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Amir heads to Saudi Arabia for Gulf Cooperation Council meet

Sheikh Sabah congratulates King Salman • Riyadh ready to welcome guests

Bashir welcomes Kharafi, praises Zain contribution



Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir receives Zain Group Vice-Chairman and CEO Bader Al-Kharafi.

KHARTOUM: Zain Group announces that the President of the Republic of Sudan Omar Al-Bashir received Zain Group Vice-Chairman and CEO Bader Al-Kharafi at a meeting held in Khartoum. Also present at the meeting was Zain Sudan Managing Director Elfatih Erwa. During the meeting, Kharafi took the opportunity to brief Bashir on the transformative developments taking place at Zain Sudan, and the numerous successes the company has scored over the years. Additionally, he reaffirmed the confidence Zain Group has in the economy of Sudan, despite its many challenges, and pledged that the group would continue to invest significantly in cutting-edge technology to provide the people of Sudan with exceptional communications services. — (See Page 11)

News in brief

3-year transfer ban mullied

KUWAIT: The manpower authority is considering issuing a decision banning visa transfers to other employers for expats hired from outside the country to work in the private sector before three years from the issuance of the first work permit have elapsed. Informed sources added that this rule has been in effect for many years concerning small and medium project companies and will greatly help fight visa trafficking. The sources stressed that the current regulations allowing visa transfers after one year from entry or six months plus a KD 300 fee will be followed until the new decision is finalized, adding that a new package of resolutions will be announced soon to regulate the local labor market and limit marginal labor. — A Saleh

Child killed in car crash

KUWAIT: A child was killed and three others were critically injured in a collision along Subbiya highway yesterday. The interior ministry's relations and security media department said that on reporting to the scene where two vehicles collided, rescue forces found the child dead and some passengers thrown out of the vehicles in critical condition. The injured were rushed to hospital. — Hanan Al-Saadoun



Equal representation for women

DUBAI: United Arab Emirates federation president Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan has decided that women should make up half of its semi-elected advisory body when it is renewed next year. This will increase the number of women on the UAE council from nine to 20 next year. The 40-member Federal National Council is currently chaired by a woman, Amal Al-Qubaisi. Half of its members are elected for a four-year term, while the others are appointed by the rulers of the seven emirates making up the federation. The last vote for the elected part was held in 2015. — Reuters

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will depart today to Saudi Arabia, heading the Kuwaiti delegation for the 39th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in Riyadh. Yesterday, HH the Amir sent a cable of congratulations to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud marking the fourth anniversary of his ascension to the throne.

In the cable, the Amir asserted on the deep and solid relations between Kuwait and the kingdom, and lauded the prominent development renaissance in various fields under the leadership of the Saudi king. HH the Amir also wished the Saudi King wellbeing and success in pursuing prosperity for the kingdom and serving both Arab and Muslim worlds. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Saudi King.

Riyadh is getting ready to welcome guests from delegations participating in the Gulf summit. The kingdom is hosting a large number of reporters to cover the event, which is expected to address important issues related to GCC joint action in the field of politics, defense, economy and law. Flags have been hung along the roads and welcoming billboards have been hung along the roads and bridges. — KUNA



RIYADH: Flags of GCC member states and welcoming billboards are seen in the Saudi capital yesterday. — KUNA

Barricades burn in fresh Paris protests

PARIS: French "yellow vest" demonstrators clashed with riot police in Paris yesterday in the latest round of protests against President Emmanuel Macron, but the city appeared to be escaping the large-scale destruction of a week earlier due to heavy security. Armored vehicles rolled through central Paris as protesters, clad in their emblematic luminous safety jackets, threw rocks at police and set fire to barricades.

Shouts of "Macron, resign" mingled with tear gas on the famous Champs-Élysées avenue, and thick plumes of black smoke from fires rose high into the

sky. Several cars were set alight. But the pockets of violence were a far cry from the destruction and looting of a week earlier, when some 200 cars were torched in the worst rioting in Paris in decades. The government had vowed "zero tolerance" for anarchist, far-right or other trouble-makers seeking to wreak further havoc at protests that have sparked the deepest crisis of Macron's presidency.

Police reinforcements were boosted to 8,000 across the city, with armored vehicles deployed in Paris for the first time ever. More than 650 protesters were detained in the capital, many of them stopped as they arrived at train stations or meeting points carrying hammers, petanque balls and other potential missiles. Police also confiscated surgical masks and goggles used to protect against the effects of tear gas.

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TOULOUSE: French riot police officers stand next to a burning barricade and face protestors during a demonstration yesterday of yellow vests against rising costs of living they blame on high taxes. — AFP

Volunteer from Mexico wins Miss World title

SANYA, China: A Mexican model and volunteer was crowned Miss World at a glitzy event on the tropical Chinese island of Hainan yesterday. Miss Mexico Vanessa Ponce de Leon, 26, has a degree in international business, volunteers for "Migrantes en el Camino" and is on the board of directors of a rehab center for girls, according to the Miss World website. She was crowned as the 68th Miss World by last year's winner, Manushi Chhillar of India, in the coastal city of Sanya.

