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19 Kout Mall: Southern Kuwait's largest shopping, entertainment destination



32 For Pakistani dockworkers in Dubai, kushti is a way of life

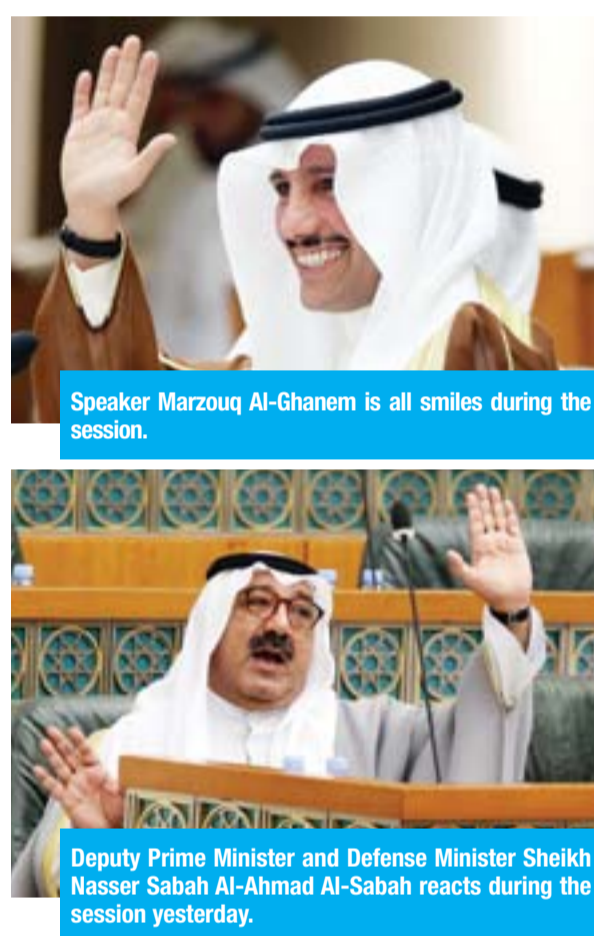


14 Football 'miracle' offers shared goal for Yemen



MPs debate 'financial crimes' at Olympic Council of Asia

Assembly approves early retirement bill



By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday debated allegations of money laundering at the Kuwait-based Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and the Olympia mall in Salmiya, which was built to house the council. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said he has evidence of wrongdoing in the OCA, adding it has to be referred to the public prosecution for an investigation. He charged that the OCA issued two cheques worth KD 400,000 to one person and the money has disappeared. He wondered how OCA could buy land in Qatar for a little over KD 1 million, and sell it a day later for KD 5.5 million.

The lawmaker charged that there are suspected money laundering cases at the OCA and suspected cases of theft of funds, adding that some unknown money transfers were sent to the two defendants in the case. Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah also said money laundering was suspected at the OCA and the ministry had received a request from the financial investigation unit at the finance ministry to investigate certain money transfers, adding that the man mentioned in the request was summoned and interrogated. The minister said that the immunity of OCA was lifted two years ago.

Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf said after the financial investigation, the issue was referred to the public prosecution. He said the building where the OCA is located - the Olympia Mall - is at the center of a legal dispute in court and that all its revenues are paid to the court until the dispute is resolved. MP Ali Al-Deqbasi said the entire file must be sent to the public prosecution for a full investigation, adding that it is illogical to sell

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News in brief

Iqama process to go online

KUWAIT: The interior ministry plans to begin renewing expats' residency permits online from next year, while a trial will start for renewing residencies of domestic helpers under citizens' sponsorship. The interior ministry's IT department has finalized the program that involves a form that is to be filled online, documents to be uploaded and an undertaking signed. The sources said the link with the social affairs and labor ministry is complete, as well as with the health ministry and the forensics and residency affairs departments. The sources said discussions are ongoing whether to print the residency permit sticker, while there is a possibility that a residency ID will be adopted with information stored digitally on it. Notably, the process of renewing driving licenses will go online from June 1. — Al-Rai

\$260bn power spending needed

DUBAI: Middle Eastern and North African countries need to spend \$260 billion over the next five years for electricity production to meet rising demand, a report said yesterday. The region, which includes oil heavyweights Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq, must make the investments to add 117 gigawatts of power generation by 2022, Arab Petroleum Investment Corp said. The Dammam-based energy development bank said \$152 billion is needed for electricity generation and the rest for transmission and distribution projects. It estimated that power capacity in the Middle East and North Africa, currently standing at 321 GW, needs to expand by 6.4 percent on average annually by 2022 to meet growing demand. The six nations belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council need to spend \$89 billion to add 43 GW over the next five years, according to APICORP estimates. — AFP

Japan to trial urine cancer test

TOKYO: A Japanese firm is poised to carry out what it hailed as the world's first experiment to test for cancer using urine samples, which would greatly facilitate screening for the deadly disease. Engineering and IT conglomerate Hitachi developed the basic technology to detect breast or colon cancer from urine samples two years ago. It will now begin testing the method using some 250 urine samples, to see if samples at room temperature are suitable for analysis, Hitachi spokesman Chiharu Odaira told AFP. It is also intended to be used to detect pediatric cancers. The Hitachi technology centers around detecting waste materials inside urine samples that act as a "biomarker" - a naturally occurring substance by which a particular disease can be identified. — AFP

Riyadh renews offer to deploy troops to Syria

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia would be prepared to send troops into Syria as part of the US-led coalition if a decision was taken to widen it, Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir said yesterday. "We are in discussion with the US and have been since the beginning of the Syrian crisis about sending forces into Syria," Jubeir told a news conference in Riyadh with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. He said Riyadh had expressed its readiness while Barack Obama was US President

to send ground forces into Syria if the United States were to add an on-the-ground component to the US-led coalition fighting Islamic State insurgents.

Jubeir was responding to a question about a Wall Street Journal report that the administration of US President Donald Trump is seeking to assemble an Arab force to replace the US military contingent in Syria. "There are discussions regarding ... what kind of force needs to remain in eastern Syria and where that force would come from, and those discussions are ongoing," Jubeir said.

Trump wants to bring US troops home from Syria but has not set a timeline, White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said on Monday, two days after Western allies bombed Syrian targets

Continued on Page 11

Rape-killings spark outrage in India, Pak

NEW DELHI/KARACHI: The body of a seven-year-old girl who had been raped and strangled was found in India yesterday, compounding outrage over a series of horrific sexual attacks on women or girls. Separately, at least one man was killed and several injured in Pakistan's biggest city Karachi yesterday when a riot broke out in protest at the rape and murder of a six-year-old girl.

Nationwide protests have been held in India in the past week over the gang-rape and murder of an eight-year-old Muslim girl in Jammu and Kashmir state. In the latest case, the child's body was found on a building site early yesterday, hours after she went missing from a wedding in the Etah district of Uttar Pradesh state.

Police said a neighbor who was putting up tents for the wedding had been detained on suspicion of luring the girl to the secluded building. Etah superintendent of police Akhilesh Chaurasia told AFP the man fled but was arrested within hours. "We have charged him with the rape and murder of the child.

Continued on Page 11

'The man with three faces' has new transplant

PARIS: Jerome Hamon is getting used to his new sobriquet "the man with three faces". He remains in a Paris hospital, three months after undergoing his second face transplant, but has quickly accepted his new "identity". His new face remains smooth and motionless, with his skull, skin and features yet to be fully aligned, a gradual process reliant on immunosuppressant drugs which,

hopefully, will prevent his body rejecting the transplanted material.

"I feel very well in myself," the 43-year-old transplant recipient told reporters last week as he continues his recovery from the surgery which was carried out on Jan 15 and 16. "I can't wait to get rid of all this," he adds, speaking with difficulty of all the major treatment he has undergone to become the first man to have received two face transplants. This unprecedented feat was painstakingly carried out by the staff at the Georges-Pompidou European Hospital in Paris, and Laurent Lantieri, a professor of plastic surgery, who led the team through the multi-step procedure.

It was a strange reunion for patient and doctor as it was Lantieri who carried out the world's first full face transplant, including tear ducts and eyelids, on Hamon at a hospital outside Paris in July 2010. Hamon suffers from neurofibromatosis type 1, a genetic mutation which causes severely disfiguring tumors and related complications. His first face transplant in 2010 was a success. But that same year - in order to treat nothing more than a common cold - he was given an antibiotic incompatible with his immunosuppressive treatment.

In 2016 he began to display signs of transplant rejection, and his new face deteriorated.

Continued on Page 11



RIYADH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz meets United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday. — AFP



KARACHI: Pakistani men bury yesterday the body of a six-year-old girl who was raped and murdered. — AFP



PARIS: Jerome Hamon poses on April 13, 2018 at the Hopital Europeen Georges-Pompidou. — AFP

Amir, Ivorian president lead bilateral talks, observe several deals' signing

President Ouattara adorned with 'Mubarak Al-Kabeer' order



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Cote d'Ivoire's President Alassane Ouattara. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Cote d'Ivoire's President Alassane Ouattara observe the signing of an agreement between the two countries.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Cote d'Ivoire's President Alassane Ouattara, as both leaders presided over discussions. His Highness the Amir was joined by Kuwait Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and senior state officials, while the Ivorian leader was flanked by officials from across the West African nation's political spectrum. The talks centered on issues of mutual concern as well as plans to ameliorate relations between the two countries. Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah said in a statement.

Meanwhile, a number of deals between Kuwait and Cote d'Ivoire were sealed, including an agreement to form a joint cooperation committee and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) involving the two countries' respective foreign ministries. Another MoU between Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the Ivorian government was also among the agreements made.

During the meeting, His Highness the Amir adorned Ouattara with Kuwait's knightly order known as 'Mubarak Al-Kabeer,' while the Ivorian president deco-

rated His Highness the Amir with the African country's highest state order in return. His Highness the Amir later went on to fete Cote d'Ivoire's leader with a lavish luncheon held in his honor.

Separately, President Ouattara received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, First Deputy of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Abdulwahab Al-Wazzan, as well as Director General of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) Abdulwahab Al-Bader. Head of mission of honor assigned for the distinguished guest Amiri Diwan Advisor Abdullah Al-Maatouq attended the receptions.

In other news, His Highness the Amir received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, Ghanem hosted the visiting Imam of the Grand Mosque of Makkah Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jahni. Separately, His Highness the Amir is set to attend and patronize today the final ceremony of the 2018 Kuwait International Quran contest. The event will be held at 10:30 am in Bayan Palace Theater. —KUNA



Cote d'Ivoire's President Alassane Ouattara meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah presents the order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer to Cote d'Ivoire's President Alassane Ouattara.



Cote d'Ivoire's President Alassane Ouattara presents his country's highest state order to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Crown Prince to US for medical checkups



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah left Kuwait yesterday, heading to the United States on a private visit, during which he would have routine medical checkups. His Highness the Crown Prince was seen off at the airport by Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, in addition to a host of senior state officials. — KUNA

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Local

Compensations ready for owners of farms on GCC railway route

53,000 non-Kuwaiti students in public schools

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Nezi

KUWAIT: Relevant bodies have almost finished removing the last obstacle facing Kuwait's leg of the GCC railway project, said informed sources, noting that the state property sector of the finance ministry has finished preparing the compensation amounts to be paid to the owners of ranches and farms located on the railway route, pending the Cabinet's final approval.

Students' numbers

Latest official statistics show that the total number of Kuwaiti students in public schools is 330,000, while non-Kuwaitis number 53,000. The 2017-2018 educational bulletin issued by the Central Statistics Bureau shows that the total number of public schools in various educational areas is 622 (306 for boys and 316 for girls), with a total number of 14,000 classes. Statistics also show that the total number of Kuwaiti teachers is 42,000 including 35,000 female teachers and only 6,000 male teachers.

The total number of non-Kuwaiti teachers is 25,000, including 14,000 female and 11,000 male teachers. Statistics also show that a majority of Kuwait teachers - 17,000 - work in the primary stage, 7,000 in kindergartens, 12,000 in the intermediate stage and 6,000 in the secondary stage. Statistics also show that the total number of private schools is 541, including 390 co-ed schools, 84 for boys and 67 for girls. The total number of Kuwaiti students in private schools is 71,000, while non-Kuwaiti students total 194,000. Private schools also have 312 Kuwaiti and 16,000

non-Kuwaiti teachers.

Infertility

The secretary of the Kuwait syndicate of urinary tract surgeries and infertility diseases consultants at Sabah Al-Ahmed kidney and urinary tract diseases center Dr Delaim Al-Hajri stressed that the syndicate has completed preparations to hold the 13th annual urinary tract surgery conference due to be held under auspices of Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah at Al-Hashimi Hall at Radisson SAS hotel from April 21 to 23.

Hajri added that the percentage of infertility in Kuwait is 15 percent, of which 40.2 percent are men and 36.5 percent women. He added that 30 percent of male infertility cases are due to low sperm count, 34 percent due to sperm movement and 8 percent with no sperm. Hajri explained that male infertility rates are increasing in GCC communities due to the high rates of obesity and diabetes. He noted that unlike women, men have recently formed the majority of patients visiting infertility clinics.

Speaking about the conference, Hajri said this year's edition will discuss a specialty concerning urinary tract and infertility surgeries. "The conference will discuss the latest scientific researches and studies in masculinity and infertility diseases with over 29 lectures, symposiums and two workshops," he said, noting that 14 masculinity and infertility diseases' consultants from the world's leading medical centers in the US, UK, Netherlands, India, Egypt, GCC and Kuwait will take part in the conference.

State-owned lands

The finance ministry is preparing to launch a campaign against citizens who have not been paying the fees for utilizing empty state-owned lands and sue them. Informed sources said 10 individuals and five companies have failed to pay over KD 8 million since August 17, 2017 till April.

Food bank

Kuwait Food Bank announced promoting the current secretary general Salem Al-Hamar as general manager. A press release issued by the food bank said Hamar had been secretary general for over a year and has taken part in the food bank's foundation and management since its establishment. Hamar stressed that the food bank will continue with its 'Life without Hunger from the Land of Humanity' strategy. Notably, the food bank works on urging various companies and establishments to take part in charitable activities as well as encourage citizens to donate for charity purposes. The bank receives zakat, alms, charity, gifts, furniture, sacrificial meat, banquet food and iftar meals to distribute to poor families. Donations are accepted 24/7 through text messages on 50487 (VIVA) and 94122 (Zain) as well as its website www.kuwaitfoodbank.org

Municipal elections

The Municipal Council elections' candidate Fatima Al-Rasheedi withdrew her candidacy from the sixth constituency and applied for a new nomination in the seventh constituency. Notably, the total number of candidates so far is 45, including one woman.



KUWAIT: A map showing the proposed route for the GCC railway.

Special delivery

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry's (MoCI) assistant undersecretary Abdullah Al-Owaisi met the cooperative societies union's deputy chairman Khaled Al-Otaibi and the heads of various co-op boards. Otaibi discussed the problems faced by workers in co-op invested branches, and said the union has been in intensive contacts with the social affairs ministry to resolve them. Owaisi stressed that crowding at subsidized goods outlets is annoying for senior citizens and

suggested delivering these products to those citizens' houses through a special delivery company. He added that if the new method is proved successful, it would be later adopted for everyone.

Food inspection

Hawally food and nutrition inspectors confiscated and destroyed 21.5 kilograms of inedible food items, filed 49 citations and issued 18 warning notices, said the team leader Ali Hashim Al-Kandari.

Defense minister, Indian envoy address common concerns



KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with India's Ambassador to Kuwait Jeeva Sagar. In his encounter with the Indian envoy, the Kuwaiti minister spoke highly of his country's ties with the world's second most populous nation, according to a statement by the Kuwaiti defense ministry. — KUNA

KAC plane makes landing in Frankfurt

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways announced Monday that its flight KU-168 heading back to Kuwait from Paris diverted its route and landed safely at the Frankfurt International Airport due to a technical problem. In a press statement, Kuwait Airways clarified that the fault was

repaired in Frankfurt and the plane resumed the flight.

Unfortunately, the problem was detected again which forced the pilot to return to the Frankfurt International Airport, the Kuwaiti national carrier regretted. As the crew had exceeded their working hours and for the comfort of passengers, bookings were made for the crew and passengers at one of Frankfurt's hotels to rest till a replacement was sent, it noted. Flight No KU172 was to leave from the Frankfurt International Airport to Kuwait yesterday at 2:20 pm local time with all passengers of the delayed flight on board. — KUNA

Bus enhances digital knowledge among youth

KUWAIT: Kuwait Public Authority for Youth has equipped a bus with various digital and state-of-arts devices, basically turning it into a makeshift scientific and research center freely available for young citizens including those of special needs. The "bus of innovation" has been made as part of efforts to provide facilities and means for scientifically talented youth, namely those of special challenges, said Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, the authority General Director, speaking at a news conference at Dasman Bilingual School, marking its inauguration. The bus can be easily boarded by the handicapped who can also use various electronic and innovative tools on board, he said.

on the bus in 3D printing, electronic programming and robots' making. Saud Al-Tawash, of Armor Group, who also spoke at the conference, said his company contributed with the special small lift for boarding by the disabled. The devices and machines on the environmentally friendly bus can operate for 12 hours with "alternative energy," he said Ahmad Al-Saleh, chief trainer at "Innertech," the bus operator, said 400 schools had registered to host the bus for training students on the digital appliances. — KUNA



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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Flowers pictured at a garden in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

CRSK retains about 20 million documents: Official

Classification of half-a-million documents complete



Documents from the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait.



A special device donated by His Highness the Amir to sterilize cultural heritage materials including different types of documents, photographs and records without causing any damage.



A worker restores a historical document at the center.

KUWAIT: Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait (CRSK) keeps about 20 million official and civil documents, some dating back to the mid-19th century and many others back to the first half of the last century, said Dr Abdullah Al-Ghunaim, the center's director.

Ghunaim said in an interview yesterday that the center is exerting great efforts to protect those documents from damage and restore the ones that need it, in addition to classifying and digitizing them to be reached easily. The center has completed the classification of half-a-million

documents of General Organization for the South and Arabian Gulf, and indexed more than a million documents of government and other official bodies, in addition to a collection of civil documents and papers of the Iraqi aggression; a major achievement of the center.

The center has also been keen in translating many books into different languages, such as English, French, Spanish, Ghunaim noted. The center has links with many regional and international similar centers, and have contributed in various cultural and scientific exhi-

bitions in Riyadh, Sharjah, Manama, Frankfurt, Paris and London. The center's last prominent publications was "Messages from Kuwait" by Dr Peter Lienhardt, which was translated by Dr Tarek Fakhr El Din. This book won the country's award of best-translated book in Kuwait. Another book published by the center, prepared by Ali Ghuloom Al-Raees, billed "Old Kuwait Markets", which encloses a number of photographs of old Kuwaiti markets from 1916 to 1966.

Ghunaim said that with a generous donation from His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the center afforded a special device to sterilize cultural heritage materials including different types of documents, photographs and records without causing any damage to these materials.

CRSK was established in December 1992 by an Amiri decree, aiming to be a main source for knowledge on Kuwait's history and heritage. The center's goal is to conduct research on Kuwait and publish them both locally and internationally. —KUNA

Zain sponsors AUM Career Fair 2018

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its Gold sponsorship of the American University of the Middle East (AUM) Career Fair for the year 2018, held in the main campus in Egaila. The event was organized by AUM's Tawteen Career Development and Recruitment center.

Zain is keen on sponsoring this career fair on an annual basis given the high turnouts it witnesses from both students and graduates who are eager to learn about the company's available job vacancies. Students of various business and engineering majors learned about Zain's leading experience in the telecom sector, as well as its internal policy and wonderful work atmosphere.

Zain participated in the career fair through its dedicated booth, where it highlighted the available job vacancies in the company, provided a detailed explanation of the nature of work at various departments and divisions, as well as



answered questions and inquiries visitors had. Zain also showcased the available vacancies for undergraduates to work in part-time jobs as part of its Future University Network (FUN) program.

Zain participates in career fairs all year round as part of its Human Resources strategy, which closely focuses on supporting the educational sector hand in hand with various universities, colleges, and educational institutions

in Kuwait to provide students and graduates with career opportunities in the private sector.

Zain is committed to playing an active role in the investment in the human capital of Kuwait. The company seeks to provide young and eager Kuwaitis with job opportunities that allow them to apply their practical skills, achieve their potential, and fully develop their capabilities.

CBK sponsors Quran contest

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) sponsored the "Qurani Noor Hayati" (my Quran is the light of my life) contest that was organized by Kuwait Education

Academy for people with special needs. Assistant General Manager for Advertising and Public Relations Amani Al-Wara said that CBK is keen on affirming positive vision and provide necessary care to people with special needs. Meanwhile, Director of Special Needs Programs Rebhi Bani Salama thanked CBK management for sponsoring the Holy Quran contest organized by the academy.



Local

Labor exporting, importing countries should share responsibilities: Official

Researcher spoke at an American University of Kuwait lecture

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Both labor sending and receiving countries must have shared responsibilities for the well-being of migrant workers, said Froilan T Malit Jr, Research Fellow at the Institute for Social and Economic Research at Zayed University in Dubai. Speaking at the American University of Kuwait, Malit said labor migration, in the Philippines for example, is considered temporary, but the economic needs back home of both workers and the country itself for job generating purposes and the need to fill shortages of labor in receiving nations have to be satisfied.

"The migration trend in this part of the word - particularly in the GCC countries - continues, and this is because of the need for the supply of manpower and the need for the job and dollars of labor sending countries," he said. Economically speaking, the researcher said governments of labor exporting countries cannot provide ample jobs for their citizens, thereby send-

ing workers (although sending workers is not a right term because the governments argue it is the workers' prerogative to go abroad) is the way out for their citizens to look for greener pastures, thus providing

“**Labor migration will continue to rise**”

for the needs of their families including education for their children.

Labor migration

According to Malit, labor migration, especially in the GCC countries, will continue to rise due to economic challenges back home and the need for workers here. He

also cited the growing population and the high fertility rate in the Middle East, which also adds to the demand. "Yes, we are filling the gap, but as we fill the gap, we are able to send our children to schools and provide for the needs of our families and the need for a job, which is the duty of the government to provide," he said.

According to Malit's research, global migration stood at 152.5 million in the 1990s, but grew to 257.7 million in 2017. He said international diplomatic cooperation and accountability are key elements in governing temporary labor workforce. He also mentioned the need for more accountability on the part of receiving countries, especially in terms of implementing the laws and more accountability on the part of employers and recruitment agencies.

Some issues of labor migration include the never-ending abuses and mistreatment of mostly domestic helpers, human trafficking and unpaid salaries among others. He also shared some of his research about the Philippines labor policy and history, which



KUWAIT: Froilan T Malit Jr, Research Fellow at the Institute for Social and Economic Research at Zayed University in Dubai, speaks at the American University of Kuwait yesterday. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

he claimed started during the 1960s or the oil boom in Saudi Arabia. He said the demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers will continue in the years to come.

Kuwaiti army keen on implementing IHL rules: Chief-of-staff

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Army Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khuder affirmed yesterday the army's keenness on implementing International Humanitarian Law's provisions. Khuder made his remarks in his speech during the first annual consultative meeting of Middle East experts, entitled "convergence between military operations and International Humanitarian Law." The three-day meeting is organized in cooperation between Kuwait's armed forces and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The Kuwaiti general staff has a keen interest in promoting awareness and legal culture in the field of military operations among armed forces staff, he said. It also strives to integrate IHL's principles into the country's national legislations, trainings, and military exercises, Khuder said. He noted IHL is also a main studying course in Kuwaiti colleges, institutions, and military schools.

The law is also a key subject in local, regional, international conferences and symposiums, as well as training courses and workshops, said the army chief.

Khuder affirmed support to integrate IHL into military operations, urging IHL experts to devote its provisions and principles toward building a better future for the region backed by legal and humanitarian protection. The Kuwaiti army chief also indicated that IHL currently faces several challenges such as improving the concept of modern and contemporary armed conflicts.

The fast-paced development in the arming systems have posed legal and operational challenges in terms of implementing IHL's provisions, in addition to the humanitarian fallouts resulted from using these systems, Khuder said. "The whole world goes through great challenges, fast events, and several conflicts that affect the entire region's security and stability, he noted. Khuder stressed the importance of giving rules and regulations further attention in order to boost the principle of humanitarian integrity. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Army Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khuder speaks during the first annual consultative meeting of Middle East experts yesterday. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Officials pose for a group photo during the event.

Tailoring shops monitored over military uniforms

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior asked the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to strictly monitor tailoring shops and impose the maximum punishment on those who make military uniforms for persons who do not have IDs from their departments, sources said. "Instructions have been given to make sure about the IDs of those who want to tailor uniforms or buy accessories, and that no tailoring should be done until the person produces an official letter from his workplace," the sources said. They said the main violation in this regard is in tailoring uniforms with ranks or names of places of work, adding that tailoring trousers or jackets may not be in violation as far as security is concerned, but placing epaulets and other information is contrary to instructions and will not be allowed without a permit.

Drug dealer caught

Fahaheel police arrested a Bangladeshi man who sold drugs to school students. Police were tipped about the Bangladeshi's activities, so he was monitored and caught while waiting for his customers to give them illicit pills. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Prostitution

Two Egyptian men were caught red-handed promoting immoral activities - one works as a driver and the other as a guard. They separately used Twitter to tweet clips and photos to encourage prostitution. Electronic crimes detectives discovered one of the accounts belongs to a driver of an engineering company. An undercover agent made an appointment with him and he was arrested. The second suspect was arrested in a similar sting. Both accounts will be closed.

Blackmail

A citizen sought police help against a woman who wanted to blackmail him and threatened to expose him in front of his wife. The citizen told police he knew the woman through a voluntary work program and their relationship was "superficial". After he got married, he asked her to stay away from him, but she gave him a choice of paying her a monthly allowance, rent and car payments, otherwise she will tell his wife about their relationship. The man refused, so she kept threatening him. Police are investigating.

Wife beater arrested

An Egyptian man was arrested for beating his wife in an attempt to force her waive off her dowry and other rights. The woman's refusal enraged him and he beat her, then forced her to sign a waiver. The husband denied the charges, but he was detained. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Hold sexual crime perpetrators accountable: Kuwait

NEW YORK: The State of Kuwait stressed that the UN Security Council must take responsibility for ensuring accountability for perpetrators of sexual crimes during times of armed conflict. This came in a speech delivered by the Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi before the UN Security Council at the debate on sexual violence in conflict late Monday. "Political missions must include the empowerment of women in conflict situations in their agendas and refer those crimes to the justice system," he noted. Otaibi highlighted how sexual violence in conflicts was linked to terrorism and extremism, recalling the Council's position, as reflected in resolutions 2231 and 2253 (2015).

Summarizing some of the findings of the Secretary General's report on sexual violence in conflicts, Otaibi said the crimes continued to be employed as a 'tactic of war' and a tool for political repression, attacking and altering ethnic or religious identity of persecuted groups and changing the demographics of disputed regions. He said that the retreat by certain armed groups had created challenges in liberated areas, including the reintegration of survivors, adding that the best way to prevent sexual violence was to promote basic freedoms, human rights and political participation while assisting survivors of such violence. The Kuwaiti ambassador urged the Council to hold all perpetrators of such crimes accountable, stressing the importance of treating survivors as victims. — KUNA

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KUWAIT: Kuwaiti forces which participated in the joint 'Gulf Shield 1' military exercise returned from Saudi Arabia yesterday.



Legalese

Startups and employment

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

The team is by far the most important asset when it comes to a company, and especially when you are a small company just starting off. Your team can make or break your company. With that said, I know that it is difficult for startups at first to hire employees because of the cost, but investing in a team and the legal structure of the company and the team is very important. Today I am writing an article regarding the most common misconceptions for founders and employees at startups.

Founders as employees

Question: Can founders be employees? What legal implications should we look for if we would like to have founders as employees? What should the equity split for founders be?

Fajer: It is very common to have founders as employees, CEOs, COOs, CFOs and so on. There are many factors to consider when having a founder/partner as an employee - here are a few:

1. If a founder is getting shares because he will be working for the company, then you need to make sure the shares are given after the work/time period of work is completed. This is usually under a vesting schedule - a schedule that states when a shareholder receives his share.

2. A point that founders always overlook, is if they should receive a salary or not, and how much should that salary be. This is especially important if you are looking for investors in the future. You need to know as a founder whether you would like to continue being an employee in the company in the future. Also you need to make sure that all your documents are done professionally and are legally correct for future investors.

3. You need to consider an equity split carefully - it may sound like the best option is to just split the equity equally with the founders, but that shouldn't be the case. Instead, the equity split should be studied carefully, considering what each partner may bring to the company.

Part-time

Question: Can I legally hire part-time? As a startup we currently cannot afford to hire full-time employees.

Fajer: There is no mention of part-time employees under the Kuwaiti labor law currently or any option to register an employee part time under the ministry of labor and social affairs. With that said, in my opinion, it is not illegal to hire someone part-time or to pay someone to complete a task or provide you with a service. The most important thing though is to make sure that the employees are receiving their full rights under Kuwaiti labor law. Just because the employees are part-time, this doesn't mean you can keep their passports or not pay them for any additional work that they do.

I hope the above helped. If you have a concern, please email us at info@tl-legal.com



Chemical experts' mission in limbo

Confusion, blame game fuels Philippines vaccine scandal

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DOUMA: The former Syrian town of Douma on the outskirts of Damascus is seen yesterday after the Syrian army declared that all anti-regime forces have left Eastern Ghouta, following a blistering two month offensive on the rebel enclave. — AFP

In Syria's Raqqa, corpses lie in the rubble

Rescue workers struggling to retrieve dozens of bodies

RAQQA: The stench of rotting corpses rises from piles of rubble and destroyed buildings that line the streets of Syria's Raqqa, serving as a bitter reminder of the brutal battle for the recapture of the former Islamic State stronghold. Islamic State declared a caliphate in 2014 and at the height of its power ruled over millions of people in parts of Syria and Iraq. The militant group had declared Raqqa the capital of its self-proclaimed state. But the city was retaken by US-backed militias last October, after a four-month battle that left hundreds of civilians dead and most of its neighborhoods flattened.

Rescue workers say they are struggling to retrieve dozens of bodies still trapped under mounds of debris around the city. "We are calling for more support, this support must include machinery which we need desperately in order to continue our work," said Yaser Khamis, head of the First Responders Unit formed by the Raqqa Civil Council, set up to rebuild and govern

the city. In one building, rescuers were cutting through wires and lifting heavy slabs of concrete in search of corpses or body parts trapped underneath.

Hours later, workers said they were able to retrieve 20 bodies. But Khamis fears they are not working fast enough. "The danger alarms are beginning to sound in this area, diseases and epidemics are starting to spread," he said. "We currently have more than 114 requests for digging and exhumation of bodies." According to a 2009 World

Health Organization report, there is no clear evidence that links corpses to the spread of epidemic diseases.

However, rescuers who routinely handle dead bodies risk contracting tuberculosis and gastrointestinal infections, as well as potential effects on mental health.

Since starting their operations, the First Responders Unit say they have exhumed more than 500 corpses. Forensic pathologists examine the bodies and try to identify them. "We check the body, its general condition, whether it is male or female, child or elder. We look at body parts, some

rotting," said Dr Abu Ibrahim. But most remain unidentified and are buried in a special graveyard near the city. Rebuilding and restoring the city, which was once home to more than 200,000 people, is proving to be a monumental task.

During a recent visit to the town, Syria country director for the United Nations World Food Program, Jakob Kern, estimated that "two thirds" of Raqqa had been destroyed in fighting. The Raqqa Civil Council has said it will take 5.3 billion Syrian lira (about \$10 million) a year to restore power and water supplies, roads and schools. The United States backed the campaign to drive Islamic State from Raqqa, and in February said it would invest money in "stabilization" efforts there. But last month, US President Donald Trump decided to freeze more than \$200 million for recovery efforts in Syria while Washington reassessed its role in the conflict, administration officials said. — Reuters



Stench of rotting corpses rises from piles of rubble

Calls for 'proof of life' after Chibok girls death claims

KANO: Nigeria is facing calls to establish how many of the missing Chibok schoolgirls are still alive, after claims that nearly 100 of them may have lost their lives in captivity. Parents of the missing girls and supporters gathered in the small town in remote northeast Nigeria on Saturday to mark the fourth anniversary of the kidnapping that sparked world outrage. But soon after the end of their vigil and prayers, a Nigerian journalist who has been involved in negotiations with the Islamist group said only a "handful" of the girls survive.

Ahmad Salkida wrote in a lengthy thread on Twitter that "only 15" of the 112 girls still being held were alive. "Many of the girls have died as a result of cross fires and bombardments of the security forces that no doubt were intent on rescuing them," he added. The Nigerian government in response neither confirmed nor denied the claim. President Muhammadu Buhari's spokesman, Garba Shehu, said only that Salkida's claim was "not known" to them or anyone working on their behalf. "The facts as known to our officials and the international contacts assisting this process are that the remaining Chibok girls are there," he added. "We are not relying on getting their release."

