
Norwegian Krone	0.032706	0.037906
Romanian Leu	0.064731	0.081581
Russian ruble	0.005182	0.005182
Slovakia	0.009013	0.019013
Swedish Krona	0.032196	0.037196
Swiss Franc	0.300571	0.311571

Australasia	BUY	SELL
Australian Dollar	0.221074	0.233074
New Zealand Dollar	0.202126	0.211626

America	BUY	SELL
Canadian Dollar	0.230480	0.239480
US Dollars	0.298450	0.302870
US Dollars Mint	0.298950	0.302870

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003296 0.003880
Chinese Yuan	0.044339 0.047839
Iranian Riyal	0.036798 0.039548
Hong Kong Dollar	0.004105 0.004746
Indian Rupee	0.000018 0.000024
Indonesian Rupiah	0.002630 0.002810
Japanese Yen	0.000269 0.000284
Korean Won	0.069712 0.075712
Malaysian Ringgit	0.003019 0.003189
Nepalese Rupee	0.002645 0.002935
Pakistan Rupee	0.005845 0.006145
Philippine Peso	0.219474 0.229474
Singapore Dollar	0.001699 0.002279
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.009995 0.010175
Taiwan	0.008942 0.009492
Thai Baht	

Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.795527 0.804027
Egyptian Pound	0.014497 0.020215
Iranian Riyal	0.000084 0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000185 0.000245
Jordanian Dinar	0.422118 0.431118
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000 1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000155 0.000255
Moroccan Dirhams	0.023512 0.047512
Omani Riyal	0.779526 0.785206
Qatar Riyal	0.078813 0.083753
Saudi Riyal	0.079593 0.080893
Syrian Pound	0.001282 0.001502
Tunisian Dinar	0.117804 0.126204
Turkish Lira	0.071597 0.081897
UAE Dirhams	0.080948 0.082648
Yemeni Riyal	0.000983 0.001063

Business

US Q3 economic growth fastest in three years

Inventories, business account for upward GDP revision

WASHINGTON: The US economy grew faster than initially thought in the third quarter, notching its quickest pace in three years, as increases in business investment in inventories and equipment offset a moderation in consumer spending. Gross domestic product expanded at a 3.3 percent annual rate in the third quarter also boosted by a rebound in government spending, the Commerce Department said in its second GDP estimate yesterday.

That was the fastest pace since the third quarter of 2014 and a pickup from the second quarter's 3.1 percent rate. The economy was previously reported to have grown at a 3.0 percent pace in the July-September period. It was the first time since 2014 that the economy experienced growth of 3 percent or more for two straight quarters.

The growth pace, however, likely exaggerates the health of the economy as inventories, goods yet to be sold, contributed 0.8 percentage point to third-quarter GDP growth - up from the previously reported 0.73 percentage point. Excluding inventory investment, the economy grew at a 2.5 percent rate. When measured from the income side, output also expanded at a 2.5 percent rate. The government said after-tax corporate profits surged at a 5.8 percent rate last quarter after rising at only a 0.1 percent pace in the second quarter.

Economists polled by Reuters had expected that third-quarter GDP growth

would be raised to a 3.2 percent rate. The brisk growth pace strengthens the case for the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates next month. The US central bank has increased borrowing costs twice this year.

Prices for US Treasuries were trading lower, while the dollar rose marginally. US stock index futures were higher. The economic recovery since the 2007-2009 recession is now in its eighth year and showing little signs of fatigue. The economy is being

tained basis. The fiscal stimulus would, however, come when the economy is at full employment.

Consumer spending

Businesses accumulated inventories at a \$39.0 billion pace in the third quarter, instead of the previously reported \$35.8 billion rate. That suggests inventories could be a drag on growth in the fourth quarter. Data on Tuesday showed a drop in wholesale and retail inventories in October, leading economists to slash their fourth-quarter GDP growth estimates.

Growth in consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of the US economy, was revised down to a 2.3 percent rate in the third quarter from the previously reported 2.4 percent pace. Consumer spending increased at a robust 3.3 percent rate in the second quarter. The deceleration in consumer spending likely reflects



Consumer spending trimmed

powered by a tightening labor market, which has largely maintained a strong performance that started during former President Barack Obama's first term.

Economists see a modest boost to growth from efforts by President Donald Trump and his fellow Republicans in Congress to push through a broad package of tax cuts, including slashing the corporate income tax rate to 20 percent from 35 percent. Trump wants lower taxes to lift annual GDP growth to 3 percent on a sus-

tained basis. The fiscal stimulus would, however, come when the economy is at full employment. The impact of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, which struck Texas and Florida during the quarter. Spending also is being constrained by sluggish wage growth, which is forcing households to dip into their savings to fund purchases. The saving rate was lowered to 3.3 percent in the third quarter from the previously reported 3.4 percent. Economists say savings cannot drive consumer spending indefinitely, which has left many to expect quarterly GDP growth to slow. Growth in business investment in equipment was



NEW YORK: People shop at a retail outlet in New York. US consumer spending increased at a robust 3.3 percent rate in the second quarter.

raised to a 10.4 percent pace, the fastest growth pace in three years, from the previously reported 8.6 percent rate. Business spending has been buoyed by expectations of hefty corporate tax cuts.

Investment in nonresidential structures fell at a 6.8 percent pace in the third quarter, the biggest drop since the fourth quarter of 2015, instead of the previously estimated 5.2

percent rate. That is largely because of a slowdown in spending on oil and gas well drilling. Growth in government spending was raised to a 0.4 percent rate. Government outlays were previously reported to have declined at a 0.1 percent pace in the third quarter. Government spending had contracted for two consecutive quarters. — Reuters

Lloyds to cut 49 branches, adding to record closures across Britain

LONDON: Lloyds Banking Group is closing 49 branches of Lloyds Bank and Halifax Bank of Scotland citing more customers banking online, it said yesterday. The closures at Britain's biggest mortgage lender follow 100 announced in April involving 325 job cuts. They will involve 99 job losses, the Unite workers union said. Earlier this year Lloyds also announced plans to reduce some branches to just two staff with tablet computers. It has more than 2,000 branches across the UK and employs approximately 75,000.

The bank said that while branches remain a key part of the service, footfall has declined in recent years. "Customers are increasingly choosing to use digital and mobile channels for their everyday banking needs," a spokesman said.

Banks across Britain are set to close a record 762 branches this year, Reuters reported in August, moves which have been met with criticism for depriving customers of access to in-person services.



LONDON: Lloyds Banking Group is closing 49 branches of Lloyds Bank and Halifax Bank of Scotland citing more customers banking online, it said yesterday.

"The news today will not be welcomed by staff or the customers left with no access to local banking," said Rob MacGregor, national officer at Unite. Lloyds shares fell on Tuesday after the Bank of England's stress tests, an annual health check on lenders.

Lloyds passed the test but shares in Lloyds, one of the banks most exposed to the UK economy, suffered after the central bank warned that a hard Brexit could be costly. The shares rebounded yesterday and stood up 3.29 percent at 13:09 GMT. — Reuters

Lonmin to cut social, discretionary spending to save cash

JOHANNESBURG/LONDON: Troubled platinum producer Lonmin plans to cut spending on social and labor projects and freeze "non-critical" recruitment, part of an array of measures to save cash, according to an unpublished presentation reviewed by Reuters. The South African miner, not for the first time, is facing an uncertain future after earlier this month delaying annual financial results pending conclusion of a business review, a move that sent its shares down 30 percent in a single day.

In the presentation to stakeholders earlier this month, the company signaled it would stop all discretionary spending and save 250 million rand (\$18.3 million) via energy and water initiatives. It also reiterated plans to cut capital spending. Cutting expenditure on social and labor plans - called SLPs in South Africa - could be problematic as mining companies are required to meet certain obligations to provide

housing and other services to the communities around their shafts to maintain their operating licenses.

In September, Lonmin said it had been informed by South Africa's department of mineral resources that it had failed to meet some social and labor obligations, although the company added it did not think its operating license was in jeopardy.

Lonmin spent 270.8 million rand on social and labor plans during the 2016 financial year, the last year for which it has provided full details. "The law provides for a review of SLP plans depending on the prevailing business environment - called a section 102 process - and this is discussed with the regulator," Lonmin spokeswoman Wendy Thlou said in response to Reuters questions.

"We are in the process of engaging with the Department of Mineral Resources with regards to the proposed adjustments to the plan and only once those are completed and agreed upon, would we have an idea of impact." She also said "non-critical recruitment" involved "positions we can delay or do without for some time compared to critical roles that you may need immediately for operational reasons."

Lonmin, which has been forced to tap investors three times since 2009, is under pressure on a range of fronts. "The confidential presentation Lonmin presented to stakeholders does not paint a pretty picture," said one attendee, who declined to be named. — Reuters

AUB announces Al Hassad weekly draw winners

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading Shariah compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, yesterday. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each.

AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car. On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 13,000". The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Reem Mohammed Soud.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Hussain Ali Al Muhanna, Mohammad Saeid Aliamhi, Saleh Ibrahim Jarkhi, Ohoud Yaqoub Alayyaf, Eatedal Absulrazzaq Hasan, Ahmed Habib Qambar, Ali Almutawai, Ahmad Aldaaij, Lulwa Alqenei, Hossein Ali Mohammad, Saswsan Mohd Waleed, Wadhha Mohammad Alajmi, Sarah Rashed Altukhaim, Munerah Abdulmohsen Abalkjeel, Zeyad Moayyed Alresheed, Ali Hasan Alajmi,



Mohammad Saad Alazmi, Khaled Marzooq Al Oubi, Mahmood Khamis Al Sabbagh, Georgios Fotiou, Dhaysiya Hussain, Hammad Ahmad Al Shaikh, Jamal Abdulla Al Kooheji, Mohammad Abdulla Mohammad, Mohamed Abdulla Mohamad.

Al Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions. Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year."

Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw. For every KD 50 deposited in the account, customers are given one chance to enter the quarterly draw. They must have held the minimum deposit requirement for at least two weeks prior to the draw date. The more deposits made, the higher the chances of winning on a weekly basis. For more information on Ahli United Bank's products and services, customers are invited to visit any of the Bank's branches or dial the customer service 'Hayakum' log on the Bank's website www.ahliunited.com.kw

Chipotle seeks turnaround expert to replace Ells as CEO

NEW YORK: Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc co-founder Steve Ells said yesterday he would step down as chief executive, succumbing to pressure from investors after failing to turn around the burrito chain from a string of food safety lapses. The company said it was searching for a "new leader with demonstrated turnaround expertise" to replace Ells, who will stay on as executive chairman.

Chipotle's shares, which have more than halved in value since the first reports of a major e-coli outbreak linked to its restaurants in October 2015, rose 4.7 percent to \$299.38 in premarket trading yesterday. "Bringing in a new CEO is the right thing to do for all our stakeholders," Ells said in a statement. "Simply put, we need to execute better to ensure our future success." Ells has held or shared the chief executive's role since founding Chipotle in 1993, attracting investment from McDonald's Corp before taking it public in a blockbuster 2006 stock market launch.

Years of double-digit sales growth stalled, however, after the e-coli outbreak, which spread across several states, affecting more than 50 people. The company was also subsequently hit by cases of salmonella poisoning and norovirus stomach bugs, which made it the

subject of chat show hosts' jokes and kept diners away. Ells has led the company on his own since December of last year when co-CEO Monty Moran stepped down amid intense pressure from investors including William Ackman, whose Pershing Square Capital Management LP is Chipotle's biggest investor.

That same month Chipotle named four new directors to its board, including Pershing Square partner Ali Namvar and Matthew Paull, a Pershing Square advisory board member and former McDonald's chief financial officer. A group of investors in March withdrew a proposal to split the chairman and CEO roles after the company vowed to strengthen the lead director position held by Neil Flanzraich, who has been an independent director since September 2014.

"This news is unexpected given the recent moves to streamline the CEO position, but is an absolutely critical, important next chapter for Chipotle, which has been struggling to recover sales under Ells," Mizuho Securities USA analyst Jeremy Scott wrote in a note.

"We believe the move today will help to restore confidence in the board, the activist, and in the stock," Chipotle said it had formed a search committee comprised of directors Robin Hickenlooper and Pershing Square's Namvar, as well as Ells, to identify a new CEO.

Prior to yesterday's announcement, some analysts had floated Panera Bread founder Ron Shaich as a potential replacement for Ells.

Shaich recently announced he would step down as Panera CEO on Jan. 1, but remain as chairman to work on strategy, communications and acquisitions for the bakery-cafe chain. Given Shaich's role at Panera, Bernstein analyst Sara Senatore said it seemed unlikely that he would jump to rival Chipotle. — Reuters

Business

Stocks surge, pound up as Britain coughs up

LONDON: Signs of progress with US tax cuts and Europe's Brexit negotiations brought fresh highs for world stocks yesterday while bitcoin topped \$10,000 in a frenzy for cryptocurrencies.

open higher yesterday, fueled by investor optimism after more progress was made on US tax legislation and hints of lighter regulation in the banking sector.

day we had yesterday," said Randy Frederick, vice president of trading and derivatives for Charles Schwab in Austin, Texas.

Street indexes notched up new highs on Tuesday. They were expected to be in consolidation mode when U.S. trading resumes.

rily bring forward activity with most of the stimulus eventually offset by the Federal Reserve lifting interest rates more quickly.

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Wednesday 29 November 2017. Table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades. Includes sub-tables for Trades, Basic Materials, Consumer Goods, Health Care, Consumer Services, Banks, Insurance, Investment Instruments, and Parallel Market.

Among the better performers, Japan's Nikkei added 0.5 percent, while Australia's main index rose 0.45 percent.

But Republican leaders conceded that they have yet to round up the votes needed for passage in the Senate, where they hold a narrow 52-48 majority.

"For that reason, the package will primarily bring forward activity with most of the stimulus eventually offset by the Federal Reserve lifting interest rates more quickly."

Bubble or brave new world? Bitcoin breaks \$10,000 barrier



TOKYO: This file photo taken on April 7, 2017 shows a man walking past a signboard informing customers that Bitcoin can be used for payment at a store in Tokyo. —AFP

SINGAPORE: Bitcoin broke through the \$10,000 barrier for the first time yesterday as it extends a stratospheric rise that has delighted investors but sparked fears of a bubble.

The virtual currency hit a high of \$10,903 in Asia, according to Bloomberg News, about 14 times its value at the start of the year.

Bitcoin, which was valued at just a few US cents when it was launched, has no legal exchange rate, no central bank backing it and is traded on specialist platforms.

What began as the preserve of computer nerds and financial experts has gained a following among a broader group seeking alternatives to traditional investments, while it has been used to pay for items from a pint in a London pub to a manicure.

The virtual currency has attracted as much anger as praise, however. The boss of JP Morgan Chase labelled it a fraud, while China has closed down Bitcoin trading platforms and South Korea this week expressed concern it could lead young investors to become embroiled in fraud.

It got a big boost last month when exchange giant CME Group announced it would launch a futures marketplace for Bitcoin, which has not been listed on a major bourse before.

The announcement sparked a surge in its value-it has risen 50 percent since October alone. The current market value of Bitcoin is now around \$180 billion, according to Coimmarketcap.com, which tracks the market capitalisations of cryptocurrencies.

cy has suffered wild swings in the past. "This is a bubble and there is a lot of froth. This is going to be the biggest bubble of our lifetimes," warned hedge fund manager Mike Novogratz at a cryptocurrency conference Tuesday in New York.

Stephen Innes, of forex broker Oanda in Singapore, warned of "crazy numbers" and added: "I'm a little bit fearful that retail traders are jumping in under the false guise of this will run on forever. We know things never go in a straight line."

Bitcoin's use on the underground Silk Road website, where users could use it to buy drugs and guns, was also presented as proof it was a bad thing.

While analysts expect the currency to suffer falls, they are betting it will prosper in the long term and see the CME launch as the next big test.

"If it survives the CME, there is no reason why it won't continue to rise higher," Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at AxiTrader, said. —AFP

Business

Kuwait's Jazeera Airways sets course for Kochi, Ahmedabad

Expansion continues with two new direct routes on Jan 17, 18

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, is proud to announce its plans for further expansion into India. Following a successful launch in Hyderabad in November, Jazeera Airways will now fly to Ahmedabad and Kochi starting January 17th and 18th respectively. With the increase in operations to India, the award winning carrier is now able to support the travel needs of over 920,000 Indians residing in Kuwait.

Rohit Ramachandran, CEO of Jazeera Airways said, "This is a major strategic move for us to extend our network into India and provide greater choice and value for the Indian community in Kuwait and broader GCC. We have been delighted with how well our new operations to Hyderabad, Kochi and Ahmedabad have been received both in India and the wider Middle East region. The decision to invest further in India comes from the rising demand of Indian expats visiting their friends and families, as well as the large interest of Kuwaiti travelers in exploring new destinations

for tourism and medical visits." Located in western India, Gujarat's major city, Ahmedabad has emerged as an important economic and industrial hub in India. The city was selected as one of the hundred Indian cities



Strategic move by low-cost carrier

to be developed under Government of India's flagship Smart Cities Mission and in July 2017, the Historic City of Ahmedabad or Old Ahmedabad, was declared as India's first UNESCO World Heritage City.