The colorful ceremony included US

group Sister Sledge performing their 1979 disco anthem "We Are Family". First runner up was Thailand's Nicolene Pichapa Limsukan, a 20-year-old studying business administration. Miss Belarus Maria Vasilevich, Miss Jamaica Kadijah Robinson and Miss Uganda Quiin Abenakyo were also among the final five.

It is the eighth time the Miss World final has been held in Sanya, which first hosted the pageant in 2003. At the finals three years ago controversy erupted as officials in Hong Kong stopped Miss Canada, Anastasia Lin, from boarding a plane bound for Sanya, telling her she would not receive a visa. The 25-year old actress claimed the decision was due to her stance on China's human rights record, including its persecution of Falun Gong, a Chinese spiritual group of which she is a practitioner. — AFP



SANYA, China: Miss Mexico Vanessa Ponce de Leon reacts after winning the 68th Miss World contest final on the tropical Chinese island of Hainan yesterday. — AFP

China launches rover for far side of moon landing

BEIJING: China launched a rover early yesterday destined to land on the far side of the moon, a global first that would boost Beijing's ambitions to become a space superpower, state media said. The Chang'e-4 lunar probe mission - named after the moon goddess in Chinese mythology - launched on a Long March 3B rocket from the southwestern Xichang launch center at 2:23 am (1823 GMT), according to the official Xinhua news agency. The blast-off marked the start of a long

journey to the far side of the moon for the Chang'e-4 mission, expected to land around the New Year to carry out experiments and survey the untrodden terrain.

"Chang'e-4 is humanity's first probe to land on and explore the far side of the moon," said the mission's chief commander He Rongwei of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, the main state-owned space contractor. "This mission is also the most meaningful deep space exploration research project in the world in 2018." He said, according to state-run Global Times. Unlike the near side of the moon that is "tidally locked" and always faces the earth, and offers many flat areas to touch down on, the far side is mountainous and rugged.

It was not until 1959 that the Soviet Union captured the first images of the heavily cratered surface, unclocking some of the mystery of the moon's "dark side". No lander or rover has ever touched the surface

there, positioning China as the first nation to explore the area. "China over the past 10 or 20 years has been systematically ticking off the various firsts that America and the Soviet Union did in the 1960s and 1970s in space exploration," said Jonathan McDowell, an astronomer at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. "This is one of the first times they've done something that no one else has done before."

It is no easy technological feat - China has been preparing for this moment for years. A major challenge for such a mission is communicating with the robotic lander: as the far side of the moon always points away from earth, there is no direct "line of sight" for signals. As a solution, China in May blasted the Queqiao ("Magpie Bridge") satellite into the moon's orbit, positioning it so that it can relay data and commands between the lander and earth.

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Local

Gulf Cooperation Council achieves its citizens' aspirations for integration

Saudi Arabia hosts 39th GCC Summit today



Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) leaders attend the 14th GCC Summit in Riyadh in 1993. — KUNA



GCC leaders attend the fourth summit in Doha in 1983.

KUWAIT: Over its 38-year march, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has made a host of strategic achievements and undergone numerous transformations to meet the aspirations of the citizens of its member countries who are bound together by a history of unity and fraternity. The achievements notched up so far in the economic, political, military and security domains lay firm ground for the emergence of the Gulf union which became an urgent need amid the challenges and risks surrounding the region. These achievements also constitute a robust framework for collective security to protect the interests of the GCC members and address the challenges and crises in the neighborhood.

Founding treaty

May 25, 1981, a historic day for the region, saw the signing of founding treaty (charter) of the GCC in Abu Dhabi, capital of the UAE, by the leaders of its six member countries, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The permeable of the document set forth the targets of future cooperation, coordination and integration among the GCC nations in all areas, capitalizing on common history, shared destiny and religious Islamic values, and similar ruling regimes. Based on these noble objectives, the GCC countries were able to make outstanding achievements in various fields and coordinate their foreign policies.



They were able to put an end to the Iraq-Iran war on August 20, 1988, and liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion on February 28, 1991, support Iraq's unity, stability and sovereignty, back up the UAE right to restore sovereignty on three occupied islands, and lobby international support for the fair Palestine question. The GCC member states continue working together for stabilizing the situations in Lebanon, Syria, Somalia, Libya and Yemen, and putting an end to the atrocities against the Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar.