Grief and alarm

A total of 276 girls were seized from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok on April 14, 2014 and 57 managed to escape in the immediate aftermath. Since then, 107 have either been found or released as part of a government deal with the jihadists. Claims that some have died or been killed are not new. In August 2016, Boko Haram released a video purporting to show about 50 of the students. "Some of them have died as a result of aerial bombardment," a masked gunman tells the camera. One of the girls then gives details about an air strike by Nigerian armed forces. Ayuba Alamson Chibok, a community leader in the town whose cousin is among the missing, said parents and relatives were all aware of those claims. "After the 82 girls were released (in May 2017) I spoke with some of them and they confirmed that some girls were killed in military strike on the camp they were being held," he said. — AFP

Rights groups fume; Philippines detains an Australian nun

MANILA: Philippine authorities detained an elderly Australian Catholic nun overnight in what civil rights groups alleged yesterday was a crackdown on foreign critics of President Rodrigo Duterte's human rights record. Sister Patricia Fox, 71, was held overnight at the nation's immigration bureau on Monday but was later released without charge, the government agency said, the day after it deported a European Union politician who has criticized Duterte's deadly drug war.

Fox, a Manila resident, was taken into custody for allegedly violating the conditions of her stay by engaging in "political activities and anti-government demonstrations", the bureau said in a statement. "The allegation that she engaged in partisan activities is not true. She has been in the Philippines for almost 27 years doing advocacy work for farmers," Fox's lawyer Jobert Pahilga told AFP. Fox, a missionary of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, joined an international fact-finding mission in the southern Philippines this month to look into reported violations of the rights of farmers and indigenous people, Pahilga added. Rights groups criticized Fox's detention as a warrantless arrest.

The Philippines on Sunday deported Italian Giacomo Filibeck, deputy secretary general of



MANILA: Australian catholic nun Sister Patricia Fox (center), escorted by immigration officers is greeted by supporters during her release from detention at the Immigration headquarters in Manila yesterday, a day after she was arrested. — AFP

the Party of European Socialists, who had condemned "extra-judicial killings" in Duterte's anti-drug crackdown. Like Fox, the immigration bureau had accused Filibeck of violating laws barring foreigners from engaging in political activities. Duterte, 73, has launched an unprecedented campaign against illegal drugs that has left thousands dead. He has lashed out at foreign critics of his drug war, threatening last week to arrest the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor, who has begun a preliminary examination of whether the campaign amounted to state-sanctioned mass murder.

Rights groups said the incidents involving

Fox and Filibeck were part of a crackdown on foreign activists. "This shows the international community that the democratic space in the Philippines is shrinking. We are not just concerned and alarmed but we view these actions as despicable," Amnesty International Philippines human rights officer Wilnor Papa said. "If the government is threatened by a 71-year-old nun, there is something really wrong with the government." Manila Catholic Bishop Broderick Pabillo also condemned the detention. "They don't even mind if they are nuns or if they are old. There is no humanity here. People should realize the government has a tendency of being dictatorial," Pabillo said. — AFP

International

Iraqi women with alleged links to IS sexually abused

French woman sentenced to life in jail for joining IS

BAGHDAD: Iraq is using collective punishment including sexual exploitation against women and children with alleged ties to Islamic State jihadists, Amnesty International said yesterday. In a new report, the watchdog revealed widespread discrimination by security forces, camp administrators and local authorities against women and children in eight camps for people displaced by violence.

"Iraqi women and children with perceived ties to IS are being punished for crimes they did not commit," said Lynn Maalouf, Amnesty's Middle East research director. "They are trapped in camps, ostracized and denied food, water and other essentials. This humiliating collective punishment risks laying the foundation for future violence."

The United Nations said in February that some 2.5 million people remained displaced after Iraqi forces backed by an international coalition waged a vast offensive to oust the extremist group from parts of northern Iraq it had seized in 2014.

Many of those who fled IS-held areas ended up in camps. Amnesty said that in each of the eight camps it visited, women were being pressured into sexual relationships in exchange for money, aid and protection. In its report, entitled "The Condemned: Women and Children Isolated, Trapped and Exploited in Iraq", the watchdog said women in the camps were also at risk of rape. "The very people who are supposed to be protecting them are turning into predators," said Maalouf. She called on

the Iraqi government to show its commitment to protecting women by "holding all perpetrators to account and stopping all armed men from entering" the camps for the displaced.

Amnesty also called on Iraqi authorities to "immediately end the systematic and widespread practice of forcibly disappearing men and boys with perceived ties to IS that has left thousands of wives, mothers, daughters and sons in desperate situations". In many cases, the men's only "crimes" were escaping an IS stronghold, having similar names to jihadists on "wanted lists", or working in non-combat roles with the group, the watchdog said. Iraq declared victory over IS in December after pushing the jihadists out of their final holdouts along the border with Syria. But the group retains the capacity to strike and still clings to pockets of desert in war-torn Syria.

French woman jailed

In another development, Iraq yesterday sentenced a French woman to life in prison for belonging to the Islamic State group, raising to more than 180 the number of such convictions of foreign women since the country's defeat of IS. Djamilia Boutoutaou, a 29-year-old of Algerian origin, told a Baghdad court that she left France with her husband, a rapper. She said she thought they were going on holiday but "when I arrived in Turkey I discovered that my husband was a jihadist". She said she was forced by her husband to join IS and live in the "caliphate" that the jihadists proclaimed in 2014 straddling Syria and Iraq. Boutoutaou, who appeared in court wearing a brown headscarf, said she and her two children had been forced to live in a "cave".



BAGHDAD: French jihadist Djamilia Boutoutaou attends her trial at the Central penal Court in Baghdad yesterday. French jihadist Boutoutaou, 29, was sentenced to life in prison for belonging to the Islamic State group, the latest in a series of court judgments against jihadists. —AFP

Her husband was killed near the former jihadist stronghold of Mosul, northern Iraq, and her son died in bombardment. Boutoutaou said, before she and the wife of a neighbor fled and surrendered to Kurdish peshmerga fighters. Two women from Russia, both holding children in their arms, were also sentenced to life in prison at the same hearing, while five from Azerbaijan were condemned to death along with a woman from Trinidad. Iraq declared victory in December against IS, which at one point controlled a third of the country. The Iraqi anti-terrorism law empowers courts to convict people who are believed to have helped IS even if they are not accused of violence.

In January, an Iraqi court condemned a German woman to death after finding her guilty of belonging to IS. A court the following month sentenced another French woman to seven months in jail for entering Iraq illegally but ordered her release on time already served. Under Iraqi anti-terrorism laws, a total of 97 foreign women have now been condemned to death since January and 185 others to life imprisonment by courts in Baghdad, a judicial source said. Most of the women were from Turkey and republics of the former Soviet Union. Iraqi authorities have not announced any of the sentences being carried out.—Agencies



Watchdog reveals widespread discrimination

Nigerian media under scrutiny over deadly herder-farmer clash

LAGOS: A photograph of a man with an assault rifle in front of cattle is frequently used to illustrate Nigerian media stories about bloody clashes between farmers and herders. Another shows men armed with machetes on the rampage. The issue with both is they have nothing to do with Nigeria or the violence: one is from South Sudan, the other from the Central African Republic. The conflict in Nigeria looks set to be a key issue in the run-up to next February's presidential election at which President Muhammadu Buhari is seeking a second term.

How it is reported could be key to the results but the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) and Buhari's spokesman, Garba Shehu, are already unhappy. Shehu said "the frequent expressions of hate speech... (were) a source of concern" and drew comparisons to the incitement to violence before the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. "Those beating the gongs of war and fanning the embers of discord" should be brought to order, he said in a statement in February. Parliament is now debating new legislation to criminalize hate speech.

Outright fabrication

Buhari's response to the crisis has by many accounts been tepid, despite the deaths of hundreds of people since the start of this year, mainly in Nigeria's central states. The so-called Middle Belt, where the predominantly Muslim north meets the largely Christian south, has long been a flashpoint for clashes between the two sides. But what is primarily a battle for land and water fuelled by climate change and rapid population growth has been seized upon by identity politicians and religious leaders.

In Benue state, where Governor Samuel Ortom banned open grazing for cattle, 73 people from farming communi-

ties were killed in one attack in January. He alleged afterwards there was an orchestrated plot by the nomadic Fulani herders, who are Muslim, to exterminate his people, the Tiv, who are Christian. The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) rejects the claim. Many media reports of attacks, however, suggest religious differences are a prime motivation.

Social media users and bloggers in particular have been accused of sensationalism and developing the trope about "killer herdsmen" with outright falsehood. The Kogi state police commissioner Ali Aji Janga told AFP last month that several reports were entirely fabricated or ascribed to Fulani herders when it was general criminality. One report, in which Fulani herders were said to have killed 10 people in a village, including the local chief and his wife, was "a figment of imagination", he said. "The report was not only false, it was mischievous aimed at distorting the peace in the state," he added.

'Ethnic profiling'

Critics of Buhari have said the herders have become emboldened since he came to office three years ago because of his failure to address the underlying issue. Thousands of people have been killed over several decades but the former military ruler is also a Fulani Muslim and has been accused of not wanting to act against his kinsmen. Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, whose property in southwest Nigeria was overrun with cattle, has even said the herders had "declared war against the nation".

"Their weapon is undiluted terror," he wrote in January. "Why have they been permitted to become a menace to the rest of us?" NUJ president Waheed Odule said the overall media coverage of the conflict was fair and there were expected differences of opinion. But he added: "What is disturbing is the ethnic profiling of the conflict. They tend to make the violence look like a north-south, Christian-Muslim problem." Describing all herdsmen "as Fulani Muslim is dangerous and can jeopardize the peace and unity of Nigeria", he added, warning the media "not to heat up the polity by playing up the nation's faultlines".

MACBAN for its part has blamed cattle rustlers and



LAGOS: Photo shows newspapers, front page headlines focusing on the bloody clashes between farmers and herders displayed in Lagos. —AFP

foreign criminals for the frequent raids on farming communities. As elsewhere around the world, Nigerian media organizations, reflect the views of their owners—many of them politicians or the politically well-connected. But readers increasingly needed to be cautious about what they were being told, according to David Ajikobi, Nigeria director of fact-checking website Africa Check. "It's not true that every herdsman is Fulani," he said, pointing to the involvement of Yoruba and Igbo in cattle herding. "A blanket categorization of herders as Fulani is stereotyping the issue and such a tendency should be avoided."—AFP

Erdogan's ally ignites Turkey snap poll talk

ISTANBUL: The main nationalist ally of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday ramped up expectations that elections could be brought forward by over a year by urging snap polls in August. Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) chief Devlet Bahçeli said Turkey could not wait for the scheduled date of November 3, 2019 to hold simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections and urged that the polls be held on August 26.

The government reacted sanguinely to the suggestion, saying it would evaluate Bahçeli's call. Erdogan is due to hold a crunch meeting with Bahçeli today afternoon. "In this situation it is not possible to wait until November 3, 2019," Bahçeli said in a televised meeting of MHP lawmakers in Ankara. "On August 26, 2018 the Turkish nation should go to the ballot box in the spirit of marking a new victory," he added.

Turkish politics has for the past months fizzed with speculation the elections could be brought forward, with analysts saying this would neutralize the risk of the economy deteriorating in the next months. It is after these upcoming elections that the new executive presidency-agreed in a 2017 referendum and denounced by the opposition as giving the head of state authoritarian powers—will come into force. The polls will also give Erdogan a chance to extend his stay in power with a new five year mandate,

after already serving 15 years in power as premier and then president.

'Early polls more likely'

Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, the Ankara Office Director of the German Marshall Fund of the US, said that Bahçeli's call "has made early elections more likely". "If President Erdogan does not intend to go to early elections he will now need to make a more clear binding promise that he will not," he said. Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdogan, quoted by Turkish media, said that the government would "consider" Bahçeli's call, which he said had created a "new situation". Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci said early polls would be "positive". With Bahçeli's call dominating the Turkish headlines, Erdogan declined to directly comment on the intervention, saying "right now I have nothing to say about it".

He said he did not want to add to an earlier speech to lawmakers, where he had repeatedly referred to the elections taking place in November 2019. But Turkish media said Erdogan, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim and parliament speaker Ismail Kahraman were holding an unscheduled meeting in parliament. Erdogan has formed a tight alliance with the MHP in recent months with the aim of fighting the elections together and the two parties have rarely had any recent disagreements in public. Bahçeli, who has led the MHP since 1997, used to be an outspoken critic of Erdogan but has closely aligned with the president since the July 2016 failed coup aimed at ousting him from power.

'Regardless of the costs'

The date of August 26 would coincide with the anniversary of the 1071 Battle of



ANKARA: President of Turkey and Leader of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Recep Tayyip Erdogan (center), flanked by Prime Minister of Turkey and Vice Chairman of AK Party Binali Yildirim (left), is about to sit upon his arrival at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), to attend an AK party's parliamentary group meeting yesterday. —AFP

Malazgirt where pre-Ottoman tribes defeated the Byzantines in a victory celebrated with increasing fervor in modern Turkey in recent years. Bahçeli's comments took markets by surprise with the lira sharply losing value but then slightly making up the losses to trade at 4.1 to the dollar, a loss in value of 0.34 percent on the day.

While growth in Turkey was 7.4 percent in 2017, economists have raised concerns that double digit inflation, a wide

current account deficit, and an almost nine percent fall in the value of the lira this year showed severe risks ahead. Economists say that the government wants to keep the economy booming to create a positive momentum ahead of the elections.

"The government appears determined to keep the economy growing rapidly ahead of national elections... regardless of the costs," credit ratings agency Moody's said in a note this week.—AFP

Confusion and blame game fueling vaccine scandal in Philippines

IMUS: Melinda Colite shakes with rage as she clutches a photo of her grandson, who she says died after getting the anti-dengue fever vaccine at the heart of a bitter scandal in the Philippines. While Dengvaxia's maker Sanofi has said unequivocally that its world-first vaccination is safe, Philippine authorities disagree publicly over whether it could have contributed to children's deaths. The resulting confusion has prompted a dangerous plunge in vaccination rates in the Philippines for other diseases. It has also added to a swirling political battle, fanned by bloggers who back President Rodrigo Duterte and have an audience of millions of Facebook followers.

"The blame game has taken over the main issue," Ronald Mendoza, dean of the Ateneo de Manila University's School of Government said. "It may be doing damage to public health rather than protecting it." Health authorities have said child vaccination rates against illnesses like measles have dropped by as much as 25 percentage points over the previous year as public anger and mistrust has grown in the Dengvaxia case. Several measles outbreaks have struck the nation, claiming at least 13 lives, since the controversy began.

The trouble started last year, shortly after the Philippines gave Dengvaxia to some 837,000 students as part of a public immunisation campaign. Sanofi hailed the vaccine as a breakthrough in combating dengue, which kills hundreds in the Philippines every year, mostly children. But the company set off a panic when in November it said a new analysis showed the vaccine could lead to more severe symptoms for people who had not previously been infected with dengue. It prompted Manila to halt the campaign and left hundreds of thousands of terrified parents wondering if their children were at risk.

Allegations fly

Sanofi has repeatedly said the vaccine is safe, noting in a March statement: "No causal-related deaths were reported in 15 countries after clinical trials conducted for more than a decade with 40,000 subjects involved." "There continues to be no evidence that any deaths have been causally linked to our vaccine," it added. But that has not stopped allegations emerging of vaccinated children dying of super-charged cases of dengue after getting Dengvaxia. "It could not have been anything else. He started complaining of frequent body aches after his third injection," Melinda Colite, 55, said of her 12-year-old grandson Zandro. As of last week 65 deaths have been reported to authorities and are under investigation, the health department says.

Different branches of the Philippine government have disagreed openly about potential risks of the vaccine, leading to confusion for the public. "We cannot conclude at this point that Dengvaxia directly caused the deaths," Health Secretary Francisco Duque told lawmakers in February, referring to the cases of 14 children who received the vaccine. However, after additional potential cases emerged, the government assigned its legal service that represents the poor, the Public Attorney's Office, to take up the matter.

Its chief lawyer, Persida Acosta, told lawmakers in February: "They (death certificates) said they were (killed by) acute respiratory arrest, encephalitis, appendicitis, septic shock. All of those are mimics of severe dengue." Certainty about the children's cause of death may remain clouded because post-mortem diagnosis of dengue can be a tricky process. The most accurate and widely used way of testing, called RT-PCR, relies on genetic material that degrades quickly after a person dies, especially in warm climates like the Philippines, virus expert Benjamin Neuman said. "The challenge of determining a cause of death by RT-PCR can swiftly move from difficult to impossible," he added.—AFP

International

US, Britain warn of Russian campaign to hack networks

Hackers target key hardware of government networks

LONDON: Russian government-sponsored hackers are compromising the key hardware of government and business computer networks like routers and firewalls, giving them virtual control of data flows, Britain and the United States warned yesterday. The operation was "to support espionage, extract intellectual property, maintain persistent access to victim networks and potentially lay a foundation for future offensive operations," Washington and London said in a joint statement.

"Whoever controls the routing infrastructure of a network essentially controls the data flowing through the network." The US Department of Homeland Security said the hacking was part of a broad operation dubbed Grizzly Steppe, which DHS says comprises concerted

cyberattacks by Moscow's civilian and military intelligence agencies. The router hacking operation has targeted both government and private sector groups, and the key providers of network infrastructure and internet services serving them.

The announcement came in an unprecedented joint alert that underscored closer cooperation between Western governments fighting what they say is an ongoing, multifaceted hacking and online disinformation campaign by Moscow. The alert came from the Britain's National Cyber Security Centre, DHS and the US Federal Bureau of

West fighting multifaceted hacking campaign

Investigation. It came after more than one year of separate warnings over the attempted hacking of key infrastructure like power and water utilities in Western

countries. The two sides did not give any examples of systems that had been broken into, but said those compromised risked losing data, identities, passwords and even control of their own systems.

Critical components targeted

The hacking effort goes to the critical components of a computer network: the routers, switches and firewalls designed to safely and accurately deliver data from one computer to another. Taking over a router virtually would give a hacker the ability to manipulate, divert or stop any data from going through it. In an operation like an electric power plant, the hacker could shut down the service or physically damage a plant. A hacker could also "potentially lay a foundation for future offensive operations," the joint alert said. "The current state of US and UK network devices, coupled with a Russian government campaign to exploit these devices, threatens our respective safety, security, and economic well-being," it said. Both countries have accused Moscow of concerted efforts to use social media to interfere with public affairs, particularly with the British Brexit referendum and US presidential election in 2016. — AFP



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May hosts a meeting with leaders and representatives of Caribbean countries, at 10 Downing Street in central London yesterday on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM). — AFP

News in brief

Nanny's insanity defense

NEW YORK: A New York nanny who stabbed to death two children in her care acted on "a thought-out plan" to murder them due to resentment of their mother, undercutting her insanity defense, a prosecutor told jurors in closing arguments on Monday. Lawyers for Yoselyn Ortega, 55, said she hallucinated that a devil told her "to kill the children and herself" and should be found not guilty by reason of insanity. Ortega was suffering from "command hallucinations" in 2012 when she repeatedly plunged a kitchen knife into Lucia Krim, 6, nicknamed Lulu, and her brother Leo, 2, at their New York luxury apartment, her attorney, Valerie Van Leer-Greenberg, said in her closing argument at state Supreme Court in Manhattan. Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Stuart Silberg argued that mental illness did not excuse Ortega's actions and defense attorneys needed to prove that she could not understand the consequences of her actions. — Reuters

Clean-up in UK city

LONDON: A clean-up operation in the British city where a former Russian spy was poisoned began yesterday, with officials saying the nerve agent used was delivered in "liquid form" and small quantities. The attack on ex-double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia on March 4 in Salisbury has damaged relations between Moscow and the West. The environment ministry, which is in charge of the clean-up, said an area of the cemetery in Salisbury where Skripal's wife and son are buried was reopened yesterday. But nine other sites, including a pub and a restaurant the Skripals visited shortly before collapsing, remain closed off. Counter-terror police are gradually handing the sites over to specialist cleaning teams. The work is expected to take several months. Around 190 specialist military personnel are supporting the operation. — AFP

Sophisticated cheating plot

SINGAPORE: A Singaporean private tutor has been convicted over an elaborate scheme to help Chinese secondary school students cheat in an exam using mobile phones and wireless devices, prosecutors said yesterday. Tan Jia Yan, 32, pleaded guilty on Monday to her part in the plot in which answers to O-Level exams were relayed to at least six students via mobile phones concealed under their clothing and connected wirelessly to skin-colored earpieces, they said. Tan, who will be sentenced next month, faces a jail term of up to three years and a fine. Academic excellence is highly valued in Singapore which often tops international education rankings, although the system has been criticized for putting children under too much pressure at a young age. The Chinese nationals who took the exams in October, 2016 were students at a tuition centre where Tan was a teacher. — AFP

Demining shared border

DUSHANBE: Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are set to demine their shared border, Tajikistan's border service said yesterday, as the Central Asian neighbors look to roll back more than two decades of hostile relations. A representative of Tajikistan's border service said yesterday that a joint commission had been created to "thoroughly study in what sections of the Uzbek-Tajik border there are anti-personnel mines" and to create a schedule for demining. Uzbekistan initially mined its side of the 1,332-kilometre border in 2000 to prevent incursions from Islamist forces held over from the five-year civil war that began in Tajikistan shortly after its independence from the Soviet Union. But according to the UN-backed Tajikistan Mine Action Centre, 374 Tajik citizens, mostly shepherds and other residents of cross-border regions, have been killed by mines since they were laid. — AFP

Unwelcome reunion: Helped as children, Burundian adults are now refugees abroad

KIREHE: During Burundi's brutal 12-year civil war, Maggy Barankitse set out to rescue as many children as she could. Through her efforts hundreds survived, and many returned to their communities after the war ended in 2005. But today, with Burundi facing its most serious crisis in more than a decade, thousands of refugees have fled once more, this time to neighboring Rwanda. Among them are some of the children - now adults - who once lived at her Maison Shalom charity in Burundi, and who are again in need of help.

"It pains me to see them like this," said Barankitse, 61, shedding tears as she hugged refugees at Mahama camp, which lies about 140 kilometers southeast of Kigali, Rwanda's capital. "Some of the children I cared for who stayed back in Burundi have been killed," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Sometimes, I feel like someone rolling a huge stone up a hill only for it to roll down when it nears the top, and I wonder if I'm condemned to do this all my life ... but I choose always to be the light in the darkness," she said.

The small and impoverished Central African nation of Burundi has been unstable since 2015, when President Pierre Nkurunziza decided to seek a third term in office that his opponents said was unconstitutional. The resulting violence has left hundreds dead

and forced at least 400,000 people into exile. Around 174,000 of them are in Rwanda, with Mahama camp in Kirehe district hosting 60,000. About 60 to 80 more people arrive weekly, said Samuel Bigirimana of the UN refugee agency UNHCR. He said the last 200 of Mahama's 19,520 mud-brick houses would soon be occupied. "Now, this camp is full ... We are negotiating with the government of Rwanda to allocate another camp," said Bigirimana.

Forced flight

Thirty-year-old Arlene Nifasha was one of hundreds who arrived at Mahama camp with her two children last November. Her husband stayed behind in Burundi. "Women from the ruling party kept trying to force me to join them. They threatened that they would slash my neck again if I didn't," Nifasha told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Nifasha was just five when, during Burundi's civil war she was hacked with a machete and left for dead. Barankitse found her, and flew her to Germany for surgery that doctors initially considered hopeless: it saved her life, but left her face and neck severely scarred. Now, in a refugee camp with a child aged 6 and another just 17 months, Nifasha struggles to get by. But she is hopeful that the skills she will soon be learning at a sewing workshop being organised by Maison Shalom will help.

The steady stream of refugees to Mahama is a concern for camp manager, Murebwayire Goreth, who worries about the shortage of food. At least five refugees were killed and 20 injured at the Kiziba camp in western Rwanda in February when a protest over a cut in food rations turned violent. The 25 percent cut implemented by UNHCR due to a lack of funding has also caused difficulties at Mahama. "It is a problem managing the people not eating," said Goreth, who works for Rwanda's disaster management ministry. But,

he says, responsibility lies with the United Nations. "There's little the government can do. It's for the UN."

Kigali kitchen

Two years ago, Barankitse was awarded the inaugural Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity in recognition of her work caring for orphans during Burundi's civil war. "Even the times a child had only five minutes to live, I asked the doctors to let me carry him in my arms and show him love," Barankitse said of those times. Ironically, in 2015 Barankitse was forced to flee Burundi. Since then she has lived in Rwanda where her charity provides jobs and education for refugees.

Maison Shalom used some of the million-dollar Aurora award proceeds to open the Oasis of Peace restaurant in Kigali. It is run by refugees, and is a place other refugees can learn to cook. Among those working here is Modeste Nahimana. Another survivor of Burundi's civil war, Nahimana was just eight when she was badly injured in a machete attack that killed her mother and sisters. Barankitse took her to Italy for surgery that saved her arms. Today, Nahimana works the counter at the restaurant, taking orders and serving meals to a steady stream of customers, a smile on her face.

"I feel at home here," said Nahimana, stroking the extensive scars on her two arms. "Everybody here has their own story." Maison Shalom is currently building another restaurant - at Mahama camp. Like this one, it will be run by refugees; it will cater for the staff of charities who work at the camp and who currently have to travel miles to eat. The same building will house a workshop, where refugees can learn to sew. "I see my children like Arlene (Nifasha) and it breaks my heart," said Barankitse as she watched refugees mixing concrete and laying bricks for the new building. "When will it ever end?" — Reuters

Armenia's former president elected PM amid protests

YEREVAN: Armenia's former president Serzh Sarkisian yesterday elected prime minister in a move the opposition says is designed to extend his chokehold on power despite protests in the impoverished country. Lawmakers backed the candidacy of the Kremlin-supported veteran politician with 77 to 17 votes, after his second and final term as president ended last week. The opposition denounced the vote, which makes Sarkisian Armenia's top leader under a new parliamentary system of government - saying the 63-year-old lacked popular support.

Earlier in the day, several thousand demonstrators marched through the centre of the capital Yerevan and staged sit-in protests outside government buildings. Protesters blockaded the entrances to about a dozen government buildings, including those housing the foreign ministry and the central bank. A bigger protest was planned for in the evening. Ahead of the vote, Sarkisian blamed the opposition for rocking the boat. "Extinct volcanoes should not wake up if we want to live in a prosperous Armenia, in a country of the rule of law. And volcanoes will not wake up if no one provokes them."

'Start of velvet revolution'

Opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan urged Armenians to take to the streets en masse. "I proclaim today the start of a peaceful velvet revolution in Armenia," he told a rally in Yerevan earlier in the day, calling on supporters to "paralyse the work of all government agencies". Rallies were also held in the country's second- and third-largest cities of Gyumri and Vanadzor. Police said 14 demonstrators were briefly detained. On Monday police used stun grenades as protesters sought to break through a barbed wire cordon in the centre of Yerevan in an effort to get to the parliament building. Authorities said 46 people including six police and opposition leader Pashinyan required medical help.

'Nothing good'

Student Irina Davtyan said she skipped lectures to join the protests. "My generation-my friends and me are against Serzh Sarkisian and against his government," she said on Monday. "He's been in power for 10



YEREVAN: Armenian people shout during an opposition rally in central Yerevan yesterday, as parliament elected the country's ex-president as prime minister under a new parliamentary system of government. — AFP

years and we can all see that nothing good has come out of it." The spokesman for the ruling party, Eduard Sharmazanov, has dismissed the protests as "the opposition's artificial and fake agenda". Sarkisian, a shrewd former military officer, has been in charge of the landlocked South Caucasus nation of 2.9 million since winning a presidential vote in 2008.

He stepped down last week after serving two consecutive presidential terms. He also held the office of prime minister in 2007-2008. The country's new president, Armen Sarkisian, was sworn in last week but his powers will be weaker under the new system of government. Even though the two men share the same surname, they are not related. The constitutional amendments were passed after a referendum in December 2015, with some 63 percent of the voters backing the

changes. After the plebiscite, thousands of opposition supporters rallied in protest against alleged mass violations at polling stations.

Council of Europe observers have said the referendum was marred by allegations of large-scale vote buying and multiple voting, among other irregularities. Opposition politicians say the shift to a parliamentary republic with a powerful prime minister has been designed to increase Serzh Sarkisian's grip on power in the impoverished Moscow-allied country. "Sarkisian wants to perpetuate his rule," the leader of the opposition Heritage party, Raffi Hovannisyan said. After Sarkisian was first elected in 2008, 10 people died in bloody clashes between police and supporters of the defeated opposition candidate. He won a second presidential term in 2013. — AFP

International

Myanmar to release over 8,000 prisoners in New Year amnesty

Amnesty includes over 6,000 prisoners with drug-related charges

YANGON: Myanmar began releasing more than 8,000 prisoners yesterday on humanitarian grounds under a presidential pardon, with most of those being released convicted of drug offences but with 36 people classified as political prisoners among them. The pardon, signed by newly elected President Win Myint, coincides with Myanmar's traditional new year celebrations and was aimed at promoting peace and the joy of the people, his office said in a statement. "To bring peace and pleasure to people's heart, and for the sake of humanitarian support, 8,490 prisoners from respective prisons will be pardoned," the Presidential Office said.

Dozens of prisoners were set free later yesterday from Insein prison in Myanmar's main city of Yangon, greeted at the gates of the colonial-era jail by scores of relatives and friends. "I'm happy for this amnesty but I'm sorry for the other prisoners left behind," said Saw Wah Lay, a member of a political party affiliated with an ethnic Karen insurgent group, the Karen National Liberation Army. He said he had spent 13 years in Insein jail after being sentenced to death and a 95-year prison term for murder and other charges. "I hope they will be released soon because some of them are facing unfair charges without having done anything wrong," he told reporters.

Two Reuters reporters, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, jailed in Myanmar were not included in the amnesty, according to Min Tun Soe, spokesman of Myanmar Prisons Department, citing ongoing legal proceedings against them. A court in Yangon has been holding preliminary hearings since January to decide whether the pair will be charged under the colonial-era Officials Secrets Act, which carries a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison. Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi has made end-

ing years of war between government forces and ethnic minority insurgents her top priority but the releases announced yesterday did not appear to include a significant number of people convicted for links to insurgencies.

'Very good news'

More than 6,000 of those being released were sentenced on drug charges, government spokesman Zaw Htay said on his Facebook page. He did not identify any of those being released but said nearly 2,000 were members of the military and police, jailed under the Military Act or Police Disciplinary Act. He did not elaborate. Zaw Htay also said 36 prisoners on a list issued by the human rights group Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) were included in the amnesty.

Hundreds of political prisoners have been released from Myanmar's jails in amnesties in recent years, including dozens freed in April 2016, days after Nobel laureate Suu Kyi's party took power following nearly 50 years of strict military rule. Before yesterday's pardon, there were 240 political activists jailed or awaiting trial in Myanmar, the AAPP said.

"This amnesty is very good news and we welcome and support it," said a representative of the group, Aung Myo Kyaw. "But there should not be a single political prisoner in a democratic country," he said. Suu Kyi, who spent years under house arrest, has said that releasing all remaining political prisoners was a top priority. She has faced criticism at home over slow economic growth and the stuttering peace process. Her government has also faced mounting international condemnation over a military operation against Rohingya Muslims that has sent nearly 700,000 members of the minority community fleeing to Bangladesh, according to UN figures.

Two Reuters reporters jailed in Myanmar not included in pardon



YANGON: Myanmar women wear traditional hairstyles and costumes during a ceremony celebrating the Buddhist New Year, known locally as 'Thingyan', in Yangon. — AFP

US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said on Twitter on Monday she had met representatives of Reuters and prominent human rights lawyer Amal Clooney to discuss efforts for the release of the two Reuters reporters "jailed for doing their job".

"Freedom of press & rule of law are the bases that democracies are built on & we hope Burmese author-

ities will realize the importance of this release to the int'l community," Haley wrote. Clooney has joined the legal team representing the two reporters, her office said last month. A Reuters spokesperson confirmed the meeting and said the company would continue to do all it could to secure the release of the two reporters.—Reuters

Murder of 8-year-old girl tied to land rights

BANGKOK: The brutal rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in India, that has triggered massive protests, highlights nomadic tribes' vulnerability and lack of land rights, activists said. According to the police, the girl was kidnapped, gang raped and killed in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir as part of a plot by Hindu residents to evict her nomadic Bakkarwal community from a village where they had temporarily settled.