Known as the center of the world for spice

trade, Kochi is a major port city on the south-west coast and district in Kerala. The state is renowned for tourism ranging from the famous Backwaters - a chain of lagoons, rivers and canals; to the archaeological landmarks of museums, ancient palaces and forts. More importantly, Kerala has been fast developing into a world-class healthcare center and is known as the hub of Ayurveda. Jazeera Airways will operate three flights on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays to and from Ahmedabad starting January 17th departing 00.05am from Kuwait arriving 06.00am, ensuring a quick and efficient journey. Kochi flights will operate four times a week on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays departing at 12.45 pm from Kuwait and arriving at 20.10pm in Kochi International Airport.

Passengers can enjoy a baggage allowance of 30kg for Economy class and 50kg per Business class passenger. Travelers can start booking flights now via Jazeera's website - Jazeeraairways.com, through the Jazeera app, or from all travel agents.



Greater flexibility with NBK's 'Notice Account' savings deposit option

KUWAIT: Diversifying savings can help protect against risks and economic downturns. Not all savings options are equal as some, limit access to the amount saved for months or even years. To provide greater flexibility and accessibility, National Bank of Kuwait now offers 'Notice Accounts' for its Premium Banking customers that allow access to savings via withdrawal notices.



Amal Al-Duwaisan

NBK Notice Accounts are ideal for customers with saving goals whilst still needing flexibility to withdraw funds if required. With an NBK Notice Account, customers earn interest on their savings every 30 days, 60 days or 90 days depending on the

selected Notice Account type. There are 3 types on Notice Accounts: 35 days, 65 days or 95 days' Notice Account. In addition, customers are still having the flexibility to have these funds available in case of an emergency or unexpected expenses such as maintenance on your car or house.

"Today's customers need greater flexibility to deposit and withdraw from their accounts as part of their regular banking options," said Amal Al-Duwaisan, Senior Manager Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. Al-Duwaisan has added that "NBK's Notice Account allows customers to save while earning interest and also have the

flexibility of withdrawal without being penalized." Customers earn a higher interest rate unlike standard savings accounts while at the same time continuing to have flexible access to their capital. The NBK Notice Account is tailored to the needs of Premium Banking customers, providing them with a flexible savings account for ease of deposit at any time, withdrawal with advance notice as well as obtaining high interest savings benefits.

"We've combined some of the best features of a fixed term deposit, i.e. higher interest rates, with the accessibility of a standard savings account to create Notice Accounts," said Al Duwaisan. "Customers can earn a higher interest rate but decide which notice period - 35 days, 65 days or 95 days - works best for their budget and planning."

How does it work? Simply visit any of our local NBK branches to open a Notice Account with a minimum balance of KD 5,000. There are three notice periods to choose from: 35 and 65 days earn at 1.500 percent interest rate and 95 days at 1.625 percent interest rate. To withdraw, ask the officer to establish the withdrawal notice, not less than 35 days before making the withdrawal and/ or closing the account.

Savings can also be added to the account at any time by visiting any of the NBK branches or through NBK Online Banking; also customers can establish Standing Orders to their Notice Account. This product is free of charges. Terms and conditions apply. To learn

more, our valued customers can visit any local NBK branch, speak to their Relationship Manager or can call the NBK call center on 1801801. They can also invite to visit the award-winning website, nbk.com to get more details regarding this savings product.



Enjoy Flexible Savings and the Best Rates With NBK "Notice Account"

The Port Fund achieves success despite challenges



KUWAIT: KGL Investment Company (KGLI) announced the successful exit of The Port Fund investments doubling its Fund's capital from \$188 million to \$380 million and generating an annual return of 10 percent over 10 years. The Fund is a private equity fund focused on port and related logistics opportunities in emerging markets. The Fund has consistently outperformed its industry peers despite unpredictable and uncertain market conditions, including the financial crisis in 2008 and the Arab spring in 2011, when the majority of private equity funds experienced substantial losses or at best devaluation. Due to the outstanding performance, the Fund's returns have been ranked, with its management, amongst the top performing Funds worldwide.

Commenting on the Fund successful exit, Marsha Lazareva, The Port Fund Director, and Vice Chairman and CEO of KGL Investment Company, said: "We are immensely proud of the extraordinary effort of our team of dedicated investment professionals for achieving such superior returns for our investors."

She added, "I would like to express my sincere gratitude to KGL Investment's Board of Directors for their prudent guidance and consistent support during this turbulent time and would like to sincerely thank our investors and partners for their patience and loyalty. Our business is built on integrity and transparency and we are proud to have put our investors' interest

first and succeeded in our aim to realize the highest possible return." Lazareva further elaborated that the successful Exit of the Fund which has achieved investors significant profit return, will factually end all unreasonable allegations against KGL Investment Company, The Port Fund and their management teams. She stated: "these allegations were based on falsified and unsubstantiated information and fabrications by some of those who were unhappy with the success of The Port Fund, and by completing the Exit process, these allegations fell apart and proven to be false." Lazareva pointed out that the Fund's successful Exit, provides objective vindication and thereby proves that the allegations against the Port Fund are entirely false: "Far from being defrauded or even suffering investment losses, our investors have enjoyed significant returns on their investments. This fact is irrefutably demonstrated by today's deal, which crystallizes those gains". She clarifies that "the Fund has always operated in compliance with its guiding documents and governing laws, its Private Placement Memorandum, the laws of the Cayman Islands and its Limited Partnership Agreement".

Lazareva ended: "Despite all the challenges we have faced, our sincere and professional efforts have paid off. Our investors' trust and support were the main drive that empowered our strong will to exceed their expectations; today, we are even more determined to build upon this success and introduce tailor-made quality funds in the coming period to be the first choice of investors for successful and profitable investment".

Brazil's economy firms, shifting political landscape ahead of polls

RIO DE JANEIRO: After a torrid couple of years, Brazil's battered economy is expected to confirm signs of recovery this week, shifting the ground under the already unpredictable 2018 general elections.

Today, the IBGE state statistics office will release October unemployment figures. Go Associados consultants expect the seventh monthly fall to 12.1 percent, down from a record high 13.7 percent in the first quarter of this year. Then tomorrow, the IBGE will

announce GDP numbers for the third quarter. A Bloomberg survey of 31 economists predicts 0.3 percent growth over the previous quarter, the third consecutive quarterly increase in output.

This would put some meat on the recovery from Brazil's worst recession in history which saw GDP shrink 3.5 percent in 2015 and 3.6 percent in 2016. It also injects an intriguing new element into the run-up to the October 2018 presidential and legislative elections. So far, polls have been dominated by leftwinger Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a two-term ex-president who has been convicted of corruption. Some way behind him in second place is rightwing firebrand and former army officer Jair Bolsonaro.

The mood is firmly anti-establishment. But if the economy recovers enough, analysts say, voters might be less keen to go for radical options. They might instead put their faith in more centrist candidates espousing a continuation of market reforms pushed by the unpopular current leader Michel Temer.

Carlos Langoni, a former Central Bank chairman, says the strength of the recovery

remains uncertain, but it's already sure "there is no risk of slipping back" into recession.

That plus the potential for joblessness falling below the psychologically important barrier of 10 percent could be "critical on the eve of the electoral process."

A better economy "would be a major argument" for the currently weak centrist candidates and those tied to Temer's attempts at pension reform and other austerity measures.

For sure, Brazilians are a long way right now from embracing the Temer agenda. He's the most unpopular president on record and his centerpiece policy of scaling back pensions is floundering in Congress. Besides, a corruption scandal has tainted much of the political elite.

Temer himself being twice charged with crimes-making a revolt at the polls more likely. But Brazilians are not necessarily in an ideological mood and may be persuaded to vote on their pocketbooks, says Langoni, who is now at the Getulio Vargas Foundation in Rio de Janeiro. — AFP

KFH continues to serve electronically, through airport branch

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced that it is ready to fulfill its commitments towards its clients during the holiday. The bank will continue to offer various services for its clients in Kuwait and overseas through its website that offers over 150 e-services, in addition to the 24/7 airport branch and other service channels that provide clients with necessary services round the clock.

Moreover, the Call Center will be ready to receive calls from clients throughout the day, and will work relentlessly to overcome any problems that might face clients in Kuwait and overseas. In addition, KFH continues to offer its IVR service on 1803333 that is available throughout the day. Clients can call to make account transactions, ask for financial transaction, pay bills, purchase cards to recharge cell phone, and other services.



Further, clients can take advantage of KFH's ATM machines (Shamel) that are available at most of the branches in vital locations. KFH offers Mobi Baitok vehicles that serve as mobile branches that allow people to deposit and withdraw cash in addition to other usual transactions.

KFH has additional technical privileges, such as allowing clients to conduct basic banking operations through smart phones on kfonline application. KFH has recently

launched a new e-service that allows KFH customer subscribed to KFH's SMS Baitak notification service to receive Push message-type notifications - in addition to the regular SMS notifications - onto their smartphones. KFH's e-Banking customers who are also SMS Baitak subscribers will be able to register to - and receive - the Push messages for free via the KFH Online Smartphone app, and will also be able to receive and view the Push messages using the smartphone apps.

China warns of retaliation after fresh US trade probe

BEIJING: China yesterday warned it would take the "necessary measures" to protect its businesses after the United States launched a new trade probe into China's possible aluminium dumping.

The investigation into imports of aluminium sheet worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year was an unusually aggressive move by the United States. For the first time since 1991, the US Commerce Department said it launched the investigation on its own initiative, rather than responding to a request from a US company. "This practice by the US side is very rare in the history of international trade,"

China's Ministry of Commerce said in a statement. "China expresses strong dissatisfaction towards the tendency of trade protectionism displayed by the United States." The US Commerce Department said Tuesday it opened the probe into possible dumping and inappropriate subsidies of common alloy aluminium sheet from China, which may be harming US industry. "President Trump made it clear from day one that unfair trade practices will not be tolerated under this administration, and today we take one more step in fulfilling that promise," Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said in a statement. — AFP

Technology

Toyota unveils humanoid robot that mirrors user

Robot could also be used in workplaces, disaster areas and outer space

TOKYO: Japanese auto giant Toyota yesterday showcased a humanoid robot that can mirror its user's movements, a product it says has uses as varied as elderly care and disaster response. The T-HR3 can be controlled by a wearable system that allows users to operate the entire robot in real-time by simply moving their own limbs.

It is one of the main attractions at the International Robot Exhibition that opened in Tokyo yesterday. Toyota's new robot is the latest in dozens of humanoid models that have been developed recently thanks to rapid technological advances, especially in artificial intelligence.

"We are thinking about using this mainly for home elderly care and daily life support," Akifumi Tamaoki, head of Toyota's Partner Robot division, told AFP.

"Technically, this robot could also be used in workplaces, disaster areas and outer space." Robot-makers see big potential for their use in Japan, where the number of elderly people is rapidly growing, causing labour shortages in a country that strictly controls immigration.

The T-HR3 has 32 joints and boasts smooth human-like movements. It can also balance itself in one-legged

poses. Sensors on the robot can detect how much force it should exert on humans or objects.

A head-mounted display allows the user to see from the perspective of the black-and-white prototype, which is 1.54 metres (5.1 feet) tall and weighs 75 kilograms (165 pounds). Toyota has no immediate plans to sell the T-HR3, whose development costs were not disclosed.

In 2004, the company unveiled a trumpet-playing robot—its first humanoid machine—in a bid to catch up with robot technology frontrunners like Honda and Sony.

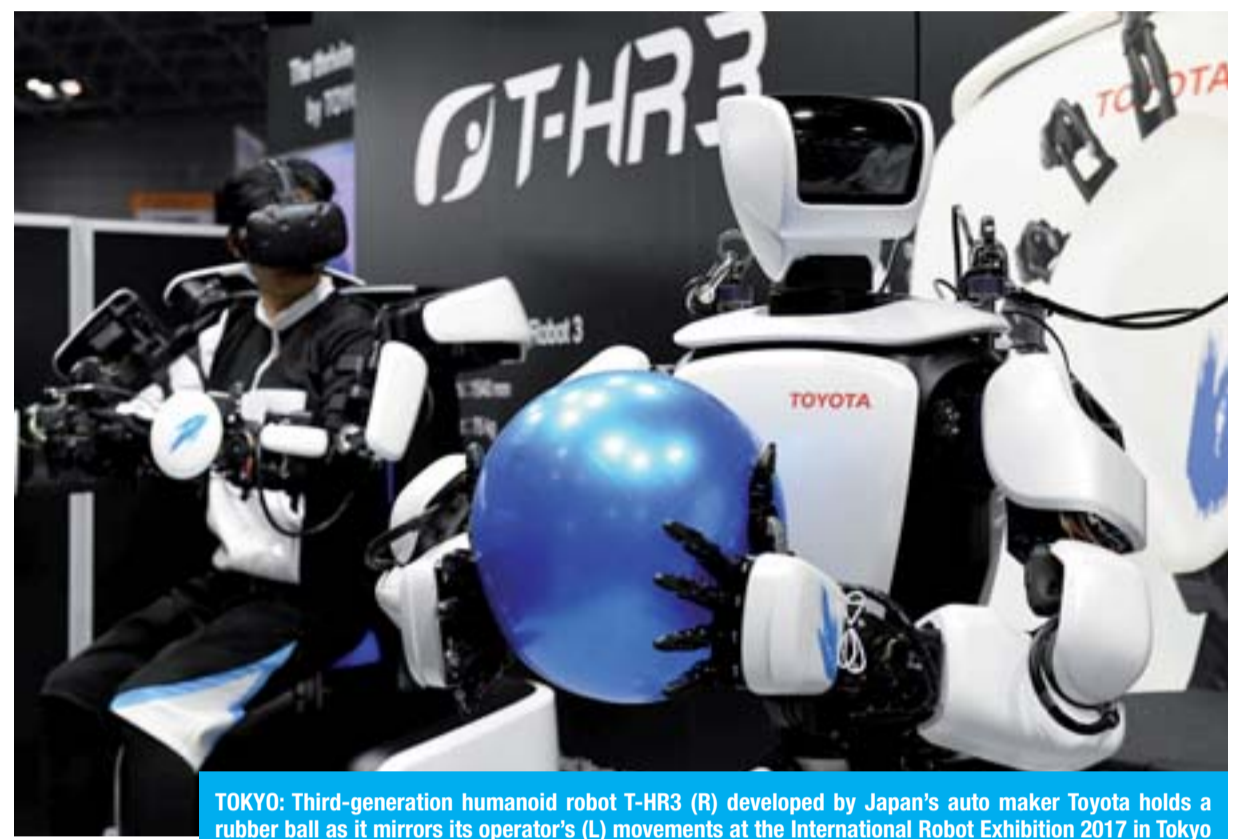
Three years later, the carmaker made another robot that could play the violin as part of an effort to develop futuristic machines capable of assisting humans in Japan's greying society.

The country's most famous robot is arguably

Asimo, an astronaut-looking humanoid developed by Honda which has been hired out as an office servant and has even popped up to offer toasts at Japanese diplomatic functions. Separately, Japan's SoftBank has also developed a talking human-like robot called "Pepper", which has been introduced into workplaces around the world. — AFP



T-HR3 can be controlled by a wearable system



TOKYO: Third-generation humanoid robot T-HR3 (R) developed by Japan's auto maker Toyota holds a rubber ball as it mirrors its operator's (L) movements at the International Robot Exhibition 2017 in Tokyo yesterday.—AFP

Hackers could get even nastier in 2018: Researchers

WASHINGTON: After a year marked by devastating cyberattacks and breaches, online attackers are expected to become even more destructive in 2018, security researchers said yesterday.

A report by the security firm McAfee said the ransomware outbreaks of 2017 offer just a taste of what's to come as hackers develop new strategies and "business models."

McAfee researchers said that as ransomware profitability fades in the face of new defenses, hackers will turn to new kinds of attacks that could involve damage or disruption of computers and networks. Attackers will also look to target wealthy individuals and aim at connected devices which offer less security than computers and smartphones. "The evolution of ransomware in 2017 should remind us of how aggressively a threat can reinvent itself as attackers dramatically innovate and adjust to the successful efforts of defenders," said Steve Grobman, McAfee's chief technology officer.

McAfee also predicted wider use of cyber attacks "as a service," allowing more hackers to hire to have an impact.

Raj Samani, chief scientist at McAfee, said the events of 2017 showed how easy it is to commercialize hacking services. "Such attacks could be sold to parties seeking to paralyze national, political and business rivals," Samani said.

McAfee's 2018 Threats Predictions Report also said privacy is likely to be eroded further as consumer data—including data involving children—is gathered and marketed by device makers.