Acting on shared vision for defending the interests of their countries against external threats, the GCC leaders adopted a firm response to the Yemeni crisis and the flagrant Iranian intervention in the domestic affairs of Yemen and other Arab countries. In March 2015, they decided to launch the military Operation Decisive Storm, known later as Operation Restoring Hope, against the Iranian-backed Houthi militia in Yemen with a view to restoring the legitimate government of President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi.

In January 2016, the GCC leaders decided to freeze relations with Iran against the backdrop of the latter's backing to the subversive acts of the Houthi militia in Yemen and Hezbollah group in Lebanon. The GCC defense cooperation dates back to 1981 when the chiefs of staff of the GCC countries held their maiden meeting in Riyadh, capital of Saudi Arabia, to explore horizons of joint military action; they adopted several defense strategies and agreements over the following three decades.

Peninsula Shield Force

In November 1982, the Supreme Council of the GCC convened its third session where the GCC leaders

agreed to set up the Peninsula Shield Force (PSF) at an initial strength of 5,000, which expanded in December 2005 to 7,000 personnel. During their summit meeting in December 2000 in Manama, capital of Bahrain, the GCC leaders approved the joint GCC defense treaty, which served as nucleus for the development of structures of military intervention, such as the Integrated GCC Missile Shield, and bridging the gaps in military capabilities of the GCC members. The treaty stipulates that the GCC countries be legally bound to defend any of them in case of external threat. It also provides for strengthening the military capabilities of the PSF in order to make it better able to repel any foreign aggression.

In early February 2003, in the run-up to the US-led military campaign against Iraq, the State of Kuwait requested from the GCC defense ministers to deploy PSF units along its borders with Iraq to guard against potential ramifications of the conflict. The GCC states stood by the Kingdom of Bahrain when it underwent violent acts in February and March 2011 and offered all possible political, economic and security assistance. Due to the regrettable incidents, Bahrain requested activation of the GCC joint defense agreement, and thereby the GCC states deployed PSF units in Bahrain in March; this force played a crucial role in restoring security and stability in the kingdom.

Operation Decisive Storm

In March 2015, the Operation Decisive Storm constituted a major transformation in the GCC states'



Founding treaty signed on May 25, 1981

approach to dealing with external threats. The GCC states realized that failure to respond firmly to the Houthis' repeated violations of the Yemeni peace agreements could pose serious threat to the GCC security. In April 2015, the Operation Restoring Hope, sought to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people through speeding up the UN-facilitated peace talks and focusing on reconstruction.

The operation constituted a major shift from military action to a political process based on the GCC initiative, the UN Security Council Resolution 2216 and the outcomes of the Yemeni National Dialogue. Regarding the security cooperation, it started from the meeting of the ministers of interior of the GCC states in Riyadh in 1982. The meeting approved strategy for collective security including the combat against terrorism and transnational crimes, and cooperation in the fields of civil defense, criminal investigations, traffics and border control. The meeting approved a range of measures to protect against illicit drug trafficking and nuclear radioactivity.

In 2003, the GCC states approved a strategy to combat violent extremism, and in the following year, they approved an agreement against terrorism. In



GCC leaders attend the 33rd Summit in Manama in 2012.

2008, the GCC states approved the updated comprehensive security strategy. In November 2012, they adopted a joint plan to build the capacity of anti-terrorism units and the amended security agreement. In 2015, they approved the launching of the GCC police force headquartered in the UAE.

Media cooperation

As for the media cooperation, the GCC states adopted a code of conduct and a strategy for cooperation in such areas as external media, TV and radio, press and wire services. Regarding the economic cooperation, the founding system of the GCC serves as the main point of reference in the quest for economic integration among the six member countries, including the economic agreement of 1981, the treaty of 2001, the monetary union, the trade cooperation, the customs union, the single currency and the common market. The GCC states attached great importance to auditing cooperation as a means of economic cooperation and coordination of their stances at competent international organizations, such as the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ARABOSAI).

Economic cooperation

As an important aspect of economic cooperation, the cooperation among the 'zakat' (alms or fund-raising) agencies coordinates the efforts of the GCC states towards integration. The GCC committee on financial and economic cooperation approved during its 47th meeting on May 16, 1998, the launching of an ad hoc committee on joint action in the field of zakat and tax levying. The ad hoc committee worked out a range of recommendations that charted a map for joint action in the field of zakat and tax levying.

helped the GCC states exchange expertise, organize joint training courses, and launch a diploma program on zakat, a prize for creativity and a website for the zakat agencies.

The GCC made great strides towards cooperation with friendly countries and regional economic blocs inside the Arab region and beyond. It launched partnerships with Yemen, Jordan, Morocco, China, Pakistan, India, Turkey, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. It also launched partnerships with the European Union, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). As for judicial and legal cooperation, the GCC states worked for codifying their judicial, legal and legislative systems. They arranged single legislations for their various judicial bodies and the proceedings at courts with different grades. They also approved several agreements on judicial cooperation and held a host of symposiums on exchange of legal assistance, human rights, anti-graft combat and protection of transparency.