Nearly 2 million people in the state belong to the Muslim Bakkarwal and Gujjar ethnic groups who traditionally spend the summer months in mountain pastures, and winters on the plains with their cows, sheep and horses. They have sparred with Hindu villagers in recent years over their shrinking access to grazing and forests, said Javid Rahi, a tribal activist in Jammu.

"Their biggest problem is the lack of land rights," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "They are being seen as encroachers on lands they have lived on for centuries. Where can they go? Even a burial ground was denied to the child because their right over it was disputed." Nearly 40 percent of Gujjars and Bakkarwals in the state have given up migration because of land disputes and are now impoverished, said Rahi. Indigenous people in India are protected by several laws that acknowledge their way of life, including customary rights to land. But these rights are often disregarded as demand for land for industry increases, activists say.

Restive Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional "special status" a provision that allows the state to make its own laws - has kept it from implementing the Forest Rights Act, which gives indigenous people the right to inhabit and live off forests. State chief minister Mehbooba Mufti has said a tribal policy is being drafted, and that nomadic tribes can-



KASHMIR: A cow grazes along a path leading to the house of the eight-year-old girl, who was raped and murdered, at Rasana village in Kathua district of Jammu yesterday.— AFP

not be evicted without government permission. But elsewhere too, lands of indigenous people are becoming increasingly contentious. In northeastern Arunachal Pradesh state, individual ownership rights to tribal communities can trigger more conflicts, analysts say.

Conservationists have also criticized the slow progress of the Forest Rights Act and a move to promote commercial plantations. "Land rights are precarious for forest

dwellers across the country, and the Bakkarwals have to cope with many layers of disadvantage," said Anita Sharma, a sociologist who has studied the community. "The relationship of the pastoral nomad with settled populations has changed drastically, owing to the continued marginalization of the pastoralist."

The migration of the nomad is increasingly viewed as an indulgence.—Reuters

based Foundation for Scientific Research. "If the Russians and Syrians have nothing to hide, it's strange that they would wait 36 to 72 hours," he said. "It's probably to give themselves the time to finish cleaning up."

Stripping Legion d'Honneur

In an impassioned defense to the European Parliament on Tuesday, France's President Emmanuel Macron admitted that Saturday's strikes had been a more political than military decision. "Three countries have intervened, and let me be quite frank, quite honest - this is for the honor of the international community," he said in the French city of Strasbourg. "These strikes don't necessarily resolve anything but I think they were important," Macron added.

The French leader was also set to strip Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad of a prestigious award he was granted by former president Jacques Chirac in 2001. "The Elysee confirms that a disciplinary procedure for withdrawing the Legion d'Honneur (Legion of Honor) is under way," Macron's office said. The war of words continued to spiral between the Russian-backed Syria regime and the West but a military escalation looked to have been averted despite both sides trading threats after the strikes.

Yet, a report on SANA that Syrian air defenses had shot down missiles over Homs province overnight raised fears that further action had indeed been taken. It branded the incident an "aggression" but did not name a specific country. Explosions were heard near Shayrat air base, southeast of Homs city, and near Damascus where two other air bases are located, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported.

'False alarm'

Later yesterday, however, SANA retracted the report, stressing there had been "no external attack" on Syria. "Last night, a false alarm that Syrian air space had been penetrated triggered the blowing of air defense sirens and the firing of several missiles," a military source told the agency. After Saturday's strikes, which destroyed mostly empty buildings, the trio of Western powers trying to



THE HAGUE: Photo shows the headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague, The Netherlands. Priority must be given to boosting the work of the world's chemical arms watchdog so it can dismantle Syria's 'secret' toxic weapons program, the French ambassador said.— AFP

reassert influence on the seven-year-old war have appeared to favor diplomatic action. A series of meetings was scheduled in a bid to relaunch talks aimed at ending a war that has left more than 350,000 people dead and displaced more than half of the Syrian population.—AFP

Chemical inspectors enter Douma amid concerns for probe

DAMASCUS: International investigators yesterday entered a Syrian town hit by an alleged chemical attack, after days of delay and warnings by Western powers that crucial evidence had likely been removed. The suspected gas attack on April 7 on Douma, near Damascus, reportedly left more than 40 people dead and was blamed by Western powers on the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. In response, the United States, France and Britain conducted unprecedented missile strikes on Syrian military installations, but Paris admitted on Tuesday they were a matter of "honour" that had solved nothing.

"Experts from the chemical weapons committee enter the town of Douma," state news agency SANA wrote, referring to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The inspectors arrived in Damascus on the day of the Western strikes but had not been allowed to enter Douma. France and the United States appeared to question the purpose of such a mission, warning that any incriminating evidence had likely been removed by now. "It is highly likely that evidence and essential elements disappear from the site, which is completely controlled by the Russian and Syrian armies," the French foreign ministry said.

The US ambassador to the OPCW, Ken Ward, had claimed Monday that the site and "may have tampered with". Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova hit back at France, calling the accusation "very surprising" and saying that Russia had supported the inspection. Several experts have also said however that any investigation at this stage was likely to be inconclusive. "As with any crime scene, it is crucial to get there as soon as possible," said Olivier Lepick, a fellow at the Paris-

News in brief

US pastor in Turkey jail

ALIAGA: A Turkish court ruled Monday to keep an American Christian pastor in custody, deeming him to be a flight risk, after his trial opened in a case that has raised tensions with Washington. Andrew Brunson, who ran a Protestant church in the western city of Izmir, has been detained by Turkish authorities since October 2016. If convicted, he risks up to 35 years in jail. Brunson-wearing a black suit, speaking fluent Turkish and sometimes bursting into tears-empirically rejected all the charges against him at the first court hearing in the town of Aliaga north of Izmir. He is accused of engaging in activities on behalf of the group led by exiled Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen-who Ankara says is behind a failed 2016 coup-and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). —AFP

'War against women'

HELSINKI: A Moroccan man told a court in Finland he was "in war against women" when he went on a rampage in the Finnish city of Turku last year, stabbing two women to death and wounding eight more people, local media reported. Abderrahman Bouanane, at the time a 22-year-old asylum seeker, spoke in district court yesterday, where he is on trial on charges of murder and attempted murder "with terrorist intent". Bouanane told the court that before the attacks last August, he had visited mosque and recorded a video in which he talked about US-led air strikes in Syria and the fight for Islamic State. When he started the attacks on the market square, he said, he couldn't control himself.—Reuters

Tanzania net crackdown

DAR ES SALAAM: Tanzania has arrested two musicians, including one of the country's most popular singers, after they posted video clips deemed obscene by the authorities, in the latest crackdown on social media users. Tanzania has become more socially conservative since the election of President John Magufuli in late 2015. Last month, the government tightened regulations on online content, imposing license fees for bloggers and threatening internet users with criminal charges for posting hate speech or indecent content. Award-winning 28-year old singer Nassib Abdul, whose stage name is Diamond Platnumz, was arrested after sharing a video clip with his 4.5 million followers on Instagram that showed him kissing a girl.— Reuters

Scandal-hit degree

MADRID: Madrid's conservative regional president said yesterday she was giving up a masters degree she is suspected of obtaining fraudulently and may never even have passed, sparking derision on social networks. Cristina Cifuentes has been caught in a media storm over accusations she got the 2011-2012 law diploma from Madrid's King Juan Carlos University (URJC) without taking all the required exams and rarely attending lectures. The university rector himself admitted the document attesting she had passed it was a "re-construction" of the original, with two professors' signatures faked, sparking a probe.—AFP

Bomb explodes in Nepal

KATHMANDU: A bomb that exploded outside an Indian diplomatic post in southern Nepal caused damage and drew attention for being a rare attack on a foreign mission, officials said. The homemade device went off late Monday at Biratnagar, 200 kilometers southeast of Kathmandu and close to the Indian border. "There were no injuries in the pressure-cooker bomb blast, but the wall suffered some minor damage. We are investigating," senior district police official Arun Kumar said.—AFP

Analysis

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Under military rule, Venezuela oil workers quit in a stampede

Chauffeured around in a sleek black pick-up, the head of Venezuela's oil industry, Major General Manuel Quevedo, last month toured a joint venture with US major Chevron. Flanked by other trucks carrying security guards, Quevedo passed a handful of workers waiting by an oil well cluster. They wanted a word with the OPEC nation's oil minister and president of its state-run oil firm, PDVSA, about the sorry state of the company. Quevedo and his caravan drove on by. "He didn't get out to ask workers about what is going on," said Jesus Tabata, a union leader who works on a rig in the oil-rich Orinoco Belt. "That way it's easier to keep saying everything is fine - and at the same time keeping us on like slaves on miserable wages."

What's going on is that thousands of oil workers are fleeing the state-run oil firm under the watch of its new military commander, who has quickly alienated the firm's embattled upper echelon and its rank-and-file, according to union leaders, a half-dozen current PDVSA workers, a dozen former PDVSA workers and a half-dozen executives at foreign companies operating in Venezuela. Some PDVSA offices now have lines outside with dozens of workers waiting to quit. In at least one administrative office in Zulia state, human resources staff quit processing out the quitters, hanging a sign, "we do not accept resignations," an oil worker there told Reuters.

Official workforce statistics have become a closely guarded secret, but a dozen sources told Reuters that many thousands of workers had quit so far this year - an acceleration of an already troubling outflow last year. About 25,000 workers resigned between the start of Jan 2017 and the end of Jan 2018, said union leader and government critic Ivan Freitas, citing internal company data. That figure comes out of a workforce last officially reported by PDVSA at 146,000 in 2016. Resignations appear to have increased sharply this year, said Freitas, a prominent union leader at Venezuela's major refineries in the northern Paraguana peninsula. "It's unstoppable," he said.

Many of those leaving now are engineers, managers, or lawyers - high-level professionals that are almost impossible to replace amid Venezuela's economic meltdown, the PDVSA workers and foreign executives told Reuters. PDVSA and the Oil Ministry did not respond to repeated requests for comment. PDVSA board member and pro-government union representative Wills Rangel acknowledged the flight of talent is a serious problem. "The massive resignations are worrying," Rangel said in an interview. "In refinery operations, many have left."

The pace of departures has quickened with the rapid deterioration of PDVSA's operations and finances - radiating pain through the OPEC nation's oil-based economy, now beset with food shortages and hyperinflation. Quevedo - a little known former housing minister who replaced two executives jailed for alleged graft - has further poisoned the atmosphere, according to the two dozen sources who spoke with Reuters. A stiff official who rose through the National Guard, Quevedo fired many long-term employees upon arrival and urged remaining ones to denounce any of their colleagues who oppose Maduro. He tapped soldiers for top roles, giving the oil firm the atmosphere of a "bar-rack", two company sources said.

"The military guys arrive calling the engineers thieves and saboteurs," said a Venezuelan oil executive at a private company who frequently works with PDVSA. Quevedo is also fighting to retain control of a company increasingly riven by turf wars. The ruling socialists, once held together by late leader Hugo Chavez, have succumbed to infighting under Maduro, a former bus driver and union leader who lacks Chavez' charisma and has seen his budget slashed with the decline in global oil prices.

Quevedo has clashed with Venezuela's powerful Vice-President Tarek El-Aissami. When Aissami in February appointed a vice-president to the PDVSA unit that oversees joint ventures with foreign companies, Quevedo removed the appointee and had him arrested, according to three sources with knowledge of the incident, which has not been previously reported. Quevedo is an ally of Socialist Party heavyweight Diosdado Cabello. "There is a fight between Diosdado and Tarek for control of the industry," said Hebert Garcia, a former army general who later broke with Maduro and fled the country.

The political turmoil and mass resignations threaten Maduro's government, which depends on oil for 90 percent of export revenue. In the Orinoco Belt, some drilling rigs are working only intermittently for lack of crews, said two sources there. In PDVSA's refineries, several small fires have broken out because there are no longer enough supervisors, two sources in the northern Paraguana peninsula said. Lack of personnel in export terminals have forced some ports to cut back working hours, according to two shippers and one trader. Oil production in the first quarter of this year slipped to a 33-year low of 1.6 million barrels per day. Jobs at PDVSA were once coveted for their generous salaries and benefits, including cheap credit for housing. —Reuters



Concern over Modi reticence over rapes

As India's rape epidemic gets worse by the year, critics have pointed fingers at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government for not doing enough to protect the country's women. During the past week, his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been battered by a nationwide storm over two rapes. One involved the abduction, gang rape and murder of an eight-year-old Muslim girl by Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir state, where two BJP ministers in the provincial government were forced to resign after initially offering support for the accused rapists. Eight men are on trial for the crime, which has led to a wave of revulsion and anger in the country. In the other case, a BJP legislator in Uttar Pradesh state, India's most populous, stands accused of raping a teenager.

When Modi came to office in 2014, he coined the slogan "save our daughters, teach our daughters", but right now that message is ringing hollow. Nearly 40 percent of India's rape victims are children. And the 40,000 reported rapes in 2016 marked a 60 percent increase over the level in 2012 - the year that a sickening rape and murder of a 23-year-old student in the capital New Delhi sparked nationwide demonstrations. Yet, by the time Modi addressed the outrage over the latest rapes last week by promising justice regardless of whoever the guilty were, critics had already hammered the prime minister for his silence.

The economy and increasing intolerance towards religious minorities are expected to be the main issues for a general election due by next year and Modi remains a frontrunner with a splintered opposition struggling to narrow the distance. But analysts foresaw the opposition Congress and regional parties tapping a well of discontent over the BJP's weak response to the rapes, especially among better informed urban voters.

"There will be political fallout, every party will go to town over it," said Neera Chowdhury, a political columnist, describing Modi's hesitancy to speak out on cases involving his own party members as "most worrying". With Modi away on an official visit to Europe that began yesterday, the criticism has been mounting.

Castro set to step aside as president, reforms incomplete

Most of Camilo Condis' family emigrated from Communist-run Cuba to the United States seeking a better life, but the 32-year-old decided to stay after Raul Castro became president a decade ago and promised change. Seeking to make socialism sustainable, Castro introduced some market reforms to the state-run economy and secured a historic detente with the United States. He made it easier for Cubans to travel, allowed them to own property, cellphones and computers, and expanded internet access.

Condis, who graduated university in 2011, the year Castro announced most of the reforms, now makes a decent living in the capital, Havana, working for a restaurant in Cuba's fledgling private sector, and renting out a flat. He surfs the web daily and has traveled outside the Caribbean island. But even Condis, who has benefited more than most from the changes, is worried about the future as Castro prepares to step down as president this week and hand off power to a younger generation of Communist leaders. "I decided I could bet on a good future here," Condis said on a street buzzing with private cafes and shops, fruit of the changes. "But there is a lot of uncertainty."

Like most Cubans, his biggest concern is the creaking economy, which remains one-third smaller than in 1985 when it was receiving subsidies from its ally the Soviet Union, according to former Cuban central bank economist Pavel Vidal. Castro introduced some new social freedoms when he officially took power from his ailing older brother Fidel Castro in 2008, albeit maintaining the one-party system that has a monopoly on the media and little tolerance for public dissent.

On the economy, his government has implemented only a fraction of its planned market reforms, which aimed to deepen an opening Fidel Castro had started following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It has even back-

tracked on some. Those who welcomed the proposed changes blamed this on resistance to change from the party and entrenched bureaucracy as social inequality rose and the state's control diminished. "He created the main lines, the institutions, but what he wasn't able to do is end the old mentality," said Carlos Alzugaray, a retired Cuban diplomat.

More than two-thirds of Cubans work in the inefficient state sector, earning on average \$30 per month, although free education and healthcare and some subsidized food and housing offset low wages to some extent. In interviews across the country, Cubans told Reuters they are struggling to get by. Travel and use of the Internet at \$1 per hour were luxuries many could ill afford. The benefits of the economic opening have been concentrated on the private services sector in cities, especially Havana where better relations with the United States boosted tourism.

But even there, opportunities were curtailed last year when US President Donald Trump partially reversed the detente, and they look set to be curbed further by tighter regulations. The economy has grown on average 2.4 percent per year over the last decade, according to official statistics. The government said in 2014 that annual growth of at least 7 percent was necessary to develop the country. And exports have stagnated. Some analysts say Castro may have missed a historic opportunity to enact change given his authority as a leader of the 1959 revolution. Others say his legacy hangs in the balance. Much will depend on the path taken by his successor - likely to be 57-year-old Miguel Diaz-Canel - and on how much Castro maintains a hand in policy as he remains head of the ruling Communist Party until 2021.

A new Cuba? While critics saw just another Castro when Raul Castro took over from his more charismatic brother, who died in retirement in 2016, his ascent was seen by some as a ray of hope for reform. Once considered an implacable Stalinist, Raul Castro is said to have become more pragmatic after the Soviet collapse pushed Cuba to the brink of economic chaos. He was defense minister at the time and the military became the first Cuban institution since the revolution to introduce capitalist business practices, going on to manage large swaths of the economy.

ling, according to a BJP official in the state capital Lucknow, that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath could be asked to resign to soothe public anger over the handling of the case. A ruling party spokesman declined to comment on the speculation. In Jammu and Kashmir, the communal dimension of the case could spoil the BJP's relations with the mainly Muslim party that it shares power with in the state, and pose a security risk in a region disputed with Pakistan and ravaged by a long-running Muslim militant insurgency.

Extending death penalty? Laying all blame for the rape crisis at the door of the BJP government is obviously unfair, but critics of the right-wing conservative party and its Hindutva or Hindu nationalist agenda accuse it of pandering to backward attitudes that suppress women. The opposition Congress party has seized on the public revulsion over the rapes. Its leader Rahul Gandhi led the first protest, with a candlelight vigil at India Gate, the war memorial at the center of the capital where mass crowds had gathered to demonstrate their disgust and shame after the rape in 2012.

The protests this time have been on a smaller scale. Chowdhury, the columnist, said this was partly due to the absence of people who would be typical BJP supporters. "It's strange and curious the women of the BJP who take up cudgels often, who are the champions of women causes, are quiet. Why? Because the child was Muslim? I'd like to think not," she said. How the BJP responds to the public's demands for action is unclear, although Maneka Gandhi, the minister for women and child development, has advocated applying the death penalty for rape cases where the victim is under 12 years old. Currently the Supreme Court reserves the death penalty for extreme cases.

On Sunday, police in Modi's home state of Gujarat found the body of a young girl who had been tortured and raped before being strangled to death, the latest case to be publicized. In response, Anand Mahindra, the chairman of one of India's leading automobile companies, said in a tweet: "The job of executioner is not an aspirational job. But for the execution of brutal rapists & murderers of young girls I would volunteer unhesitatingly." —Reuters

As president, Castro has trimmed the bloated state payroll, leased out fallow land and expanded the private sector. The number of self-employed Cubans has more than tripled to around 580,000, out of a total population of more than 11 million. Some of those have started earning - and spending - conspicuously more than everyone else. Castro also oversaw the creation of a Chinese-style industrial park and a new law offering foreign investors tax cuts. To advance Cuba's re-integration into global markets, he renegotiated its external debt, getting the Paris Club to forgive 76 percent of its \$11.1 billion in official obligations.

The detente with long-time foe the United States, reached with former US President Barack Obama and announced in 2014 sparked global investor interest in Cuba. A surge in tourism boosted the private sector and remittances served as start-up capital for many Cubans forming small businesses, but that meant many of the emerging opportunities were for people in the right place, or with relatives abroad.

Rural change at an ox-pace In rural areas, though, farmers remain dependent on the state to allocate scarce equipment like tractors. Agricultural output stagnated over the past decade, according to the Brookings Institution think tank, and Cuba still imports 60 to 70 percent of the food it consumes. "What we need here is a decent irrigation system," said farmer Mario Cruzata, 45, who uses ox-drawn plows to work his fields of yucca, eggplant and lettuce in south-eastern Santiago de Cuba province.

And while the reforms have had more success at stimulating the services sector, there are still hids on private business such as the lack of a wholesale market and the right to import or export. "I wish they would let people grow," said Yusbely Andino, 40, who makes a living fixing computers in the eastern province of Holguin. He has to buy old PCs for spare parts. Moreover Cuba has authorized self-employment only in certain, highly specific categories, and it stopped issuing new licenses last year for certain popular activities like running restaurants and bed and breakfasts.

In fact, a draft of new regulations seen by Reuters proposes curtailing the private sector. One measure would limit licenses to one business activity per person, hurting entrepreneurs like Condis. —Reuters

News

'The man with three faces' has...

Continued from Page 1

Last summer Hamon was hospitalized and in November his face, suffering from necrosis, had to be removed. He remained in hospital without a face for two months, a very difficult time, while a compatible donor was sought. This exceptional case revealed an exceptional patient. Everyone at the hospital "was blown away by Jerome's courage, his will, his strength of character in a tragic situation. While he was waiting he never complained, he was even in a good mood," recalled Bernard Cholley, an anesthetist.

Eventually, a face donor was found, a 22-year-old man who had died hundreds of kilometers from Paris. Lantieri heard the news on a Sunday in January and the massive logistical and medical operation was swiftly

launched. The donor face was transported as quickly as possible by road on the Monday to the Georges-Pompidou hospital in Paris. By late morning the following day, Hamon was being wheeled back to his hospital bed following the groundbreaking surgery, with his medical team noticing encouraging signs of good color in his new face.

The operation answers a key question for Lantieri and the rest of the medical world: "Can we redo a facial transplant? Yes, we can re-transplant and this is what you get!" To avoid any rejection, the patient underwent three months of special blood treatment prior to the transplant, nephrologist Eric Thivet explained. Despite all the anxiety and suffering, Hamon is a happy man again. "The first transplant I accepted immediately. I thought 'this is my new face' and this time it's the same," he explained. "If I hadn't accepted this new face it would have been terrible. It's a question of identity... But here we are, it's good, it's me." There have now been around 40 face transplants throughout the world since the first was performed on Frenchwoman Isabelle Dinoire in northern France in 2005. — AFP

Arab angst at US Jerusalem move won't spark action



GAZA CITY: Palestinian women take part in a demonstration in support of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails yesterday. — AFP

Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had said that the kingdom, a key US ally, could take part in military action in Syria. While some commentators have assumed that Saudi Arabia is fully preoccupied with a three-year-old war in Yemen, Riyadh has suggested it could help counter-terrorism operations in some other theatres of conflict as part of a wider Muslim alliance.

For example, a Saudi-backed Islamic military coalition will provide logistical, intelligence and training to a new West African counter-terrorism force, Jubair said in December. About 40 Muslim-majority nations met in Riyadh at the end of November to flesh out details of an alliance first conceived two years ago by Prince Mohammed that is widely seen as a vehicle for countering the growing influence of Riyadh's rival Iran. — Reuters

Riyadh renews offer to deploy...

Continued from Page 1

over a suspected chemical weapons attack. One US official told Reuters the United States is looking at what forces might be able to follow on in areas of Syria formerly under Islamic State control, should the United States leave or reduce its force dramatically. But no decisions have been made to do this.

Before the Western military strikes took place, Saudi

lion was also found in the account of a female defendant. The speaker vowed not to allow any organization to exploit its status to carry out money laundering operations, adding that some people utilized such operations to keep international sanctions on Kuwaiti sports. MP Mohammad Al-Mutairi charged that some people raise sports issue to make personal and political gains. During the debate, MPs Adasani and Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei traded accusations and insults.

In other business, the Assembly passed in the first reading and without debate the early retirement draft law amid a dispute between the government and MPs. The law allows early retirement for Kuwaiti employees after serving for 30 years for men and 25 years for women, regardless of age.

DUBAI: Arab leaders at a summit in Saudi Arabia have slammed Washington's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move its embassy there, but analysts say their words are unlikely to lead to action. The shift by US President Donald Trump has sparked deep anger across the Arab world, particularly among Palestinians, who see East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. But it seemed clear at the Arab League summit, held in the eastern city of Doha on Sunday, that regional rulers, particularly in the Gulf, are unwilling to jeopardize close ties with Trump as they seek to counter Iran.

"Generally, Arab League summits produce more rhetoric than action," said Denis Bauchard, an expert from the French Institute on International Relations. "I don't think this will go beyond declarations." For Riyadh, he said, "what is essential is the relationship with Washington". Israel occupied mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem and the surrounding region in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it, declaring the city its capital. Neither move was recognized by the international community - but the United States is now set to shift its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in May.

United States." The American decision on Jerusalem comes as ties warm between the US and key allies in the region - Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. That follows years of tension under former president Barack Obama as Washington improved ties with Iran, culminating in a historic 2015 deal to lift sanctions in exchange for curbs on Tehran's nuclear program. Saudi Arabia and Iran have spent years fighting proxy wars across the region, from Syria to Yemen.

Trump has openly sided with Riyadh and threatened to back out of the Iran nuclear accord - possibly also in May. "Saudi Arabia and the UAE... have felt since the nuclear deal with Iran that Washington was not taking into account their concerns about Iran's strong presence in the region," said Khalil Harb, editor of Journal, an Arabic-language website focusing on Gulf affairs. The two countries are now trying "to push the Trump administration... to review the American position on the nuclear deal. At a political moment like this, Riyadh doesn't want to embarrass or anger America," he said.

MPs debate 'financial crimes'...

Continued from Page 1

a building for KD 800,000 and the one adjacent to it for KD 8 million, a clear money laundering case. Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said the entire issue must be investigated because of suspected crimes, adding that an employee at OCA was drawing a monthly salary of KD 400 but KD 12 million was found in his account. He said a number of people were granted citizenship at the expense of Kuwait, adding that KD 6 mil-

case. A 2014 UN report said one in three rape victims in India was a minor. Nearly 11,000 cases of child rape were reported in India in 2015, according to the National Crime Records Bureau's latest figures.

In Karachi, crowds took to the streets after the body of the victim was discovered late Monday, blocking a main road in the western suburb of Orangi Town, where they hurled stones at riot police. "One man has died because of a gunshot," said Aamir Farooqi, the police chief in the district. "We are investigating whose bullet caused that death." A second police official confirmed the figure.

That breaks with decades of US policy and international consensus that the status of the city should be settled in negotiations. Nour Odeh, a Palestinian political analyst, said Palestinians had low expectations for any Arab response. "Ordinary people and politicians alike understand the dismal state of Arab affairs, and no Arab government is going to confront Trump," she said. Saudi King Salman dubbed the Doha conference the "Jerusalem summit" and used his opening speech to denounce Washington's decision and announce a \$150 million donation for the maintenance of Islamic heritage in the eastern part of the holy city.

Other leaders queued up to add their criticism, and the summit's final statement also slammed Trump's move. But an Arab diplomat, who asked not to be named, said that "even Washington's allies (Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Cairo) know very well that they don't have many diplomatic options". "Their aim is to improve the situation of the Palestinians as much as possible, but they won't go as far as confronting" the Trump administration, the diplomat said. Ghassan Khatib, a Palestinian academic and former minister, said they were "not capable" of doing so, "especially with all the problems in the Arab world". He said Arab governments were "not willing to risk their relationships with the

Karim Bitar, from the Paris-based Institute of International and Strategic Affairs, said those states are "so concerned with the Iranian threat that they realize that they might have to coordinate the anti-Iranian effort with the US and Israel."

Amid the controversy surrounding Trump's decision on Jerusalem, observers have said the move could spark renewed violence in the region. But there have been growing signs of a diplomatic opening between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Saudi Arabia's powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the 32-year-old son of the king and heir to the region's most powerful throne, said during a US tour days before the summit that Israel also had a right to its own land. King Salman called Trump hours later to reaffirm the kingdom's support for "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent state with its capital in Jerusalem".

Rape-killings spark outrage...

Continued from Page 1

We are awaiting the post-mortem reports but prima facie it looks she was strangled to death," Chaurasia said. The authorities and police face mounting pressure over a series of sexual assaults, including the Jammu and Kashmir case. That killing was in January but outrage has mounted as details of the rape emerged. Police say she was drugged and raped for days at a Hindu temple before being beaten to death. Eight men, all Hindus, have been arrested for the crime. Police said the accused targeted the girl because they wanted to drive her nomadic Muslim tribe out of the Hindu-dominated region.

Two Jammu and Kashmir state ministers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) resigned after they attended rallies organized to defend the accused. Some activists have accused the party of siding with Hindu groups demanding the release of the arrested men. The BJP government has also faced criticism after one of its legislators in Uttar Pradesh state was arrested last week for the alleged rape of a 17-year-old woman. The woman's father died in police custody as he agitated for the authorities to take up the

Relatives of the girl and hundreds of residents were angry over what they say has been police laxity in the case. A medical report said the child had been sexually assaulted and strangled. As the demonstration boiled over, police fired in the air over the crowd and attacked demonstrators with batons. Two protesters suffering from gunshot wounds were brought to nearby Abbasi Shaheed hospital, where one died later. Another senior police officer said 10 to 15 police officials were injured during the violence.

The rioting comes months after six-year-old Zainab Fatima Ameen was raped and killed in eastern Pakistan's city of Kasur, sparking nationwide outrage and soul-searching over how the country fails to protect its most vulnerable. In February a Pakistani court handed down four death sentences on the man charged with the killing. — AFP



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Sports

Japan hails school clerk who won Boston Marathon

'You can compete at world level even if you have a job like I do'

TOKYO: Japan yesterday hailed local school clerk Yuki Kawauchi, the surprise winner of the Boston Marathon, who called work after his victory to ask for an extra day off to celebrate. When Kawauchi ploughed across the finish line on Monday, despite the coldest start in 30 years and steady rain, he became the first Japanese runner to win the race since 1987.

In a poetic twist of fate, that was the year Kawauchi was born. He finished the punishing 26.2 mile (42.1 km) course with a time of 2hrs 15min 58sec. The humble bureaucrat, who has no coach and no sponsor and trains on his free time, has been hailed across Japan for the shock triumph. "It is a tremendous achievement to win Boston, which is one of the highest quality races in the world," Toshihiko Seko, the Japanese runner who won the race in 1987 and 1981, told national broadcaster NHK. "In the horrible conditions that everyone hates, Kawauchi managed to maintain the toughest spirit, more than anyone else," he said. In a country that values modesty and hard work, Kawauchi's quiet dedication has garnered widespread admiration. At the Kuki High School in Saitama region, where Kawauchi works, officials

said he had been in touch to ask about an extra day off.

'THE GREATEST DAY OF MY LIFE'

Apparently not expecting his win, Kawauchi had planned to fly back to Japan the morning after the race and start working from today evening. "He called to ask for an extra day off because he has to attend functions there," school official

Kawauchi's low-key approach to his running. His training is done outside working hours, and he competes in races on weekends or on holiday.

"Generally he has kept his work and marathon separate. We support him, like we support others, by covering his work while he is gone," Mitsui said. Marathons are hugely popular in Japan, and Kawauchi is well known for juggling his day job with his running passion.

"I want to show that you can compete at the world level even if you have a job like I do," he has said of maintaining the balance. After his win Monday, a tearful Kawauchi declared: "This is the greatest day of my life."

"There was no one who thought I would be the winner. I was able to prove that marathon is a sport in which you cannot tell what happens until the finish." But while the Boston victory might be the biggest of his career, but it is far from his only marathon win.

In fact, the 31-year-old has racked up five consecutive marathon wins with his latest victory, including races in Japan, the US, and Taiwan. Last month, he was recognised by the Guinness World Records for the highest number of

“
The greatest day of my life
”

Yasuhiro Mitsui told AFP. "The principal told him 'Congratulations, you have done very well,'" Mitsui said, adding that the holiday extension had been granted. No celebrations were being planned at the school, Mitsui said, in keeping with



BOSTON: Yuki Kawauchi of Japan celebrates after crossing the finish line as the winner of the 2018 and 122nd Boston Marathon for Elite Men's race with a time of 2:15:58 in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

marathons run in under two hours and 20 minutes — 78 in all.

And he won't be resting on his laurels

long, with plans to run a half marathon this weekend in the Japanese city of Gifu, he told Japanese media. — AFP

Yankees romp to a 12-1 victory over Marlins

NEW YORK: Luis Severino fired six scoreless innings of one-hit ball, and Didi Gregorius homered twice for the second time this year as the New York Yankees beat the Miami Marlins 12-1 at Yankee Stadium on Monday. Severino (3-1) struck out eight and walked one. Aaron Judge and Gregorius slugged their fourth homers as New York opened an 11-0 lead in the first five innings. Gregorius added a solo shot in the seventh. Gary Sanchez had three hits and three RBIs. Judge, Gregorius, Miguel Andujar, Brett Gardner and Tyler Austin had two hits each for the Yankees.

BRAVES 2, PHILLIES 1

Julio Teheran struck out nine batters in six strong innings, and Atlanta ended visiting Philadelphia's six-game winning streak. Teheran (1-1) allowed one run on five hits, one of them a solo homer from Odubel Herrera in the first inning. The right-hander walked three. Atlanta tied the game in the bottom of the first inning when Freddie Freeman grounded into a double play that scored Ender Inciarte. The Braves got their other run in the fourth when Ozzie Albies scored on Kurt Suzuki's sacrifice fly.