"Connected home device manufacturers and service providers will seek to overcome thin profit margins by gathering more of our personal data—with or without our agreement—turning the home into a corporate store front," the McAfee report said. The report said parents "will become aware of notable corporate abuses of digital content generated by children," as part of this effort to boost profitability.—AFP

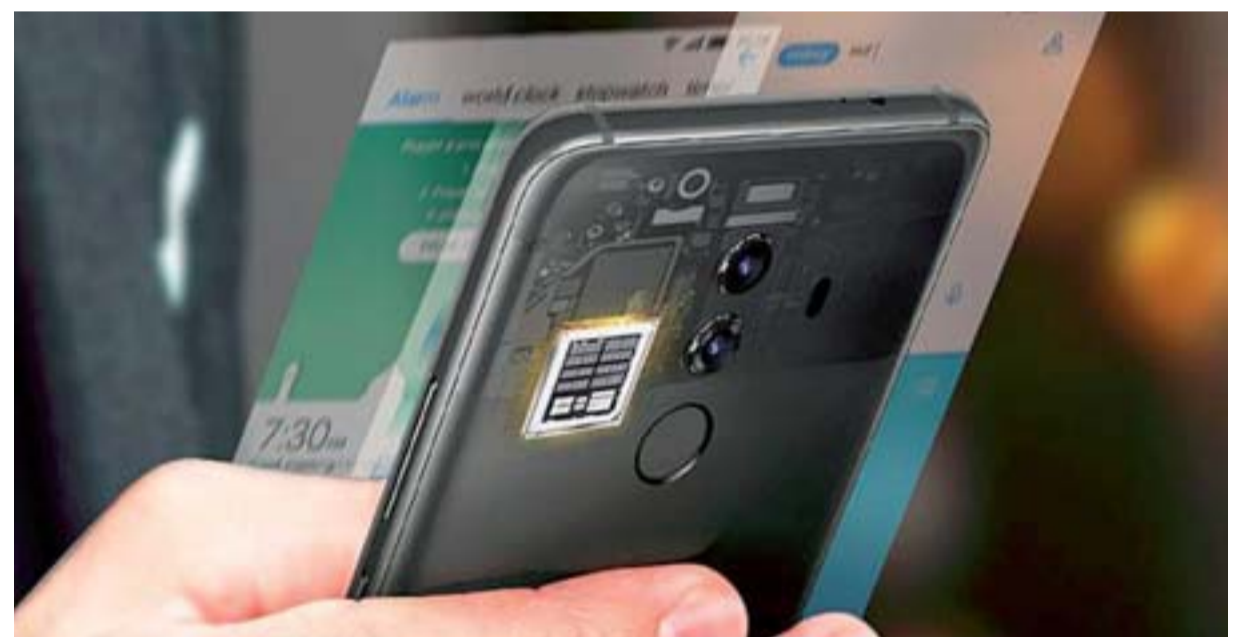
Your HUAWEI Mate 10 gets to know you better over time!

At home, in the car, on the street, in the office, our eyes are always on our smartphones. And it's so hard to put them down because we rely on them to do many things. Our smartphones became more of a necessity than an accessory: we touch them more than 2617 times, use them for more than 4 hours, and check them more than 47 times a day!

Knowing how much we rely on our smartphones, Huawei designed the HUAWEI Mate 10, embedding artificial intelligence and a powerful processor to allow the phone to learn everything about you, and thus offer you a faster and smoother experience. Let's find out how the HUAWEI Mate 10 learns everything about you!

The HUAWEI Mate 10 comes with an advanced technology inside: we're talking about the world's first artificial intelligence processor, the Kirin 970, built to deliver a never-seen-before performance once it gets to know you very well. In fact, this new processor is endowed with advanced technological features: machine learning and deep learning. Thanks to these features, your phone learns and builds a model of your behavior as you use it every day; it understands your behavior and learns your preferences: what are the games you like to play, what are your favorite apps, at what time of the day and how many times you use these apps, etc.

Once the phone gets to know all this data, it starts to predict your behavior and allocate the CPU, GPU and other resources to your mostly used apps, to offer you an ultimate performance that is 25 percent faster than its predecessors. The more the device learns about you, the faster experience it will provide you. And when it learns about the apps you use the least or do not need, it compresses them in the memory and save more space to keep your device ready for a fast performance at any time of the day.



Build fast, fix later: Speed hurts quality at Tesla

SAN FRANCISCO: After Tesla's Model S sedans and Model X SUVs roll off the company's Fremont, California assembly line, the electric vehicles usually make another stop - for repairs, nine current and former employees have told Reuters. The luxury cars regularly require fixes before they can leave the factory, according to the workers. Quality checks have routinely revealed defects in more than 90 percent of Model S and Model X vehicles inspected after assembly, these individuals said, citing figures from Tesla's internal tracking system as recently as October. Some of these people told Reuters of seeing problems as far back as 2012.

Tesla Inc said its quality control process is unusually rigorous, designed to flag and correct the tiniest imperfections. It declined to provide post-assembly defect rates to Reuters or comment on those cited by employees. The world's most efficient automakers, such as Toyota, average post-manufacturing fixes on fewer than 10 percent of their cars, according to industry experts. Getting quality right during initial assembly is crucial, they said, because repairs waste time and money.

At Tesla "so much goes into rework after the car is done ... that's where their money is being spent," a former Tesla supervisor said.

The Silicon Valley automaker said the majority of its post-assembly defects are minor and resolved in a matter of minutes. Tesla has enthralled consumers with sleek designs, clean technology and legendary acceleration on its pricey cars. A Consumer Reports survey found 91 percent of Tesla owners would buy again.

Still, the magazine and market researcher J D Power have dinged the company on quality, citing troubles such as faulty door handles and body panel gaps. Bernstein analyst A M (Toni) Sacconaghi, Jr. test-drove one of the company's new Model 3 sedans earlier this month, writing that the fit and finish were "relatively poor." Tesla owners have complained on

web forums of annoying rattles, buggy software and poor seals that allow rainwater to seep into the interior or trunk.

Auto industry experts say the company's survival now depends on its ability to crank out high-quality cars in volume as it begins to build its first mass-market car, the Model 3, which starts at \$35,000. Tesla has never turned an annual profit and is burning through \$1 billion a quarter. That is unsustainable without fresh cash or a big increase in sales to mainstream customers who may prove less forgiving of potential defects.

"We've never doubted Tesla's ability to make exciting products with top specifications, but there's a difference between unveiling something and then actually making it perfectly in large volume. Tesla has not perfected the latter yet," Morningstar analyst David Whiston wrote earlier this month.

Musk has vowed Tesla would become "the best manufacturer on Earth," helped by a new, highly automated assembly line and a simpler design for the Model 3. However, production woes have slowed deliveries of the much-anticipated sedan.

Snags are normal with any new launch. But chronic defects with Tesla's established Models S and X show a company still struggling to master basic manufacturing, workers said. Known as "kickbacks" within Tesla, these vehicles have glitches as minor as dents and scratches to more complex troubles such as malfunctioning seats. Easy fixes are made swiftly on the factory floor, workers said. Trickier cases head to one of Tesla's outdoor parking lots to await repair. The backlog in one of those two lots, dubbed the "yard," has exceeded 2,000 vehicles at times, workers told Reuters.

Tesla denied to Reuters that such "repair lots" exist. Reuters interviewed nine current and former Tesla employees, including a former senior manager, with experience in assembly, quality control and repairs on Model S and Model X. All requested anonymity because the company required them to sign non-disclosure agreements. Four of the people were fired for cause, including two last month as part of a mass dismissal of hundreds of workers for what Tesla said was poor performance. Sacked workers who spoke with Reuters denied they were poor performers.

People with knowledge of Tesla's internal quality data shared those figures with Reuters. The news agency was unable to confirm the information independently. Defects



LOS ANGELES: People take a ride on the electric Arcimoto, a three-wheel Utility Vehicle, outside the Technology Pavilion at the 2017 LA Auto Show on Tuesday in Los Angeles, California, days before the event opens to the public running from tomorrow.—AFP

included "doors not closing, material trim, missing parts, all kinds of stuff. Loose objects, water leaks, you name it," another former supervisor said. "We've been building a Model S since 2012. How do we still have water leaks?"

Defect-free

Tesla disputed workers' portrayal of the automaker as struggling to produce defect-free vehicles. A spokesperson described a rigorous process that requires all cars to pass more than 500 inspections and tests. Any reworking of cars after assembly reflects the company's commitment to quality, the spokesperson said. "Our goal is to produce perfect cars for every customer," Tesla said in a statement. "Therefore, we review every vehicle for even the smallest refinement. Most customers would never notice the work that is done post pro-

duction, but we care about even a fraction of a millimeter body gap difference or a slight paint gloss texture. We then feed these improvements back to production in a pursuit of perfection." Employees who worked on Model S and Model X described pressure to keep the assembly line moving, even when problems emerged. Some told of batches of cars being sent through with parts missing - windshields in one case, bumpers in another - because there were none on hand. The understanding, they said, was that these and other flaws would be fixed later.

Quality inspectors would sometimes find more defects than those reported by workers in the internal tracking system when a car came off the line. "We'd see two issues, that's pretty good. But then we'd dig in and there would be like 15 or 20," one person said.—Reuters

Health

For Gabon's sick uranium miners, a long quest for compensation

MOUNANA: "We are all sick. It's our health, and we are being conned," Moise Massala says angrily. The 82-year-old is a retired geochimist who used to work in a uranium mine in Gabon owned by French nuclear giant Areva. He and hundreds of other former workers say they fell ill from their work to extract the uranium—a source of nuclear power and warheads, but toxic and potentially carcinogenic.

The miners worked for an Areva subsidiary—the Compagnie des mines d'uranium de Franceville, better known by its abbreviation of COMUF. Over 38 years, the mine extracted some 26,000 tonnes of uranium near Mounana, southeastern Gabon, before closing in 1999 after the global price of uranium fell and the seam of ore began to thin. By the end of 2016, 367 former workers had died from "pulmonary respiratory infections" linked to working in the mine, according to MATRAC, a campaign group gathering 1,618 former employees.

The surviving miners, many of them old and sick, have unsuccessfully demanded compensation for 12 years in the belief they were exposed to dangerous levels of uranium contamination. Areva, a multi-billion-dollar business majority-owned by the French state, has repeatedly denied that it has any case to answer. "No occupational disease related to exposure to ionising radiation" has ever been detected, it says.

'Many serious diseases'

An internal company mail dating from 2015, seen by AFP and independently verified, acknowledges that the company was aware many of its former employees had developed serious ailments. In the mail, Areva's health director, Pierre Laroche, wrote that "many serious diseases have been detected among former employees, for example contagious tuberculosis".

For former workers, this proves the company's liability and justifies their claims for compensation, even if it does not legally prove all their illnesses are directly linked to



MOUNANA: Rolland Mayombo, a former Franceville Uranium Mines, Companies miner who claims Health problems due to Uranium Mining activities looks on. — AFP

excessive levels of uranium exposure. The firm has refused to give payouts to the vast majority of its employees, apart from compensation payments in 2011 to the families in

among former miners was greater than those occurring in the wider population. "That there was radioactivity in Mounana is a reality. (But) to what degree and to what extent the workers were affected, it will be very difficult to establish," a former senior executive of the mine told AFP, on condition of anonymity. In similar disputes elsewhere in the world, experts acknowledge the difficulty of pinning cancer and respiratory diseases on nuclear exposure at work. Smoking and other "lifestyle" habits could, for instance, be a cause.

Areva has been under pressure to compensate its employees for more than a decade. In 2007, French NGOs Sherpa and Medecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) carried out field surveys in Mounana and in Niger, another Areva uranium mining site. They published a report denouncing what they described as high rates of cancer among former employees. — AFP



Toxic and potentially carcinogenic

France of two French former mine workers who died of lung cancer.

The company has repeatedly argued it was difficult to establish if the rate of cancer cases

Report reveals bear facts about the Yeti

PARIS: Legend-slaying scientists yesterday dismantled the myth of the abominable snowman, the towering yet furtive half-human rumored for centuries to inhabit inaccessible reaches of the Himalayas. It turns out, they report in the Royal Society journal Proceedings B, that the long-sought creature, also known as Yeti, is in fact a bear. Or three different bears, to be precise: the Asian black, the Tibetan brown and Himalayan brown.

Each of these sub-species inhabits different niches on the roof of the world, and all of them have probably been mistaken at one time or another for the "Wild Man of the Snows," the scientists said. "Our findings strongly suggest that the biological underpinnings of the Yeti legend can be found in local bears," said lead scientist Charlotte Lindqvist, associate professor at the University of Buffalo College of Arts and Sciences.

The study is not the first to reduce the myth to bear facts, but it does amass an unprecedented wealth of genetic evidence gleaned from bone, tooth, skin, hair and fecal samples previously attributed to the cryptic creatures. The artifacts—from private collections and museums around the world, including a monastic relic said to come from a Yeti paw—were, in reality, the remains of 23 distinct bears, they found.

Lindqvist and her team reconstructed the complete mitochondrial genomes of each specimen, leading to important discoveries about the region's beleaguered carnivores and their evolutionary back story. "Brown bears roaming the high altitudes of the Tibetan Plateau, and

brown bears in the western Himalayan mountains, appear to belong to two separate populations," she said. "The split occurred about 650,000 years ago, during a period of glaciation."

'Man-bear' snowman

The two sub-species have probably remained isolated from one another ever since despite their relative proximity, she speculated. Today, the Himalayan brown bear—*Ursus arctos isabellinus*—is listed as "critically endangered" on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Red List. Its reddish-brown fur is lighter in color than the darker Tibetan brown bear, which also sports a white collar around its neck.

Throughout the 20th century, fascination in the West—notably in the United States and Britain—with the Yeti legend remained intense. In a book chronicling his trek across the Lhasa La pass near Mount Everest in 1921, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Howard-Bury describes "tracks rather like those of a barefoot man." He attributed them to a large wolf loping through soft snow, but his sherpa guides said they were left by a "metoh-kangi", or "man-bear snowman". The report by a Royal Geographical Society member in 1925 of a human-like figure crossing a high-altitude glacier further fuelled distant imaginations.

At least two expeditions were mounted in the 1950s in search of the already legendary creatures, turning up footprints and hair specimens, with claims of sightings continuing throughout the second half of the century. "Scientific work can help explore myths such as the Yeti," Lindqvist said charitably. "Even if there is no proof for the existence of cryptids"—creatures whose existence remain disputed—"it is impossible to completely rule out that they live," she added. "People love a mystery." — AFP

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د. فهد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال

M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM



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What's On

8th Egyptian products festival kicks off at Salmiya Co-Operative Society



Under the auspices of the Ambassador of the Egyptian Republic Tariq Mahmoud Mustafa Al-Qoni, the Eighth Festival of Egyptian Products kicked off recently at Salmiya Co-Operative Society.

During his opening speech, Abdulrahman Al-Sharah Chairman of the Board of Salmiya Co-Operative Society told the press that the festival comes from the depth of brotherly relations between the two brotherly countries, which have overcome all barriers where Kuwait is keen to play its national role in increasing Egyptian imports to Kuwait to support the Egyptian economy.

Sharah thanked the Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait for hosting the festival. He also thanked the Egyptian broadcaster of the Egyptian TV Mohamed Abbas, the Stars of Egyptian Sport, the players Ahmed Nakhla and Shouqi Al-Saeed.

He stressed "I would like to emphasize that the Salmiya Society is keen to ensure the safety and quality of all products before entering the society and offering them for sale." Adding that the Salmiya Co-Operative Society was the first one to ban the selling of some Egyptian products since the ministerial decision six months ago, like onions, lettuce, guava, potatoes, tomatoes and strawberries "All Egyptian products participating in the festival, whether food or consumption have nothing to do with some products that have been banned."

Sharah added "The Egyptian Products Festival comes for the eighth year in a row, and the association organizes annually festivals for Arab products for the purpose of supporting them. Soon we will have the sixth festival of Saudi products." He also stressed on this occasion the full support of young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and SMEs and he will hold marketing festivals for them in the upcoming days.



Miami band concert concludes LAPA's Modern Heritage Festival



Despite the cold weather and rain, Kuwait's Miami band performed a concert recently at the conclusion of the Modern Heritage Festival organized by LOYAC's Academy of Performance Arts (LAPA) at the Shaheed Park.

The band started the concert with a speech in which they expressing heartfelt condolences to the Egyptian people on

the victims killed in the recent terrorist attack in Sinai, then played and sang Kuwait's national anthem before performing a verity of songs. Speaking at the conclusion ceremony, Al-Shaheed Park's Manager Yousif A-Bu'ajjan stressed that the festival would not be the last one and that it was just the beginning of many yet to come.

Former Kerala Chief Minister inaugurates OICC award night



Oommen Chandy, former Chief Minister of Kerala and Kushboo Sundar, AICC spokesperson delivered inspiring speeches at the 'Puraksara Sandhya 2017' (award night) organized by Overseas Indian Cultural Congress (OICC-Kuwait) November 23, 2017 at Ramada Hotel, Rigga, Kuwait.

In the cultural meeting chaired by President Varghese Puthukulangara, Chandy inaugurated the awards night by lighting the traditional lamp. Puthukulangara, in his presidential note explained about the services of OICC-Kuwait, for the welfare of the Indian expatriate community as a

whole. In his inaugural address Chandy briefed about the recent political developments in Kerala and the difficulties that the common men face following demonetization and introduction of GST by the central government. Kushboo Sundar, an actor-turned politician, currently being the AICC spokesperson, in her address, criticized the India government for imposing new regulations that were not in favor of the people. Indian Embassy Second Secretary U.S. Sibi, Mariyamma Oommen, wife of Oommen Chandy and KPCC Member Filson Mathew felicitated the occasion. Aadeeb Ahmad, CEO, Lulu Exchange was honored with the first

"Business Excellence Award" of OICC-Kuwait. Chandy handed the award, while Khushboo handed the Letter of Achievement and K G Abraham, Managing Director, NBTC adorned him with a ponnada. Global Secretary M A Hilal read the letter of Achievement. In his thanking speech, Aadeeb Ahmad praised the humanitarian services of OICC-Kuwait and wished all success and support to their activities. OICC-Kuwait bid farewell to the retiring M A. Hilal, Global Committee Secretary, by honoring him with a memento. Global Committee Member Rajan Daniel and OICC Alappuzha District President Christopher Daniel

were also honored with ponnada, on the happy occasion of their 70th birth anniversary.

The declaration of distributing 500 wheelchairs for the needy in Kerala was one of the major highlights of the program. For this "Karunya Sparsam" initiatives, OICC officials of 14 districts handed over their contribution to Oommen Chandy directly on the stage.