ROCKIES 6, PIRATES 2

German Marquez took a no-hitter into the fifth inning, and Trevor Story and Charlie Blackmon continued Colorado's home run parade as the visiting Rockies downed Pittsburgh. Marquez (1-1) allowed two runs on two hits in six innings with two walks and six strikeouts. Chris Rusin allowed two hits in two scoreless innings of relief, and Adam Ottavino pitched a clean ninth with two strikeouts. Story hit a three-run homer in the fourth and Blackmon added a solo shot in the eighth for the Rockies, who lead the National League with 26 homers. They have homered



NEW YORK: Junichi Tazawa #25 of the Miami Marlins delivers a pitch in the eighth inning against the New York Yankees at Yankee Stadium on Monday in the Bronx borough of New York City. — AFP

in seven of their past eight games, hitting a total of 14 in that stretch.

RAYS 8, RANGERS 4

Wilson Ramos had three hits and two RBIs, and Mallex Smith had a career-high-tying four hits to host the excellent pitching of Blake Snell as back Tampa Bay Rays rolled past Texas. Snell (2-1) hurled 6 1/3 innings, allowing just one run on five hits with nine strikeouts and no walks, to help the Rays snap a four-game losing streak. Snell got plenty of early offensive help as Tampa Bay scored all eight of its runs in the first four innings off Texas starter Martin Perez (1-2).

NATIONALS 8, METS 6

Michael A. Taylor worked a bases-loaded walk to cap a six-run eighth inning by Washington, which stunned host New York. The Nationals appeared headed for their fourth loss in as many games this season

against the Mets, who led 6-1 with staff ace Jacob deGrom still on the mound to begin the eighth inning. However, deGrom was lifted with two on and one out, and four relievers could not stop the barrage. Washington's Howie Kendrick homered leading off the ninth. Bryce Harper accounted for the Nationals' only run in the first seven innings with a broken-bat home run in the first.

REDS 10, BREWERS 4

Luis Castillo pitched 6 2/3 innings and added a run-scoring single as Cincinnati broke an eight-game losing streak with a win at Milwaukee. Castillo (1-2) allowed four runs and five hits and three walks while striking out eight. Leadoff hitter Billy Hamilton singled twice and drove in three runs for the Reds. Adam Duvall had three hits, including two doubles, while Joey Volto and rookie outfielder Phillip Ervin had two hits apiece for Cincinnati. — Reuters

Scarlets set for 'massive' Euro task against Leinster

LONDON: Llanelli Scarlets coach Wayne Pivac has said his side will need to beat European rugby's "form horse" if they are to reach the Champions Cup final at Leinster's expense. The Welsh region face Leinster in the Irish province's Dublin backyard on Saturday in what will be the Scarlets' first European semi-final since 2007. No Welsh side has yet won the continent's elite club rugby tournament whereas Leinster have three European crowns to their credit. They have been in outstanding form this season, winning all six of their pool matches against Exeter, Montpellier and Glasgow, collecting 27 out of a possible 30 points in the process, before defeating reigning European champions Saracens in the quarter-finals.

"They (Leinster) are unbeaten in the

competition, and to do that home and away against the quality of their pool shows the strength of their squad," Pivac told reporters in Llanelli yesterday. "It'll be nice to have the opportunity to go a step further in this competition, and we certainly know it's going to be a massive task."

Pivac, a possible successor to fellow New Zealander Warren Gatland as Wales coach, added: "Leinster are the form horse, and we are going to have to have probably our best performance so far as a group." Scarlets, who last season won the Pro 12 — now the Pro 14 following the addition of two South African sides to what was the Celtic League-bounced back from a poor start to their European campaign, with pool wins over Bath and Toulon taking them into a quarter-final where they overcame La Rochelle. The west Wales side may have lost all three of their previous European semi-finals but high-profile games in Dublin have not proved a problem under Pivac.

They beat Leinster in a Pro 12 semi-final at the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) ground last May before returning to the Republic of Ireland capital to beat Munster at nearby Lansdowne Road the following week. "We can certainly take a lot of confidence out of the fact we went to Ireland two weeks in a row, with one of those games at the Aviva

(Lansdowne Road)," said Pivac. "But it was 12 months ago. They are a different side, we are a different side."

Leinster were seeded to have home country advantage in the semi-finals, meaning they could not play at the RDS. But the decision by European Professional Club Rugby to stage the tie at Lansdowne Road, barely half a mile away, has raised eyebrows given how often Leinster play major matches at the 51,700 capacity stadium.

Pivac, however, was unconcerned by the choice of venue. "We have worked really hard to get to the semi-final, and to be quite honest, wherever we played it, it was never going to bother us," he said. "That is for other people to decide-what is neutral and what is not. "It is a magnificent stadium, in terms of your preparation, changing rooms and everything is international standard."

"The location of the stadium as a neutral venue? Look, there will be plenty of support for the locals I am sure, they won't have too far to travel, but I know one Scarlets supporter probably makes up for 10 of the opposition."

"Hopefully, there will be something like 5,000 Scarlets fans there by the sounds of it, which is a great number of travelling supporters. I don't know if it will be the cauldron that some people think." — AFP

Paddy Jackson's Test career over: Ulster rugby chief

LONDON: Fly-half Paddy Jackson will never play for Ireland again after he and team-mate Stuart Olding were sacked despite being cleared in a rape trial, the Ulster chief executive said.

Jackson, 26, and centre Olding, 25, had their contracts with Ulster and the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) terminated after an internal review following their acquittal. The players were found not guilty of raping the same woman in June 2016. Jackson was also unanimously acquitted of sexual assault. The high-profile trial, which ran for nine weeks at Belfast Crown Court, brought to light a number of sexually explicit and offensive text exchanges that sparked a wave of protest on social media and on the streets.

Before the trial Jackson had been the stand-in for Irish number one fly-half

Johnny Sexton but Ulster chief executive Shane Logan said he did not believe Jackson would add to the 25 caps he had won. Olding has four caps.

"The position is joint. It's a joint Irish and Ulster rugby position... The statement is clear and it is not something that we are contemplating," Logan told the BBC when asked about the pair's chances of either playing for the province or Ireland again.

Logan, who refused to reveal whether there had been a financial settlement agreed with the players, denied the IRFU had caved in to pressure on social media or that the decision was motivated by money. "No sponsor including Bank of Ireland drove the decision," he told Britain's Press Association. "We have taken on board everybody's views right across society, right across our supporter group, our sponsor group, our players, clubs, volunteers, we are part of society."

"But at the end of the day, having looked at all those things, the decision was based on alignment with what it is we stand for, in particular the value of respect. "The players themselves admitted in their own statements that they were way short of what was expected of them." —AFP

India's Kom dreams of Olympic gold

NEW DELHI: India's best-ever boxer Mary Kom said yesterday she has no plans to retire and is determined to defy her critics by winning an elusive Olympic gold. Kom, 35, won gold on debut at the Commonwealth Games in Australia last week, complementing a trophy cabinet packed with five amateur world championship titles and an Olympic bronze from London 2012. But India's most accomplished pugilist, feted at home as "Magnificent Mary", says the best is yet to come and has rubbished suggestions she could be close to hanging up the gloves.

"I have never talked about retirement, they were just rumours. Even I was shocked when I heard about my retirement," Kom told reporters in New Delhi as India's boxing team returned from the Gold Coast with three gold, three silver and three bronze medals.

"An Olympic Gold is what I am still dreaming," Kom was devastated to miss out on a wildcard entry for the Rio 2016 Olympics and said she was aiming for Olympic gold in Tokyo 2020. The mother-of-three won a record fifth Asian women's championship title in November last year-defying critics who suggested Kom was approaching retirement age. "Who said my age is a factor? Come up and I will show what I can do," she said in jest when asked about



NEW DELHI: Indian boxer Mary Kom gestures as she arrives at a ceremony for the victorious Indian boxing contingent at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

boxing in her mid-thirties. "This (age issue) should be taken out of the mind. I will know when my body will not allow me to carry on."

The veteran fighter and subject of a blockbuster Bollywood film said she was preparing for the Asian Games, world championship and more and "will try my best" as she pursues gold in Tokyo. Kom conceded she had a busy schedule-as a professional athlete, parent, gym owner and lawmaker-but warned her opponents against assuming she had too much on her plate.

"I have taken this challenge to keep fighting at 35 or 36. No one can guarantee winning or losing, but when I train nobody can beat me easily," she said. — AFP

Sports

Football 'miracle' offers shared goal for war-torn Yemen

'Qualification has brought Yemenis together'

ADEN: A "miracle" winning streak has propelled Yemen's senior and youth football teams to the Asian Cup, catching the war-torn nation's attention and offering a common goal to a divided country. Qualification is a first ever for the senior team, currently based in Qatar, and a rare achievement for the under-16s who still train in Yemen. "Qualification has brought Yemenis together—they're doing us proud," said Ahmed Sabahi, a fan in the southern port city of Aden. "All Yemenis are behind their team," he said.

Yemen's war pitting pro-government forces supported by a Saudi-led coalition against Iran-backed Shiite Huthi rebels entered its fourth year in March.

The conflict has left nearly 10,000 people dead, tens of thousands wounded and created what the United Nations says is the world's worst humanitarian crisis, rife with once forgotten diseases like cholera and diphtheria. "We hope the team will honour Yemen and give Yemenis some relief," said Sabahi. The senior team beat Nepal 2-1 on March 27, reaching the 2019 AFC Asian Cup to be contested in January-February in the Emirates—for the first time in Yemen's history.

The U-16 tournament is to take place in Malaysia in September-October. To build the youth team, selectors travelled the length of the country, including war zones and sectors controlled by rival factions. Ranked 125 in the world by the sport's governing body FIFA, Yemen's senior team has never won a single match in the Gulf Cup against its neighbours since the competition was launched in 1970. Yemen's media used to congratulate the team for an "honourable defeat" if they avoided a hammering. Asian Cup qualification was hailed as nothing less than a "miracle".

“ It has helped put smile on the face of youths ”

FOOTBALL, NOT POLITICS

Paradoxically, Yemeni football has benefited from the war, with senior players relocated to a training camp in Qatar, which has the most up-to-date facilities as it builds up to hosting the 2022 World Cup. Abd al-Salam al-Saadi, a coach in Sanaa, sees another key factor: "The players have not been drawn into politics." Yemen's war has left infrastructure, homes, schools and ports in ruins. Dozens of stadiums have been bombed or turned into military camps for various armed factions.

For football fans back home, Yemen's successful qualification offers a glimmer of hope and a distraction from everyday life in what was the Arab world's poorest country even before the war. It has "helped put a smile on the face of Yemeni youths, who need reasons to be happy and to forget", said Saleh Hanash, another fan in Aden. More than half of Yemen's 27-million-population are aged under 18. According to the UN children's agency UNICEF, more than 1,500 children have been killed in the conflict, while hundreds of minors have been recruited into militias.

'BRING BACK THE SPIRIT'

After a three-year hiatus, football is making a return to Aden, which Yemen's internationally-recognised government has declared its provisional capital while Sanaa remains in rebel hands.

The national league has been suspended but football matches are being played in the southern port city, with local tournaments organised between districts.

Football in Yemen "doesn't gather the crowds you see next door in Gulf states", said Fadel al-Wasabi, one of a



SANNA: Yemeni youth take part in a football match as part of the local league in the capital Sanaa on April 11, 2018. A shock winning streak has propelled Yemen's youth and men's football teams to the Asian Cup, capturing the beleaguered nation's attention and offering a common goal to a divided country. — AFP

handful of fans seated on green plastic chairs as two clubs battled it out on a dirt pitch beside a wall pocked by shellfire. "Maybe that's because Yemenis are preoccupied with securing their basic needs," he said, glancing over at a nearby stadium, bombed out and filled with debris, its

stands reduced to a heap of rubble. Ahmed Hussein Hussein, head of Aden's main sports organisation, admitted it was a tall order: "In the shadow of war we are trying, as much as possible, to bring back the spirit and adapt our lives." —AFP

Ideas about women in sport must change: FA official

LONDON: A "sea change" in perceptions is needed to convince girls they can play any sport they want, says a Football Association official as interest in women's sport soars. England's women footballers reached the 2015 World Cup semi-finals and the same stage at last year's European Championship—attracting a peak TV audience of four million people.

The country's women cricketers and rugby players have also enjoyed notable success on the global stage in recent years, with Lord's packed for England's win against India last year in the Women's World Cup final. Marzena Bogdanowicz, head of marketing and commercial for women's football at the FA, told a panel in London discussing unlocking the potential of women in sport, that she had been struck by a story about a young girl who wanted to take drastic measures so she could play football. "I read on social media the other day this little girl came home and said to her mother 'I want to be a boy mummy' and this carried on for a whole week," she said.

"Then finally the mum realised actually the only reason she wanted to be a boy was because she wanted to play football. "The little girl managed to find a programme for football for girls. This is an instance where we can help the club change the perception it is OK for girls to play football.

"It is just amazing that is still happening and we are slowly changing that. This girl is now playing for her local club, she is confident and bold and got new friends."

'MARGINALISED'

Bogdanowicz, in her role since 2017, said it was important to learn lessons from such cases.

"It is really sad that she believed she had to be a boy to play football," she said. "It almost made me cry. Perceptions, though, are those things you don't need investment for.

"They just need a sea change, an area where the media can help in delivering the message 'it is OK for girls to play any sport they want.'" Alex Teasdale, senior growth projects manager at the Rugby Football Union, said women rugby players had faced hurdles in being accepted. "When I first started in this role five years ago we talked to women in the game about how they felt as part of a rugby club," said Teasdale. "Many felt very marginalised.

"An early example of that that sticks in my mind was at a particular club the women's team could not have post-match teas as the television was in that room and the committee were watching something so they had to forego their opportunity of eating."

However, Teasdale said the tide had turned and women were now seen as part of the fabric of clubs as opposed to being a financial drain. Teasdale said the division of how many of either sex played the game was irrelevant.

"At the end of the day we mark ourselves on the number of people playing, the number of teams and matches and it doesn't matter whether they are men or women playing," she said. "Clubs have really, really tapped into that and are understanding that now themselves." —AFP

Unique Rashid will have big impact on IPL, says Moody

MUMBAI: "Unique" Afghan leg spinner Rashid Khan will have a major impact on this year's Indian Premier League for the Hyderabad franchise, coach Tom Moody has predicted. Rashid has made rapid strides since making his international debut in October 2015 as a 17-year-old, in February becoming the youngest to top the International Cricket Council's rankings for bowlers in the Twenty20 and 50-overs format.

Sunrisers Hyderabad splurged 40 million rupees (\$609,524) at last year's auction to land the unheralded leg-spinner from Afghanistan, where cricket is highly popular but sporting facilities are pitifully inadequate after decades of war. He saw an intense bidding war in this year's auction before Hyderabad retained him with their right-to-match option for a whopping 90 million rupees (\$1.37 million), more than double what they paid for his services a year earlier.

"Rashid is a pretty unique cricketer and he's had a lot of success with us last year," Moody, 52, told Reuters. "He's gone from strength to strength in the various tournaments that he has played around the world and also when he's representing his country."

It was only in 2013 that Afghanistan, mostly made up of players who picked up the game in refugee camps in neighbouring Pakistan, became an Associate Member.

They are currently a Full Member, scheduled to play their maiden test match against India in June, and also won the qualifying tournament for the 50-over World Cup in England and Wales next year.

Rashid has played a major role in Afghanistan's ascent, and last month become the fastest to take 100 wickets in ODIs, bettering the mark of Australia fast bowler Mitchell Starc by eight matches.

He is a proven strike bowler and has made a name for himself in Twenty20 leagues around the world, proving his worth in the IPL and Australia's Big Bash

Stewart wants IPL cut-off date after Surrey lose Curran

LONDON: Surrey director of cricket Alec Stewart wants a cut-off date for county players to join the Indian Premier League (IPL) after losing seamer Tom Curran to the Twenty20 tournament just days before the start of their championship campaign.

Curran went unsold in February's IPL auction but Kolkata Knight Riders recruited him for around \$247,000 earlier this month to replace injured Australian pacer Mitchell Starc.

Yorkshire suffered a double blow with the similar late departures of David Willey and Liam Plunkett, leading county coaches to discuss the issue at Edgbaston last week. "It's far from ideal losing Tom so late," former England captain Stewart was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo <http://www.espncricinfo.com>. "I hope in time this will be looked at. The IPL is not going anywhere—I fully understand players wanting to be part of it because, one, it's a good competition and, second, it helps your bank balance.



HYDERABAD: File photo shows Sunrisers Hyderabad cricketer Rashid Khan (C) celebrates with teammates the wicket of Mumbai Indians Ben Cutting during the 2018 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Mumbai Indians at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad. — AFP

League. "He's an important piece to our puzzle given that there's an element of mystery around him and he has that real potency as a wicket-taker. So he's important," Moody, who played eight tests and 76 ODIs for Australia, said in a telephone interview.

Hyderabad, who lead the IPL standings with three wins from as many matches, lost captain David Warner after the Australia opening batsman was banned late last month due to the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa but New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson has eased into that role. While hard-hitting Warner's ban

was a big loss, the franchise had moved on and are focused on providing Williamson the best support they can, Moody said. "It's a very easy transition to be honest," said the Australian, who has also coached Sri Lanka's national side. "Kane is the captain of experience, given he has captained international teams. He's got a real understanding of leadership and captaincy.

"And like any player captain must be true to themselves and true to their strength and Kane will be doing exactly that and we will encourage him to do it his way." —Reuters

"The problem is when you get the phone calls I got for Tom, and Martyn Moxon (Yorkshire's director of cricket) got for Willey and Plunkett, your planning goes out of the window." The readiness of county players ahead of the English season makes them prime IPL targets to replace injured players in the lucrative Twenty20 league and Stewart suggested that a fixed final recruitment date would help resolve the issue.

"All I think needs to be looked at is a cut-off, ideally a month before the championship starts," he said. "If you get picked up in the auction, that's fine—it's at the end of February, so that's six or seven weeks before the start of the season.

"Then everyone knows that, even if you don't get picked up in the auction, there's a three- or four-week window, but once that has gone, you can't then go and play (in the IPL)."

Stewart also demanded a redistribution of the money the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) receives for allowing its players to take part in the IPL. "We have discovered that the ECB have been receiving 10 percent of the overall contract a player gets from IPL for a number of years and this year it is 20 percent," he said.

"Should the ECB be keeping that? Or should that money come back to the county, who are the ones who miss out? "I personally believe all that money should come back to the county if you are not an ECB-contracted player because of the money that has been invested." — Reuters

Stokes aims to restore England's Test lustre

LONDON: Ben Stokes is desperate to inspire England back to the pinnacle of Test cricket, saying the team has "slacked off" in the past two years, slipping to fifth in the world rankings. The 26-year-old all-rounder returned to international cricket in February against New Zealand but could not prevent a 1-0 defeat for the tourists to extend a miserable run that has seen England win just one Test series overseas since 2012.

Stokes missed his side's 4-0 Ashes humbling after being suspended from playing for England over a night-club incident and admitted he was "gutted" to watch his teammates struggling in Australia. Just two years ago England were one Test win away from holding all nine bilateral Test trophies but were denied as Pakistan won at the Oval and squared the series.

"I just want to get us back to playing the way we want to play," Stokes told Britain's Guardian newspaper. "We were so close to being one of the best teams in the world. "We've slacked off in the past two years but knowing how close we were gives you that desire to get back there." —AFP

Sports

Fabio Cannavaro conflicted by potential Tianjin meeting

Damjanovic puts Suwon into AFC Champions League last 16

HONG KONG: Fabio Cannavaro is torn by the prospect of facing his old club Tianjin Quanjian in the knockout rounds of the Asian Champions League after the Italian successfully steered his Guangzhou Evergrande side into the last 16 yesterday.

A 3-1 win over Cerezo Osaka, courtesy of a second half brace from Alan Carvalho, saw the two-time champions finish in first place in Group G and set up a meeting with the runners-up in Group E. Jeonbuk Motors of South Korea and Tianjin have sealed the top two spots in that group and will play Kitchee from Hong Kong and Japan's Kashiwa Reysol respectively today to decide first and second place.

"I'll be very happy to go back to Tianjin but I'm not too happy to be their rival," said the Italian, who led Quanjian to third place in last year's Chinese Super League to qualify for the continental championship.

"I know Tianjin Quanjian very well, I'm very familiar with them and some of their tactics and techniques. But it will not be an easy game." Guangzhou only needed a draw to secure their place in the next phase and took the lead through Huang Bowen after just six minutes. However, Cerezo struck back four minutes later through Takaki Fukumitsu.

Carvalho, though, put the Chinese champions back in front when he slipped the ball home from a tight

angle on the turn before putting the result beyond doubt four minutes from time. Evergrande are joined in the next round by Thailand's Buriram United, who capitalised on Cerezo's loss to jump into second place with a 1-0 win over Jeju United from South Korea.

Korrakot Wiriyadomsiri scored the only goal of the game from close range as the Thais advanced to the knockout stage for the first time since 2013. They will likely face two-time champions Jeonbuk.

Suwon Bluewings, meanwhile, pinched first place in Group H from under the noses of Japan's Kashima Antlers as Dejan Damjanovic scored the only goal for the Koreans against the J-League side.

Sydney FC's 0-0 draw with already-eliminated Shanghai Shenhua in the group's other game meant the Australians also exited

the competition. In the west of the continent, Morteza Pouraliganji scored the only goal as Iran's Persepolis handed Al Sadd from Qatar a 1-0 defeat that ensures Branko Ivankovic's team finished in first place in Group C.

Persepolis are joined in the round of 16 by their cross-Tehran rivals Esteghlal, who topped Group D ahead of former champions Al Ain of the United Arab Emirates with a 1-0 win over last year's beaten finalists, Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia. Al Ain secured second spot with a 4-1 thrashing of Qatar's Al Rayyan. — Reuters



GUANGZHOU: Guangzhou Evergrande's Alan Douglas (R) fights for the ball with Cerezo Osaka's Noriyuki Sakemoto during the AFC Champions League group stage football match between China's Guangzhou Evergrande and Japan's Cerezo Osaka in Guangzhou in China's southern Guangdong province yesterday. — AFP



Iran's Persepolis defeat Al Sadd from Qatar

Carroll's late leveller spares Hart's blushes

LONDON: Andy Carroll's last-gasp equaliser spared Joe Hart's blushes after the West Ham goalkeeper made a costly blunder in Monday's dramatic 1-1 draw against Stoke.

Stoke substitute Peter Crouch poked home from close-range after Hart made a hash of holding onto Xherdan Shaqiri's soft shot with just 11 minutes left at the London Stadium.

The former Liverpool striker's first goal since November put relegation-threatened Stoke within touching distance of their first win in 10 games. But Carroll came off the bench to rescue West Ham with a superb volley in the 90th minute.

It was a bitter blow for Paul Lambert's Stoke, who remain second bottom of the Premier League. Stoke are five points from safety with only four games left to avoid slipping into the Championship.

"It is a blow because we were so close to winning. I thought we were excellent. I couldn't ask for any more from my players," Lambert said. "We've been playing well. We're willing to fight and we have got the supporters behind us. A win on Sunday would really set the cat among the pigeons." Carroll's third goal of the season-in his first appearance since January was a priceless contribution for West Ham, who are now seven points above the bottom three. "I didn't feel sharp," said Carroll of his return from injury.

"The ball came in and it was right on the path of my left foot so I just whacked it!" Although Hart was relieved his howler didn't cost West Ham all three points, his mistake did little to boost his chances of starting for England in the World Cup.



LONDON: Stoke City's Senegalese striker Mame Biram Diouf (R) clashes with West Ham United's Senegalese midfielder Cheikhou Kouyate during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Stoke City at The London Stadium, in east London. — AFP

It couldn't have come at a worse time with national team boss Gareth Southgate watching from the stands in east London. Hart's failure to impress came while his Stoke counterpart Jack Butland-another contender for the England number one shirt-produced a solid display.

Butland made a vital save to keep out West Ham's best chance of the first half as Marko Arnautovic's point-blank volley hit his old team-mate in the face. Referee Michael Oliver was in charge of his first match since he caused a storm by giving Real Madrid a controversial penalty and sending off Juventus goalkeeper

Gianluigi Buffon in the Champions League last week.

Oliver and his wife were subjected to social media threats over the incident that led to Juventus's elimination. On this occasion, he was involved in three disallowed West Ham goals. First, Arnautovic converted Aaron Cresswell's cross, but he had strayed marginally offside. Then a low Edimilson Fernandes drive flew past Butland but Arnautovic, this time clearly offside, was in the keeper's way. And after West Ham's equaliser, Javier Hernandez had a goal disallowed for a foul by Carroll. —AFP

Austrian Thiem saves match point in victory over Rublev

MONTE CARLO: Austrian fifth seed Dominic Thiem saved a match point in a gripping Monte Carlo Masters second-round win over Russian youngster Andrey Rublev yesterday. The two-time French Open semi-finalist recovered from a set down to book a last-16 clash against either Novak Djokovic or Borna Coric with a 5-7, 7-5, 7-5 victory. Thiem is playing in his first tournament since suffering an ankle injury at Indian Wells last month. Rublev spurned a match point on his own serve late in the deciding set as he fired a forehand narrowly wide. "I had to fight from the first to the last point, which of course I did well. But I was also lucky at the end when he had a match point and missed a forehand by 10 centimetres or so," said Thiem.

"I was 10 centimetres from being out of the tournament." The 24-year-old Thiem could also have to face defending champion Rafael Nadal in the quarter-finals if he can get past Djokovic or the in-form Coric on Thursday.

"It's a horrible draw for sure, from the first round on," conceded Thiem. "But I'm happy that I played two hours and forty (minutes)... But I'm looking forward to watching Djokovic and Coric in front of the TV and then playing the winner on Thursday." After Rublev had edged a tight first set, Thiem clinched the second on his fourth set point before racing into a 4-1 lead in the decider. His 20-year-old opponent cut loose, though, claiming four straight games to serve for the match. But Rublev struck wide on match point and ran out of steam, double faulting to hand



MONACO: Austria's Dominic Thiem celebrates after winning his tennis match against Russia's Andrey Rublev during the Monte-Carlo ATP Masters Series Tournament, yesterday in Monaco. — AFP

Thiem a place in round three as the world number seven won the last three games on the spin.

ZVEREV DUMPS OUT POUILLE

French number one Lucas Pouille blew a one-set lead to be dumped out by German serve-and-volleyer Mischa Zverev in a third-set tie-break. Seventh seed Pouille eased through the first set, but Zverev hit back to claim a 2-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7/3) victory and reach the third round for the first time in his career. The world number 55 was happy to play

baseline rallies with his opponent, saving the serve-and-volleys for the crucial points. The left-hander trailed 4-2 in the decider, but broke back immediately before clinching the tie-break when a Pouille return dropped into the base of the net. "I'm really excited to have won two matches here in Monte Carlo, it's an incredible feeling," said the 30-year-old Zverev. Fernando Verdasco saved three match points to beat Uruguayan Pablo Cuevas in a first-round match, while his fellow Spanish veteran left-hander edged out Benoit Paire. — AFP

VAR's half-time penalty call sparks more controversy

BERLIN: A call from the video assistant referee (VAR) to award a penalty during the half-time break in a Bundesliga match has sparked more controversy in Germany. Mainz's 2-0 home win against Freiburg on Monday night became controversial after the players were ordered to return from their dressing rooms for the penalty to be taken. "It was very strange, we were already sitting in the dressing room. We couldn't believe it at first," said Freiburg goalkeeper Alexander Scholow. The VAR system will be used at a World Cup finals for the first time in Russia this June.

However, the incident in Mainz is just the latest in a series of controversial scenarios which VAR has caused this season in Germany, where the system is being trialled. Late in the first-half in Mainz, the hosts had appeals for handball turned down by referee Guido Winkmann with the match goalless.

The ref blew for the half-time break and the teams left the pitch for their dressing rooms. However, after a delay of several minutes, the game's video ref Bibiana Steinhaus, who was in the VAR centre in Cologne, confirmed to Winkmann there had been a handball.

The players were called back and Mainz forward Pablo De Blasis drilled the spot-kick past Scholow. "I was not aware at the time that there was a handball, but when I later saw the images myself, it definitely was," said Winkmann.

"We played through just such a scenario on a pre-season course. "Of course, something like this is unusual, and I wouldn't be happy about it as one of the clubs involved.

"A half-time whistle only interrupts the game, the final whistle finishes it and such a decision would not have been possible." —AFP

Live		Matches on TV (Local Timings)	
English Premier League			
Bournemouth v Manchester United	beIN SPORTS HD 2	21:45	
Spanish League			
Espanyol v Eibar	beIN SPORTS	20:30	
Valencia v Getafe	beIN SPORTS HD 3	20:30	
Real Madrid v Athletic de Bilbao	beIN SPORTS HD 3	22:30	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE			
Benevento v Atalanta	beIN SPORTS	19:00	
Fiorentina v Lazio	beIN SPORTS	21:45	
Napoli v Udinese Calcio	beIN SPORTS HD 2	21:45	
Roma v Genoa CFC	beIN SPORTS	21:45	
Hellas Verona v Sassuolo Calcio	beIN SPORTS	21:45	
Torino v Milan	beIN SPORTS	21:45	
Sampdoria v Bologna	beIN SPORTS	21:45	
Crotone v Juventus	beIN SPORTS	21:45	
Spal v Chievo Verona	beIN SPORTS	21:45	

13 Japan hails school clerk who won Boston Marathon



14 Football 'miracle' offers shared goal for war-torn Yemen



15 Austrian Thiem saves match point in victory over Rublev



OAKLAND: LaMarcus Aldridge #12 of the San Antonio Spurs shoots the ball against the Golden State Warriors in Game Two of Round One of the 2018 NBA Playoffs on Monday at ORACLE Arena in Oakland, California. — AFP

Durant, Thompson sink Spurs

Dwyane Wade on fire as Heat burn 76ers

LOS ANGELES: Kevin Durant and Klay Thompson handed San Antonio a painful shooting lesson as Golden State took a grip on their Western Conference playoff duel on Monday. Durant and Thompson both weighed in with 30-point games as the Warriors powered to a 116-101 win that puts the NBA champions 2-0 up in their best-of-seven series.

The Warriors—still missing the injured talisman Stephen Curry—outclassed a physical San Antonio from three-point range in a devastating display of scoring. Golden State made 15 of 31 attempts from three-point range, contrasting sharply with San Antonio, who could only muster four from 28 attempts. Spurs coach Gregg Popovich pinpointed his team's failure to threaten from distance as the principal factor in the loss.

"The ball has to go in the basket," Popovich said. "That's the difference in the ball game. They shot 50 percent of threes; we made 14 percent, four of 28 or

something. That's tough to overcome.

"You've got to make shots. And it's been like that the entire year on the road for us, for whatever reason. And it really showed up tonight. That made it very difficult."

San Antonio started strongly, with LaMarcus Aldridge—who finished with 34 points—driving the Spurs forward as they shaded the first period 25-23. The visitors continued to rally in the second quarter and had moved into a 53-47 at half-time.

But Golden State's relentless pressure and offensive variety inevitably began to tell in the second half. Durant finished with 32 points, six rebounds and six assists while Thompson had 31 points with five assists.

"They took it to us first half," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "But in the second half we matched that effort level and physicality and were able to get that upper hand." The Warriors now head to San Antonio for game three on Thursday.

WADE SINKS SIXERS

In the Eastern Conference, Dwyane Wade produced a vintage performance as the Miami Heat ended Philadelphia's 17-game winning streak to level their series 1-1. Wade, 36, scored 28 points in 25 minutes as Miami stunned the 76ers' home crowd into silence with a 113-103 victory. It was a superb display from Wade, a three-time NBA champion who started this season with Cleveland before re-joining Miami in February before the trade deadline.

Wade's experience proved crucial throughout, inspiring a first-half fightback to wipe out the 76ers' early lead before shepherding Miami to the win in a nervy finale. Wade, who also had seven rebounds and three assists, was backed by 20 points from Goran Dragic and 18 points from James Johnson. "I just came in with an aggressive approach," Wade said afterwards. "I told myself that whatever minutes I was going to play, I was

going to do it aggressively.

"Once the balls start falling for you then it just goes from there. "I love the stage. I play the game for these moments. To be able to come through for your team when they need you feels good." Philadelphia meanwhile were left reflecting on their first loss since early March, jolting their momentum as the series heads to Miami for game three on Thursday.

Ben Simmons led the Philadelphia scoring with 24 points, with Dario Saric adding 23 and Marco Belinelli 16. Sixers coach Brett Brown later was forced to respond to a profane social media post from injured star Joel Embiid, who wrote of his frustration at being "babied" after watching the defeat from the sidelines. "He just wants to play basketball, to be with his team, to play in front of the fans," Brown said. "When he's not able to do that he gets frustrated and I respect his frustration." — AFP

FIFA probes Russia over racist chants

PARIS: FIFA has opened disciplinary proceedings against World Cup hosts Russia over monkey chants heard during a friendly international against France, a spokesman told AFP yesterday. Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba and Barcelona winger Ousmane Dembele were allegedly targeted by racist chanting during the match in Saint Petersburg last month.