Further, six valued supporters and well-wishers of OICC Kuwait were honored with mementos by Chandy. They were Suresh C Pillai, Siby Malakal, Bard Al-Samoa Medical Centre, Global International General Trading and Contracting Co, Hamza Payyannur and NSH. The floor was then handed to the conveners Binu Chempalayam and Suresh Mathur for the prize distribution to the winners of Talent Hunt competition (Rangotslv) held in last May, through Khushboo. Cultural programs staged by students were also an added attraction to the mega event. General Secretary B S Pillai welcomed the audience while Varghese Maramon proposed a vote of thanks. Philip Varghese and Nisha Manoj did excellent compeering.

'The Glory of Christmas' concert tomorrow

The region is getting ready to welcome the spring of Christmas tide as the sweet bells ring in the evergreen cadence of the celebration. Men's Voice and Choral Society - Kuwait, the renowned Christian musicale in Kuwait since 2001 always mark the beginning of the Christmas Carols in Kuwait. This group is now all set to present their 17th Annual Christmas Music Concert "The Glory of Christmas" for all the music lovers of the region tomorrow at 6:30 Pm at Smart Indian School (New Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan), Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Kuwait. They will bring the harmony of western classics, hymns and the melodies of Malayalam songs. Every music lover is cordially invited to this musical concert. All musical lovers are cordially invited to attend this program. For more details visit <https://www.facebook.com/mensvoicekuwait> or info@mensvoicekuwait.org.

TV



01:15 Avengers Grimm
02:40 6 Ways To Sundown
04:25 The Legend Of Zorro
06:35 Avengers Grimm
08:00 Drop Zone
09:45 In The Heart Of The Sea
11:50 Virtual Revolution
13:25 The Legend Of Zorro
15:35 Operation Chromite
17:30 Bloodsport
19:05 The Last Witch Hunter
20:50 The Huntsman: Winter's War
22:50 Road House



00:50 Untamed & Uncut
01:45 Trehouse Masters
02:40 Preposterous Pets
03:35 Orangutan Island
04:00 Orangutan Island
04:25 Dr. Jeff Rocky Mountain Vet
05:15 Trehouse Masters
06:02 Bahama Blue
06:49 Untamed & Uncut
07:36 Escape To Chimp Eden
08:00 Escape To Chimp Eden
08:25 Orangutan Island
08:50 Orangutan Island
09:15 Trehouse Masters
10:10 Preposterous Pets
11:05 Bahama Blue
12:00 Orangutan Island
12:28 Orangutan Island
12:55 Dr. Jeff Rocky Mountain Vet
13:50 Trehouse Masters
14:45 Preposterous Pets
15:40 Bahama Blue
16:35 Untamed & Uncut
17:30 Trehouse Masters
18:25 Killer Whales
19:20 Deadly Islands
20:15 Preposterous Pets
21:00 Orangutan Island
21:38 Orangutan Island
22:05 Whale Wars
23:00 Whale Wars
23:55 Wildest Indochina



00:15 EastEnders
00:45 Bad Move
01:15 Poldark
02:10 The Durrells
03:05 Top Of The Lake
04:10 Doctors
04:40 EastEnders
05:10 The Durrells
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Doctors
07:00 EastEnders
07:30 The Coroner
08:20 Doctor Who
09:15 Doctors
09:45 EastEnders
10:15 The Coroner
11:00 New Tricks
11:50 Doctor Who
12:40 Call The Midwife
13:35 Doctors
14:10 EastEnders
14:40 The Coroner
15:30 Doctor Who
16:15 Call The Midwife
17:10 New Tricks
18:00 Doctors
18:30 EastEnders
19:05 The Coroner
20:00 Holly City
21:00 Bad Move
21:30 Agatha Raisin
22:20 Last Tango In Halifax
23:10 Doctors
23:40 EastEnders



00:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
01:00 Escaping Polygamy
02:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
03:00 My Haunted Vacation
04:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
05:00 Escaping Polygamy
06:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
07:00 Homicide Hunter
08:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
09:00 It Takes A Killer
09:30 It Takes A Killer
10:00 Homicide Hunter
11:00 Who Was I? My Past Lives
12:00 Who Was I? My Past Lives
13:00 Who Was I? My Past Lives
14:00 Murder In-Law
15:00 It Takes A Killer
16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
17:00 The First 48
18:00 The First 48
19:00 Hatton Garden Heist: One Last Job
20:00 It Takes A Killer
21:00 It Takes A Killer
21:00 Homicide Hunter
22:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
23:00 It Takes A Killer
23:30 It Takes A Killer



00:05 Workaholics
00:30 Another Period
00:55 Another Period
01:20 Another Period
01:45 The Half Hour
02:10 Broad City
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 The Half Hour
03:50 Broad City
04:15 Kroll Show
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Important Things With Demitri Martin
05:30 Disaster Date
05:55 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:20 The Dude Perfect Show
06:45 The Dude Perfect Show
07:10 Life Or Debt
07:55 Impractical Jokers UK
08:25 Disaster Date
08:50 Workaholics
09:15 Kroll Show
09:40 Key And Peele
10:05 Important Things With Demitri Martin
10:30 The Dude Perfect Show
10:55 The Dude Perfect Show
11:20 Disaster Date
11:45 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:10 Impractical Jokers
12:35 Life Or Debt
13:15 Key And Peele
13:40 Impractical Jokers UK
14:10 Disaster Date
14:35 Workaholics
15:00 Friends
15:25 Kroll Show
15:50 Comedy Central Presents
16:25 Impractical Jokers
16:50 Workaholics

17:15 Impractical Jokers UK
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 The Dude Perfect Show
19:00 The Dude Perfect Show
19:25 Impractical Jokers
19:50 Friends
20:12 Friends
20:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Nightcap
22:00 Teachers
22:25 Detroiters
22:50 Chappelle's Show
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Pick A Puppy
00:55 Pick A Puppy
01:20 How To Build... Everything
01:45 How To Build... Everything
02:10 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
02:35 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
03:00 Ultimate Survival
03:50 Now That's Funny
04:50 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Pick A Puppy
05:55 Pick A Puppy
06:20 Invent It Rich
07:00 Pick A Puppy
07:25 Storm Chasers
07:50 Storm Chasers
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Invent It Rich
10:20 Ultimate Survival
11:10 Weather Gone Viral
12:00 Last Frontiersmen
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Invent It Rich
14:30 Pick A Puppy
14:55 Pick A Puppy
15:20 Storm Chasers
16:10 Ultimate Survival
17:00 Weather Gone Viral
17:50 Last Frontiersmen
18:40 Invent It Rich
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Now That's Funny
21:10 Weather Gone Viral
22:00 Last Frontiersmen
22:50 Ultimate Survival
23:40 Storm Chasers



00:50 Obsession: Dark Desires
01:45 Murder Calls
02:40 Killing Richard Glossip
03:35 Six Degrees Of Murder
04:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
05:25 Young, Hot & Crooked
05:50 Young, Hot & Crooked
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It
07:10 Swamp Murders
08:00 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad
08:25 Disappeared
09:15 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad
09:40 Young, Hot & Crooked
10:10 Swamp Murders
11:05 Suspicion
12:00 Grave Secrets
12:55 Disappeared
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 Swamp Murders
15:40 Suspicion
16:35 Evil Stepmothers
17:30 Disappeared
18:25 Young, Hot & Crooked
18:50 Young, Hot & Crooked
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
19:50 Swamp Murders
21:10 Suspicion
22:05 The Perfect Murder
23:00 Six Degrees Of Murder
23:55 The Perfect Murder



00:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:50 Evermore Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:20 Hank Zipzer
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:10 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
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06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Jessie
07:25 Tangled: The Series
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
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 Liloalock
10:50 Liloalock
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 Liloalock
13:45 Liloalock
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 Descendants Wicked World
17:30 Bunk'd
17:55 K.C. Undercover
18:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
18:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
19:10 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
19:15 Stuck In The Middle
19:40 Girl Meets World
20:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:10 Liv And Maddie
20:35 Jessie

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



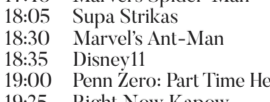
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00:35 Loopdidoo
00:55 Henry Hugglemonster
01:15 Calimero
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopdidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopdidoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopdidoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopdidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 Loopdidoo
07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
08:00 P-King Duckling
08:30 Puppy Dog Pals
09:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:30 Sofia The First
10:00 Vampirina
10:30 PJ Masks
11:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
12:00 The Lion Guard
13:00 Sofia The First
14:00 PJ Masks
14:30 PJ Masks
15:00 P-King Duckling
15:30 Puppy Dog Pals
16:30 The Lion Guard
17:00 The Lion Guard
17:30 Doc McStuffins
18:00 Doc McStuffins
18:30 Sofia The First
19:00 Sofia The First
19:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
20:30 P-King Duckling
21:00 PJ Masks
22:00 Vampirina
23:00 P-King Duckling
23:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
23:35 Sofia The First: The Curse...



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:05 Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman
02:45 Breaking Magic
03:10 Diesel Brothers
04:00 Alaska: The Last Frontier
04:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Gold Divers
06:45 Street Outlaws
07:30 Diesel Brothers
08:15 Deadliest Catch
09:47 How Do They Do It?
10:10 Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman
11:50 Breaking Magic
12:15 Breaking Magic
12:40 Baggage Battles
13:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
13:55 Gold Divers
14:40 Gold Divers
15:25 Diesel Brothers
16:10 Street Outlaws
17:00 How Do They Do It?
17:25 How Do They Do It?
17:50 Baggage Battles
18:20 Container Wars
18:50 Deadliest Catch
19:40 How Do They Do It?
20:10 How Do They Do It?
20:35 How Do They Do It?
21:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
22:40 The Wheel: Survival Games
23:30 Diesel Brothers



06:00 Disney11
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Marvel's Spider-Man
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Mech-X4
08:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
08:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
09:00 Supa Strikas
09:25 Supa Strikas
09:50 Walk The Prank
10:20 Walk The Prank
10:45 Gravity Falls
11:10 Gravity Falls
11:35 Lab Rats
12:00 Lab Rats
12:25 Two More Eggs
12:30 Phineas & Ferb
12:55 Phineas & Ferb
13:20 Zeke And Luther
13:45 Zeke And Luther
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
14:40 Gravity Falls
15:05 Lab Rats
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law
15:55 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
16:20 Two More Eggs
16:25 Walk The Prank
16:50 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man
18:05 Supa Strikas
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man
18:35 Disney11
19:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
19:25 Right Now Kapow
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Mech-X4
20:20 Walk The Prank
20:45 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
21:10 Gravity Falls
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:10 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas & Ferb
23:00 Programms Start At 6:00am



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

04:40 Revenge Body With Khloe
05:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
06:00 La Clippers Dance Squad
06:55 El News
07:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
08:10 El News: Daily Pop
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:00 El News
12:15 Botched
13:10 Botched
14:05 Botched
15:00 El News
15:15 El News: Daily Pop
16:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:10 The Platinum Life
18:05 The Platinum Life
19:00 El News
20:00 WAGs La
21:00 Fashion Police
22:00 WAGs La
23:00 El News
23:15 The Platinum Life



00:00 Chopped
01:00 Bakers vs. Fakers
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
04:00 Man Fire Food
05:00 Chopped
06:00 Guy's Grocery Games
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
09:25 Siba's Table
09:55 Bake With Anna Olson
10:25 Bake With Anna Olson
10:55 The Kitchen
11:45 Cooking For Real
12:10 The Pioneer Woman
12:35 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Bake With Anna Olson
17:30 Bake With Anna Olson
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Iron Chef: America
20:00 Patti Labelle's Place
20:30 Patti Labelle's Place
21:00 Private Chef
21:30 Private Chef
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
04:25 The Jonathan Ross Show
05:15 Murdoch Mysteries
06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
07:05 The Chase
08:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
09:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
10:00 Murdoch Mysteries
10:55 Who's Doing The Dishes?
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
14:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?
15:10 The Chase
16:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
17:00 Tonight At The London Palladium
17:50 Murdoch Mysteries
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
22:00 Tonight At The London Palladium
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Engineering Disasters
01:00 America's Book Of Secrets
02:00 Engineering An Empire
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 How The States Got Their Shapes
05:30 Engineering Disasters
06:20 America's Book Of Secrets
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Engineering An Empire
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 How The States Got Their Shapes
11:30 How The States Got Their Shapes
12:00 Engineering Disasters
13:00 America's Book Of Secrets
14:00 Engineering An Empire
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 How The States Got Their Shapes
17:30 How The States Got Their Shapes
18:00 The Universe
19:00 America's Book Of Secrets
20:00 Command Decisions
20:30 Command Decisions
21:00 Missing In Alaska
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Clash Of The Gods



00:20 Fifth Gear
01:40 Ultimate Soldier Challenge
02:00 Swamp People
02:50 Counting Cars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Swamp People
04:45 Swamp People
05:00 Swamp People
06:00 Ultimate Wheels
06:50 American Pickers
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Aussie Pickers
10:10 AX Men
11:00 Fifth Gear
11:50 American Pickers
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 Counting Cars
13:30 Time Team
14:20 Swamp People
15:10 Alone
16:00 American Pickers
16:50 Counting Cars

17:15 Counting Cars
17:40 Swamp People
18:30 Alone
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 Pawn Stars
20:35 Pawn Stars
21:00 WW2 Treasure Hunters
21:50 The Warfighters
22:40 Time Team
23:30 Alone



00:45 Eat Street
01:10 Route Awakening
01:40 David Rocco's Dolce India
02:05 Sinful Sweets
02:35 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
03:00 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
03:30 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
03:55 Places We Go
04:25 Places We Go
04:50 Migue's Feasts
05:20 Migue's Feasts
05:45 Route Awakening
06:15 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
06:40 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
07:10 David Rocco's Dolce India
07:35 Sinful Sweets
08:05 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
08:30 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
09:00 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
09:25 Places We Go
09:55 Places We Go
10:20 Migue's Feasts
10:50 Migue's Feasts
11:15 Route Awakening
11:45 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
12:10 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
12:40 David Rocco's Dolce India
13:05 Sinful Sweets
13:35 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
14:00 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
14:30 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
14:55 Places We Go
15:25 Places We Go
15:50 Migue's Feasts
16:20 Migue's Feasts
16:45 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
17:15 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
17:40 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
18:10 Restoration Man



00:10 Battleground Brothers
01:00 Disaster Earth
02:00 Disaster Earth
03:00 The Long Road Home
04:00 Battleground Brothers
05:00 Family Guns
06:00 Live Free Or Die
07:00 Science Of Stupid
07:30 Science Of Stupid
08:00 Route Awakening
08:30 Route Awakening
09:00 Route Awakening
09:00 Family Guns
10:00 Machine Impossible
11:00 Planes That Changed The World
12:00 China's Ghost Army
13:00 Live Free Or Die
14:00 Route Awakening
14:30 Route Awakening
15:00 Science Of Stupid
15:30 Science Of Stupid
16:00 Machine Impossible
17:00 Planes That Changed The World
18:00 Airport Security: Colombia
18:00 Airport Security: Colombia
18:00 Science Of Stupid
19:30 Science Of Stupid
20:00 Machine Impossible
20:50 Planes That Changed The World
21:40 Airport Security: Colombia
21:40 Airport Security: Colombia
22:30 Science Of Stupid
22:55 Science Of Stupid
23:20 Route Awakening
23:45 Route Awakening



00:20 Attack Of The Big Cats
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Ultimate Predator
02:50 Prehistoric Predators
03:45 World's Weirdest Pets Compilation
04:40 Make You Laugh Out Loud
05:35 Ultimate Predator
06:30 Prehistoric Predators
07:25 World's Weirdest Pets Compilation
08:20 Make You Laugh Out Loud
09:15 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
10:10 Caught In The Act
11:05 Wild Sri Lanka: Paradise Island
12:00 Shark Men
12:55 America's Deadliest Prehistoric Predators
14:45 Freaks & Creeps
15:40 Make You Laugh Out Loud
16:35 Wild Japan: Snow Monkeys
17:30 Caught In The Act
18:25 Dr Oakley: Yukon Vet



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 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbids Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Sanjay And Craig
13:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
14:12 I Am Frankie
14:36 100 Things To Do Before High School

15:00 Hunter Street
15:24 School Of Rock
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Sanjay And Craig
17:24 I Am Frankie
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:36 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



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



01:40 Black Beauty
03:10 The Tale Of Despereaux
05:00 Curious George
06:30 Monte Carlo
08:20 Black Beauty
09:50 Pet Pals In Windland
11:15 The Tale Of Despereaux
13:05 Hey Arnold! The Movie
14:25 Inside Out
16:05 Step Dogs
17:35 Mostly Ghostly: One Night In Doom House
19:05 Pan
21:00 Hey Arnold! The Movie
22:20 Inside Out



01:30 Wiener Dog
03:00 Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins
04:55 Made In America
06:50 Don Verdean
08:30 Summer Villa
10:00 Hard Promises
11:40 Made In America
13:35 Don Verdean
15:15 Once I Was A Beehive
17:15 Joe Somebody
18:55 When In Rome
20:30 No Stranger Than Love
22:05 The Brothers Grimsby
23:30 Alfie



00:10 Once Upon A Time In America
04:00 12 Angry Men
05:45 The Zero Theorem
07:45 Goal!
09:45 The Better Angels
11:25 12 Angry Men
13:10 127 Hours
14:50 The Flying Scotsman
16:40 Rushmore
18:20 Lorenzo's Oil
20:35 The Kite Runner
22:45 In America



00:15 Freddy Frogface
01:45 Moomin And Midsummer Madness
03:05 Funny Little Cars
04:10 Space Dogs 2: Adventure To The Moon