"We have no further comment at this stage," the FIFA spokesman told AFP. The Russian Football Union (RFU) said it was ready to cooperate with FIFA's probe.

"We launched our own internal investigation the day after the match," RFU anti-discrimination officer Alexander Baranov said. "All international

matches are played under the jurisdiction of FIFA. We opened it to understand what happened for ourselves. We have sent inquiries to the interior department."

Baranov added that the RFU was "in dialogue with FIFA. We are ready to send them our findings—there is no problem there". Russian football chiefs are under pressure with just two months to go before the start of the World Cup on June 14 as the domestic game has been once again tarnished by incidents of racism and hooliganism. "These people should not be allowed into stadiums. They should not be giving the world reason to think there is racism in our country," added Alexei Smertin, head of the RFU's anti-discrimination department. During last month's friendly, an AFP photographer heard imitation monkey noises aimed at Dembele, while internet users reported similar abuse from sections of the 50,000 crowd targeting Pogba.

The RFU's initial response was sceptical—claiming they had heard nothing — but the country's governing body then did launch its own investigation. FIFA followed suit after French Sports Minister Laura Flessel, a two-time Olympic fencing

champion, called for "European and international" action. The Russian parliament's deputy speaker, Igor Lebedev, blasted inaction in the country over racism and called on "fans to stop this". "This is not just a problem with our fans' perception of African American and black players," he had said.

"The problem is elsewhere: none of this bad behaviour will stop until we start punishing it." Lebedev insisted that such incidents taking place during the World Cup would "embarrass the country". But Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko played down the incident, saying that monkey chants heard at the game "do not mean that this was some sort of organised act of racism". "There might be elements of it," said Mutko, who has temporarily stepped down from his role as RFU president. "Around 50,000 people turn up for games and there could be some provocations," Mutko added.

Black players have complained in the past of being subjected to racial abuse in Russian football. Brazilian great Roberto Carlos, who played for Russian club Anzhi Makhachkala for one season, walked off the pitch in 2011 after a banana was thrown his way during a match.—AFP

PAS adopts legal framework for football federation

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Public Authority for Sports (PAS) has passed new FIFA-approved rules to govern the country's football federation, just months after the world soccer's governing body lifted a two-year ban on Kuwaiti footballers. In a meeting involving its board of directors, PAS has decided to form a sports federation at the school level in a bid to discover hidden talents, it said in a statement yesterday. The statement cited Information Minister and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri as saying that the sports body is determined to support young athletes as they strive for global recognition. FIFA last December lifted a two-year ban imposed on Kuwait's football federation, triggering a wave of joy across the soccer-crazed Gulf nation.—KUNA

Business

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WASHINGTON, DC: Maurice Obstfeld (on screen), Economic Counselor and Director of the Research Department at the IMF, holds a press briefing at IMF Headquarters in Washington, DC yesterday.—AFP

IMF sees solid near-term global growth

Emerging Asia seen as top global growth engine

WASHINGTON: The global economy is expected to grow at a solid pace through next year, boosted by faster expansion in the United States and Europe but after that risks will build, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday. In the latest update to its World Economic Outlook, the IMF still predicts world growth of 3.9 percent in 2018 and 2019, despite raising its estimates for US and EU growth compared to the January edition.

That is an improvement on the 3.8 percent global growth seen last year but is unchanged from the forecasts in January. However, the Fund cautions that the growth "momentum is not assured," given trade tensions between the United States and China and the expected reversal of the positive effects from the US tax cuts.

"Despite the good near-term news, longer-term prospects are more sobering," IMF Chief Economist Maurice Obstfeld said. The sweeping US tax cuts approved in December will fuel higher growth only through next year, the IMF said.

It raised its forecast by two tenths for both years, to 2.9 percent for 2018 and 2.7 percent for 2019, which follows big upward revisions in the October report.

However, Obstfeld warned the stimulus was "largely temporary." And because the US boost accounts for most of the higher world expansion, beyond 2019 "global

growth is projected to gradually decline to 3.7 percent by the end of the forecast horizon," the report said.

"US tax reform will subtract momentum starting in 2020, and then more strongly" in 2023 as some of the investment provisions kick in.

Risks to the downside

The risks to the outlook "clearly lean to the downside" beyond the next few quarters, the IMF warns. Like other advanced economies, the United States will max out growth and return to a more sluggish pace, "held back by aging populations and lackluster productivity." And despite the fact increasing world trade helped boost growth in recent years, there has been a rise in public skepticism about the benefits, leading to a renegotiation of trade deals and increasing friction.

"That major economies are flirting with trade war at a time of widespread economic expansion may seem paradoxical—especially when the expansion is so reliant on investment and trade," Obstfeld said.

He warned that "the prospect of trade restrictions and counter-restrictions threatens to undermine confidence and derail global growth prematurely." US President Donald Trump last month imposed steep tariffs on steel and aluminum imports and threatened to impose more on

tens of billions of Chinese goods, prompting Beijing to respond in an escalating series of threats.

IMF chief Christine Lagarde last week warned governments to "steer clear of protectionism in all its forms," saying the trade frictions hurt poor consumers the most as costs increase, and that they also undermined a system that had broadened prosperity worldwide. Instead, the IMF argues that the United States and others should respond to anxiety about globalization and technological advances by "strengthening growth, spreading its benefits more widely, (and) broadening economic opportunity through investments in people," Obstfeld said.

Rather than lower the trade deficit, as Trump has called for, the US trade actions could expand it by \$150 billion by 2019, he said.

Market disruption

And the fund warns that a worsening of trade conflict could have broader implications for global growth as well as market confidence. The report cites the market turbulence in early February and into March amid the US-China trade dispute, when US stocks stumbled in after surging to repeat records in the first weeks of 2018. The Dow had lost almost 10 percent of its value by the end of March, down from the record 26,616.71 reached on January 26.

The rapid decline should "serve as a cautionary reminder that asset prices can correct rapidly and trigger potentially disruptive portfolio adjustments." The IMF upgraded the forecast for the euro area to 2.4 percent for 2018, an upward revision of two tenths compared to the January estimate, with growth for its key members upgraded, especially Spain. But the forecast for 2019 was unchanged at 2.0 percent. Japan's growth is still seen at a sluggish 1.2 percent this year, after a rare and large upgrade of five tenths in January, slowing to 0.9 percent in 2019.

Upbeat on Asia

The IMF said yesterday it remains upbeat about the economic prospects of emerging Asia, labeling the region "the most important engine of global growth" despite concerns over trade disputes and mounting debt. The fastest-paced expansion will remain concentrated in Asia, it predicts, where the buoyant economies of China, India and a host of Southeast Asian nations will perform well above the global average.

The IMF left unchanged from January its growth estimate for China of 6.6 percent for 2018 and 6.4 percent in 2019. The country's own 2018 target is around 6.5 percent.—AFP

Capital Intelligence upgrades Gulf Bank's financial strength rating to 'A-'

KUWAIT: Capital Intelligence Ratings, the international credit rating agency, announced yesterday that it has upgraded the Financial Strength rating of Gulf Bank from "BBB+" to "A-".

"The rating upgrade is supported by sound and sustained improvement in the Bank's loan asset quality, the solid capital and good liquidity positions," said Capital Intelligence in its recently issued report. The rating also reflects "Gulf Bank's well established domestic franchise and in particular its strength in the retail sector," according to Capital Intelligence. Gulf Bank's Financial Strength and Foreign Currency outlook are now both revised to "Stable" from "Positive". The Long-Term and Short-Term Foreign Currency Ratings have also been upgraded to 'A+' and 'A1' from 'A' and 'A2', respectively.

Commenting on the announcement, Dalal Al-Dousari, Gulf Bank's Assistant General Manager of Investor Relations said, "We are proud to announce the upgrade of Gulf Bank's Financial Strength rating this

year, from "BBB+" to "A-". "The upgrade is an affirmation of Gulf Bank's strong risk absorption capacity and solid capital adequacy," continued Al-Dousari. "Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized in terms of its credit worthiness and financial strength internationally."

In addition to Capital Intelligence's recent upgrade, S&P Global Ratings revised their outlook on the Bank to "Positive" from "Stable" and affirmed its issuer credit rating at "A-" in June 2017. Similarly, Fitch Ratings has upgraded Gulf Bank's viability rating from "bb" to "bb+" and affirmed the bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating at 'A+' with a "Stable" Outlook. Moody's Investors Service also affirmed the bank's "A3" long-term deposits rating and "Stable" outlook in May 2017.



Dalal Al-Dousari

China seeks trade firewall with US allies

BEIJING/BRUSSELS: China's international trade representative held a series of meetings with the ambassadors from major European nations last week to ask them to stand together with Beijing against US protectionism, according to four sources familiar with the discussions. Some of the western diplomats involved in the meetings with Fu Ziyang, who is also a vice-commerce minister, have viewed the approaches as a sign of how anxious Beijing is getting about the expanding conflict with Washington, the sources said.

US President Donald Trump has threatened to impose tariffs on \$150 billion in Chinese imports to the US to punish China for what US government officials regard as its predatory industrial policies and abuse of US intellectual property. Beijing has vowed to retaliate.

Amid the rapidly rising tensions between the two sides, China has sought to seize the moral high ground as a defender of the multilateral trade system, even as US allies express shared concern with Washington over Beijing's highly restricted market. The rush of meetings

last Thursday and Friday with ambassadors from France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, and the European Union, may be a signal that China is trying to build a firewall against Trump's aggressive trade measures, the severity of which some foreign diplomats said Beijing had miscalculated.

The individual meetings, which were called by Fu, were generally "non-confrontational" as China sought support in countering the United States, a European diplomat with knowledge of the discussions told Reuters. There were, though, some "subliminal threats" about consequences for foreign companies, this person said.

"The message was that we have to stand together against US protectionism in favor of free trade," the diplomat said. "China is showing confidence, but internally they appear quite concerned. They have apparently underestimated Trump's resolve on trade," the diplomat said, adding that Beijing is nervous about China's major trading partners siding with Washington.

Three other diplomatic sources, and three embassies, confirmed that the meetings occurred. An Italian embassy spokeswoman said its ambassador met with Fu on April 12, and that while the US-China trade dispute was discussed, the meeting was mostly about bilateral issues. A British embassy spokeswoman also confirmed that its ambassador met with Fu last week as part of regular discussions with the ministry that touched on "bilateral and multilateral trade issues".—Reuters

Business

Jazeera Airways launches three weekly flights to holy city of Madinah

Flight to Saudi city to improve services for pilgrims

KUWAIT: As the holy month of Ramadan approaches, Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, is proud to announce the launch of its new direct flights to Madinah.

Jazeera Airways' foray into the second largest Islamic pilgrimage destination comes as part of the airline's mission to serve the increasing demands of all segments of society.

"We are pleased to be opening a route to Madinah to improve services for pilgrims. They are an important segment for us, from Kuwait and for travelers from other countries such as India, said Rohit Ramachandran, CEO Jazeera Airways. He added, "The experience for all our passengers will soon be greatly improved with the opening of the new Jazeera terminal at Kuwait International Airport next month, in time for the busy summer season."

Starting on April 16, Jazeera Airways provides a frequency of three weekly flights with departure at 6.15 am and arrival at Prince Mohammad bin Abdulaziz Airport at 8:00 am and departure from Madinah at 8:45 am with arrival at 10:30 am. In lieu of

the season, Jazeera Airways will recommence flights to Taif during the month of Ramadan starting May 16 until June 6, 2018.

One of the most visited cities and sacred in the Islamic religion, Madinah holds religious buildings, monuments and museums dedicated to covering and conserving Islamic history. It is home to spectacular mosques and key pilgrimage sites namely Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, or the Prophet's Mosque, Quba Mosque and the Seven Mosques which comprises a complex of mosques. From an economic perspective, it is worth mentioning that Madinah is poised to be the first smart city development in Saudi Arabia, which will house medical, hospitality, tourism, intellectual property, knowledge-based industries, and hotels.

Flying to 23 destinations across the Middle East, Europe and India, Jazeera Airways operates a reliable fleet of 9 Airbus A320 aircraft. Passengers can enjoy a baggage allowance of 30kg for Economy class and 50kg per Business class passenger. Travelers are encouraged to book flights now via Jazeera's website - Jazeeraairways.com, through the Jazeera app, or any travel agents.



The holy city of Madinah

National Investments Company holds its Annual General Assembly

KUWAIT: National Investments Company (NIC) held its Annual General Assembly Meeting yesterday at NIC's premises Khaleeja Complex with an attendance quorum of 80.334 percent Hamad Al-Ameeri, NIC's Chairman, headed the meeting and presented the Board of Directors' Report for the year 2017 to the shareholders in attendance. In his report, Al-Ameeri noted that 2017 is characterized by return of confidence as the performance of Boursa Kuwait in 2017 was active compared to the performance of 2016. This volatility was the driving force behind NIC achieving significant investment achievements during 2017.

He further asserted that with regards to the financial results of the company, Total Revenues amounted to KD 20.839 million, compared to year 2016 Total Revenues amounted to KD 10.613. While Total Expenses and Precautionary Provisions was KD 9.828 million in 2017, comparatively, 2016 Total Expenses and Precautionary Provisions amounted to KD 13.674.

These figures signified a basic and diluted profit of 12 fils per share of the parent company's shareholders, compared to the basic and diluted loss of 5 fils per share of the parent company's shareholders for the year 2016. Whereas, the company achieved net profits of KD 10.307 million during 2017 in comparison with a loss of KD 3.978 million in 2016 representing an increase of 359 percent.

Al-Ameeri further added that assets under management have exceeded KD 1.022 billion by end of year 2017. This increase is a true depiction and reflection of investors and clients' trust and confidence in the professionalism of NIC's team and its preparedness to handle varied market conditions competently and conservatively which resulted in increasing clients' assets values.

During 2018, Al-Ameeri further asserted that NIC's executive management is adamant to increase its operational profits by concentrating on key investment activities and asset management services, through searching for new investment opportunities locally, regionally and internationally. Additionally, NIC intends to launch new financial products and tools in the local market, thereby diversifying income streams and improving the financial results during this year.

The AGM further discussed and approved all items on the agenda including the distribution of cash dividends 7 percent. Al-Ameeri adjourned the meeting by expressing the Board of Directors' appreciation to NIC's staff for their hard work and devotion during 2017.

Finally, Al-Ameeri expressed his sincere gratitude to all supervisory authorities for their exceptional roles in pushing forward the rudder of development.

China CB announces surprise cut in bank reserve requirements

BEIJING: China's central bank said yesterday that it will reduce the amount of cash that most commercial banks must hold as reserves, but will require them to use that freed-up liquidity to pay back loans obtained via its medium-term lending facility (MLF).

Whatever funds the banks have left, after paying back their MLF loans, they should use to provide loans to small companies, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) said in a statement.

The PBOC's unexpected decision to cut reserve requirement ratios (RRRs) came after official data earlier yesterday showed China's economy grew a faster-than-expected 6.8 percent in the first quarter.

RRRs - currently at 17 percent for large institutions and 15 percent for smaller banks - will be cut by 100 basis points (bps), the PBOC said. The cut will be made on April 25 and will apply to most banks, with the exception of policy lenders such as China Development Bank.

On that day, banks with MLF loans that have not reached maturity are to use the liquidity released by the RRR cut to repay borrowed MLF funds to the PBOC. The amount of cash freed up by the RRR cut will be

slightly higher than the amount of MLF loans to be repaid, according to the PBOC. Based on first-quarter data, the MLF loans due to be repaid on the day will be about 900 billion yuan. There will be 400 billion yuan (\$63.67 billion) in excess of funds released, and most of that cash will go to city-based commercial banks and rural commercial banks, the PBOC said. Despite the RRR cut, the PBOC said it would maintain a prudent and neutral monetary policy. "On the surface, the RRR cut looks neutral because most of it is used to pay back MLFs, but it also shows the PBOC is adjusting its monetary policy to a loosening bias," said Xu Gao, a Beijing-based economist at Everbright Securities.

The PBOC's last RRR adjustment was on Jan. 25 when most banks saw at least a 50 bps cut to their RRRs as long as the lenders granted more loans to smaller firms and rural communities.

That adjustment was flagged months in advance in late September. In a Reuters poll this month, the PBOC was forecast to cut RRRs for all banks by only 50 bps in the fourth quarter of 2018. Analysts had expected two additional 25 bps cuts to follow to then to bring the rate down to 16 percent.

Risks to economy

Despite the economy's solid first-quarter performance, analysts still expect it to lose momentum in coming quarters as authorities force local governments to scale back infrastructure projects to contain their debt and as property sales cool due to strict controls on purchases to fight speculation. A full-blown trade war with the United States could also impact billions of dollars in trade. Net exports overall were already a

drag on growth in the first quarter after giving an added boost to the economy last year, highlighting the need for sustained strength in domestic demand if significant new US tariffs are imposed. "Rising Sino-US trade tensions are clouding the outlook for China's exports," Everbright's Xu said.

"China needs domestic demand to hold up in the face of increasing uncertainties in external demand, so it needs the micro-management of monetary policies to make sure the real economy is stable." The PBOC said it required financial institutions to mainly use newly released funds from the reserve cut to provide loans to small and micro companies and to lower funding costs for lenders, and that this would be included as a requirement in its quarterly Macro-Prudential Assessment (MPA) for banks.

Improving liquidity expected

The PBOC said it still needed to maintain relatively high RRRs for banks to fend off financial risks. But the liquidity freed by the RRR cut is expected to reduce the cost of funds for banks so that they can step up lending to support the economy.

The interest rate that the PBOC pays banks for depositing their reserves at the central bank is 1.62 percent, but the interest rate the lenders pay for MLF loans from the PBOC is 3.3 percent. "I think it shows a clear trend of policy relaxation because the interest rate of this year's MLF is 3.3 percent, but the banks are only receiving 1.62 percent for their reserves at the central bank," said Zhou Hao, senior emerging markets economist at Commerzbank. "This has greatly reduced the debt costs of banks. —Reuters

Billionaire Slim jumps into Mexico election spat over airport

MEXICO CITY, Mexico: Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim defended one of his prized investments Monday—a huge new airport for Mexico City—against the leading candidate for the country's presidential election, who has threatened to cancel the project.

In a rare foray into politics, Slim—the world's fifth-richest man, according to Forbes magazine—hit back at the fiery leftist leading the race for the July 1 vote, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, without mentioning him by name. "Canceling the project would amount to canceling the economic growth of the country," said Slim, whose construction company CICSA was awarded the \$4.7 billion contract to build the airport's termi-

nal in consortium with six other companies. Lopez Obrador, a former Mexico City mayor, has threatened to halt construction on the airport, calling it a waste of taxpayer money and alleging the project was marred by corruption.

He has instead proposed repurposing a military airbase to alleviate the saturation of the capital's current international airport, which handled nearly 45 million passengers last year.

Slim said that would only be a "patch," not a long-term solution to the pressure on one of Latin America's busiest airports. He also defended the new airport as a boon for residents of the area northeast of the city where it is being built.

"It is a magical transformation of this area of the city," he told a press conference at his offices. The new airport will create up to 450,000 jobs and have the capacity to handle 125 million passengers a year when fully operational, according to the Mexican government. Slim made most of his estimated \$71.7 billion fortune in telecoms, but he is deeply involved in the project.

His son-in-law, Fernando Romero, designed the sleek new terminal building together with British architect Norman Foster. Lopez Obrador wasted no time firing back. "This airport they want to build is



MEXICO CITY: Mexican tycoon Carlos Slim leaves a press conference in Mexico City yesterday.—AFP

going to cost the country a fortune," he told journalists after a campaign rally in the northern state of Sonora. "It's a bottomless pit. It's not a good deal for the nation." Lopez Obrador has also caused investor jitters by vowing to review contracts with private companies that bought stakes in Mexico's oil sector in a landmark privatization under President Enrique Pena Nieto. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.806
Indian Rupees	4.630
Pakistani Rupees	2.602
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.933
Nepali Rupees	2.902
Singapore Dollar	230.250
Hongkong Dollar	38.311
Bangladesh Taka	3.593
Philippine Peso	5.793
Thai Baht	9.679

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.210
Qatari Riyal	82.644
Omani Riyal	781.445
Bahraini Dinar	798.990
UAE Dirham	81.946

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	0.000
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.039
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.208
Tunisian Dinar	126.080
Jordanian Dinar	423.910
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.005
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	33.227

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	300.700
Euro	371.670
Sterling Pound	426.390

Canadian dollar	238.080
Turkish lira	74.520
Swiss Franc	315.860
Australian Dollar	234.090
US Dollar Buying	299.500

GOLD

20 Gram	260.520
10 Gram	133.180
5 Gram	67.430

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	300.300
Canadian Dollar	233.720
Sterling Pound	429.475
Euro	371.855
Swiss Frank	291.805
Bahrain Dinar	798.610
UAE Dirhams	82.165
Qatari Riyals	83.390
Saudi Riyals	80.975
Jordanian Dinar	424.830
Egyptian Pound	17.014
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.930
Indian Rupees	4.601
Pakistani Rupees	2.599
Bangladesh Taka	3.603
Philippines Peso	5.787
Cyprus pound	17.875
Japanese Yen	3.800
Syrian Pound	1.585
Nepalese Rupees	2.876

Malaysian Ringgit	78.295
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	48.335
Thai Bhat	10.635
Turkish Lira	75.650

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.424973	0.432473
Czech Korune	0.006695	0.015995
Danish Krone	0.045850	0.050850
Euro	0.366302	0.373802
Georgian Lari	0.123527	0.123527
Hungarian 0.001107	0.001297	
Norwegian Krone	0.034500	0.039799
Romanian Leu	0.063128	0.079978
Russian ruble	0.004802	0.004892
Slovakia	0.008918	0.018918
Swedish Krona	0.031651	0.036651
Swiss Franc	0.306210	0.317210
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.224945	0.236945
New Zealand Dollar	0.214023	0.223523
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.233429	0.242429
US Dollars	0.296400	0.300800
US Dollars Mint	0.296900	0.300800
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003188	0.003772

Chinese Yuan	0.046315	0.049815
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036192	0.038042
Indian Rupee	0.004111	0.004762
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002721	0.002801
Korean Won	0.000271	0.000286
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073268	0.079268
Nepalese Rupee	0.002996	0.003158
Pakistan Rupee	0.002546	0.002788
Philippine Peso	0.005676	0.005976
Singapore Dollar	0.223934	0.233934
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001604	0.002184
Taiwan	0.010097	0.010277
Thai Baht	0.009261	0.009811

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.790451	0.798951
Egyptian Pound	0.014220	0.019938
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000084
Iraqi Dinar	0.000206	0.000265
Jordanian Dinar	0.419217	0.428217
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000148	0.000248
Moroccan Dirhams	0.023271	0.047271
Omani Riyal	0.774201	0.776881
Qatar Riyal	0.078250	0.083190
Saudi Riyal	0.079047	0.080347
Syrian Pound	0.001273	0.001493
Tunisian Dinar	0.121498	0.120498
Turkish Lira	0.068500	0.078800
UAE Dirhams	0.080389	0.082089
Yemeni Riyal	0.000976	0.001056

Business

Tamdeen Group opens Al-Kout Mall

Kuwait's largest waterfront retail and leisure destination



The management team



Muath B Al-Roumi

KUWAIT: Tamdeen Group opened Al-Kout Mall to the public at 10 am on April 16, 2018 as the latest addition to the Al-Kout project, Kuwait's Largest Waterfront Retail and Leisure Destination. Al-Kout Mall is the latest dynamic development from Kuwait's leading property developer, and the ultimate destination for shoppers, tourists and thrill-seekers from Kuwait and the region. In celebration of the opening, the Mall has organized a rich month-long program of events, including international acrobatic shows from the UK, and an indoor hot air balloon experience for children for the first time in Kuwait.

Al-Kout Mall is the latest addition to the large-scale Al-Kout project and is interconnected to the rest of the six experiences. While there is a direct connection to the Al-Kout Rotana hotel from the mall, a beautiful pedestrian bridge on the Mezzanine level connects to the modern Arabic-style Souq Al-Kout with its iconic musical fountains. From Souq Al-Kout, visitors can enjoy a seamless journey through the rest of the diverse experiences including Nag'at Al-Kout, Marsa Al-Kout, and Sahel Al-Kout.

Muath B Al-Roumi, General Manager, Tamdeen Group Marketing, said: "Al-Kout Mall, the largest shopping and

entertainment destination in the South of Kuwait, features contemporary and distinctive architectural designs to serve the southern regions, the entire population of Kuwait and visitors from abroad. The mall will provide an enriching family experience, full of fun and entertainment in one location".

Al-Roumi added: "Tamdeen Group is constantly developing strategic investment projects that reflect the strength of the country's commercial sector and support the thriving tourism sector. Therefore, we are confident that the Al Kout Mall, along with all six experiences in the Al-Kout Project, will provide a truly great experience for visitors to Fahaaheel".

Retail opportunities

With the addition of Al-Kout Mall, the Al-Kout Project now offers a total of 100,000 square meters of retail opportunities, across 360 retail outlets. Al-Kout Mall's retail offering, spread over three floors, features an extensive range of fashion outlets for women, men and children, including some of the world's most popular brands and anchor stores such as H&M, Zara, Marks & Spencer, West Elm, Victoria's Secret and GAP. The mall is also home to

number of leading cosmetics brands, such as Sephora, Makeup Forever, Vavavoom, MAC and the all-new to Kuwait Urban Decay, NYX and KIKO Milano.

Al-Kout Mall features luxury home furnishing and interiors brands, including West Elm, Zara Home and H&M Home, catering to all customer needs. More than 10 new exciting brands are making their debut in Kuwait, including Fol O'Yasmine, Geekay Games, House of Samsonite, Bianca, Black Tap, New Balance, Levi's and more.

Al-Kout Mall offers dedicated dining areas featuring an eclectic blend of international restaurant chains and regional cafes, plus nine local Kuwaiti brands including Poele Café, Life with Cacao, Karak Gholam, and Triangle, amongst others. Meanwhile, the mall's food court comprises popular fast food restaurants to ensure an exceptional dining experience. Visitors can also enjoy scenic outdoor seating on the restaurants' terrace that is set to open shortly, and boasts panoramic views over the distinctive Al-Kout coastline.

Family entertainment hub

As part of its appeal as a family entertainment hub, Al-Kout Mall is home to Infinity Sea; the latest addition to

the world of family entertainment. Inspired by Al Kout's marine theme, Infinity Sea will open during the second quarter of 2018. The state-of-the-art Cinescape, which offers the latest movie viewing experience with high-end design standards, will also open during the third quarter of 2018. Another unique feature coming to the Mall in 2019 is Kuwait Karting. Located on the roof of the mall, Kuwait Karting is the biggest indoor go-karting track of its kind in the Middle East.

In line with its customer-first approach, Al-Kout Mall hosts 14 specialized complimentary customer services for visitors ranging from gift wrapping, high-speed free WiFi, mobile phone charging units, wheelchairs and mobility scooters for the elderly and more.

With the convenience and comfort of visitors in mind, Al-Kout project and Al-Kout Mall offers a multi-level car park and external parking with a capacity of holding approximately 3,600 cars. The mall has three entrances on the ground level, making it easy to walk into the mall, as well as several entrances from the multi-level car park with conveniently placed elevators and escalators, for easy access to mall. In addition, Valet Parking is offered at Entrance 1 on Dabbous Street.



Business

Global concludes acquisition of 27.2% stake in Alsoor for leading Kuwaiti group

Global acts as buy-side M&A advisor

KUWAIT: Global Investment House (Global), a regional asset management and investment banking firm headquartered in Kuwait, with offices in major capital markets in the MENA region, successfully advised a leading Group in Kuwait on the acquisition of a 27.2 percent stake in Alsoor International Holding Company (Alsoor) for total amount of KD 15 million.

The Investment Banking team at Global was the buy-side advisors to the group on this acquisition. Global arranged and negoti-

ated the transaction with several shareholders in addition to procuring the necessary regulatory approvals, and managing the execution process.

Alsoor owns one of the leading finance companies in Kuwait offering consumer loans to purchase vehicles and other tangible products and offers corporate clients customized solutions for their financing needs including turnkey financing for government projects. This acquisition will strengthen the Group's

position in the financial sector and mainly the financing and leasing services.

Omar Al-Temiemy, Vice President, Investment Banking at Global commented: "We are proud to have successfully concluded the second M&A transaction efficiently since the beginning of the year. The trust and support we have received from the buyer and other related parties have been key in the success of this transaction".

He added: "This transaction reaffirms our

role as a leading multi-sector M&A advisor in Kuwait, and the wider MENA region. Today, we have a solid pipeline of regional M&A mandates covering a multitude of sectors including financial services, sports' media, healthcare, logistics and construction".

It is worth noting that the buyer is one of the leading diversified privately held business groups based



Omar Al-Temiemy

in Kuwait with presence in eight markets and covers various sectors including automotive, engineering, retail, trading and manufacturing, security and financial services. The Group employs 15,000 people, owns over 40 different companies and subsidiaries and represents more than 200 international brands.

Agility launches new online forwarding platform Shipa Freight

DUBAI: Agility, a leading global logistics provider, yesterday announced Shipa Freight, the first fully integrated online freight service that allows users to get rate quotes and book, pay and track ocean and air shipments around the world.

Shipa Freight provides instant, no-obligation rate quotes from the countries that account for 95% of global trade and allows users to manage their international shipments with a simple, easy-to-use tool accessible by desktop, laptop, tablet and mobile app. "Shipa Freight is a simple, technology-driven answer for small and medium-size businesses trying to take the complexity out of their international shipping,"



Toby Edwards, Shipa Freight CEO

said Agility CEO Tarek Sultan. "It gives them the transparency, flexibility, competitive pricing and customer service that the industry offers only to multi-nationals and high-volume customers."

Shipa Freight is backed by Agility's global network of more than 22,000 experienced employees in 500 branches and over 100 countries. It gives customers the support of a trusted global network and allows small and medium-size companies to access the world's growing markets. Agility customer support is available 24/7 to help them book and manage their shipments, or to get rates for routes not quoted online. "Shipa Freight's digital platform

allows users to complete a shipment completely online," said Toby Edwards, CEO of Shipa Freight. "This includes shipment booking, a range of payment options, and online tracking, which have not been widely available for small and medium-size businesses until now."

In a recent Agility survey of 800 SMEs, small and medium-size companies said they needed the complexity taken out of compliance, customs requirements and cross-border bureaucracy if they were to do more international trade. Shipa Freight helps customers overcome these issues by providing a compliance database with information on documents required on all trade lanes, helping them navigate the legal and regulatory requirements that are obstacles for many small businesses.

"Shipa Freight is unique among online freight services," Sultan said. "It offers both air and ocean, including Full Container Load (FCL) and Less than Container Load (LCL) options. It provides users with the ability to manage their freight from start to finish via quote-book-pay-track features and 24/7 customer service. And it makes use of Agility's existing global network and scale, which means it's got built-in flexibility, expertise, and deep understanding of how to move freight



around the world." Shipa Freight is one of several technology-led innovations that Agility is using to make logistics more efficient and drive down costs for customers.

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US housing starts increase, single family segment weak

WASHINGTON: US homebuilding increased more than expected in March amid a rebound in the construction of multi-family housing units, but weakness in the single-family segment suggested the housing market was slowing. Housing starts rose 1.9 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.319 million units, the Commerce Department said yesterday. Data for February was revised up to show groundbreaking declining to a 1.295 million-unit pace instead of the previously reported 1.236 million units. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast housing starts rising to a pace of 1.262 million units last month. Permits for future home building rose 2.5 percent to a rate of 1.354 million units in March.

US financial markets were little moved by the data. Despite the rebound in homebuilding last month, activity appears to be slowing. Single-family homebuilding, which accounts for the largest share of the housing market, fell 3.7 percent to a rate of 867,000 units in March. A survey on Monday showed confidence among homebuilders fell in April for a fourth straight month. Builders complained about a lack of buildable lots and increasing construction material costs. According to the survey, tariffs imposed by the Trump administration on Canadian lumber and other imported products were 'pushing up prices and hurting housing affordability.'

Confronted with these supply constraints, homebuilding will probably not increase sig-

nificantly to eradicate an acute shortage of houses on the market, which is pushing up prices and sidelining some first-time home buyers. Demand for housing is being driven by a robust labor market, which is underpinning the economy. Despite jobs market strength, wage inflation has remained moderate. Single-family home construction fell in the Northeast, South and West, but rose in the Midwest. Permits to build single-family homes dropped 5.5 percent in March to an 840,000 unit-pace, the lowest level since September 2017.