05:40 A.R.C.H.I.E.
07:15 Two Buddies And A Badger
08:45 Hotel For Dogs
10:30 Micropolis
12:00 The Adventures Of The American Rabbit
13:30 Moomin And Midsummer Madness
14:50 Funny Little Cars
15:55 Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie
17:40 Micropolis
19:05 Ethel & Ernest
20:50 Izzie's Way Home
22:15 Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie
23:55 Hotel For Dogs



00:35 Troy
03:20 This Means War
05:00 The Boxtrolls
06:45 Forces Of Nature
08:35 Before We Go
10:20 The Express
12:35 This Means War
14:20 Valentine's Day
16:30 We Bought A Zoo
18:40 Dracula Untold
20:20 Due Date
22:00 Sex And The City The Movie



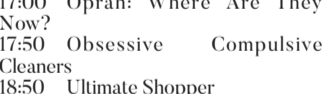
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01:30 How Do They Do It?
01:55 Food Factory USA
02:20 American Titans
03:10 Smash Lab
04:00 Prototype This
04:48 Mythbusters
05:36 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Food Factory USA
06:24 American Titans
07:12 Smash Lab
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 Prototype This
09:14 Mythbusters
10:02 Smash Lab
10:50 How Do They Do It?
11:14 Food Factory USA
11:38 American Titans
12:26 Prototype This
13:14 Mythbusters
14:02 How Do They Do It?
14:26 Food Factory USA
14:50 Smash Lab
15:38 Prototype This
16:26 American Titans
17:14 Mythbusters
18:02 Smash Lab
18:50 Prototype This
19:40 Mythbusters
20:30 Telescope
21:20 How Do They Do It?
21:45 Food Factory USA
22:10 Smash Lab
23:00 Telescope
23:50 Prototype This



00:00 Cedar Cove
03:00 MAFS: The First Year
04:00 The Fashion Fund
05:00 Fashion Star
06:00 Cedar Cove
09:00 MAFS: The First Year
10:00 The Fashion Fund
11:00 Fashion Star
12:00 Cedar Cove
15:00 MAFS: The First Year
16:00 The Fashion Fund
17:00 Fashion Star
18:00 Married At First Sight
20:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
21:00 MAFS: The First Year
22:00 The Fashion Fund
23:00 Fashion Star



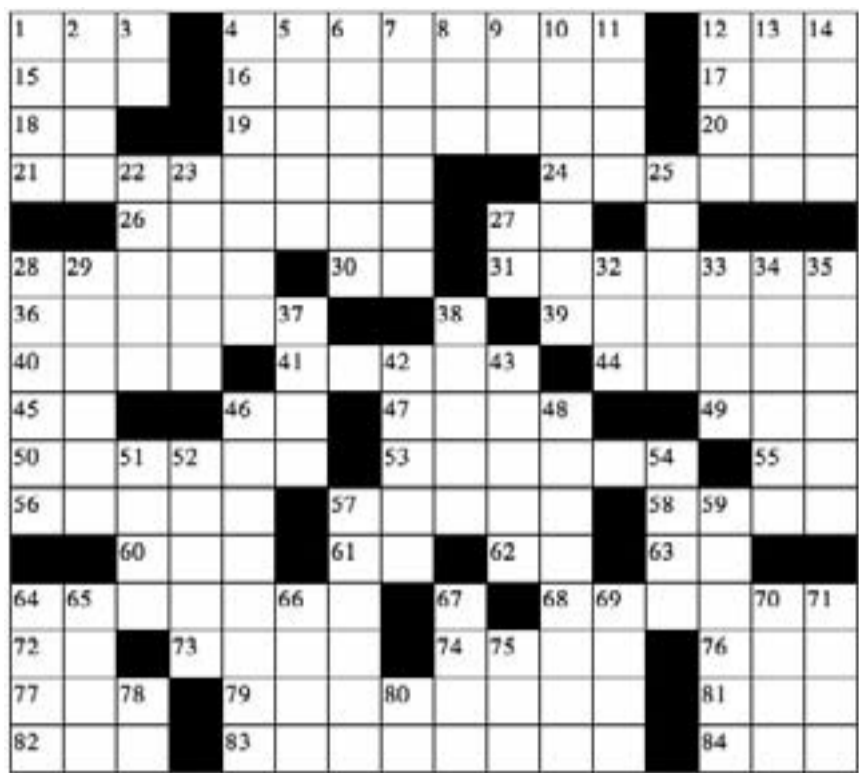
00:20 Dr Christian Will See You Now
01:05 Botched Up Bodies
01:50 Bizarre ER
02:35 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
03:20 Baby Changes Everything
04:05 Twirl Life
04:50 Ultimate Shopper
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress UK
06:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
06:45 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
07:30 Say Yes To The Dress UK
08:15 Baby Changes Everything
09:00 Cake Boss
09:25 Twirl Life
10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
10:55 Kid Tycoons
11:40 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
12:25 Say Yes To The Dress UK
13:10 Say Yes To The Dress UK
13:55 Little Miss Atlanta
14:40 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
15:25 My Kid's Obsession
16:10 Love, Lust Or Run
16:35 Cake Boss
17:00 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
17:50 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
18:50 Ultimate Shopper
19:40 Say Yes To The Dress UK
20:10 Cake Boss
20:35 Cake Boss
21:00 Say Yes To The Dress UK
21:25 Say Yes To The Dress UK
21:50 90 Day Fianc?: Happily Ever After?
22:40 Say Yes To The Dress
23:30 90 Day Fianc?: Happily Ever After?



01:30 Wiener Dog
03:00 Welcome Home Roscoe

Stars

CROSSWORD 1773



ACROSS

1. A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
4. Malaysian tree bearing spiny red fruit.
12. A federally chartered savings bank.
15. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
16. A device that controls amount of light admitted.
17. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
18. A metallic element of the rare earth group.
19. A chain of coral and volcanic islands in Micronesia halfway between New Guinea and Japan.
20. Annual grass of Europe and North Africa.
21. Sink below the surface.
24. A genus of Bothidae.
26. A person who rests.
28. The act of pursuing.
30. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
31. Of or relating to chaetae (setae or bristles).
36. A port city in southwestern Croatia on the Adriatic.
39. Brass that looks like gold.
40. English essayist (1775-1834).
41. The event of dying or departure from life.
44. A magician or sorcerer of ancient times.
45. A public promotion of some product or service.
47. Move about aimlessly or without any destination, often in search of food or employment.
49. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
50. Austrian physician who tried to treat diseases with a form of hypnotism (1734-1815).
53. The way in which someone or something is composed.
55. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
56. Not very intelligent or interested in culture.
58. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
60. An ester of adenosine that is converted to ATP for energy storage.
61. A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
62. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
63. A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
64. A river that rises in France and flows northeast across Belgium and empties into the North Sea.
68. A port city in southwestern Iran.
72. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
73. Any of a group of antidepressant drugs that inhibit the action of monoamine oxidase in the brain and so allow monoamines to accumulate.
74. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
76. Fiddler crabs.
77. Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
79. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
81. The 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet.
82. A piece of furniture that provides a place to sleep.

83. One of the three prairie provinces in central Canada.
84. The fatty flesh of eel.

DOWN

1. Informal terms for a meal.
2. Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
3. A nonmetallic largely pentavalent heavy volatile corrosive dark brown liquid element belonging to the halogens.
4. Any of 12 kings of ancient Egypt between 1315 and 1090 BC.
5. Remote and separate physically or socially.
6. Formed or united into a whole.
7. Having or covered with protective barbs or quills or spines or thorns etc..
8. A reptile genus of Iguanidae.
9. A large cask especially one holding a volume equivalent to 2 butts or 252 gals.
10. A member of a North American Plains people (now living in Oklahoma and Wyoming).
11. A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
12. A linear unit of length equal to 12 inches or a third of a yard.
13. Singing jazz.
14. A Chad language spoken south of Lake Chad.
22. (Norse mythology) God of poetry and music.
23. Genus of tropical Asiatic trees having large solitary flowers.
25. Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
27. Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
29. Ground snakes.
32. A human limb.
33. A one-piece cloak worn by men in ancient Rome.
34. (zoology) Pertaining to alulae.
35. A surface coating for ceramics or porcelain.
37. The sixth month of the civil year.
38. The ermine in its brown summer coat with black-tipped tail.
42. Protective covering made of metal and used in combat.
43. Australian shrubs and small trees with evergreen usually spiny leaves and dense clusters of showy flowers.
46. An abnormal new mass of tissue that serves no purpose.
48. A woman sahib.
51. Title for the former hereditary monarch of Iran.
52. (from a combination of MModulate and DEModulate) Electronic equipment consisting of a device used to connect computers by a telephone line.
54. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
57. Old master of the Venetian school (1490-1576).
59. Advance evidence for.
65. The work of caring for or attending to someone or something.
66. Amino acid that is formed in the liver and converted into dopamine in the brain.
67. Biennial Eurasian plant usually having a swollen edible root.
69. A small cake leavened with yeast.
70. A dull persistent (usually moderately intense) pain.
71. Horny plate covering and protecting part of the dorsal surface of the digits.
75. In favor of (an action or proposal etc.).
78. A bachelor's degree in religion.
80. A state in New England.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

The opposition and blockage you may be experiencing this morning are temporary—really. Cool it and let this one pass. Jot down inventive ideas that come to your mind today as you will have an opportunity to discuss the ideas with a trusted friend later today. The convention center, a lecture hall or some other place for a presentation could be in order today and you, along with several other work partners, want to hear the message. Follow your instincts and you will not go wrong today. When you notice a need for assisting another, you are quick to either give help or find help. This is a good time to teach and advertise your favorite charity. You throw yourself into helping other people grow and prosper. Good luck surrounds you this evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a period when you take your work more seriously than usual. There is a lot of energy available and you are determined to get things scheduled and organized. The nail that sticks up is hammered down now. Law, politics, education, travel and religion are some of the areas where an emotionally charged drama may be played. Seeing both sides of an issue and figuring out resolutions to opposing views take on a greater importance. You can really use your mind to make clear choices and think through situations. Some negotiations may be in order. A new cycle also begins that helps you with the progress of your work. This cycle involves relationships, social connections and the arts—in a more leading role than in the past.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are relentless about cutting through appearances and finding the essential in situations. This could involve legal or financial matters. A heightened interest in getting things organized into a rational system is a part of this. There is much mental busywork. A time of good fortune will begin to open up in a very natural way. It will become easy to see the path you decide to take. Because of new opportunities, you may find yourself energized and ready to participate. With your determination to succeed, the time will soon be right to take the lead. You may be able to enjoy and value your own life situation or feel especially kind towards a friend or loved one this evening. If the weather is good, you might enjoy a walk with a loved one after the evening meal.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This is a challenging day in that there is much to be accomplished. You may be especially dynamic and assertive just now. You are helpful with co-workers and, if asked, can give plenty of suggestions or ideas to others. Right now, the key to career moves involves tending to nagging details—whatever you have neglected and put off before today. Take a deep breath and dig in to the work at hand. A good work ethic is rewarded. Do your share to ensure smooth sailing on the job. Attention to matters of efficiency is important. There is a lot of energy available to push forward with your personal plans this afternoon. Close relationships offer a lot of potential for growth this evening. You are able to create many healings with your input.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You should find everything running in a smooth manner today. Ideas and interaction with authority figures may be in the forecast. Working with rather than against the flow should be easy to do. Outer circumstances and the flow of events make it easy for you to make clear decisions—see the road ahead and move forward. Things seem to fall into place—progress is easy. Be careful not to overextend. Sometimes you say yes too quickly and may hastily try to get too many things accomplished at once. Give yourself time to consider the long-term consequences. Partnerships, personal relationships or the social scene in general can have a very decided influence on your career and workplace. You will gain from networking.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have an urge to strike out on your own in a new direction, to take on new challenges no matter what the risks. You can be bold, perhaps headstrong and impatient. This is a period emphasizing an enhanced sense of personal possibility and potential. There is tremendous psychological growth, which can lead to great personal success, if you follow through with it. You might also find that you will put on the pounds if you are not careful. There is a bout of philosophy or even a little religion now that could have an enormous effect on your career during this time. Lasting values can guide you now; you are opening up avenues that have remained blocked. There is support all around you for whatever you want to accomplish.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Keep a positive outlook through a challenging dilemma in the workplace this morning. You may not have all the facts at this time so make sure you remove any judgments. Give yourself time and you will have the answers you need. Your intuition is strong and it can guide you accurately in making forecasts or decisions. Hard work and going beyond the call of duty are par for the course today. Friendships and involvement in group activities play a more important part for you this afternoon. Friends are our only true riches and the satisfaction that comes from accomplishing things in cooperation with others is something no one can take away from you. A good conversation with those you love is possible this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a good time to concentrate on your career goals. Your organizational abilities and sense of responsibility will be what guides you and proves successful. Your career could assume a more determined and solid form. There is certainly an abundance of paperwork to wade through today. You may think that few people recognize your efforts or accomplishments but instead, there are people that know and appreciate your work. You should, however, throw your efforts into work you really love doing. A majority of planets in the past have pointed to some sort of comfort zone for you. Now, you will find yourself seeking more challenging and outgoing projects. You enjoy sharing quality time with a loved one this evening.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Expressing your views regarding some subject matter may be a bit touchy today. You have a sense for power, wealth and passion. Yours is indeed a passionate life. You are not at all superficial and you always seem to get to the heart of things. This is good for business and politics but your words and actions can sometimes be construed as insensitive: listen and learn. You will succeed best if you ask for feedback from those with whom you have been teaching or helping. Be wise in your communication with others by agreeing to disagree occasionally. There is a strong sense that new things need experiencing. You may be planning your next vacation—the fun is in the prep work. For the time being you might consider a stay-vacation.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

The support you need for whatever you want to accomplish is now available. This is the time to make your request. You could gain attention with superiors or in relation to your work. As you work to enhance the value of your service, you will enhance your job potential. You may find that you enjoy your job or the responsibility it entails more than usual. Circumstances may stimulate the pleasure of your life situation now. Your ethics deepen, providing you with a better sense of discrimination. That purchasing eye of yours is fine-tuned; others may find you selecting the best buys. This is the time of year you enjoy shopping and a view in several shop windows will give you an idea of where you want to shop in the near future. Lists are good.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Someone important or in authority may put a damper on your ideas. Since you are good at creative thinking, there are many more ideas where these came from. Take this as an opportunity to reassess and revamp your thinking. Listen carefully; there may or may not be important points to ponder. Your efforts will not go unnoticed. Your work environment is usually the most practical of environments. You can manipulate every situation and put it to good use. Emotions are seldom a priority and you are always very practical and ambitious. Your career is central to everything you do. Farsighted and traditional, you enjoy success and the successful. Obtaining and exchanging information takes on more emotional significance for you now.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a great time to work and be with others. An authority figure may seek you out as just the person for a particular job. This is a busy but rewarding workday. Fondness and appreciation for the past and for your roots in life take on a greater importance. A co-worker friend may have recently done research on his or her family history and is willing to give you suggestions of how to go about this research. You could make plans to meet at a library this weekend or some day after work to gain that information. Making your home situation more attractive plays a part in this and the sale or purchase of real estate could bring you much gain before this cycle ends. There is a chance to have a special time with someone you love. This is a positive time.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Cheerleading

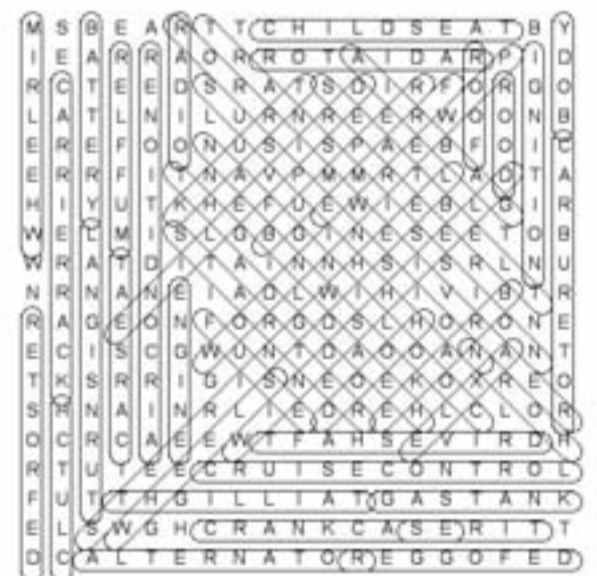
Find and circle all of the Cheerleading words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| AERIAL | DISMOUNT | JUMPS | SPOTTER |
| ARABESQUE | ELEVATOR | K MOTION | SQUAD |
| AWESOME | EXECUTION | LIBERTY | STUNT |
| BASE | EXTENSION | L MOTION | MASCOT |
| BASKET TOSS | FACIALS | FLYER | MEGAPHONE |
| BUCKET | HANDSPRING | HEEL STRETCH | PEEL OFF |
| CANDLE STICKS | HEEL STRETCH | HERKIE | POPPOPS |
| CHANT | HURDLER | HIGH V | PYRAMID |
| CHEER | CHOROGRAPHY | COACH | ROUTINE |
| CRADLE CATCH | | | SELL IT |
| | | | V MOTION |

Yesterday's Solution

Car Parts



- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| AIR BAG | CLUTCH | GAS TANK | STARTER |
| AIR CONDITIONER | COOLING FAN | HEADLIGHT | STEERING WHEEL |
| ALTERNATOR | CRANKCASE | HOOD | SUSPENSION |
| AXLE | CRUISE CONTROL | HORN | TAIL LIGHT |
| BATTERY | DEFROGGER | IGNITION | TIRES |
| BODY | DOOR | MUFFLER | TRANSMISSION |
| BRAKE | DRIVE LINE | POWER WINDOW | TRUNK |
| BUMPER | DRIVE SHAFT | RADGATOR | TURN SIGNAL |
| CAR SEAT | ENGINE | RADIO | WHEEL RIM |
| CARBURETOR | FRAME | REAR VIEW MIRROR | WHEELS |
| CARRIER RACK | FUSE | ROOF | WINDSHIELD |
| CHILD SEAT | | SEAT BELT | |

The hidden item is: SEAT BELT WARNING LIGHT

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Kuwait Times Classifieds

Thursday, November 30, 2017

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate north easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered rain later on.