With permits lagging starts, single-family home construction could slow further. Starts for the volatile multi-family housing segment surged 14.4 percent to a rate of 452,000 units in March. Permits for the construction of multi-family homes dropped jumped 19 percent to a 514,000 unit-pace.

The outlook for housing inventory was mixed. Housing completions fell 5.1 percent to 1.217 million units last month, with single-family units dropping 4.7 percent. But the stock of housing under construction rose 0.3 percent to 1.125 million, the highest level since July 2007. Single-family units under construction climbed 0.2 percent to the highest level since June 2008.

Realtors estimate that the housing starts and completions rates need to be in a range of 1.5 million to 1.6 million units per month to plug the inventory gap. — Reuters

Renault Koleos takes centre-stage at The Gate Mall for 3 days only!

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the authorized agent of Renault in the State of Kuwait will be displaying the powerful and refined SUV model - Renault Koleos at the Gate mall starting April 19 - April 21. Renault Al Babtain invites everyone to come and visit the team and additionally benefit from the numerous special offers in store.

The charismatic SUV is finely tuned with the Middle Eastern requirements backed by a local product range. The vehicle was specifically designed after having undergone extensive road testing in real-world conditions over several million kilometers during its course of development. In keeping with Renault's design strategy, the Koleos exterior holds a taste for adventure all that is expected of a D-segment SUV. Its robust and muscular features amplifies the athletic exterior design with door protective moldings, large diameter two-tone alloy wheels, alloy roof rails, shark antenna, fender chrome lines and silver front skid. The four wheel drive technology, all-terrain ability, engine and transmission line-up has been tailored to meet the needs and expectations of the Kuwaiti market. The 2.5-litre petrol engine is also an atmospheric, four-cylinder, power is 170hp (126kW) at 6,000rpm, with peak torque of 233Nm at 4,000rpm.

Ensuring equal appeal internally, it is embedded with comfortable seats including technology and design amongst the very best in its category, class-leading cabin space, including 289mm of rear knee room, 8.7"



touchscreen tablet with R-LINK 2 multimedia & navigation system. Koleos drivers can indulge in the Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) such as Easy Park Assist and

Blind Spot Warning. Renault Al-Babtain encourages Renault fans to visit its booth at Gate mall to discover Koleos and enjoy the special offers.



Burgan Bank announces winner of Al-Thuraya salary account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, announced yesterday Mahmoud Mostafa Badawi Hasan as the lucky winner of the Al-Thuraya Salary Account monthly draw. The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan Bank by offering them a chance to win a Nissan Patrol SUV every month. With every KD 10 available in the account, the customer receives one chance to enter the draw.

The Al-Thuraya account holders have the option to hold money in Kuwaiti dinar and other major currencies and can access account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards, and benefit from the discounts and offers throughout the year. Customers wishing to open the Al-Thuraya account can do so by simply visiting the nearest Burgan Bank branch.

China to relax foreign ownership limits on cars, other industries

BEIJING: China announced yesterday a timeline to open up its manufacturing sector including scrapping ownership limits for foreign automakers, shipbuilders and aircraft firms-addressing a contentious issue in its trade dispute with the United States.

The liberalization meets a longtime demand of the US and other countries seeking better access for their companies in the world's biggest car market and one of the largest markets for air travel. China currently restricts foreign auto firms to a maximum 50 percent ownership of joint ventures with local companies. The country will this year end shareholding limits for new energy vehicle firms such as those that produce electric cars, according to the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC).

The move will be followed by commercial vehicles in 2020 and passenger cars in 2022, when it will also abolish restrictions limiting foreign automakers to two joint-venture partners, the NDRC said in a statement.

"After a five-year transition period, the auto sector will lift all restrictions," it said. Auto analysts said the new rules will have the most immediate benefit for electric car makers, especially those with a less established

presence in China. One car company likely to gain is electric car giant Tesla led by entrepreneur Elon Musk, who this year had asked US President Donald Trump for help on the market access issue, alluding to the troubles his firm has faced producing in China. "It has instant impact for firms like Tesla," said Li Yanwei, an analyst with the China Automobile Dealers Association Expert Committee.

"China is the world's biggest electric car market so it has a great deal of attraction to any auto company. The demand for electric cars is very small in other countries," he said. "Auto companies can now keep their secrets and they can earn higher profits," Li said. Under the current setup, foreign carmakers must transfer proprietary technology to the joint venture companies they set up-the issue of forced technology transfer has been a top concern for the Trump administration.

"China's full opening of the manufacturing industry is a clear indication of our opposition to trade and investment protectionism, and shows our clear support to widening and deepening the development of economic globalization," the NDRC said in the announcement. "Through the full liberalization of the manufacturing industry, we will support Chinese and foreign companies in achieving common development on a level playing field," the NDRC said. It said it hoped the liberalizations would encourage greater exchanges of capital, technology, management and personnel of Chinese and foreign firms.

Volkswagen "welcomes any opening and liberalization of the Chinese market" a spokesman said. "We will carefully analyze if these changes open the door to new options for the Volkswagen group and its brands," the

spokesman added. President Xi Jinping announced the plans for the auto industry last week without giving any timeline. Xi's announcement was among a series of measures seen as potential concessions to Trump in the face of a potential trade war, including a pledge to lower car tariffs this year.

Washington wary

Still, after Xi struck the conciliatory note in his speech, Trump showed no indication he would back down from imposing the threatened tariffs on \$150 billion worth of Chinese goods, and Beijing said it was ready to hit back in kind. Officials in Washington say they have grown wary of China's endless promises that often result in little action. The NDRC announcement could allay those complaints by giving specific dates for completion of the reforms. The NDRC said the shipbuilding industry would this year scrap foreign ownership restrictions on firms designing, making and repairing vessels. The NDRC will also lift restrictions on foreign ownership of aircraft manufacturing firms this year, including those that make large-body commercial airliners, regional jets, helicopters, drones and blimps.

The commission said it would also release a new negative list for foreign investment in the first six months of the year, to "substantially relax foreign investment access". A negative list includes all the industries with foreign investment restrictions. The new list will include the already announced opening of the financial services and auto sectors, and expand to include further opening for the energy, resources, infrastructure, transportation, and other sectors, the NDRC announcement said. — AFP

Technology

Huawei introduces its new Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Huawei has introduced its all new Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 in Kuwait. Designed for young users, Huawei Y7 Prime features the stunning Huawei Full View Display, dual rear camera and selfie toning flash which allows users to enjoy professional photography experience as well as sleek design. Equipped with EMUI 8.0 based on Android 8.0, the device features three-card slots and delivers better functions and experiences than most fashionable "photography addicts" have imagined, making it truly stylish with excellent value.

Commenting on the launch, Peter Wu, Director of Consumer BG- Kuwait said, "We are committed to providing our Kuwait consumers with high quality smartphones that offer productivity, entertainment and a superb photography experience. With an immersive viewing experience, and a camera that supports AR lens modes, Y7 Prime provides a unique smartphone experience.

Full view display

Following the latest development in Full View Display design, Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 fits the impressive 5.99-inch HD+ Huawei Full View Display into the 5.5-inch compact body which traditionally houses a 16:9 screen. The bezel-less 18:9 aspect ratio shows 12.5 percent more than usual, bringing users wider view. Coupled with the 2.5D curve glass panel, Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 also features a sleek body with comfortable grip, creating a smart and stylish premium look.

With a thickness of 7.8mm, the unibody design has an astonishingly sleek and smooth finish. This phone is available in Black, Gold and Blue. The Blue variant features unique light beam patterns due to the IMT painting technique, leaving the panel a shiny glass-like effect yet with excellent durability.

With the insight of young people's fond of trendy technology, Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 has also introduced high-precision face recognition and fingerprint unlock. Face unlock is powered by AI facial recognition algorithms that allow the device to detect 1,024 feature points of a human face and map the information accurately. It takes just milliseconds to unlock the phone in a flash. The HUAWEI Y7 Prime 2018 also features the fingerprint unlock with fingerprint sensor 4.0, which allows users to unlock the device in less than 0.35 seconds. Both methods outperform other products at the same price.

Dual Camera

Who wouldn't want a nice picture or selfie when that moment comes? Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 sports the 13MP+2MP dual rear camera with stunning wide aperture. The 13MP camera mainly takes photos whereas the 2MP camera provides bokeh effects with up to 7 aperture level for users to select from. The Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 also allows the users to refocus after the photo is taken, users can select the focus manually under the wide aperture mode to make sure everyone under the spotlight are in-focus.



The Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 features an 8MP front camera with the advanced selfie toning flash, which automatically detects the lighting on the subject's face and intelligently adjust the level of brightness for a natural-looking selfie, producing flattering soft light in low-light or even pitch black conditions. And the 10-level beauty mode allows users to take perfect selfie anytime, anywhere. Additionally, the front camera supports AR lens modes: Change Background, and funny Cosplay, whereas the rear cameras support the function of funny Cosplay, making selfie and photo-taking more fun than ever.

Memory expansion

The Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 features three-card slots design to simultaneously support pri-

mary and secondary Nano SIM cards as well as a Micro SD card(optional) up to 256GB.

Smoother experience

Smooth experiences are essential for all smartphones. The Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 is built in with a 3GB RAM and features the customized EMUI 8.0 based on Android 8.0, to bring users the best advantages of software and hardware. EMUI 8.0 is integrated with machine learning algorithms, the device learns users' behaviors and habits to intelligently predict their needs, ensure adequate operational space and better system performance.

In addition, the Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 also introduces other useful functions such as the smart split-screen, eye comfort mode, three-finger screenshot, and floating navigation dock, enables a much more convenient and user-friendly experience. The Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 features a 3000mAh (typical value) battery, which allows users to continuously watch videos for 13 hours or playing music for up to 58 hours (based on lab test results). Combined with the power saving 6.0 that utilizes energy-saving technologies in both hardware and software, the Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 enables longer-lasting battery with amazing battery time.

Pricing and Availability

Huawei Y7 Prime 2018 will start selling in Kuwait on April 20, 2018 and will be available in black, blue and gold at 54.9 Kuwaiti Dinar.

Facebook hit with class action suit over facial recognition tool

SAN FRANCISCO: A US federal judge in California ruled Monday that Facebook will have to face a class action suit over allegations it violated users' privacy by using a facial recognition tool on their photos without their explicit consent. The ruling comes as the social network is snared in a scandal over the mishandling of 87 million users' data ahead of the 2016 US presidential election.

The facial recognition tool, launched in 2010, suggests names for people it identifies in photos uploaded by users—a function which the plaintiffs claim runs afoul of Illinois state law on protecting biometric privacy. Judge James Donato ruled the claims by Illinois residents Nimesh Patel, Adam Pezen, and Carlo Licata were "sufficiently cohesive to allow for a fair and efficient resolution on a class basis.

"Consequently, the case will proceed with a class consisting of Facebook users located in Illinois for whom Facebook created and stored a face template after June 7, 2011," he said, according to the ruling seen by AFP. A Facebook spokeswoman said the company was reviewing the decision, adding: "We continue to believe the case has no merit and will defend ourselves vigorously."

Facebook also contends it has been very open about the tool since its inception and allows users to turn it off and prevent themselves from being suggested in photo tags. The technology was suspended for users in Europe in



SAN FRANCISCO: This file photo shows a computer screen displaying the logo of the social networking site Facebook, taken in Manchester, England. — AFP

2012 over privacy fears. Also on Monday, Facebook confirmed that it collected information from people beyond their social network use.

"When you visit a site or app that uses our services, we receive information even if you're logged out or don't have a Facebook account," product management director David Baser said in a post on the social network's blog. Baser said "many" websites and apps use Facebook services to target content and ads, including via the social network's Like and Share buttons, when people use their Facebook account to log into another website or app and Facebook ads and measurement tools. But he stressed the practice was widespread, with companies such as Google and Twitter also doing the same.—AFP

superfast wireless systems that will be needed for self-driving cars, telemedicine and other technologies.

The report prepared by the research firm Analysys Mason found that all major Chinese providers have committed to specific launch dates and the government has committed to allocate spectrum for the carriers. The 10-nation study said the US is in the "first tier" of countries in preparing deployment of 5G, along with China, South Korea and Japan. In the second tier are key European markets including France, Germany and Britain, with Singapore, Russia and Canada in the third tier.

Industry officials say 5G deployment will reap important economic benefits for the leaders, and that lagging could have negative effects. "The United States will not get a second chance to win the global 5G race," said Meredith Attwell Baker, CTIA president and chief executive. "I'm confident that America can win and reap the significant economic benefits of 5G wireless due to our world-leading commercial investments."

Baker said the US still needs to enact measures to reform local zoning rules and unlock access to spectrum as part of a broader plan for 5G. "I'm optimistic we will leapfrog China because key leaders in the administration, on Capitol Hill, and at the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) are focused on the reforms needed to win the race." According to the study, Europe led that way in 2G, the second generation, while Japan was ahead in 3G and the United States in 4G.

The first commercial 5G roll-outs begin this year and next in the United States, Korea and Japan, and the wireless industry is counting on the new technology to trigger a wave of growth in equipment sales and mobile services.—AFP

"It is the end of the poker face," Crum said. "We broadcast our emotions. We will know more about each other than we ever have." Eye dilation reveals how hard a brain is working, and heat radiating from the skin signals whether we are stressed or even romantically piqued. The amount of carbon dioxide exhaled can signal how riled up someone, or a crowd, is getting. Micro-expressions and chemicals in breath reveal feelings.

The timing of someone's speech can expose whether they are at risk of dementia, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, or bipolar disorder, according to the neuroscientist. Brain waves can indicate whether someone's attention is elsewhere in a room, regardless of the fact their gaze is locked on the person in front of them.

Russia begins blocking access to Telegram

MOSCOW: Russia's communications watchdog on Monday began blocking access to the popular messaging app Telegram after a court banned the service for refusing to give the security services access to private conversations. "Roskomnadzor has received the ruling of (Moscow's) Tagansky court to block Telegram's services on Russian territory. This information was sent to providers on Monday," the watchdog said in a statement.

Some Russian internet providers began blocking Telegram on Monday afternoon. "Russian authorities have begun blocking Telegram. The service could be unstable without a VPN. We will inform you on the developing situation," the messaging app notified its Russian users. Around 10 activists were arrested after demonstrating outside the FSB security service headquarters against the move, Maria Alekhina, a member of the Russian protest punk group Pussy Riot, told Ekho Moskvy radio.

Pussy Riot members were among those arrested, she said. "The police came and took us by the arm and put us in a van," Alekhina said, adding: "They did not give us a reason." She said the protesters had flown paper planes—Telegram's logo—at the FSB building. The Kremlin's press service told journalists on Monday that it will be switching to ICQ, a 1990s chat service now owned by billionaire Alisher Usmanov's Mail.ru, to communicate with them.

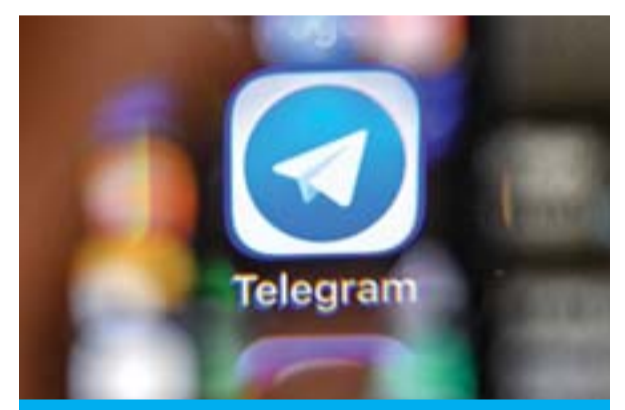
"It is telling that authoritarian governments (e.g., Russia) are trying to block Telegram over encryption, but are more relaxed when it comes to other encrypted messaging apps," Pavel Durov, the app's maverick creator—dubbed Russia's Mark Zuckerberg—wrote on Twitter. Writing on Vkontakte, the social media platform Durov founded that is now under state control, he said the decision harms Russia's national security as users will switch to WhatsApp and Facebook which are "controlled from the US."

"We believe the ban is anti-constitutional and will continue to defend the right of Russians to private messaging," said Durov, who left Russia in 2014 and is now based in Dubai. Durov has long said he will reject any attempt by the country's security services to gain backdoor access to the app. The ban followed a long-running battle between authorities and Telegram, which has a reputation for securely encrypted communications, as Moscow pushes to increase surveillance of internet activities.

Telegram, a free application that lets people exchange messages, stickers, photos and videos in groups of up to 5,000 people, has attracted more than 200 million users since its launch by Durov and his brother Nikolai in 2013. Telegram is especially popular among political activists of all stripes, but it has also been used by jihadists. Russia has acted to curb internet freedoms as social media have become the main way to organize demonstrations.—AFP

Technology exists to read such cues and, combined with artificial intelligence that can analyze patterns and factor in context, can magnify empathy if used for good or lead to abuses if used to oppress or manipulate, said Crum. "It is really scary on one level, but on another level it is really powerful," Crum said. "We can bridge the emotional divide."

She gave examples of a high school counselor being able to tell whether a seemingly cheery student is having a hard time, or police quickly knowing if someone acting bizarrely has a health condition or is criminally violent. One could skip scanning profiles on dating apps and, instead, scan people for genuine interest. Artists would be able to see the emotional reactions people have to their creations.



MOSCOW: An illustration picture taken through a magnifying glass in Moscow shows the icon of the popular messaging app Telegram on a smart phone screen.—AFP

Four things to know about Telegram

MOSCOW: The popular messaging app Telegram has been blocked in Russia after refusing to give state security services access to private conversations. Here are four things to know about the company, which says it has 200 million active users:

Whizz-kid billionaire

Known as Russia's Mark Zuckerberg after the Facebook boss, Pavel Durov has amassed a fortune of \$1.7 billion at 33, according to Forbes magazine. He founded popular social networking site VKontakte in 2006 and Telegram—with his brother Nikolai—in 2013. Unlike his sibling, Pavel doesn't shy away from the limelight. He once threw bank notes from his office window in Saint Petersburg, shows off his sculpted chest on Instagram, and has quarreled with shareholders and the authorities. Durov left Russia in 2014 after refusing to hand Russian authorities personal data of pro-European Ukrainian activists. He later settled in Dubai.

Strictly confidential

Telegram boasts that it keeps users' personal data confidential and champions internet freedoms. "Unlike other popular apps, Telegram doesn't have shareholders or advertisers to report to," Pavel Durov wrote on Telegram's blog last month. "We haven't disclosed a single byte of our users' private data to third parties," he added. Durov offered whistleblower Edward Snowden a job after his revelations of mass surveillance.

Threat of terrorism

The service has been accused of aiding terror plotters by refusing to share users' information. Iran recently restricted its use. After the Paris attacks in 2015, Telegram shut accounts linked to the Islamic State group and has blocked 6,000 others. Durov has said Telegram draws a clear line, with no restrictions on "criticizing local authorities, challenging the status quo and engaging in political debate." On the other hand, "promoting violence and calling for actions that can harm innocent people are not OK," he wrote last year.

Luring investors

Investors are closely watching Telegram's move into cryptocurrency. Experts say the messenger wants to create its own virtual currency. The messaging service has raised \$1.7 billion this year alone, a record figure for the sector, to develop the blockchain technology on which cryptocurrencies are based. But the service's heady growth has also had glitches.—AFP

In race for 5G, China leads South Korea, US

WASHINGTON: China is slightly ahead of South Korea and the United States in the race to develop fifth generation wireless networks, or 5G, a US study showed Monday. The study released by the CTIA, a US-based industry association of wireless carriers, suggested that the United States is lagging in the effort to deploy the



LAS VEGAS: In this file photo, signage for 5G technology is displayed at the Intel booth during CES 2018 at the Las Vegas Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

'Poker face' stripped away by new-age tech

VANCOUVER: Dolby Laboratories chief scientist Poppy Crum tells of a fast-coming time when technology will see right through people no matter how hard they try to hide their feelings. Sensors combined with artificial intelligence can reveal whether someone is lying, infatuated, or poised for violence, Crum detailed at a big ideas TED Conference.

"I realize a lot of people are having a hard time with people sharing our data, or knowing something we didn't want to share," Crum said. "I am not looking to create a world where our inner lives are ripped open, but I am looking to create a world where we can care about each other more effectively." With emotion-reading rooms, smart speakers, or accessories on their way, Crum is keen to see rules in place to make sure benefits are equally available to all while malicious uses are prevented.

"It is something people need to realize is here and is going to happen; so let's make it happen in a way we have control over," Crum said. "We will be able to know more about each other than we ever have. Let's use that for the right reasons rather than the wrong ones."—AFP

Health

SpaceX postpones launch of NASA's planet-hunter spacecraft

TESS is expected to reveal 20,000 exoplanets

TAMPA: SpaceX postponed the launch of NASA's new planet-hunting mission Monday in order to verify the Falcon 9 rocket's navigation systems, the California-based company said. The next opportunity to blast off the \$337 million satellite—which aims to advance the search for extraterrestrial life by scanning the skies for nearby, Earth-like planets—will be Wednesday. The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite, or TESS, is "in excellent health and remains ready for launch," SpaceX said on Twitter.

"Launch teams are standing down today to conduct additional guidance navigation and control analysis." The postponement was announced about two hours before the planned blast off from a NASA launchpad in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The washing machine-sized spacecraft is built to search the nearest, brightest stars for signs of periodic dimming. These so-called "transits" may mean that planets are in orbit around them.

TESS is expected to reveal 20,000 planets beyond our solar system, known as exoplanets, NASA said. Its discoveries will be studied further by ground- and space-based telescopes for signs of habitability, including rocky terrain, a size similar to Earth and a distance from their sun—neither too close nor too far—that allows the right temperature for liquid water.

NASA predicts that TESS could find more than 50 Earth-sized planets and up to 500 planets less than twice the size of the Earth. TESS will survey far more cosmic terrain than its predecessor, NASA's Kepler Space Telescope, which launched in 2009, taking in some 85 percent of the skies. "TESS is equipped with four very sensitive cameras that will be able to monitor nearly the entire sky," said George Ricker, TESS principal investigator at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). "That is about 20 times what the Kepler mission was able to detect."

Kepler vs TESS

Kepler, the first planet-hunting mission of its kind, "was launched to answer one single question: How common is a planet like Earth around a star like the Sun?" said Patricia "Padi" Boyd, director of the TESS guest investigator program at NASA's Goddard Spaceflight Center. "It was designed to look at 150,000 stars in a fairly wide field of view without blinking, for four years," she told reporters on the eve of the launch.

"One of the many amazing things that Kepler told us is that planets are everywhere and there are all kinds of planets out there. So TESS takes the next step. If planets are everywhere, then it is time for us to find the planets that are closest to us orbiting bright nearby stars, because these will be the touchstone system." TESS and Kepler use the same system of detecting planetary transits, or shadows cast as they pass in front of their star.

While Kepler confirmed some 2,300 exoplanets and thousands more potential planet candidates, many were too distant and dim to be studied further. With Kepler running low on fuel and nearing the end of its life, TESS aims to pick up the search while focusing closer, on planets dozens to hundreds of light years away. "TESS is going to dramatically increase the number of planets that we have to study," said Ricker.

The Hubble Space Telescope and the James Webb Space Telescope, scheduled to launch in 2020, should be able to reveal more about planets' mass, density and the makeup of their atmosphere—all clues to habitability. The first data from TESS is expected to be made public in July, and NASA says citizen astronomers are welcome to help study the planets. It may be decades before astronomers know whether or not life exists elsewhere. "TESS is the first step," said Stephen Rinehart, TESS project scientist at NASA's Goddard Spaceflight Center.—AFP

“ Remains ready for launch ”



FLORIDA: In this image obtained from NASA, technicians assist as the SpaceX payload fairing containing the NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) is moved by crane to a transporter inside the Payload Hazardous Servicing Facility at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Florida.—AFP

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What's On

Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait launches Chococafe Garden



Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait, the jewel of Kuwait City, has added another gem to its inspiring food and beverage offering, with a vibrant closed garden. Temperatures may be rising with summer on the way, but Chococafe Garden is the cool, new hangout in Kuwait. Chococafe Garden, an extension of the hotel's renowned, stylish Chococafe was officially inaugurated on April 10, 2018 with a special, energizing opening for distinguished members of the media representatives and invited agencies.

Guests enjoyed an enlivening evening in the new luxury surrounds of this favorite hotspot in the heart of Salmiya, sampling the delights of the Chococafe while cheering on the UEFA Champions League quarter-finals and networking with their peers. Chococafe Garden is a fully air-conditioned covered garden offering relaxed luxury and the culinary masterpieces of the Chococafe menu, which features unrivalled signature hot chocolates, specialty beverages and seductive pastries, plus the finest grills, paninis and more.

KAMCO sponsors AUK's 14th Annual Career Fair

KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, sponsored the American University of Kuwait's (AUK) 14th Annual Career Fair. KAMCO actively participates in events that support and educate the youth while providing them with guidance as they pursue their future careers.

KAMCO staff members standing at the Firm's booth presented AUK students and alumni with the opportunity to learn more about the Firm's services, internship opportunities and possible positions offered. In addition to career guidance, KAMCO also included engaging activities that encouraged booth visitors to think outside the box and gain a



new perspective when solving problems.

Farouq Al Oumi, Chief Resources Officer of KAMCO, said, "We would like to acknowledge AUK for hosting this career fair that is targeted towards supporting and enhancing the local youth in determining the career path that is most suitable to them. We believe that is a necessity to educate and

guide the future generations to develop and strengthen our society. KAMCO will continue to participate in events that fall in line with our human resource development strategy. We will also dedicate our resources to equip our workforce with the necessary tools to pave the path for their future careers while supporting the local economy."

GUST awards scholarship to 15 outstanding students

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) announced yesterday the names of the 15 outstanding students awarded the Annual Summer Scholarship by the university. This scholarship aims to enrich the students' academic journey.

GUST Dean of Student Affairs Dr. Raghad Al Kazemi, said, "Our role as an institute of higher education is to provide our students with every opportunity to challenge themselves, and help them to excel at combating those challenges. The University of Missouri - St. Louis and George Washington University are both excellent backdrops for our students to see what it's like to attend a different university, be self-sufficient, and experience life from a completely different perspective."

Also commenting on the occasion, Amani Gaber, Acting Director, Academic and International Affairs, said: "Our university believes in bringing out the best in everyone, and we always have an eye out for those with a record of excellence and ambition. The aim of the scholarship is to allow those with a thirst to expand their comfort zones to further enrich their academic experience with university life in a different setting. I am extremely proud of those who have been selected, and I am certain that they will find the experience fulfilling and rewarding."

In order to qualify for the scholarship, applicants must have completed 60 credit hours, be a full-time student enrolled at GUST, have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, and attain a minimum TOEFL score of 550 (paper-based); 230 (computer-based); or 79-80 (internet-based). In addition to this scholarship, GUST also offers the 'Mission Scholarship' whereby Kuwaiti GUST graduates can go on to earn their Master's and PhD's in the United States.



STUDENT NAME	MAJOR
Shirin Ghazi Ahmad Abdelqader	Computer Science
Naila Kashif Ghani	Computer Science
Merehan Mohamed Elaraby	Computer Science
Hamza Abbas Zayat	Finance
Hassan Mohammed Farhat	Finance
Raghad Said Abdel Rahman	MOB
Mohammad Jasem AlMutawa	MIS
Barrak Bader Almubarak	Finance
Sarah Abdullah Alobaid	English Literature
Reem Rafe Zaabalawi	Finance
Arwa Alboloushi	English Literature
Fatemah Alakhwand	English Literature
Sara Al Musallam	Public Relation & Advertising
Marwa Alobaid Kudayr	English Education
Fathima Shaheema Fahmey	Finance

Boursa Kuwait participates in AUM Career Fair

Boursa Kuwait has recently participated in the American University of the Middle East's (AUM) Career Fair. The Career Fair, aimed at connecting students and alumni with potential career opportunities. Participation and support of the Career Fair comes in line with Boursa Kuwait's commitment to attracting young Kuwaiti talent and reinforcing its role in supporting Kuwait's youth and the development of Kuwait's economy.

The company aims to facilitate the development and sustainability of a performance-driven organization, foster and sustain a successful corporate culture, attract and retain high caliber talent, as well as advocate the organization's effectiveness and efficiency and promote learning, growth, skills and competency enhancement.

Boursa Kuwait is a results-oriented organization that strives to make a difference, creating sustainable impact in the industry and the



community, while delivering on social responsibility commitments. With a commitment to supporting youth events and initiatives to help empower the next generation of Kuwaitis and contribute to the enhancement of the country's economy, Boursa Kuwait reaches out through ongoing programs, which provide encouragement and support during their education.

Grand welcome for tiny tots at ICSK Amman

The new batch of LKG students of The Indian Community School Kuwait - Amman were given a splendid welcome on their first day, April 8, 2018. The highlight of the welcome program was the orientation session arranged for the parents to empower them in joining the school for educating the child. Principal Rajesh Nair welcomed the gathering and gave a presentation in detail on how to guide the children through their journey ahead in LKG. He briefed the parents about the care and precautions to be taken in early

stages of schooling.

Supervisor Julie Antony clearly explained the rules and regulations of the school and gave clear instructions to parents on how to support the school in educating the child. Children from Primary and UKG presented beautiful dances which even the new comers relished. RJs of Radio Amman conducted spot games for parents and children which they enjoyed thoroughly.

Vice Principal Dr Mary Isaac proposed the vote of thanks and congratulated the parents for choosing ICSK as their partner in molding the future of their child. Children were happy to be in the beautifully decorated, colorful classrooms and were delighted to receive special gifts from their teachers. With the welcome program the school ensured that beginning of Kindergarten is a happy and exciting experience for parents as well as children.



Equate supports AUM's Career Fair

As part of its sustainability strategy, Equate Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, participated in the American University of the Middle East's (AUM) career fair to share with the students the job opportunities that suit their majors at the company. On this occasion, Equate's Human Resources Workforce Planning and Planning Administrator Dhari Al-Baghli, said: "Equate is always seeking to hire A-List candidates to fit our 'One Culture. One Company' dynamic work environment. We are here to advise students on how to use Equate's electronic recruitment system to register and apply for upcoming vacancies to attract the most qualified human capital."

For the second consecutive year at AUM's fair held on April 17-18, 2018, Equate's team explained to future

engineers the company's development plans for the national workforce. In 2018's first quarter, Equate hired over 35 Kuwaiti fresh graduates as part of efforts to increase the current 54 percent Kuwaitization rate. The Equate Group is a global producer of petrochemicals and the world's second largest producer of Ethylene Glycol (EG).

The Group has industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe that annually produce over 5 million tons of Ethylene, EG, Polyethylene (PE) and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET). The products are marketed throughout Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The Equate Group's shareholders include Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan Petrochemical Company (BPC) and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC). The Group is a leading enterprise that pursues sustainability wherever it operates through partnerships in fields that include the environment, economy and society.



TV

AM MOVIES ACTION
01:30 The Reckoning
03:15 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation

ANIMAL PLANET HD
00:45 Mekong: Soul Of A River
01:40 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
02:35 Swamp Brothers

BBC FIRST
00:30 The Durrells
01:20 Top Of The Lake
02:20 Holly City

crime & investigation network
00:00 Evil Up Close
01:00 Evil Up Close
01:55 Killers: Behind The Myth

COMEDY CENTRAL
00:05 Comedy Central Presents
00:35 Another Period
01:00 This Is Not Happening

Discovery Family
19:00 Friends
19:25 Friendszone
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood

Discovery Family
00:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
00:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things
01:20 How It's Made

ID
00:45 Blood Relatives
01:40 True Conviction
02:35 Jodi Arias: From Lust To Murder

Disney HD
00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse

Discovery Family
06:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
06:25 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts

Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...

Disney Junior
00:00 Trulli Tales
00:30 PJ Masks
00:55 Trulli Tales
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster

Discovery Channel HD
00:15 Gear Week
01:05 Fast N' Loud
01:50 Goblin Works Garage

Discovery Channel HD
00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse

Discovery Channel HD
06:00 Supa Strikas
06:25 Lab Rats
06:50 Gravity Falls

El News
01:50 El News
02:50 Botched
03:40 Botched
04:35 Botched

itv CHOICE
00:10 Paul O'grady's Animal Orphans
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street

itv CHOICE
00:00 Ancient Discoveries
01:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
02:00 The Universe

NAT GEO WILD HD
00:20 Mother Croc
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Crocodile King

NAT GEO people HD
00:15 Maximum Foodie
00:45 David Rocco's Dolce India
01:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

Fish Of The Day
13:05 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
13:35 Croatia's Finest
14:30 The Diving Women Of Jeju

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD
00:10 Yukon Gold
01:00 Wicked Tuna
02:00 Air Crash Investigation

NAT GEO WILD HD
00:20 Mother Croc
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Crocodile King

nick HD
00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion

nick jr.
00:07 Max & Ruby
00:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:41 Kiva Can Do!