BY DAY: Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times north easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

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

STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART	29/11/2017 1200 UTC
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	17 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	23 °C	14 °C		
ABDALY	22 °C	12 °C		
BUBYAN	23 °C	15 °C		
JAHRA	23 °C	14 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	23 °C	16 °C		
SALMIYAH	22 °C	17 °C		
AHMADI	22 °C	17 °C		
NUWASIB	23 °C	14 °C		
WAFRA	24 °C	14 °C		
SALMY	22 °C	13 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	11/30	Partly cloudy to cloudy + a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	21 °C	14 °C	NE	15 - 40 km/h
Friday	12/01	Mostly Sunny	24 °C	12 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Saturday	12/02	Sunny	21 °C	10 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Sunday	12/03	Sunny	21 °C	09 °C	NW	15 - 38 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:00
Sunrise	06:24
Zuhr	11:37
Asr	14:30
Sunset	16:49
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	23 °C
MIN. Temp.	10 °C
MAX. RH	98 %
MIN. RH	28 %
MAX. Wind	NW 39 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

AIRLINES

American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Air Slovakia	22434940
Olympic Airways	22420002/9
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
Reservation	22433388
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Alitalia	22414427
Balkan Airlines	22416474
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Czech Airlines	22417901/2433141
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

FREE BITCOIN SEMINAR

The world's leading crypto currency has reached US\$10,000. We teach you the technology and how to trade and profit, this Friday from 4pm to 6pm in Nuzha.

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 INVENTOR BASE

SITUATION WANTED

Accounting service: Firm headed by 16 year experience chartered accountant. Accounting, Vat, A/R, A/P, Inventory, Financial Reports, Projections etc. Contact: 97769970. (C 5364) 26-11-2017

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Neeraj Kumar S/o Subhash Chander, holder of Indian Passport J5752152 & Civil ID No. 285092011066 has changed my name to Neeraj Makan hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5363)

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

1889988

EMERGENCY

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Kuwait Times

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Kuwait Times is the first daily in the Arabian Gulf providing all the news and information on business, politics, social, sports and entertainment in Kuwait.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 30/11/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 30/11/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
KAC	102	London	00:50	PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	JZR	502	Luxor	01:30
WAN	416	Beirut	01:05	JZR	142	Doha	01:45
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KAC	351	Kochi	03:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:05
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	DHX	172	Bahrain	06:50
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	167	Paris	07:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	JZR	902	Baku	07:50
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	KAC	413	Bangkok	08:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:30	KAC	791	Madinah	08:35
WAN	342	Sohag	06:35	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	BAW	156	London	08:55
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	WAN	133	Doha	09:00
QTR	8511	Doha	07:35	KAC	117	New York	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	QTR	8512	Doha	09:05
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
WAN	332	Alexandria	08:00	KAC	741	Dammam	09:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	101	Taif	09:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	126	Doha	20:15
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	DHX	172	Bahrain	20:20
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	692	Muscat	20:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	QTR	1088	Doha	20:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:45
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	JZR	189	Dubai	20:55
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ALK	229	Colombo	21:20
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	168	Paris	21:20
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	KAC	786	Jeddah	21:25
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	UAE	859	Dubai	21:35
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	KAC	676	Dubai	21:40
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
NIA	161	Cairo	11:35	WAN	116	Bahrain	21:50
WAN	134	Doha	11:45	KLM	445	Amsterdam	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	564	Amman	22:05
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
FEJ	933	Sohag	12:40	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
JZ	R561	Sohag	12:45	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
FD	B075	Dubai	12:45	JZR	241	Amman	22:40
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JZR	185	Dubai	23:10
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	WAN	836	Sarajevo	23:25
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	MSC	405	Sohag	23:30
KAC	792	Madinah	13:20	BBC	043	Dhaka	23:30
				FDB	071	Dubai	23:45

Lifestyle | Gossip

Carey reaches a financial settlement with fiancée

The chart-topping American star and the Australian billionaire - who were engaged from January to October 2016 - quietly entered into a settlement agreement a few months ago, which meant that Mariah secured a few million dollars and her engagement ring, according to TheBlast.com. The blonde beauty was initially seeking a settlement deal worth an eye-watering \$50 million, but their eventual agreement was reportedly worth considerably less than that. Mariah has continued to wear her engagement ring over recent months, but the beautiful-looking item is worth less than the \$10 million that has been widely reported, with her overall settlement package said to be valued between \$5 and \$10 million. Mariah based part of her settlement claim on the fact that she uprooted her life and moved to Los Angeles to be with the businessman. She also accused James of doing something awful to her assistant while on a yacht in Greece, which ultimately caused her to cancel part of her money-spinning South American tour. This comes shortly after Mariah - who has twins Moroccan and Monroe, both six, with her ex-husband Nick Cannon - cancelled three more days of her Christmas tour. The 48-year-old singer announced she was pulling the plug on a few of her upcoming performances earlier this month due to an upper respiratory infection. And Mariah subsequently took to social media to announce she is scrapping even more gigs from her 'All I Want For Christmas Is You World tour' because she has been told by medical experts she needs "a few extra days of rest". She recently wrote on her Instagram account: "I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with loved ones: it's certainly nice to remember what we are grateful for! Like most, I'm thankful for my overall health... for which I need a bit more time to get right. Doctors have ordered a few extra days of rest before I can finally fly to New York and take the stage for my Christmas Tour (sic)."

Maria Grazia Chiuri to receive the Swarovski Award for Positive Change



The 53-year-old fashion designer is set to be honoured with the accolade at the star-studded bash in partnership with Swarovski, which will take place at London's Albert Hall on Monday (04.12.17), for her contribution to women's empowerment in the fashion industry, as she is the first female to hold the title of Creative Director at Dior. And the creative mastermind - who previously helmed the Italian fashion house Valentino - is "delighted" to be selected for the gong, which she hopes will inspire other women. Maria said: "I am delighted and very honoured to receive the Swarovski Award for Positive Change. The feminist movement that has been mine for the longest time has finally struck a resonant chord in society, and this recognition sends a powerful message to all women battling on a daily basis." Maria is the second figure in the business to receive the honour, which was presented for the first time in 2016 to the late Franca Sozzani. And the mogul thinks her award is the perfect time to pay tribute to the Editor-in-Chief at Vogue Italia, who tragically passed away last year aged 66 years old. Maria added: "It also offers a timely opportunity to pay tribute to Franca Sozzani who, last year, was the recipient of the very first award." And the British Fashion Council believe Maria's deserves the title because of her "determination" to encourage females to "believe in themselves", and for being a "great inspiration" to people across the globe. Dame Natalie Massenet - who is the Chairman of BFC - said: "With this award, Maria Grazia will be celebrated for her successful creative achievements, her contribution to female empowerment within fashion and her determination to encourage women of future generations to believe in themselves. The positive impact she has had on the fashion and global communities makes her a great inspiration to all of us."



Sophia Bush says Ryan Reynolds is one of the 'good men'

The 35-year-old actress shared her first-ever on-screen kiss with Ryan in the 2002 romantic comedy movie 'Van Wilder', and Sophia has nothing but fond memories of her experience of working with the Canadian star. She shared: "That was my first job. 'Truly I just remember Ryan Reynolds being the most professional and kind and courteous man. You want to talk about good men in Hollywood - aces all around. Such a good human being." Ryan even offered his inexperienced co-star some tips to help her succeed in the movie business. And looking back on the experience, Sophia feels grateful towards Ryan. She told 'Entertainment Tonight': "To walk in as an actor and have your first on-screen kiss with somebody, and not know what's going on ... I said something about it being my first day and he was like, 'Here's a few things you need to know,' and gave me just little technical tips that were so helpful, [which] put me completely at ease. And yeah, he's just the best." Since they starred together in the movie, Ryan has emerged as one of the most sought-after actors in Hollywood. And Sophia is delighted to see the success he's enjoyed in his career, while she's also pleased to see him happily married to actress Blake Lively, with whom he has daughters James, two, and 13-month-old Ines. She said: "Over all the years that I've seen him and I've watched his career, he'll be like, 'I just saw you on this and you were great.' 'And I'm like, 'I saw this movie and I loved it.' To watch him become this incredibly happy dad ... I don't know, he's one of those people that I really root for. It's crazy to think that it's been that long."

Jennifer Hudson drops restraining order

The 36-year-old singer sought an emergency order of protection earlier this month after she split from her fiancée, but according to The Blast, she voluntarily motioned to have it vacated on Monday in Illinois, and a judge signed it off. In return, the 37-year-old wrestling commentator agreed to not go back to Jennifer's house. Under the terms of the order, David was not entitled to spend time with the former couple's son, eight-year-old David Jr., until their next court date, and any time he did get with the youngster required written approval from the 'Spotlight' singer. David doesn't view the quashing of the order as a "victory", but the pair are now planning to work together on what is best for their son. A source told People magazine: "This wasn't a victory for David. Jennifer dropped the order so they could remove the matter from the courtroom and work together to do what is best for their child." According to the insider, Jennifer is still acting as primary caregiver for David Jr. and paying for any childcare costs that arise. The decision to drop the order comes shortly after the 'Dreamgirls' star agreed to modify it so David could have his son for Thanksgiving, though the sportsman had initially had a request for the order to be thrown out denied in court.



Jennifer Lawrence turns mean in public

The Oscar-winning actress is widely regarded as one of Hollywood's most down-to-earth stars, but Jennifer freely concedes that her attitude towards people changes as soon as she's in a public space. Speaking to Adam Sandler for Variety magazine's Actors on Actors series, Jennifer explained: "Once I enter a public place I become incredibly rude, I turn into a huge ass. 'That's kind of like my only way of defending myself [from fan attention]." During their chat, the 27-year-old actress demonstrated her icy glare and finger wag, which she uses when fans approach her in public. She revealed too, that she has no qualms about declining to pose for selfies with her fans. Jennifer said: "That's like my only defence. One of my best friends is Amy Schumer. I take my dog to the park all the time, Central Park. As soon as I meet her in the park, we're f***ed." Meanwhile, Jennifer previously claimed that people pay too much attention to her and what she's doing with her life. The 'Mother!' star believes she is understood by the public, but she thinks they ought to find other things to interest themselves with, rather than focusing on her career and personal life. She said in 2016: "I don't feel like I'm misunderstood. I feel like I'm over-paid-attention-to. 'I'm not trying to be a GIF. I'm not trying to be a picked-up-on-Twitter quote. All I'm trying to do is act. And I have to promote these movies. And I am, at the end of the day, I guess, a f***ing lunatic. So if you record what I'm saying, it's gonna be goofy." "What do I do? What do I do? I'm just a girl, sitting in front of the world and asking them to forgive her for speaking."



Pamela Anderson has sent Kim a faux fur coat

The former 'Baywatch' star - who is an animal activist and vegan - is determined to persuade the 36-year-old reality TV beauty to ditch animal skins once and for all next year and, in a bid to kick-start her cruelty-free way of life, has given her a coral eco-fur jacket that she custom-designed especially for her with Russian manufacturer Only Me. She accompanied the gift with a letter in which she wished Kim and her family a happy festive season before she advised her that her fans would "admire" her more if she dropped fur from her wardrobe. The letter said: "Happy holidays from France! 'In the spirit of the season, please accept this coral hip-length faux-mink coat, made especially for you by my partners at Only Me Eco Fur in Russia. As we all ponder New Year's resolutions, won't you consider making a meaningful one to stop wearing fur? You'd be setting a trendy, compassionate example..."

"...Also this fall, Gucci announced that it would stop using real fur because it's "out-dated"—joining Giorgio Armani, Ralph Lauren, BCBG Max Azria, Calvin Klein, and other stylish brands that have shed fur. "Kim, I know your young fans would admire you and your brand even more if you dropped fur. I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday!" This isn't the first time the 50-year-old actress has penned the 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star a letter as she wrote to her in September urging her to omit animal skin, including leather, fur, feathers and suede, from her wardrobe and to show more compassion to the creatures being slaughtered for fashion - but she ignored her. Pamela has worked closely with the animal rights organisation PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) for many years and, during that time, has agreed to strip off and flash the flesh for some eye-catching campaigns.



Wilson doesn't consider herself to be beautiful



The 37-year-old actress has admitted she thinks her 'Pitch Perfect 3' co-stars, who include the likes of Brittany Snow, Ruby Rose, Hailee Steinfeld and Anna Kendrick, are "gorgeous" - but she doesn't put herself in the same category. The Australian star said: "Everyone is so different looking and I think that's great but I think all the girls, I'll take myself out, they're so beautiful and they're all so gorgeous." But Rebel revealed she loves working with the glamorous girls, because she also finds them to be immensely fun and kind people. She told Yahoo Be: "They all have a light that shines through and I think that's why we have so much fun working together, because they're beautiful inside and out." Meanwhile, Rebel has previously claimed that being curvier than the typical Hollywood star has actually helped her career. To prove her point, Rebel recalled a story about writing her first play, when she cast a heavier actress alongside her who was eliciting more laughter from the audience than she was. She shared: "I was like: 'Oh, that girl's getting a lot of laughs, a lot easier than me. What is it?' Because I don't think there's much difference in talent. 'And I remember distinctly thinking: 'I think it's because she's fatter.' And then, I don't know if it was mega-conscious, but I thought: 'How can I get more laughs? Maybe if I was a bit fatter ...' And then suddenly I was fatter, and doing comedy." Rebel also admitted to being in two minds about whether to lose weight. She previously said: "Oh yeah! I'll take six months off, and just do a total transformation. But then, so many people go: 'Don't you do it!' But I think: 'Why not?'"

Lifestyle | Gossip

Meghan Markle to get a UK citizenship



The 36-year-old actress announced she was taking her romance with her 33-year-old beau to the next step earlier this week, and as the couple's wedding ceremony at Windsor Castle next year is fast approaching, Meghan intends to secure a dual nationality as a UK and US citizen. However, a spokesperson for the former 'Suits' star thinks it is "too early to say" whether Meghan will be granted the dual nationality. And even if Meghan is granted both, the process to become a UK citizen is believed to be a painstakingly long process, which is believed to take a number of years to confirm, CNN has reported. But that is not the only new title Meghan is set to land herself, as she is rumoured to be given named the Duchess of Sussex once her and her fiancé are married. And to stick with tradition in the UK, Harry is also expected to be handed a new moniker on his wedding day, with the Duke of Sussex regarded as the most likely choice, although the alternatives include the likes of Clarence, Connaught, Windsor, Albany, and Cumberland. However, many of those names have an inauspicious history, meaning Sussex is now rumoured to be the favoured option for the grandson of Queen Elizabeth II. Speaking previously about Meghan and Harry's potential future titles, Charles Kidd - who is the editor of Debrett's Peerage & Baronetage - said: "They're quite limited in the titles that are available. The Duke of Sussex is the front-runner without any doubt." But in the unlikely event that Harry opts to decline the offer of a title, Meghan would be known as HRH Princess Henry of Wales - a moniker derived by Harry's actual name.

Rihanna only sleeps for 'three or four hours a night'



The 29-year-old singer has admitted she finds it tough to switch off from the demands of her day-to-day life at night and, as a result, she gets markedly less sleep each evening than the average person. She shared: "I have a lot of trouble switching off. Even when I get home early, which means before 1am, I start binge-watching shows or documentaries, which I love. "I can't go straight to bed. As a matter of fact, I only sleep three or four hours a night." The 'Diamonds' singer regards the likes of Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey and Tina Turner to be among the biggest inspirations in her own life. But perhaps surprisingly, Rihanna has also taken inspiration from the late Princess Diana - and in particular, the so-called revenge dress she wore to the Serpentine Gallery's summer party in 1994, shortly after it emerged Prince Charles had been unfaithful to her. The fashion-conscious star told French Vogue magazine: "Every time a man cheats on you or treats you badly, you need a revenge dress. Every woman knows that. "But whether her choice of this knockdown dress was conscious or not, I am touched by the idea that even Princess Diana could suffer like any ordinary woman. This Diana Bad B***h moment blew me away."

Gadot gets 'emotional and excited' by young fans

The 32-year-old actress - who has daughters Alma, five, and Maya, eight months, with her husband Yaron Versano - is proud of how much her movie 'Wonder Woman' has touched a broad spectrum of people but she also finds it "overwhelming" to think about how big the film became. She said of the fandom: "I get really emotional and excited when it's little kids. To them, I'm not Gal. To them, I'm Diana. I'm Wonder Woman. "It's funny how this movie was so broad, touched different people, different ages, different cultures. "I got photos from people that I work with or friends that their grandparents went to see it with their wheelchair and everything. It's been really overwhelming." But Gal - who plays the titular character and her alter ego, Diana Prince, in the DC comics franchise - admitted the success and scale of the movie hasn't truly sunk in for her yet as it's too soon. Speaking to Kumail Nanjiani for Variety's Actors on Actors series, she said: "Right now, in the eye of the storm, I enjoy it and I appreciate the amazing feedback. "But I think that it's going to take me time to really digest and realise what's happening." And Gal hopes the success of 'Wonder Woman' will lead to more female-driven movies being commissioned. She said: "Having two girls, I can only hope that this is not just a trend. Now, because we did well at the box office, I hope that there's going to be more female-led stories that everyone can enjoy because at the end of the day, I enjoyed so many male-led stories. We're talking about representation, so on Earth there's 50-50 men and women, and it should be the same on film, on TV, on everywhere."