Nella The Princess Knight
02:26 Paw Patrol
02:38 Max & Ruby
03:01 Max & Ruby

Nella The Princess Knight
02:26 Paw Patrol
02:38 Max & Ruby
03:01 Max & Ruby

Nella The Princess Knight
02:26 Paw Patrol
02:38 Max & Ruby
03:01 Max & Ruby

OM SERIES HD COMEDY
00:15 How I Met Your Mother
01:05 Seinfeld
01:30 Seinfeld

OM SERIES HD COMEDY
00:15 How I Met Your Mother
01:05 Seinfeld
01:30 Seinfeld

OM SERIES HD COMEDY
00:15 How I Met Your Mother
01:05 Seinfeld
01:30 Seinfeld

Are We Done Yet?
04:55 Tyler Perry's Boo: A Madعا Halloween
06:30 Christian Mingle

OM MOVIES FESTIVAL
00:00 Where Angels Fear To Tread
02:00 Little Man Tate
04:10 Chronically Metropolitan

OM MOVIES HD KIDS
00:00 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter
01:25 Rainbow Valley Heroes
03:00 Ozzy

OM MOVIES HD
00:00 Kung Fu Hustle
01:50 Chloe And Theo
03:20 Joe Somebody

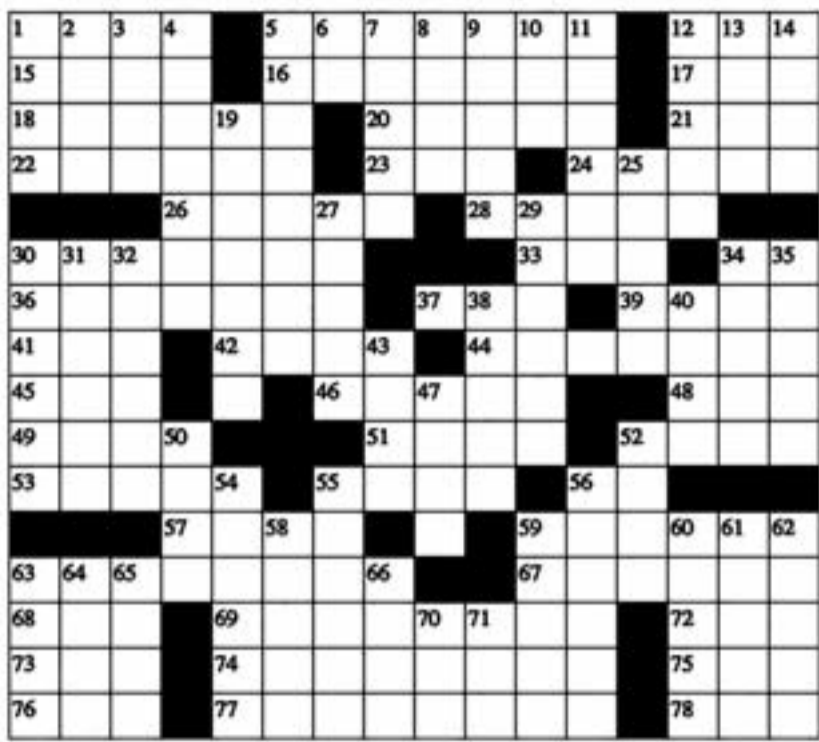
DISCOVERY SCIENCE
00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory USA
01:20 Extreme Engineering

STAR GOLD
01:40 Highway
02:00 Highway
04:00 Koffee With Karan

STAR MOVIES HD
00:45 Grace Of Monaco
02:30 The Air I Breathe
04:00 Crossing Over

STAR MOVIES HD
00:00 Project Runway
01:00 Project Runway
02:00 Grey's Anatomy

CROSSWORD 1886



ACROSS

1. Type genus of the Amniidae.
5. Any of various volatile flammable liquid hydrocarbon mixtures.
12. (informal) Of the highest quality.
15. A city in western Germany on the Rhine River.
16. A Bantu language spoken in the coastal regions of eastern Kenya.
17. A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.
18. A member of a North American Indian people living around the mouth of the Colorado river.
20. Tree (as opposed to shrub).
21. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
22. The male reproductive organ of a flower.
23. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
24. A minor Hebrew prophet (8th century BC).
26. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
28. Annual to perennial herbs of the Mediterranean region.
30. Genus of herbs of southern United States.
33. The residue that remains when something is burned.
36. Any fungus of the family Hygrophoraceae having gills that are more or less waxy in appearance.
37. A mature blood cell that contains hemoglobin to carry oxygen to the bodily tissues.
39. A quantity of no importance.
41. The capital and largest city of Japan.
42. Again but in a new or different way.
44. English economist who argued that the laws of supply and demand should operate in a free market (1772-1823).
45. Either of two folds of skin that can be moved to cover or open the eye.
46. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
48. Any of various trees of the genus Ulmus.
49. Characteristic of false pride.
51. Small European freshwater fish with a slender bluish-green body.
53. Used of the older of two persons of the same name especially used to distinguish a father from his son.
57. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
63. A flat cake of thin batter fried on both sides on a griddle.
67. Any member of Athapaskan tribes that migrated to the southwestern desert (from Arizona to Texas and south into Mexico).
68. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
69. Inspiring mixed contempt and pity.
72. A prominent rock or pile of rocks on a hill.
73. Step on it.
74. Someone who puts to good use.
75. Black tropical American cuckoo.
76. A doctor's degree in dental surgery.
77. Lacking or showing a lack of what is fitting and considerate in dealing with others.
78. Towards the side away from the wind.

DOWN

1. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
2. Open to debate.
3. A ruler of the Inca Empire (or a member of his family).
4. Deviation from the normal or common order or form or rule.
5. A member of the Samoyedic people living on the Taimyr peninsula in Siberia.
6. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
7. Capital and largest city of the Czech Republic.
8. Engage or hire for work.
9. A set of data arranged in rows and columns.
10. Group insurance that entitles members to services of participating hospitals and clinics and physicians.
11. Port city of Denmark in eastern Jutland.
12. Squash bugs.
13. (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and raised by hand.
14. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
19. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
25. Type genus of Ochnaceae.
27. Greek mythology.
29. French tragedian who based his works on Greek and Roman themes (1639-1699).
31. Relating to or near the radius.
32. Ticks having a hard shield on the back and mouth parts that project from the head.
34. In a manner differing from the usual or expected.
35. Leafless East Indian vine.
38. French anthropologist who studied the craniums and brains of different races of people.
40. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
43. English tennis player who won many women's singles titles (born in 1945).
47. A rapid series of short loud sounds (as might be heard with a stethoscope in some types of respiratory disorders).
50. A less than average tide occurring at the first and third quarters of the moon.
52. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
54. A member of the dominant Hindu military caste in northern India.
55. Marked by intense agitation or emotion.
56. Writing that provides information (especially information of an official nature).
58. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
59. Income (at invoice values) received for goods and services over some given period of time.
60. Of or relating to a seizure or convulsion.
61. A major French river.
62. Suggestive of the supernatural.
64. Set down according to a plan.
65. (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
66. A knee-length pleated tartan skirt.
70. Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
71. A fatal disease of cattle that affects the central nervous system.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You step away from the usual way of doing things; this pertains to electronic gadgets, work related methods or transportation options. You open your mind to new technologies and thereby gain abundance in many areas of your life: real estate, finances, possessions. You're confident and unafraid to cut a new path in new areas of endeavor. While you're considered a risky bet, you're focused on the way to prosperity as you see it: listen well to your intuition. Someone could complain about a suggestion you make later but the rest go with the flow and understand what you're saying. You reject a new age type idea in favor of traditional beliefs. You agree to take the lead when planning a project with new team members. Stargaze this evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Tensions are at an all-time high; foginess is prevalent regarding your thoughts and ideas. Avoid quarrels with those above you such as a boss, supervisor or client customer. You're clear on all you have done to promote successes and failures; stay true to what you know and ignore the tendency to be willful. You reach out to a supplier or source that seems to have closed your account. You re-evaluate your biggest priorities regarding the things in life that hold the most importance to your circumstances. Your reputation is well known; someone supports the new directions you want to go in and listens as you describe how you plan to effect change. Stepping away from the day lends relaxation and rejuvenation as you put your feet up this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Communications with those younger than yourself are called for. A certain task falls to you as the group can't make a decision about how to move forward. You have entered a cycle of abundance in material, financial and spiritual aspects. A new design or method makes itself known today and becomes a regular part of your routine. Your memory is occupied by someone who's passed away; let your heart be light and try to remember the times of joy you shared. The tendency for broadening your mind is strong; leaving a mark with your work is important and your efforts reflect this. Enjoy this evening beneath the stars or perhaps at a planetarium would be fun; spending time with someone special makes a difference in your sleep tonight.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You could be tempted to venture where perhaps you shouldn't socially; someone critical is watching you closely. You may feel as though you're not comfortable in your own skin. You could be challenged by someone who rarely agrees with you. You're able to avoid an argument by using your natural charm; make a note to stay away from a certain person when possible. A very sensitive situation comes to your attention through a surprising connection; intimate hurts require a special kind of healing. Hold your head up as you work to grow and evolve; it's not everyone who can manage to follow this difficult, sometimes painful, path. You're invited to a small dinner with friends featuring a new dish. Unwind later with a favorite book.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You let physical concerns go to the wayside as your attention is fully focused on the true meaning of dreams and intuitive experiences. Be careful to let your logical side play a role in new beliefs and notions. You may have the sensation of watching your own life unfold from a distance, almost like an out of body experience. Pay attention to new information; it could hold ideas and answers you aren't prepared for. A new place to grocery shop is just what you're looking for. You make an effort to pay attention to the needs and wants of others. Being a bit too much into yourself sometimes creates friction you don't want at this time! Your advice is golden when you're approached by someone new who's in a volatile situation that could be serious.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You could actually accept an invitation to a special gathering later; remember, with the new phase you have entered you'll feel free to be you most of the time. A domestic project for a friend introduces you to new people and new food. Kicking back and enjoying yourself feels like something you want to do regularly; go for it! You could notice a certain radiance in your physical appearance; the new lifestyle changes are working for you. You enjoy the perks of life such as nice clothes, vehicles and home as well as art, jewels and real estate; you value these things very highly right now and are in a cycle of acquiring. Friends gather round to celebrate a nice occasion; you feel humbled and grateful for the blessings and good fortune you enjoy.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Some things that have confounded you could be cleared up and put away today. You could have to deal with an urge to spend, spend, spend just now. You don't intend to pass a good deal when you see it; watch your purse strings as you try to stay within your budget. Your tax plans need your attention today as you could have forgotten to add or subtract important information. You should get to the center of an issue at work with ease and accuracy. You have a social gathering on your mind; perhaps you have been asked to cater or address invitations. Make an effort to slow your pace so that nothing is overlooked. Make a list and check off chores as you go for better focus and peace of mind. Put your feet up tonight and let your hair down.



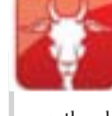
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You try something new and bold like bright colors in clothing or paint; whatever this is makes a definite statement. Your mind shifts dramatically in thinking; what before seemed foreign now seems as though you've found your home. A friend agrees with your ideas and supports them. Duties and tasks go quickly and smoothly during this period of positive energy opening up. This new cycle could represent a good time to take risks at an emotional level; you can offer fine contributions to a relationship. Tensions could run high with a family member who only wants the best for you. Later, you seek fun and laughter with friends at a new place in town; you could find yourself running into someone new and exciting in a friendly sort of way.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You notice strong discomfort in general with surroundings, people, even thoughts. You could hold your affections back due to lack of warmth in your mood. Friends call on you for help in a trying matter; your input is valuable and most appreciated. Your quiet nature is useful as you stand back and observe while making your own plans. This new cycle is the perfect time to uncover important theories and ideas that represent the future. A new assignment has your name written all over it; you're relieved and prepared to make your mark on this. You could write an emotional note that speaks of your true feelings. You receive a surprise gift from someone who loves you; this gesture fills your heart. Reading helps get you to sleep.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You look and feel good as you focus on getting things done. You could feel something amiss, something that just niggles and irritates but you can't tell exactly what. A new project progresses and the teamwork is excellent; someone could challenge some of your decisions on this. A quick visit with someone sparks your thoughts and ideas as you connect on a mutual understanding and agree to pursue this together. Warm feelings for someone younger brighten your day; you feel strongly about the future being with those of the younger generation and you contribute to this in some way. Your energy is very positive, your heart is light and it feels good! A new romantic interest invites you for a light dinner to become more acquainted.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Today brings a sense of ease when communicating on all levels. Your gains in money and material items are a focus for you now; remember to be grateful for all that you have now! You find it hard to focus on anything but reaching your goals; pay attention to personal issues. Your sense of worth when looking at purchases or projects is very sharp; your judgment is on target. You shine when addressing a group with updates and plans. There may be a difficult family discussion later; you have the ability to take the bull by the horns and get to the heart of the matter. A certain sentimental item could be argued over when the subject comes up; is possession of this worth family unrest you learn some interesting facts tonight.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You receive information regarding someone who is a large part of your emotional landscape. Activities with family members takes prominence over any other relationships. A discussion with others helps strengthen the bonds you share; if you have done or said anything you are confronted with remember it's just better to be honest so that feelings can be repaired. An older person may want you to do something that would go against your morals; remember shysters aren't right or good just because you're related. Money and control are very attractive to you; sexual acceptance and fulfillment are strongly desired. It is up to you to destroy circumstances and behaviors that are hurtful to others; look at both sides of the coin.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Transportation

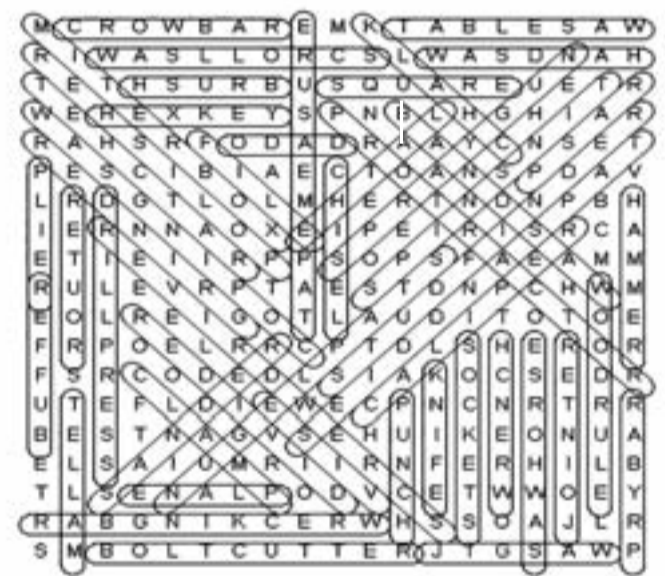
Find and circle all of the transportation words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters will reveal an additional method of transportation.



- | | | | |
|----------|------------|---------------|------------|
| AIRPLANE | FERRY | RICKSHAW | SNOWMOBILE |
| BICYCLE | GONDOLA | ROCKET | SUBMARINE |
| BLIMP | HORSE | ROLLER BLADES | TRAIN |
| BOAT | JET | SCOOTER | TRAM |
| CAMEL | MOPED | SHIP | TRUCK |
| CANOE | MOTORCYCLE | SKATEBOARD | VAN |
| CARRIAGE | PARACHUTE | SKIS | WAGON |
| ELEVATOR | RAFT | SLED | YACHT |

Yesterday's Solution

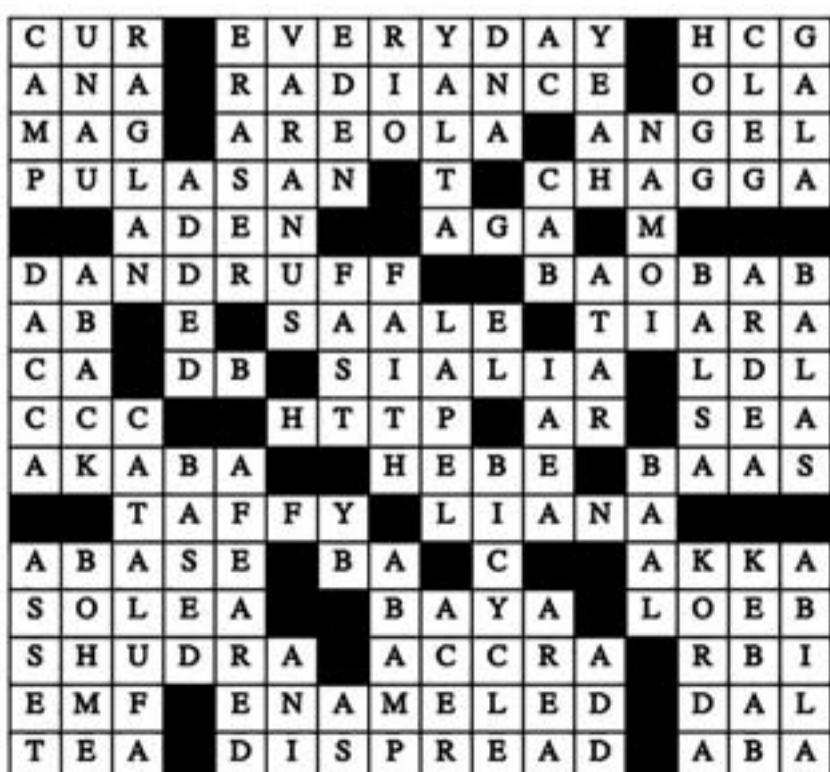
Tools



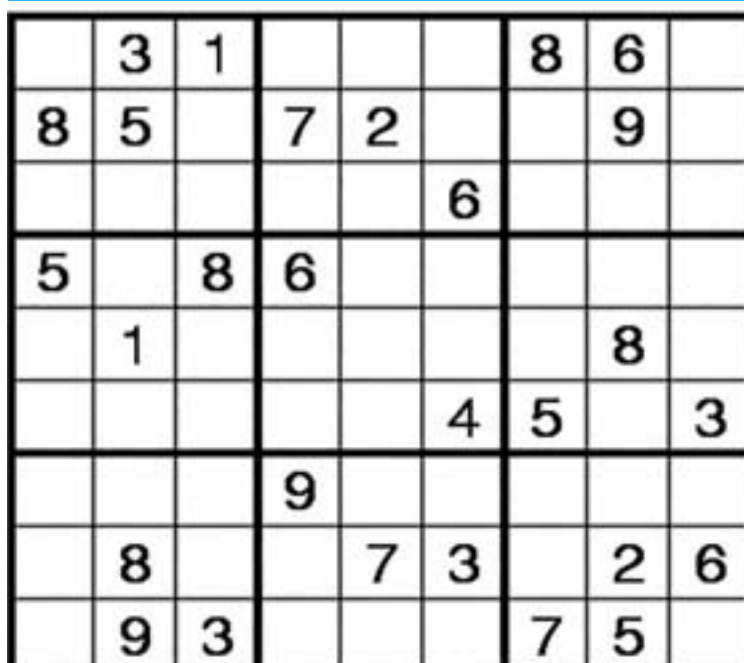
- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| BAND SAW | FILE | POLISHER | SPRAY GUN |
| BOLT CUTTER | GRINDER | PROTRACTOR | SQUARE |
| BRUSH | HAMMER | PRY BAR | STAPLE GUN |
| BUFFER | HAND SAW | PUNCH | STUD FINDER |
| CALIPER | HEX KEY | RASP | TABLE SAW |
| CHALK | JIG SAW | RATCHET | TAPE MEASURE |
| CHISEL | JOINTER | ROUTER | TAPS AND DIES |
| CLAMP | KNIFE | SANDER | VISE |
| COPING SAW | LATHE | SAWHORSE | TENSIPS |
| CROWBAR | MALLET | SCREWDRIVER | WOOD RULE |
| DADO | MITER BOX | SCROLL SAW | WRECKING BAR |
| DIVIDER | PLANE | SOCKETS | WRENCH |
| DRILL PRESS | FLJER | | |

The hidden sentence is: MEN HAVE BECOME THE TOOLS OF THEIR TOOLS

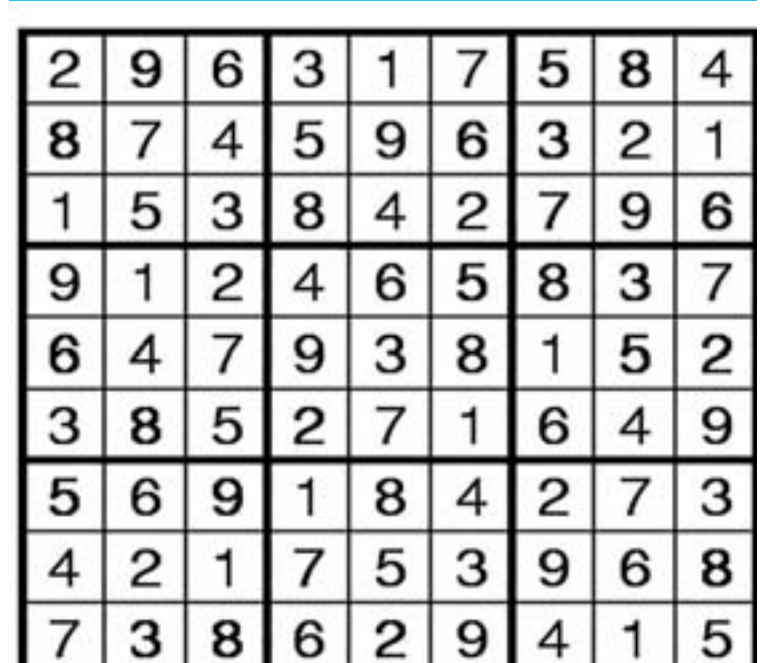
Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Classifieds

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Kuwait Times
 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Relatively hot with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 17/04/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	30 °C	20 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	33 °C	19 °C		
ABDALY	32 °C	15 °C		
BUBYAN	29 °C	00 °C		
JAHRA	33 °C	20 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	29 °C	19 °C		
SALMIYAH	27 °C	21 °C		
AHMADI	28 °C	22 °C		
NUWASIB	29 °C	20 °C		
WAFRA	32 °C	17 °C		
SALMY	32 °C	19 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	04/18	Relatively hot and some high clouds will appear	33 °C	21 °C	N-NW	10 - 35 km/h
Thursday	04/19	Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will appear later on	36 °C	20 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 35 km/h
Friday	04/20	Partly cloudy and rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on	36 °C	21 °C	SW-SE	20 - 55 km/h
Saturday	04/21	Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will appear	36 °C	23 °C	SE-VRB	08 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:56
Sunrise	05:19
Zuhr	11:48
Asr	15:22
Sunset	18:15
Isha	19:36

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	29 °C
MIN. Temp.	20 °C
MAX. RH	81 %
MIN. RH	30 %
MAX. Wind	NE 60 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	.4 mm

REQUIRED Head Indian Chef

- ◆ 17-20 years experience
- ◆ Has transferable residency (Article 18)
- ◆ Can be team leader
- ◆ For a kitchen that will serve 500 customers and above

Good Salary
Food, Accommodation and transportation provided

Contact number 97808071

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2 BEDROOMS FULLY FURNISHED
 (GYM/INTERNET/WATER & ELECTRICITY/ 24/7 SECURITY & MAINTENANCE)

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Arrival Flights on Wednesday 18/4/2018				Departure Flights on Wednesday 18/4/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	JZR	776	Jeddah	13:40
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	CLX	792	Hanoi	14:30
JZR	267	Beirut	01:25	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
QTR	8511	Doha	01:30	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR	188	Dubai	15:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KNE	684	Madinah	15:50
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KAC	283	Dhaka	15:50
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	JZR	606	Kochi	16:00
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
KAC	796	Madinah	03:45	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	SVA	505	Madinah	16:55
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:55
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	SAW	706	Dammam	17:00
PAL	668	Manila	05:00	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	143	Doha	07:00	JZR	266	Beirut	18:30
WAN	342	Sohag	07:30	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	WAN	135	Doha	18:40
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	WAN	117	Bahrain	19:30
JZR	529	Asyut	08:10	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
IRC	6552	ABD	08:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	JZR	552	Alexandria	20:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	353	Bengaluru	21:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
SYR	341	Latakia	11:00	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	543	Cairo	21:20
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
KIS	6032	Mashhad	12:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
WAN	134	Doha	12:20	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
CLX	792	Luxembourg	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:25
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
JZR	903	Baku	12:55	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
JZR	125	Bahrain	12:55	JZR	604	Ahmedabad	22:40
KAC	522	Al Najaf	13:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
JZR	357	Mashhad	13:05	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:15
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
				WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40
				JZR	560	Sohag	23:45

Lifestyle | Gossip

Arctic Monkeys
fans petition
to get band
BBC special

A petition urging the BBC to give Arctic Monkeys their own hour-long live concert special has received almost 2,000 signatures. The Change.org profile was setup by James Gillen, who has called on fellow fans of the popular Sheffield band to tweet commissioning executive at BBC Music, Rachel Davies, asking her to get the one-off broadcast to celebrate the release of their holly-anticipated sixth studio album, 'Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino', commissioned. If fans get their way, Alex Turner and co would follow in the footsteps of the likes of Sam Smith, U2 and Adele in having an '... At the BBC' show broadcast. The petition reads: "After recent BBC shows focusing on Sam Smith and U2, the format would be the perfect opportunity to showcase Arctic Monkeys and the top quality British songwriting of Alex Turner to a national audience." The 'Do I Wanna Know' rockers recently had to extend their UK tour due to demand. They'll now play four consecutive

concerts at London's The O2, adding gigs on September 12 and September 13. And they've also added additional Newcastle, Sheffield and Birmingham shows. It comes off the back of the announcement that their long-awaited new album will be released in May. The Sheffield band - completed by Matt Helders, Jamie Cook and Nick O'Malley - took to Twitter to reveal that 'Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino' will drop next month. The band tweeted: "Our new album 'Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino' will be released on May 11th, 2018. [sic]" Alongside the name of the upcoming album, the indie band - who had previous hits including 'I Bet That You Look Good on the Dancefloor' and 'Fluorescent Adolescent' - posted a short teaser featuring a futuristic landscape, a cinematic orchestration and then a bluesy riff. The new LP - which marks the first studio album since 2013 - is already available to pre-order and consists of 11 brand new tracks. It is their first record since 2013's 'AM'.

STYLES THROWS CREAM
PIE IN MABEL'S FACE

Harry Styles thanked Mabel for supporting him on tour by throwing a cream pie in her face. The 'Sweet Creature' singer stormed the stage whilst the 'Fine Line' hitmaker was opening for him on the last night of their tour at Dublin's 3Arena on Monday night, covering her face in the sweet treat, before hugging her and running away. Luckily for the One Direction star, he'd used a pie with vegan ingredients as the star follows the meat and dairy-free diet. Sharing a clip of the hilarious moment on Twitter, Mabel wrote: "When @Harry_Styles pranks you on stage and throws a cream pie in your face whilst you're singing. At least it was vegan (sic)" Thanking the 22-year-old star - who is daughter of Neneh Cherry and Massive Attack's Cameron McVey - for joining him on the road, Harry added to his profile: "A huge thank you @Mabel for also being wonderful. To all the crew, and everyone involved, thank you. Australia, I'll see you soon. H (sic)" The 24-year-old heartthrob's tour has been full of fun and games, at The O2 in London last week, Harry managed to catch a gummy bear in his mouth after it was hurled on stage by a fan. The 'Kiwi' singer was performing his second night at the 20,000-capacity arena and entertained the front row by letting them aim the Haribo fruit gum directly into his mouth. In fan footage shared on Twitter, the 'Dunkirk' star could be heard shouting to the fan: "You can do one in my mouth and then the game's over, and only throw Haribo. Okay?" After chewing the sweet treat, a pleased Harry quipped: "I cannot tell you how relieved I am that went in." Harry will head to Australia next performing at Perth Arena on Saturday.

ONE DIRECTION HAVE DISCUSSED
COMEBACK SHOW PLANS

Liam Payne has hinted One Direction could reunite with one big "fantastic show" in the future. The 24-year-old hunk has teased Directioners that now that he and his bandmates - Harry Styles, Louis Tomlinson and Niall Horan - have developed as solo artists, following their hiatus which began in 2016, they have discussed making a huge comeback. He told German news outlet Promiflash: "You know I think it (a reunion) will happen at some point in the distant future. We've all spoken about it and, you know, the dream for this most fantastic show that could be, is amazing. With everybody being so successful ... It's so important for us to be able to make that show. And it's the only way really that One Direction could get any bigger. It's the only way we could get more successful really, isn't it? By being good on your own." It's not known if former member Zayn Malik - who quit in 2015 to lead a normal life - will be part of their



future plans. The 'For You' singer - who has 12-month-old son Bear with his girlfriend Cheryl - has previously insisted the boyband would be "coming back around at some point". Asked if it has always been an aim of his to be a solo artist after he first entered 'The X Factor' solo, he said: "It's always been a dream. I wouldn't say it's always been an aim. Once One Direction started, it was just the passion. It was fantastic and it still is. It's coming back around at some point, I'm sure ... Yes, I think we will reunite at some point in the future. We have to - I mean we've got an album ['Made In The AM'] we haven't even toured yet, and I want to write some more songs as well with the boys." And 24-year-old Niall previously insisted he would drop everything if a One Direction reunion was to "come knocking". He said: "I told my managers from the start: When One Direction comes knocking, what I'm doing, I don't care if I sold out arenas or won Grammys. I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't for that."

Payne releasing
next single this week

Liam Payne will release his next single on Friday. The 24-year-old singer previously teased fans with details of his collaboration with reggae star J Balvin, and now he's confirmed the release date. Alongside the artwork, which features the pair, he wrote on Twitter: "This is it! My next single #Familiar featuring my boy @JBalvin is out this Friday! Go pre-save it on @Spotify for a chance to be the FIRST person to hear it! (sic)" Judging by a teaser clip posted on both the singers' accounts, fans will have to get to know their Spanish if they want to understand the lyrics. Liam took to his Instagram story back in February from Miami, Florida to tease the track by singing topless in Spanish, whilst tagging the popular Colombian reggaeton singer. In the clip, Liam could be heard saying: "I can't stop speaking Spanish, I can't..." Before adding in Spanish: "The girls... A little bit." Liam - who is dating former Girls Aloud star Cheryl, with whom he has 12-month-old son Bear - wrote on the post: "I have no idea what I'm saying." And Liam also teased a potential collaboration with the 'Bonita' hitmaker, writing alongside a picture of the pair: "My long lost Colombian brother @jbalvin (sic)" Liam - who teamed up with Rita Ora on the 'Fifty Shades Freed' soundtrack 'For You' - recently admitted



he can't believe how his solo career has taken off. Meanwhile, Steve Mac, who is working on Liam's debut solo record, has promised it will feature "hit after hit". The 'Shape of You' co-writer - who has worked with the likes of Ed Sheeran and Little

Mix, as well as One Direction - said: "I've heard a lot of his stuff and I think it's going to be a great album. I wouldn't say it's a body of work that will flow, but what I like is that it's going to be hit to hit to hit. And in my world, those are the best albums."

Malik
splits
from manager

Zayn Malik has been dropped by his long-time manager Sarah Stennett. The 'Dusk Till Dawn' hitmaker had been with Sarah's First Access Entertainment since he quit One Direction to pursue a solo career in 2015. Confirming the split to Variety, she stated: "Sometimes in life you have to make extremely difficult decisions to effect positive change for everyone." The 25-year-old singer is about to release his second solo album - expected in June - and has been teasing fans that he's been rehearsing to head out on the road in support of the record, unlike his 2016 debut 'Mind Of Mine'. Zayn has just released the lead single 'Let Me', but the former boyband star has said he wants to keep the album a "mystery". He said recently: "I'm trying to keep it as mysterious as possible but there's a plan with the roll out. It's going to be different to I think anything anyone has done before. It's going to be interesting to see how the audience reacts to this kind of release but I wanted to try something different. I think it's all going to make sense in the end when the album finally drops." It is the second split for Zayn this year, after his break-up with his girlfriend of two years, Gigi Hadid, in March. Speaking about 'Let Me', which is about the 22-year-old model, Zayn said: "I was in love - and I think that's pretty evident. I was aspiring to be in love with someone for the rest of my life and the rest of theirs, as we all do. Things change and we move forward in life. Times change, but that's what I was thinking when I wrote it. We go through experiences so we have memories and stories and things to write down and contemplate and think about. You get to really put your experience into something. It should be remembered forever." Zayn's departure from First Access comes after Ellie Goulding recently left after 10 years to sign with Dua Lipa and Lana Del Rey's Tap Management.