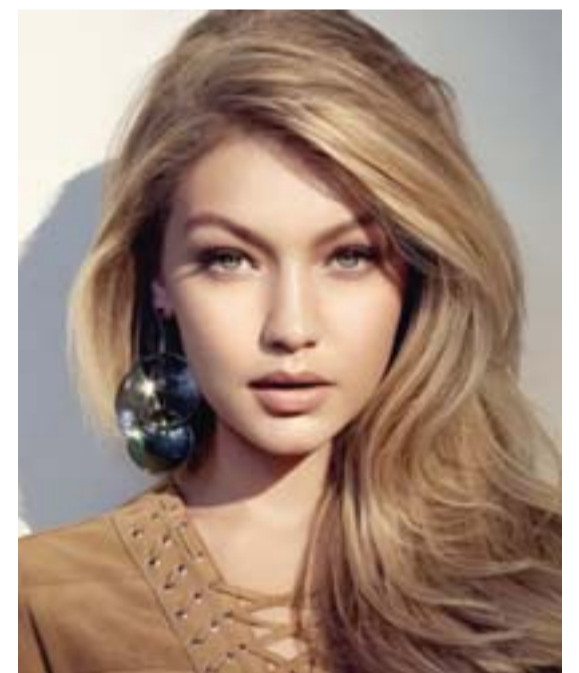
Kidman's parents were 'thrown' by her desire to act



The 50-year-old actress - who received the Film Tribute honour at this year's Gotham Awards, which took place at New York's Cipriani Wall Street on November 27 - has admitted her career choice surprised her mother, Janelle, and late father Antony because their jobs were completely different. Speaking to E! News, the 'Australia' star said: "I came from a father who was a psychologist and a biochemist and a mother who was a nurse educator, so they were like, 'Actor? What are you talking about?' They were thrown by that." And though her family questioned her dream occupation, they "never devalued" her decision and supported her. She continued: "But at the same time they never devalued it. They let me follow my path, which was very self-motivating." And Nicole has insisted she will give her daughters Faith, six, and Sunday, nine - who she has with her husband Keith Urban - as well as 22-year-old Connor and Isabella Cruise, 24, - who she has from her previous relationship with Tom Cruise - and the same encouragement with their future and allow them to "be what they want". She said: "I want to see them be what they want, what they're passionate about". Meanwhile, Nicole believes there is a "big change" happening in the entertainment industry, following the sexual harassment and assault accusations made against film moguls including Harvey Weinstein, and she thinks it is "crazy" how unbalanced the business is. She explained: "There's big change happening right now and we can feel it. Hopefully the people that are following us will be the recipients of that change. But it's still only in the beginning process of it happening. In terms of our industry and women, statistically it's still crazy how it's not balanced at all. "As much as we say it's for our daughters, everyone prospers when there's equality. We take care of each other."

Gigi Hadid is 'so proud' of sister Bella

The 22-year-old model missed out on gracing the runway in the lingerie giant's annual fashion show, which took place in Shanghai, China, last week, but that didn't stop the blonde-haired beauty from supporting her 21-year-old sibling and "all [her] angelic friends" when the catwalk show recently aired on CBS. Gigi posted an image of Bella strutting along the platform in a black lace bra and matching angel wings on her Instagram Story, which lasts on the photo-sharing site for 24 hours. The captions emblazoned across the image, read: "Excited to watch my gorg lil sis (so proud @bellahadid) and all my angelic friends tonight #vsfs "HUGE LOVE to all the girls and the whole VS team!! (sic)." Gigi - who is currently dating 'Pillowtalk' hitmaker Zayn Malik - continued to praise the entire team behind the fashion extravaganza for their "hard work" over the last 12 months, which she believes needs to be celebrated. She continued: "A year of prep and hard work deserves celebration!!!!!! "Even though u never stop and you'll already be planning '18 tomorrow morning if not already @ed_razek (sic)." Gigi was forced to pull out of appearing in the brand's fashion show just days before with no explanation. At the time she tweeted: "I'm so bummed I won't be able to make it to China this year. Love my VS family, and will be with all my girls in spirit!! Can't wait to tune in with everyone to see the beautiful show I know it will be, and already can't wait for next year! :) x (sic)" However, it has since been reported the star was unable to take part in the show because she had been refused a visa, after she posted a video that was deemed offensive on Instagram.



Weeknd deletes all of his Instagram posts of Selena Gomez

The 27-year-old singer recently split from Selena after 10 months of dating, and he has now decided to remove any trace of his ex-girlfriend from his page on the photo-sharing website. The Canadian star previously had a number of sweet snaps of Selena on his page, including one dating back to April this year in which she is seen clutching his face and giving him a kiss on the cheek. By contrast, Selena - who recently rekindled her romance with Justin Bieber - still has a series of pictures featuring her ex on her own Instagram page. Among the pictures still appearing on Selena's Instagram is one of her first red carpet appearance alongside The Weeknd at the Met Gala in May. The Weeknd's decision to remove Selena from his Instagram account came shortly after it was reported that her family are "still getting comfortable" with the idea of her reuniting with Justin. Selena and the 'Sorry' musician recently decided to give their relationship another try, having ended their five-year on/off romance in 2015. But while the high-profile duo seem happier than ever together, Selena's family are said to be less than thrilled with the idea. Speaking after the Thanksgiving holiday, an insider explained: "They both spent Thanksgiving with their families. Justin went to Canada and Selena was in Texas. They are still doing really well together, but they agreed it was best for them to be with their families for the holiday. "Selena felt it was too soon for Justin to come to Texas with her. Her family is still getting comfortable with the idea of them back together."



Hilton credits reality TV for 'shaping' her



The 36-year-old businesswoman and DJ waved goodbye to her reality show 'The Simple Life' - which she starred on alongside Nicole Richie from 2003 to 2007 - a decade ago, and whilst she "doesn't even feel like the same person" that once graced television screens, she does admit the experience on the show has helped make her the business mogul she is today. She said: "I look back and I don't even feel like I'm the same person anymore. I've really grown and just became an adult, learning and having a lot of life lessons. It really shaped me into the person I am today, where my priorities are not about having fun and going to parties. It's more about giving back, using my voice for those in need of it, and also my business, my family, my relationship, my boyfriend, my pets and my friends. That's all that matters to me." Despite speaking fondly of her days as a reality star, Paris doesn't think she'll ever return to the platform, as her "priorities" are so different now. Speaking to the December issue of Ocean Drive magazine, she said: "'The Simple Life' was just so iconic and one of a kind that you can't replicate that. I can't see it going better than that show. My priorities are different. I'm running a huge business and I'm traveling. I don't really have time to do a bunch of fake drama on a reality show." And although she might have closed the door on her reality tv career for good, that doesn't mean she doesn't enjoy to reminisce, as she and her boyfriend Chris Zylka love to binge old episodes of 'The Simple Life'.

Jay-Z leads Grammy nods as hip-hop dominates

Jay-Z led the Grammy race Tuesday with eight nominations, followed closely by fellow rapper Kendrick Lamar with seven, in a striking embrace of hip-hop for the music industry's top prizes. Jay-Z, who has won an impressive 21 Grammys over his career but has never before been nominated in a major category as a solo artist, is up for Album of the Year for his "4:44" as well as for Record and Song of the Year.

"4:44" marked a return to music by the 47-year-old multimillionaire after years focused on business ventures. The album put on display an unusually vulnerable Jay-Z, who acknowledged his infidelity to wife Beyonce, revealed his mother's closet struggles as a lesbian and tackled the state of US race relations. Lamar's seven nominations came for "DAMN.," an album which switched back to a more traditional hip-hop style after the 30-year-old Los Angeles native's experiments with jazz, electronica and spoken word.

Bruno Mars, the fun-loving funk revivalist, also fared well with six nods including Album of the Year for his "24K Magic." "Despacito," the viral hit that tied for the most weeks ever on top of the US singles chart despite being in Spanish, was nominated both for Record of the Year, which recognizes the overall performance, and Song of the Year, which honors the songwriter. If it triumphs, "Despacito" would again make history as the first song in a language other than English to win in either category since Italian songwriter Domenico Modugno's "Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu" - popularly known as "Volare" after its chorus - at the very first Grammys in 1959. The Recording Academy, which consists of more than 13,000 music professionals, will vote to decide the winners who will be unveiled at the annual Grammy gala on January 28. The ceremony will take place in New York, Jay-Z's hometown, to mark the awards' 60th edi-

tion after 14 years in Los Angeles. The awards mark the first time that the majority of nominations for Album of the Year, the most prestigious prize, hail from the world of hip-hop. The breakthrough comes after years of criticism about how little the entertainment industry recognizes African American artists. In the past, only two rap-dominated albums have won Album of the Year.

In 2016, Lamar's "To Pimp a Butterfly" - a widely acclaimed album that featured an unofficial anthem of the Black Lives Matter movement - controversially lost to Taylor Swift's "1989." And at the last Grammys in February, Adele expressed embarrassment over winning Album of the Year for "25" over Beyonce's experimental and narrative-rich "Lemonade."

This time, Swift was only nominated in two side categories, although her chart-topping new "Reputation" came out too late for consideration for Album of the Year. Ed Sheeran, who has enjoyed nominations annually since 2013, was also shut out in

the major categories despite the strong commercial performance of his latest album "Divide."

And Katy Perry, the world's most followed person on Twitter, was completely absent as her latest album "Witness" struggled to match the impact of her earlier hits. Among other rappers, Childish Gambino - the stage-name of comedian Donald Glover who infuses funk and psychedelic R&B into his hip-hop - is up for Album of the Year and Record of the Year. Lorde is the only woman in contention for Album of the Year with "Melodrama," the 21-year-old New Zealander's sophomore work, a dance-pop exploration of the challenges of adulthood. The contenders for Best New Artist include the quickly emerging young singers Alessia Cara and Khalid, who are also nominated for Song of the Year for the anti-suicide



Breakthrough comes after years of criticism



This file photo taken on April 16, 2017 shows US hip hop singer Kendrick Lamar performing at the Coachella Valley Music And Arts Festival in India.

track "1-800-273-8255" - the title refers to a US telephone helpline.

Also up for Best New Artist are the fast-charging rapper Lil Uzi Vert, prolific songwriter turned breakout pop star Julia Michaels and the innovative R&B singer SZA. In classical music, Dmitri Hvorostovsky - the Russian baritone and sex symbol of the operatic world - received a nomination a week after his death at age 55 from a brain tumor. — AFP



Lorde



This file photo taken on September 15, 2017 shows Jay-Z performing during Day 1 of The Meadows Music & Arts Festival at Citi Field in New York. — AFP photos



Bruno Mars performing during the 59th Annual Grammy music awards in Los Angeles. — AFP

Actress says Weinstein's assistant turned blind eye to assault

A British aspiring actress who has sued Harvey Weinstein over an alleged sexual assault in France suggested Tuesday the disgraced producer's assistant turned a blind eye to his misconduct. Speaking at a press conference in New York, Kadian Noble said that in May 2016, she confided to one of the Hollywood mogul's assistants that he had sexually assaulted her two years earlier at a hotel during the Cannes film festival.

"She said to me I should write a letter to him. She kept reassuring me that he's a good man and he's been so good to her, that I should put in the letter everything I feel and that she would ensure that letter gets to him," Noble said. The 31-year-old added it was then that she realized Weinstein had "so much wall built up around him" that she "had no chance." It was the first time an accuser has cast blame on a member of Weinstein's entourage, although others have mentioned being left alone in hotel rooms with him.

More than 100 women have come forward since October to accuse Weinstein of bullying and degrading behavior over the past 40 years, from intimidation to rape. When contacted by AFP about

Noble's accusations, Weinstein's former assistant - who no longer works for the Weinstein Company, according to its website - did not respond.

Noble filed the civil lawsuit in New York on Monday under a sex trafficking law which relates to acts committed by US citizens overseas. Weinstein is accused of groping Noble, pulling her into his hotel bathroom and forcing her to perform a sex act on him, telling her that "everything will be taken care of for you if you relax." Noble is seeking unspecified damages, accusing Weinstein of being able "to force or coerce" her into sexual activity in his hotel room by promising to find her a film role and to use his influence on her behalf. Her lawyer Jeff Herman said he will inform French authorities of the incident in Cannes, but said: "We're not pursuing any criminal case." A statement issued on behalf of Weinstein repeated his denial of allegations against him.

Scourge

The 65-year-old filmmaker has already been expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which runs the Oscars, and has resigned from the Producers Guild of America. He

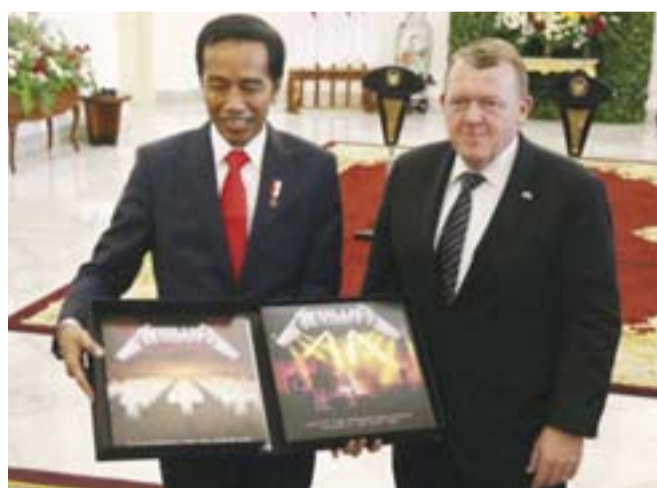


British actress Kadian Noble, who has filed a lawsuit against Harvey Weinstein, Bob Weinstein and The Weinstein Company LLC (TWC) accusing the movie producer of committing sex acts upon her in a hotel room in France, speaks at a news conference in New York. — AFP

also parted ways with The Weinstein Company, the production house he and his brother Bob co-founded, and was suspended by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts.

Noble is also suing The Weinstein Company and Bob, alleging they were aware of Weinstein's behaviour and of contributing to his foreign travel to recruit women into "forced or coerced sexual encounters". Two women-led investor groups are interested in taking over The Weinstein Company - which is on the verge of bankruptcy - with a figure in the region of \$275 million reportedly on the table.

The DGA had condemned the "scourge" of sexual harassment when it announced disciplinary action against Weinstein in October, calling for a zero-tolerance approach to abuses of power. "This isn't about one person. We must recognise sexual harassment is endemic in our society, and painfully, in our industry. We believe that every individual has the right to a safe workplace," the guild said. "For far too long, many have not spoken out - directors, agents, crew, executives, performers, producers, writers. This shameful code of complicity must be broken." Police in New York, Los Angeles, Beverly Hills and London have confirmed that they are investigating allegations of sexual assault made against Weinstein. — AFP



Indonesian President Joko Widodo (L) displays a box set of Metallica's 'Master of Puppets', a gift from Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen during a welcoming ceremony at the presidential palace in Bogor, West Java province. — AFP

Metalhead Indonesian prez gets thrash-worthy gift from Danish PM

Indonesia's metalhead president received a thrash-worthy present from his Danish counterpart Wednesday. Joko Widodo, better known as Jokowi, was presented with the recently launched, remastered box set of US heavy metal band Metallica's 1986 album "Master of Puppets". The 56-year-old Jokowi is a well-known Metallica fan - several years ago he received a signed guitar from the band's bassist Robert Trujillo.

A spokesman said Indonesia's leader was "pleasantly surprised" by the unusual diplomatic gift from Danish counterpart Lars Løkke Rasmussen, who was in Jakarta on an official visit. The box set was signed by Metallica drummer and Danish native

Lars Ulrich. "Indonesia's president @jokowi seemed eager to dig into his diplomatic gift from Denmark: A #MasterOfPuppets box signed by #heavymetal fans' all-time favorite (sic) drummer @larsulrich," Rasmussen wrote on Twitter.

But Jokowi may not be able to keep it, as politicians have to report gifts to graft-riddled Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). The instrument Jokowi got from Trujillo is now displayed in a KPK gallery and considered a state asset. "The KPK will decide whether the president should return the gift or if he can keep it," his spokesman said Wednesday. And what did Rasmussen get in return? A traditional Indonesian dagger called a rencong. — AFP

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, EXTENDS SMASH-HIT BROADWAY RUN

Bruce Springsteen on Tuesday announced four more months of intimate concerts on Broadway after his initial run triggered massive interest — and wide disappointment among fans who couldn't get tickets.

The rock legend, who for decades has sold out arenas with his adrenaline-fueled marathon performances, said he would extend his residency at the 960-seat Walter Kerr Theatre from February 28 to June 30. Springsteen opened the shows on October 3 and already extended once, until February 3, with tickets selling out nearly instantly.

The 68-year-old balladeer of working-class America set prices at \$75 to \$800 — but tickets immediately reappeared on resale sites at much higher prices. As of Tuesday, the cheapest ticket on resale site

StubHub was \$1,449 — significantly higher than Broadway's most coveted theater seats including those for "Hamilton" and Bette Midler's revival of "Hello, Dolly!" Springsteen has tried to reduce scalping through a new verification system by Ticketmaster, which asks fans to sign up and uses algorithms to determine the likelihood that they will attend before providing a code to allow purchases.