Gary Barlow relies on
cryotherapy for tour fitness

Gary Barlow has been relying on cryotherapy to get in shape for his solo tour. The 'Take That' star, who kicked off his run at Edinburgh's Playhouse last night is the latest celebrity to test out the popular weight-loss technique - which involves standing in a tank at sub-zero temperatures for three minutes in order to burn calories. The 47-year-old singer - whose debut solo LP 'Open Road' is back in the charts, sitting comfortably at number 10 in the Official UK Chart at present - was inspired by Real Madrid football champion Cristiano Ronaldo to try out cryotherapy, and he admits being inside the icy tanks is a "horrific" experience. He told the Daily Mirror newspaper: "Someone said to me, it was probably my son, that Ronaldo never goes on the pitch unless he's had a cryo. The problem is I am so gullible, I believe all this. So the next minute I thought, 'I'm going to have a bit of that'. It was horrible. I am used to ice baths - I do those every week. They do make me feel really good as it gets the blood rushing. But this cryo chamber was horrific." Ronaldo has his very own cryotherapy pool at his home which cost £36,000. On the benefits, Gary added: "It definitely wakes you up. We used to take ice baths on tour and whenever we did them, no one ever got injuries. So there is something in the cold thing but it's not pleasant for the three minutes you're in it." The 'Back for Good' hitmaker says he goes to extreme lengths to ensure his wellness on the road to avoid having to axe gigs due to illness. He said: "The last thing you want is cancelling shows because you are ill. I want to make sure I am 150% every night I go on." Meanwhile, Gary has reassured fans that while he's currently enjoying touring solo, he has no plans to quit Take That - completed by Mark Owen and Howard Donald. He told the Metro newspaper: "I'll always say, I'll move anything to



do things with the band. "We usually do a record and tour every three years. As someone who has been on a stage since the age of 11, I want to tour for years ... that's not enough for me. I want to go out and more." The 'Never Forget' singer says he'd be left "devastated" if he did ever have to give up performing with his bandmates. He added: "If there was a reason that I couldn't do it anymore I would be devastated because I enjoy it so much."

Lifestyle | Gossip



CARRIE COON CAST AS PROXIMA MIDNIGHT IN AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR

Carrie Coon has been cast as Proxima Midnight in 'Avengers: Infinity War'. The 37-year-old actress - who is best known for starring as Nora Durst in the HBO drama series 'The Leftovers' - is to play the part of Proxima, a member of the Black Order, in the much-anticipated new Marvel film. Carrie - who is currently pregnant with her first child - announced on Twitter: "It's true! My voice and a dazle of gifted animators have teamed up to play Proxima Midnight." Other actors set to play members of the Black Order include 'Kong: Skull Island' star Terry Notary and Tom Vaughan-Lawlor. The last-minute casting announcement comes shortly after Elizabeth Olsen - who plays the role of Scarlet Witch in the Marvel movies - revealed that the cast of 'Avengers: Infinity War' still don't know the title to its sequel. The 29-year-old actress admitted that despite being a veteran of the

franchise, she's not been told the name of the sequel, which was shot immediately after 'Infinity War' last year. Asked whether she knew the title of the follow up, Elizabeth confessed: "No. Someone just told us that they were going to release it after this movie. "When are they releasing the name? I have no idea what it is. I've been calling it 'Avengers 4.'" Elizabeth also revealed she's been sworn to secrecy regarding the film's plot. She said: "We can choose to sit in a locked private room with an iPad that has the full script - which also has a bunch of lies in it - because they won't print the full script. "But if you don't want to do that, they give you your pages that pertain to your character, and then they orally explain to you what's happening in the rest of the movie. "So we do know what happens as much as they have given us ... unless they're lying to us, and planting strange seeds."

Danny Boyle's new project handed September 2019 release



Danny Boyle's new untitled comedy movie has been handed a release date of September 13 next year. The 61-year-old director - who has been strongly linked with helming the new James Bond movie - is teaming up with the likes of Lily James, Himesh Patel and Kate McKinnon on the project, which is based on a script by Richard Curtis. Boyle - who has previously directed hits such as 'Trainspotting' and 'Slumdog Millionaire' - and Curtis are also set to serve as producers, according to Variety. Plot details of the new project are being kept under wraps for the time being, but it has been confirmed that the movie will be music-themed and set in the 60s and 70s. Boyle has, of course, also been heavily to the new Bond project, which was originally handed a release date of November 8 next year. That now appears to be unlikely, with actress Naomie Harris - who stars as Miss Moneypenny in the franchise - recently admitting she hasn't spoken to anyone about the much-anticipated new movie. She confessed: "It'll be very disappointing if I'm not involved. I really hope they ask me back. I haven't heard anything." Naomie is delighted that Daniel Craig has agreed to reprise the role of Bond, and she's similarly excited about the prospect of Boyle directing the film. But the London-born star recently admitted she hasn't held any serious discussions about the highly anticipated movie. She said: "I know it's going later in the year and released next year. "I know quite excitingly that Daniel [Craig] is definitely back and I've heard that Danny Boyle is attached as director. Who knows."

Mad Max: Fury Road sequel in doubt amid legal dispute

The sequel to 'Mad Max: Fury Road' is in doubt because of a bitter legal dispute. Efforts to make a sequel to the 2015 sci-fi film have stalled due to a dispute between director George Miller and the movie studio Warner Bros. The film, which starred Academy Award-winning actress Charlize Theron and Tom Hardy, was well received by critics and was a modest success at the box office. But plans to start shooting the sequel have been derailed by an argument over Miller's bonus for the project, with the director claiming he's entitled to an additional \$7 million for keeping the film's budget under \$157 million. On the other hand, Warner Bros. is saying that the film did, in fact, go over its original budget and therefore, isn't willing to pay the bonus. The film studio has tried to get the lawsuit moved out of Australia - where the



movie was shot - but the Australian Supreme Court ruled late last year that the case needed to be heard Down Under. In the court filings, the studio has been accused of demanding that a series of scenes in the script not be shot and that additional scenes be included in the movie, but still be excluded from the net cost of the project. Meanwhile, Warner Bros. has alleged that that 'Fury Road' "significantly exceeded the approved budget", with the additional costs largely being the responsibility of the production company. What's more, the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper reports that Warner Bros. says it simply requested an alternative ending to the movie, rather than insisting upon it. A judgment is pending on the case and for the moment, plans to make the 'Mad Max: Fury Road' sequel cannot progress any further.

THANDIE NEWTON IS THE FIRST 'WOMAN OF COLOR TO HAVE A PROMINENT STAR WARS ROLE'

Thandie Newton is thrilled to have become the "first woman of color to have a prominent role in the 'Star Wars' legacy". The 45-year-old actress plays the part of Val in the eagerly-awaited 'Solo: A Star Wars Story', which is due out next month, and Thandie is proud to have secured the role, describing it as a "big deal". She said: "I'm the first woman of color to have a prominent role in the 'Star Wars' legacy. "There have been others with one line and Lupita Nyong'o was a computer-generated character [in 'The Force Awakens' and 'The Last Jedi'], but you didn't get to see the colour of her skin. I'm the first. "I'm going to have a toy and everything." The London-born actress is delighted to have been chosen for the coveted role. But she also admitted that, at this stage, there's not much she's allowed to say about her on-screen character. Speaking to the Radio Times, Thandie explained: "It's exciting, but that's all I can say. It is a big deal." Earlier this month,

Hollywood legend Samuel L. Jackson doubted whether the success of 'Black Panther' will lead to long-term changes within the movie business. The 69-year-old actor - who previously appeared in the 'Star Wars' prequel trilogy - doesn't think the acclaimed movie - which features a predominantly black cast - will ultimately have the impact some fans have suggested. He said: "I'm not positive that 'Black Panther' is going to change the dynamic of black stories being told in Hollywood and being accepted all over the world. "It's an action-adventure story and a lot of people like those, and they'll work all over the world forever because everybody loves a hero. "But not everybody loves a drama about somebody's life experience - that's why awards have a separate category for foreign films: they are perceived as being different. "Once we stop perceiving them as different and just see them as good films and they get recognized in the same category, we'll be laying markers."



Amy Schumer for boxing biopic

Amy Schumer is in talks to star as world champion boxer Christy Martin in a gritty biopic. 'Christy Martin' will be the directorial debut of Katherine Fugate, who has worked as script writer on the Garry Marshall rom coms 'Valentine's Day' and 'New Year's Eve' and created the TV drama 'Army Wives'. 'Trainwreck' star Amy is circling the project with an eye to star as the female boxer, according to Deadline. This would be a marked career change for the 36-year-old stand-up comedian, who is currently starring in 'I Feel Pretty' about a woman who suffers a blow to the head which results in her believing she is the most beautiful person in the world. Christy Martin, now known by her maiden name of Salters, was born in West Virginia in 1968. She earned the nickname of The Coalminer's Daughter after she won a boxing competition and in 1990 decided to go pro. She married her trainer Jim Martin, and when they first met in the training ring her broke her ribs in a bid to deter her from boxing. Christy persevered, however, and went on to become the first woman to sign with renowned boxing promoter Don King, signing pay-per-view fights and knocking out her opponents. She rose to the top of her field where she remained until 2003. Outside the ring Christy was trapped in a violent marriage to Jim, and fell in love with another woman. When she decided to leave him he stabbed and shot her. Christy survived the attack and Jim was arrested, but she refused to stand before him to testify in court. —Bang Showbiz

Domhnall Gleeson to join The Kitchen



Domhnall Gleeson is in talks to join the cast of 'The Kitchen'. The 34-year-old actor is believed to be in final negotiations for a part in the New Line adaptation of the DC and Vertigo female-fronted crime comic book series, according to The Hollywood Reporter. If Domhnall takes on a role in the production, he will be joining previously announced cast members including Elisabeth Moss, Tiffany Haddish, and Melissa McCarthy. 'The Kitchen' is being helmed by 'Straight Outta Compton' co-writer Andrea Berloff - who is making her directorial debut on the feature - and is set Hell's Kitchen, New York, in the 1970s. The story follows the story of the wives of Irish mobsters who end up taking over the criminal enterprise after their husbands are arrested and jailed. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the part being offered to Domhnall is Gabriel O'Malley, an intense veteran of the war in Vietnam, who works for the neighborhood gangsters as a hitman before skipping town to avoid the police, before returning once again when the wives take over. Michael De Luca has signed up as a producer on the project, which is set to start filming next month and is aiming to hit theatres in September 2019. For Domhnall, it comes after roles in 'Goodbye Christopher Robin' and 'Peter Rabbit', as well as his part as General Hux in the new trilogy of 'Star Wars' movies. The star will reprise his role in the final episode of the trilogy - the as-yet-unnamed 'Episode IX' - and recently said he was surprised to have not been killed off during 2017's 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi'. He said: "I'll be honest, I was very surprised that I survived. I kind of imagined myself getting blown up in a ship pretty early on. Spoiler alert, I suppose. There's also this moment where [Kylo] Ren [Adam Driver] is on the ground, and it looks like maybe I'll finish him. It's like, what state would the franchise be in if like Snoke and Ren are gone?"

Joaquin Phoenix reveals what discourages him from directing

Joaquin Phoenix says working with so many talented directors has made him less likely to move behind the camera. The 43-year-old actor is one of the most sought-after talents in Hollywood, but having previously worked with the likes of Woody Allen, Paul Thomas Anderson and Spike Jonze, Joaquin isn't sure whether he has what it takes to direct. He explained: "I wouldn't do it just to do it. I imag-

ine if there was a story that I felt like I had a unique understanding of, then maybe it's something I would pursue, but I haven't really thought about it. "I've worked with really great directors, and I don't know if I have that. "Do you know what I mean? If you work with people that were mediocre, if you were on set with a bunch of mediocre directors, you'd probably be like, 'I think I could probably do that.'"

Joaquin has occasional "fantasies" when he believes he's more capable than he really is. But when he watches the real experts in action, the actor quickly realizes his own shortcomings. He told Collider: "Then when you work with these people that are at the highest level ... Sometimes you have fantasies where you go like, 'I could probably play basketball,' or, 'Maybe I could box.' "Then you see people that really do it, you

go like, 'I could never with that.' It's kind of like that." Joaquin also admitted that despite being a veteran of the movie business, he's still quite ignorant about the specifics of directing. He shared: "I still, I don't know, like when somebody calls out a lens size, I have no idea what that means. "I don't know how wide it is. I try not to pay attention to that part of it, as much as I try to stay inside the character."



Lifestyle | Music & Movies



Actress Eva Longoria poses on her Hollywood Walk of Fame Star during a ceremony in Hollywood, California on Monday. — AFP photos



Actress Eva Longoria (center) poses with her family on her Hollywood Walk of Fame Star during a ceremony.

Eva Longoria gets star on Hollywood Walk of Fame



Actress Eva Longoria (left) poses on her Hollywood Walk of Fame Star with fashion designer Victoria Beckham.



Actress Eva Longoria (left) poses with her husband Jose Antonio 'Pepe' Baston.

Eva Longoria, best known for her role in the TV series "Desperate Housewives," got a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame on Monday, in an event hailed by the Latino community. "Representation matters. So every time there's another Latino on this Walk of Fame, it's another win for a whole community," the 43-year-old actress from a Texas family tracing its roots to Mexico told AFP. Longoria received the honor in the presence of her husband, former Televisa chairman Jose Baston. They are expecting their first child in May.

Celebrities such as Ricky Martin, Victoria Beckham and actresses Felicity Huffman and Anna Faris also attended the ceremony. "It's really important for me to be here, for people to come and see the star, and know that you can do it with a lot of hard work," said Longoria. In the romantic comedy "Overboard," set for release next month, Longoria plays the best friend of a single mother struggling to make ends meet. —AFP



Actress Eva Longoria (second left) poses on her Hollywood Walk of Fame Star with actress Felicity Huffman (left), actress Anna Faris (second right) and singer Ricky Martin during a ceremony in Hollywood, California.

Nick Cave, Johnny Depp top bill at Montreux Jazz Festival

Australian alternative rocker Nick Cave, Hollywood star Johnny Depp and punk legend Iggy Pop will be among the headliners at this year's Montreux Jazz Festival, organizers announced yesterday. The program for the 52nd edition of the festival, which kicks off on the evening of June 29 and runs through July 14, offers "a particularly rich lineup", organizers said in a statement. Kicking off this year's festival in the idyllic Swiss town of Montreux, on the shores of Lake Geneva, they boasted "the kind of improbable pairing that we love", featuring French singer Etienne Daho and Italian singer, pianist and composer Paolo Conte.

Montreux has for more than half a century been a magnet for big names of the music business and rising stars alike. It has retained its jazz label despite dramatically expanding its repertoire over the years, with big names in rock, punk, R&B and hip-hop also on the bill this year. Australian composer and singer Nick Cave will be one of the top attractions at the festival, where he and his band will be performing for the first time this year, hitting the main stage on July 12. The gothic frontman of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, who is known for the unsparring emotional intensity of his lyrics, is "an outsize personality, dark crooner, guru and poet," the organizers said.

He is joined on the marquee by other music industry giants performing at Montreux for the first time, including US industrial band Nine Inch Nails and Jack White, of the White Stripes, who will be performing solo. Billy Idol, Iggy Pop and Van Morrison also figure on this year's program, as does Hollywood megastar Johnny Depp, who will be performing with his band Hollywood Vampires, which also counts Alice Cooper and Joe Perry as members. "In addition to that colossal freeway of rock is a veritable streetscape of options," organizers said, pointing to "the retro-funk of Jamiroquai, the nervy hip-hop of N.E.R.D., (and) the sunny pop-folk of Angus & Julia Stone," among others.

Meantime, "at the crossroads of rock, electronic music and the avant-garde", John Cale, a founding member of the mythical New York band Velvet Underground, will be at Montreux for the first time this year, accompanied by a string orchestra, organizers said. Charlotte Gainsbourg, the daughter of French legendary singer and songwriter Serge Gainsbourg and British actress Jane Birkin, who has just released her fifth album, will meanwhile return to Montreux this year, hitting the stage on July 2.

In a tribute to its jazz label, the festival this year will create a new space, The House of Jazz, dedicated exclusively to projects within the genre, including an event featuring Brazilian singer Seu Jorge singing David Bowie songs in Portuguese. The festival will also double the seating available at its Montreux Jazz Club stage to fit 600 people, organizers said. —AFP



In this file photo Kendrick Lamar receives the Grammy for the Best Rap Album for 'DAMN.' during the 60th Annual Grammy Awards show in New York. — AFP

In rap milestone, Kendrick Lamar wins Pulitzer for music

Kendrick Lamar on Monday became the first rapper to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music, a milestone for which the board cited his skill in telling the African American experience. With the Pulitzer, the 30-year-old from the historically deprived Los Angeles community of Compton joins the leagues of celebrated American composers such as Aaron Copland, Charles Ives and John Adams. The Pulitzer board, which also awards literature and journalism, gave Lamar the prize for "DAMN.," an exploration of a classic hip-hop sound for an artist who has shifted gears musically with each album.

In its announcement, the Pulitzer board described "DAMN.," as "a virtuosic song collection unified by its vernacular authenticity and rhythmic dynamism that offers affecting vignettes capturing the complexity of modern African American life." "DAMN.," which reached number one on the US albums chart, moves forward the conversation about race that Lamar started on his previous album, "To Pimp a Butterfly," which infused jazz and spoken word and gave voice to the Black Lives Matter movement.

"DAMN.," opens with Lamar addressing his cultural role indirectly with a snippet from a conservative talk show criticizing his lyrics against police brutality, which he again raises in the track "XXX.," a reflection on the meaning of America that features U2. But much of "DAMN.," is more personal and introspective, with the track "HUMBLE.," exploring the pitfalls of fame and Lamar also introducing a martial-arts alter ego, Kung Fu Kenny. The Pulitzer board rarely awards mainstream music, last year giving the prize to the experimental opera composer Du Yun.

But the board in the mid-1990s introduced changes to make the award more inclusive. It has given the prize previously to jazz artists including Wynton Marsalis and Ornette Coleman. Hip-hop also has been recognized by the Pulitzer board in the drama category with "Hamilton"-Lin-Manuel Miranda's modern retelling of America's founding fathers-winning in 2016. —AFP

Cannes holds out olive branch in row with Netflix

The Cannes film festival said yesterday that it was still in talks with Netflix despite the platform's dramatic withdrawal of its films last week. Director Thierry Fremaux praised the streaming giant's bosses as "people of taste who love cinema", and said he was ready to heal the rancorous split that saw Netflix reportedly pull five films in the running for the world's top festival next month. Fremaux riled Netflix by banning movies that are not first released in French cinemas from the competition after cinema owners protested last year at the inclusion of two of its films, "Okja" and "The Meyerowitz Stories".

The Silicon Valley giant complained that it was being unfairly targeted because under French law films cannot be streamed until three years after their cinematic release. But Fremaux denied that there was a "war" between them despite harsh words from Netflix's chief content officer Ted Sarandos last week, who claimed its films were being "treated disrespectfully". "Netflix are cinephiles, people of taste who love cinema, and who have made possible what was never done before," Fremaux told French radio. "Again last night I wrote to my friends at Netflix so that we might find a solution. They find our love for (watching films in) cinemas hard to understand," he added.

Von Trier ban lifted?

Fremaux also went out of his way to praise the platform for financing the completion of Orson Welles' legendary unfinished opus, "The Other Side of The Wind", which the late American director began in 1970 and was still working on until his death in 1985. Netflix, however, was with stinging in its criticism of Cannes and Fremaux, claiming that "the festival has chosen to celebrate distribution rather than the art of cinema."

"It is not a coincidence that Thierry also banned selfies this year," Sarandos added, in a biting reference to Fremaux outlawing them on the red carpet. "I don't know what other advances in media Thierry would like to address." Fremaux also revealed yesterday that Russian director Andrei Zvyagintsev, who many critics thought should have won

the top Palme d'Or prize last year for his film "Loveless", will sit on this year's jury. And he hinted that controversial Danish director Lars Von Trier, who was banned from Cannes in 2011 for saying he was a Nazi, may be on the point of being brought back into the fold.

Fremaux said that with Von Trier finishing his serial killer flick, "The House That Jack Built", the festival's president Pierre Lescure was working hard to "lift the status of persona non grata". The film, starring Uma Thurman, Riley Keough and Matt Dillon, would help to give a little more star power to a highly-political Cannes line-up. Zvyagintsev, the maker of such classics as "The Return" and "Leviathan", has been a prominent supporter of his fellow Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov, whose film "Leto" is in the running for the Palme d'Or.

Fremaux has pleaded with the Kremlin for Serebrennikov, who is under house arrest for controversial charges of money laundering, to be allowed to travel to Cannes to premiere his film. Iranian master Jafar Panahi is also competing for the prize, though he too is banned from leaving his homeland. — AFP



French Director of the Cannes Film Festival Thierry Fremaux addresses a press conference on the official selection of the 71st Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP



Genevieve Paish of Christchurch, New Zealand, poses at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival in Indio, California.— AFP photos



Fans watch as Jean-Michel Jarre performs during the Coachella Music and Arts Festival.

From bondage to flowers, a fashion bonanza at **COACHELLA**

Coachella became one of the world's premier music festivals not only for the A-list performers. The two-weekend party in the California desert has become a major event in its own right for the fashion. While designers have heavily marketed their brands to Coachella, the fans who draw the most notice often do so by embracing their own sartorial flair, driven by a sense of innovation and, among revelers in the searing heat, of inhibition.

with rabbit ears. Twyman, 23, said that she and Watkins, 25, considered themselves "very fashion-forward"—and found the cans to be comfortable.

All about the sunglasses

For Genevieve Paish of Christchurch, New Zealand, who is attending Coachella for the first time, the initial accessory was a pair of orange-red, heart-shaped sunglasses. Paish, 21, said she picked the rest of her outfit to match, including her impromptu dress of drooping red strings. She dyed her hair a similar color and used a key chain to make puffy red scrunchies with which to hold up her hair. — AFP

Fun with bondage

They dress in green from head to toe, or at least when they dress at all. Tiana Tuttle and T.J. Sonnier covered their bodies with green nets over matching swimsuits, with caps to top it off. The pair from Los Angeles have been coordinating their festival outfits for several years. Tuttle, 23, said that this year, they wanted to explore the fashion possibilities of bondage. "We wanted to be that slutty, sexy thing in the corner that you can look at when you're bored at the show," said Sonnier, 22.

A passion for flowers

Hillary Osgood, 31, has been heading to festivals, especially Coachella, for 12 years. One thing she never forgets and has never lost—her light purple umbrella that both shields her from the sun and highlights her signature style. This year, she decked herself out in matching flowers draped like a turban on her head. While the flowers are artificial, Osgood said she found inspiration as she lives in the flower district of Los Angeles and works at a tiki bar. "It's a way to exemplify the Coachella lifestyle. It's not every day that you find a safe place to project some of your style," she said.

'Graduation' in a vintage dress

Aquiel Hayden has been on the festival circuit for the past two weeks and threw her clothes into a suitcase, choosing the day's wardrobe at the last minute. The purple-haired 21-year-old sported a floor-length, sparkling red dress that she found in a vintage store in her home of Santa Barbara, California, paired with thick maroon sunglasses and a golden belt. Hayden however said she was disappointed in the changing musical direction of ever-expanding Coachella and may not come back. "I thought I should go all out for my last one. It's sort of like my graduation," she said.

Recycled fashion

Chanel Twyman and Auzunay Watkins were looking for something different for Coachella and found it—short, and largely revealing, dresses made entirely from the tops of soft drink cans. The pair from Philadelphia bought the unique outfits from the New York designer Gypsy Sport and matched them with equally shiny half-masks



Aquiel Hayden of Santa Barbara, California, poses at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival.



Darius Glover, 28, of New York City poses at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival.



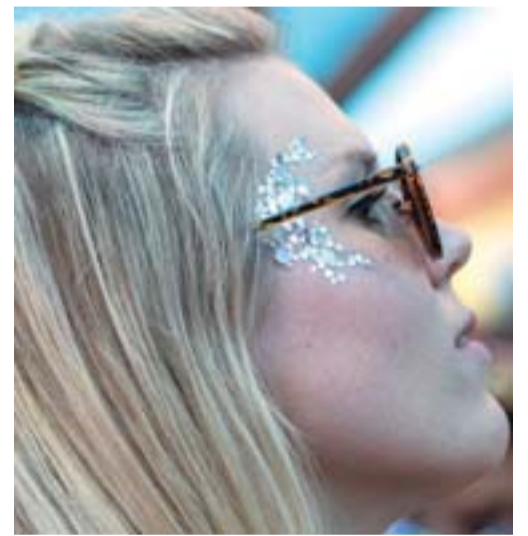
Actress Eva Longoria (center) poses with her family on her Hollywood Walk of Fame Star during a ceremony.



Jake Kiszka performs with Greta Van Fleet during the Coachella Music and Arts Festival in Indio.



Genevieve Paish of Christchurch poses at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival in Indio, California.



Shelby Baker of San Francisco, California, listens to Goldfish in the Do Lab tent at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival.

Selling off the Ritz, one monogrammed slipper at a time



This file picture shows the cover page of a survey titled 'Mes confidences' and filled out by the late French writer Marcel Proust, as it is displayed at the International Rare Book and Fine Art Fair (Salon du Livre Rare et de l'Objet diart) set at the Grand Palais in Paris. — AFP photos

Who wants a piece of the Ritz? The legendary Paris hotel, home for a while to Ernest Hemingway, Marcel Proust and Coco Chanel, is auctioning off 10,000 pieces of furniture and decor through the auction house Artcurial. The hotel's reputation for luxury and celebrity has already created global buzz around the sale. Although the pieces that will be on sale from April 17 to 21 might not have exceptional monetary value, they also pack a certain je ne sais quoi of something from the iconic Place Vendome establishment.

"The resonance of the Ritz abroad is very important," Stephane Aubert, one of the two auctioneers, told AFP. "The first client who called me to ask about the auction was an American from Texas. We've also been in contact with some Australians." The 3,500 lots up for grabs are on display this weekend at Artcurial, which used stools from the Hemingway Bar, a 19th-century bathtub, and sofas and a harp from the Proust Lounge to recreate various rooms.

The Ritz decided to sell the pieces when it reopened in June 2016 after four years of extensive renovations. Buyers can bid on objects ranging from velvet security cordons and curtain ties, to rugs, bed-frames and sets of bathrobes and slippers embroidered with the Ritz insignia. Price estimates run from 100 euros (\$123.40) for a pair of tablecloths to 10,000 euros (\$12,341) for a pair of nymph sculptures carrying bronze candelabras that used to decorate the lobby. Opened in 1898 by Swiss entrepreneur Cesar Ritz the Ritz has served as the backdrop to several key moments in French history.

The Nazis requisitioned it during World War II but had cleared out by the time Ernest Hemingway burst in with a group of Resistance fighters on August 25, 1944, gun in hand, to "personally liberate" it. Realizing he was too late Hemingway took to the bar where he is said to have run up a tab for 51 dry Martinis. In 1997, tragedy befell the hotel when Britain's Princess Diana, who had been staying there, was killed in a car accident in a Paris tunnel

while being pursued by paparazzi. The hotel made global headlines again in January, when robbers armed with guns and hatchets ransacked jewelry shops on

the ground floor, making off with over four million euros (\$4.9 million) in gems and watches. — AFP



A man holding pages of a survey titled 'Mes confidences' and filled out by the late French writer Marcel Proust, as it is displayed at the International Rare Book and Fine Art Fair.

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2018



'Light Balance' from the Ukraine perform during the 'Spotlight' festival opening in Bucharest on April 12, 2018. The Spotlight Festival transforms Bucharest into an open air light art exhibition using more than 25 different light art installations and projections. In addition to the historical monuments and buildings, Spotlight extends this year's map of events with new iconic locations in the city. The motto is "United We Shine", celebrating 100 years since the Great Union of Romania. — AFP

For Pakistani dockworkers in Dubai, kushti is a way of life

Every Friday evening in Dubai's bustling Deira district, a sandy lot is transformed into the ring of champions. It is kushti wrestling night and Kala Pehlwan is ready to fight. As the sun sinks below towering palm trees, dozens of men—many in tunics, others in T-shirts—begin to form a perfect circle. Most are Pakistani or Indian, from the cross-border region of Punjab, where kushti is a beloved pastime. They are also a pillar of the United Arab Emirates' workforce. Veteran wrestlers, now referees, pour water over the inner ring to minimize dust.

A peanut vendor drags a rickety cart around the circle, tending to the crowd—now three rows deep. "Clink, clink, clink," ring out wooden cymbals with bells. The wrestlers unabashedly strip down to their underwear, donning yellow, red, or even floral-patterned loincloths. "Kala Pehlwan, son, come to the ring! Suhail, son, come to the ring," cries out 50-year-old Mohammed Iqbal—a Dubai kushti fixture. Glaring, the opponents swipe one another's bodies with sand—a reciprocal move to counter sweat. The day's matches are quick—sometimes under a minute—and hard fought.

A foot is trapped between a rival's legs, a fighter flips over his opponent's shoulders to escape his grip. One pins his match down on his stomach and throws sand in his face before getting restrained by the referees. Spectators dart into the ring to film fights. Others watch in rapture, breaking out in cheers at decisive moments in the match. The winner is declared when a fighter manages to pin his opponent to the ground on his back. If

the fight starts going over 20 minutes, the referees declare a tie. On this evening, Kala Pehlwan finds himself overpowered—and faced with a challenge. "Find me a fighter that can beat me," his opponent taunts.

'I'm famous'

Kala Pehlwan, 26, huddled with friends and came up with a plan. They would find a challenger—not from Dubai, but from their hometown of Muzaffargarh in the Punjab region of Pakistan. Within days, they had gathered the money, throwing in 50-100 Dirhams (roughly \$15-25, 12-20 euros) each to pay for a plane ticket. "I can't meet you tonight I'm going to the airport," Kala Pehlwan tells AFP one Monday evening. Two days later, AFP met Kala Pehlwan at his workplace, Dubai's gleaming Waterfront Market.

Row upon row of ice-topped stalls are laden with fresh fish from Oman, Sri Lanka and beyond—a testament to the shipping hub that is Dubai. The stalls bear the names of Emirati owners, but South Asians are the face of the market. "We have connections from Pakistan at the fish market," says Kala Pehlwan. This is where he learned about the kushti matches when he arrived in Dubai six years ago. The brawny fighter enters the delivery area, crossing paths with his mentor, Mohammed Iqbal, who is pushing a cart of fish. "When I enter the market everyone is excited. They recognize me and know my name. And if there is any problem, they come to help me because I'm famous," Kala Pehlwan grins. That evening, Mohammed



Pakistani immigrant workers in the United Arab Emirates take part in a Kushti competition in Dubai. — AFP photos

Shahzad—the challenger from Muzaffargarh—tags along. Dressed in a crisp, blue tunic, Shahzad, 22, says he didn't hesitate when he received Kala Pehlwan's call. "The other fighter beat my friend and challenged him to find someone who can knock him out... so I came to Dubai," he grinned.

No kushti, no life

Kala Pehlwan says kushti is a way of life back in Muzaffargarh. "In our town, it's a tradition to learn wrestling. Everybody grows up on kushti. They do not have bad habits like cigarettes or drugs. Everyone is trying to be fit for a fight." Kala Pehlwan—whose real name is Mohammed Arsalan—took his nom de guerre from a hometown legend who shares his fighting style. He says a proper diet, coach and training are key to success.

Eating right is his biggest challenge in an expensive metropolis. Here, the fish market has some benefits. "Fish is my favorite dish. It is the healthiest food because in Dubai, most things are coming in frozen form but fish is fresh. Every other day I am eating a fish from the market. We are getting free fish from our employer at the end of the day," Kala Pehlwan says, returning to stack crates.

For Kala Pehlwan and many of his friends, Dubai is a temporary stage in life—a place to save cash before returning home. They work hard and sleep in shifts. AFP obtained permission to film at the men's residence but was unable to because it would have disrupted the group's sleeping patterns. "We all have our jobs here. Some are porters, some work in the fish market," Iqbal says ahead of a Friday match. But kushti, he adds, "is our tradition. It's where we come to de-stress."

'Better than fighting in anger'

Iqbal wrestled for more than two decades in Dubai before passing the torch to the next generation, whom he takes the time to train each evening before work. "It's not hard to get a space for these fights because in Dubai they always want entertainment and encourage us. "The (authorities) say arranging fights like this is better than fighting in anger where you live or at your workplace," said Iqbal. Kala Pehlwan says he can earn 500-600 Dirhams (\$135-\$165) on a good night the money collected in a plastic bag by the referee and champion—but kushti is not about money. "We can't enjoy life, we can't have a good time if we don't have wrestling in Dubai," he said. When Friday night comes around again, it's the visiting challenger Shahzad who wins. — AFP



Pakistani immigrant workers in the United Arab Emirates take part in a Kushti competition in Dubai.



Pakistani kushti wrestler Mohammed Arsalan (center), also known as Kala Pehlwan, working at the fish market in Dubai.