In light of the number of fans who were unable to buy tickets initially, the ticketing company said it would not start a new verification round, instead sending codes to fans who already signed up. Springsteen has said he was inspired to create a more intimate concert experience after he played a somber private show at the White House as a gift from departing President Barack Obama to staff. — AFP



This file photo taken on September 30, 2017 shows Bruce Springsteen performing during the closing ceremony of the Invictus Games 2017 at Air Canada Centre in Toronto. — AFP

FLAMENCO FUSIONISTS BREAK INTO GRAMMY WORLD CATEGORY



This file photo taken on April 14, 2009 shows Spanish singer Concha Buika performing with Cuban musician Chucho Valdes at Amadeo Roldan Theater in Havana. — AFP

Two Spanish-born musicians with modern takes on flamenco were separately nominated Tuesday for the Grammy for Best World Music Album, breaking into a category long dominated by a small pool. Vicente Amigo and Concha Buika, who have both been on the scene for two decades, are among five contenders for the prize to be unveiled on January 28 in New York as part of the music industry's annual gala.

Amigo was nominated for "Memoria de los Sentidos" ("Memory of the Senses"), a return to traditional flamenco by the Seville guitarist who has collaborated with Sting and Algerian rai star Khaled. "Memoria de los Sentidos" earlier in November won the Latin Grammy for Best Flamenco Album at the Spanish- and Portuguese-language music awards in Las Vegas. Buika, also a past Latin Grammy winner, incorporates flamenco but brings in a range of influences including African rhythms and jazz. Born in Mallorca to parents from Equatorial Guinea, Buika - who often goes only by one name - was nominated for "Para Mi" ("For Me"), a succinct album of five emotionally rich songs.

Also enjoying a nomination for the first time was Anat Cohen, a New York-based Israeli clarinetist who set out to explore choro, the early Brazilian popular music that emerged in the 19th century at the same time as jazz was forming in New Orleans. She was nominated for "Rosa Dos Ventos" ("Wind Rose"), a collaboration with an ensemble calling itself the Trio Brasileiro. Cohen was separately nominated for Best Latin Jazz Album for work with another Brazilian musician, seven-string guitarist Marcello Gonçalves.

Among the artists who have become favorite nominees for Best World Music Album is Tinariwen, the ensemble of Tuareg musicians from northern Mali who have frequently teamed up with Western rock artists and in recent years recorded outside their conflict-hit homeland. Tinariwen, which won Best World Music Album in 2012, was nominated this time for "Elwan" ("Elephants"), which blends heavy guitars and Saharan rhythms with appearances by indie artist Kurt Vile and alternative rockers Mark Lanegan and Alain Johannes, who have both played with Queens of the Stone Age.

The South African all-male choral group Ladysmith Black Mambazo, which has won four Grammys, was nominated for "Shaka Zulu Revisited: 30th Anniversary Celebration." The album revisits its successful "Shaka Zulu" album released in 1987, just after the group rose to international prominence by appearing on folk-rock legend Paul Simon's "Graceland." — AFP

Dickens Museum captures Christmas spirit with new exhibition



This file photo taken on February 06, 2012 shows a man exiting the Charles Dickens Museum based in a house where the British novelist lived in central London.



This file photo taken on February 06, 2012 shows visitors looking around the dining room of the Charles Dickens Museum.



A collection of early editions of novels written by British author Charles Dickens at the Charles Dickens Museum. — AFP photos

The Dickens Museum in London got into the festive spirit yesterday, unveiling its "A Christmas Carol" exhibition centered on the novelist's famous tale of Scrooge and the ghosts of Christmas. The book helped "crystallize" the way Britons celebrate Christmas and carried a strong social message after a scathing report on child labor that deeply shocked Charles Dickens, curators said.

The exhibition is housed in a Victorian building where the author and his family lived between 1837 and 1840 — and where he penned several classics including "Oliver Twist" and "The Pickwick Papers". The museum holds over 100,000 Dickens-related items include furniture, personal effects, paintings, prints, photographs, letters and manuscripts. "A Christmas Carol" was written in six weeks in 1843 and is considered a charming tale with a heart-warming ending. But it is also a story

about child labour, at a time when poverty-induced misery had reached record levels—and had pushed Dickens to put pen to paper, according to the museum's director, Cindy Sughrue.

'Highlight the cause'

"It really shocked him and he pledged he was going to do something to highlight the cause and the sentiment that children deserved more than this," she said. Dickens, who himself was forced to stop attending school and work as a child while his father was imprisoned for debts, consistently took up in his books the cause of the weakest. "Every work he wrote there was a little bit of his own story and his own experience," Sughrue said, labeling him a "social reform campaigner".

"A Christmas Carol" recounts the redemption of Ebenezer Scrooge, a mean-spirited,



A copy of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," belonging to former US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, is seen during a preview of holiday decorations in the Library of the White House in Washington, DC.

miserly old man who tries to make the lives of his employees and family miserable. However, he is visited on Christmas Eve by the spirit of his dead partner, Jacob Marley, as well as the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future, which all helps him see the error of his ways. Cherishing the spirit of sharing and simple pleasures like a fire-side family meal, the story was an immediate success.

Frankie Kubicki, the exhibition's curator, said although Dickens did not "invent" how the British celebrate Christmas, he helped "crystallise it". "He hits the zeitgeist and the feeling within the 1830s and 40s of a nostalgia for Christmas, of this idea of wanting to celebrate it within a new urban context," he added. The exhibition, which runs until February 25, also includes costumes of the forthcoming movie "The Man who invented Christmas", which will hit British cinema screens later this week. — AFP

Royal fan urges Harry, Meghan to have India honeymoon, many kids

Mumbai cafe owner Boman Kohinoor, arguably India's biggest fan of the British royal family, wants Prince Harry and Meghan Markle to honeymoon in India and have lots of children. The 95-year-old, who met Harry's older brother William and wife Catherine when the royal couple visited India's commercial capital last year, said he was delighted to hear news of the engagement.

"I wish them a very long and happy married life. And may all their troubles be little ones," the sprightly nonagenarian told AFP at Mumbai's famous Britannia & Company restaurant where his love of British royalty is plain to see. On one wall hangs a large framed photograph of Queen Elizabeth II, next to a portrait of Indian independence hero Mahatma Gandhi.

Attached to a banister on the second floor of the cafe, which dishes up lip-smacking Parsi and Irani cuisine, is a giant cardboard cut-out of a grinning William and Kate, their arms linked. Kohinoor spent around 10 minutes with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at



Indian restaurateur Boman Kohinoor, 93, an ardent fan of the British royal family, stands inside the Britannia & Co. restaurant in Mumbai on April 8, 2016, ahead of the royal visit of Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate.

Mumbai's Taj Mahal Palace hotel in April 2016 after they became aware of a social media campaign encouraging them to meet him.

Kohinoor, clutching a photo of the three of

them from that meeting, said he now hoped to meet Harry, 33, and American actress Markle, 36, after they get married at Windsor Castle next spring. "I hope they will visit me or I will invite them to visit me. My invitation is open for all of the royal family," he explained, adding that he would serve them Britannia's famous berry pulao, a popular Parsi dish.

'Cheaper by the dozen'

Mumbai's Parsi settlers were Zoroastrians from Persia. In Britannia, which was opened by Kohinoor's father in 1923, the Union Jack hangs alongside the Indian tricolour and the flag of Iran. Kohinoor, who has written regular letters to Queen Elizabeth over the years and would like the return of British colonial rule in India, encouraged Harry and Meghan to spend their honeymoon there. "There are many places they can visit. We have got one of the wonders of the world, the Taj Mahal," he said, adding he was "very excited" about the prospect of watching the wedding on television.



Indian restaurateur Boman Kohinoor with Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate. — AFP photos

Kohinoor, who makes no attempt to hide his dislike of Harry's father and heir to the throne Prince Charles, said he was not overly familiar with Markle's work but was aware she is American and divorced.

He said he was convinced she would "make a good wife". "Mrs Simpson was American and she was also a divorcee but it doesn't matter.

What matters is that they should be happy together," he said, referring to Wallis Simpson who married King Edward VIII after he abdicated in 1936. Kohinoor, who has a granddaughter named after Harry's mother Princess Diana, advised the prince and Markle to have several children. "It will be cheaper by the dozen!" he laughed. — AFP



A poster speaking on repealing New York's dance prohibition is seen hanging outside a bar in New York City. — AFP

Mayor signs repeal of New York dancing ban

New York's mayor on Monday signed into law the repeal of a 91-year-old piece of legislation that had technically banned dancing in thousands of bars, clubs and restaurants in the city. The city council voted overwhelmingly on October 31 to axe the law, which had come into effect in 1926 during Prohibition and which campaigners decried as racist, saying it was used initially to crack down on Harlem's jazz clubs, where blacks and whites mixed.

Campaigners say it was also used historically to target Hispanics and members of the LGBT community. In the 1990s, mayor Rudy Giuliani used the law to get tough on clubs in his fight against crime. "It's 2017 and this law just didn't make sense. Nightlife is part of the New York melting pot that brings people together," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "We want to be a city where people can work hard, and enjoy their city's nightlife without arcane bans on

dancing." Although the law was rarely enforced in recent years, it required public spaces that sell food and drink to acquire near impossible-to-obtain permits to authorize dancing indoors or risk a fine. Yet only around 100 of New York's more than 22,000 bars, restaurants and clubs had the elusive permit. Brooklyn Democratic councilman Rafael Espinal led the charge to repeal the law, saying it unfairly discriminated against small businesses.

"Artist, musicians, business owners, workers and everyday New Yorkers looking to let loose will no longer have to fear the dance police will shut down their favorite venues," he said Monday. A search is also now on for a "nightlife mayor" who can liaise between city hall, residents and the city's multi-billion-dollar nightlife industry, in order to support a safe nightlife scene that supports 300,000 jobs and attracts tourists far and wide. — AFP

Japan, China dominate list of world's top restaurants

Japan and China have more of the world's best restaurants than anywhere else, according to the La Liste ranking, which will be published next week. Although the French-based list will declare Guy Savoy's flagship Paris riverside restaurant the best in the world for the second year running—and French cooking dominates the top 100 — the big trend is the climb of Chinese haute cuisine.

"The rise and rise of China is the big story," said Jorg Zipprick, who crunched the numbers for the "guide of guides", which was set up as a "more scientific and reliable" rival three years ago to the British-based 50 Best Restaurants. Japan still tops the country table with 138 restaurants in the top 1,000 of the French classification—which aggregates reviews from guides, newspapers and websites including TripAdvisor—but China is closing the gap fast with 123. "Up to now China has been one of the most difficult countries to get data from," Zipprick told AFP, but a boom in local gastronomic guides has changed all that. "Asia has a lot more restaurants than Europe and it is only logical that La Liste will reflect that," he added.

Mao's favourite dish

Tokyo institution Kyubey, whose sushi is renowned for being both "extraordinary and reasonably priced", took third spot after Le Bernardin, a New York fish restaurant run by Emmy award-winning US television chef Eric Ripert. Two other restaurants in the Japanese capital made the top 20, the minuscule Kyo Aji and French chef Joel Robuchon's plush dining room in a reconstructed French chateau.

They were followed by the highest-placed Chinese restaurant, the Huai Yang Fu at Andingmen in Beijing—whose specialty is a roast pork dish adored by Chairman Mao. While there is no dramatic change at the summit of the list, there were three newcomers to the top 10, including The French Laundry, a former saloon in California's Napa Valley which "Kitchen Confidential" author Anthony Bourdain has called "the



best restaurant in the world, period". It shared an almost perfect mark of 99 out of 100 with La Vague d'Or in the French Riviera resort of Saint Tropez and Martin Berasategui's restaurant in the village of Lasarte in Spain's Basque country.

Plankton sorbet

Another of the big climbers was Aponte at the other end of Spain, where diners cleanse their palates with a plankton sorbet. The Andalusian fish specialist in El Puerto de Santa Maria jumped 200 places on the back of getting a third Michelin star. For the first time a Canadian restaurant, Alo in Toronto, has entered the top 100, while the Turkish female chef Aylin Yazicioglu makes the grade for her highly-rated Istanbul restaurant, Nicole.

New York's Eleven Madison Park, which was first in the 50 Best Restaurants ranking in 2017, made the top five of La Liste. But the two lists differ widely beyond that—although they roughly agree that El Celler de Can Roca in Girona, Spain; Osteria Francescana in

Modena, Italy, as well as Alain Ducasse and Le Bernardin represent more or less the summit of the culinary arts. La Liste's aggregator of the 1,000 top-rated restaurants in the world is modeled on the world tennis rankings and the Shanghai Ranking for universities.

While Japan, China, France and the United States top the league for having the highest number of best restaurants, Switzerland with 38 for a population of eight million, has the highest per capita rating. Zipprick said its database—which is available as a smartphone app—now includes 16,000 eateries across the world which it classifies from haute cuisine to lower-priced "Food Gems". Superstar chef Gordon Ramsay's flagship London restaurant remained the highest-rated British table, pipping L'Enclume, which operates in a former blacksmith's forge in Cumbria, northwest England. This year's winners will be formally announced at a banquet in Paris on Monday, with 40 of the world's leading chefs also invited to meet French President Emmanuel Macron at his Elysee Palace residence. — AFP

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2017



Artists of the Canadian entertainment company "Cirque du Soleil" perform as part of the "Soda Stereo Sep7imo Dia" program during the premier in Mexico City. — AFP

'Niqab Squad' takes aim at face veil prejudice

Riding a horse or nailing an archery target is tough at the best of times—it's even harder when you're wearing a niqab. But that isn't about to stop a group of Indonesian women who have banded together to combat prejudice against the face-covering veil, which has been at the centre of a heated global debate over religious freedom and women's rights.

The "Niqab Squad" meets to recite the Koran or, at one recent gathering, mounted horses and tried their gloved hands at archery, activities endorsed by the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Janariah, a 19-year-old group member, had never ridden a horse before but she gave it a whirl in her flowing black veil, as other niqab-wearing novices fired off arrows with suction-cup tips. "It's not really difficult," insisted Janariah, who like many Indonesians goes by name, as she giggled and tried to keep her animal on track in the blazing Jakarta sun. "Even running is okay. If you're used to it, it's comfortable. The most important thing is that you don't see it (niqab) as a burden and you've got to be patient."

'Weird looks'

Although the body covering garment with narrow slits to see through is common in ultra-conservative Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf states, they're rare in Indonesia, where around 90 percent of its 255 million people have traditionally followed a moderate form of Islam. Recently, a private Islamic high school on the main island Java was reprimanded by local officials after pictures went viral online that showed a classroom of female students wearing niqab. The veils violated a national regulation on acceptable school uniforms.

Seeking out other women facing discrimination online, Indadari Mindrayanti founded the squad this year after switching from hijab—a headscarf that leaves the face visible—to the more restrictive niqab in 2016. The twice-divorced

Mindrayanti - who was once married to an Indonesian soap opera celebrity - saw it was a way to be more pious but the decision hasn't gone over well with her family or people on the street who often give her "weird looks".

She saw it was a way to be more pious but the decision hasn't gone over well with her family or people on the street who often give her "weird looks". "It's hard to expect people to talk to you. They look kind of afraid," the 34-year-old

told AFP at a mosque in Indonesia's sprawling capital. "Walking on the street sometimes I get comments like 'Wow, there's a ninja' or 'uh, very scary,' uncomfortable comments like that." Some of the group's fast-growing membership of 3,000 women in Indonesia, as well as Malaysia, Taiwan and South Africa, say they've been labeled as extremists and are regularly asked questions such as "why are you dressed like a terrorist?"

Ideological battle

Mindrayanti felt the stares when she went to France seeking treatment for a skin condition this year. France was the first European country to ban the full-face veil in public spaces and a bitter ideological battle is raging across Europe and in North America over whether the niqab, and more restrictive burqa, are key to religious freedom or an affront to women's rights.

Last month, Canada's Quebec province prohibited government workers and anyone receiving public services from covering their face, which critics said unfairly targets Muslim women who wear a niqab. "Our goal is that we want to unite differences, even within Islam itself," said Mario, who was involved in organizing the squad's horse riding and archery event. "There are different views even in Islam...and the prophet wants us all to unite."

Still, some critics see the niqab as symbolic of a growing religious conservatism that is being exported to Indonesia via Saudi Arabia and other stricter Islamic countries. Worries about Indonesia's religious tolerance soared when Jakarta's Christian governor was jailed for two years in May on blasphemy charges. "We have to respect women who wear niqab but they cannot claim it's the best practice of the religion because it is a product of the Arabs," said Zuhairi Misrawi, head of the Muslim Moderate Society.

Niqab Squad's founder, however, says she will keep trying to win over skeptics by speaking to them in a gentle, friendly voice to let people know her intentions are good, even if they're puzzled by her appearance. "The niqab doesn't prevent us from socializing with anyone, even if they are not Muslim," Mindrayanti added. "We can be a good ambassadors of Muslims in front of non-Muslims... (and) those who don't understand Islam and only know it from what they see in the media." — AFP



Indonesian Muslim women participate in an archery lesson in Bekasi. - AFP photos



Indonesian Muslim women pose for a photograph after participating in archery and horse riding lessons. (Center) An Indonesian Muslim woman riding a horse in Bekasi. (Right) Two Indonesian Muslim women stretching prior to taking archery lesson.