Cooperation among the GCC states covered also the areas of energy, electricity, water, industry, transport, communications, agriculture and development planning. They also had fruitful cooperation in the fields of education, scientific and technical research, labor, social services, healthcare, environment, housing, municipality and public works, and youth and sports. Realizing human development as cornerstone of socio-economic development, the GCC leaders approved the GCC human rights declaration at the Doha summit of December 2014. They reaffirmed strong belief in human dignity in keeping with the noble provisions of the Islamic sharia, the national legislations and the relevant international conventions. — KUNA

Chronology of 38 GCC summits

KUWAIT: Saudi Arabia is set to play host to the 39th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) leaders today. The Gulf leaders are expected to weigh a slew of weighty subjects and matters pertinent to the Gulf bloc, along with integrity and cooperation in political, defensive, economic and legal realms. The following is a chronology of the 38 Gulf summits since the GCC was created in 1981:

The first and second Gulf summits were held in Abu Dhabi and Riyadh in May and November 1981 respectively. The third summit was held in Manama in 1982, while the fourth and fifth took place in Doha and Kuwait in 1983 and 1984 respectively. Muscat hosted the sixth GCC gathering in 1985, followed by the seventh in Abu Dhabi in 1986 and the eighth in Riyadh in 1987. In 1988, the ninth summit was held in Manama, followed by the 10th in Muscat in 1989 and the 11th in Doha in 1990. Kuwait hosted the 12th Gulf gathering in 1991, while Abu Dhabi and Riyadh hosted the 13th and 14th meetings in 1992 and 1993.

Manama hosted the 15th Gulf meeting in 1994, and the following two events took place in Muscat and Doha in 1995 and 1996. The 18th version of the annual Gulf gathering was hosted by Kuwait in 1997, followed by the 19th in Abu Dhabi in 1998, the 20th in Riyadh in 1999, the 21st in Manama in 2000, the 22nd in Muscat in 2001 and the 23rd in Doha in 2002. The 24th summit was held in Kuwait in 2003, while the 25th version took place in Manama in 2004 under the title 'Zayed Summit' to pay tribute to the late UAE president

Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan thanks to his major contributions and efforts in serving Gulf, Arab, Muslim and world causes.

Abu Dhabi played host to the 26th conference in 2005, which was called 'King Fahad Summit' in appreciation for the late Saudi King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud's great role in the promotion of Gulf, Arab, Muslim and international issues. In 2006, Riyadh hosted the 27th version entitled 'Sheikh Jaber Summit' as a sign of appreciation and gratitude to the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his great role in creating the GCC and serving Arab and Muslim issues, along with regional and world peace. Doha and Muscat hosted the 28th and 29th Gulf events in 2007 and 2008 respectively. The 30th, 31st, 32nd and 33rd summits were organized in Kuwait in 2009, Abu Dhabi in 2010, Riyadh in 2011 and Manama in 2012, consecutively.

Kuwait hosted the 34th summit in 2013, while the 35th took place in Doha in 2014, followed by the 36th version in Riyadh in 2015 and the 37th in Manama in 2016. The last Gulf gathering was held in Kuwait last year. The 39th summit in Riyadh is hoped to come up with constructive and fruitful outcomes that would prop up Gulf cooperation and integration in various domains, and fulfill the Gulf people's expectations for closer ties and firmer coordination in order to address all challenges and safeguard regional security and stability. — KUNA



GCC leaders attend the seventh summit in Abu Dhabi in 1986.

Local

Delays increased new university project's budget from KD 475 million to KD 2.95 billion

'Citizens lost faith in government's seriousness in building the new academic city'

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A State Audit Bureau report about Sabah Al-Salem University City (Kuwait University - Al-Shadadiya) tracked some lenience in determining the basic requirements for the campus colleges, and bad primary assessment that resulted in many modifications and changes made in the project. The report also stressed that as a result of the delays, college buildings were not launched on time, the free maintenance period of those buildings expired while citizens lost faith in the government's seriousness in building the new academic city. The report explained that the delay also led to increasing the project's budget from KD 475 million, when the project was approved in 2004, to KD 1.6 billion in 2010, then KD 2.95 billion in 2018.

Remote areas

Well-informed sources at the Civil Service Commission (CSC) said decision number 18/2012 pertaining with incentives for employees working in remote areas added Sabah Al-Ahmed City, Subbiya Palace and Shuaiba industrial zone to those areas,

noting that the allowance will be KD 90 monthly for employees in ranks 1-4 and KD 75 for those in ranks 5-8.

Landmines

The Municipal Council is scheduled to meet tomorrow to review Public Works Minister Hosam Al-Roumi's approval of the previous meeting's minutes and a proposal made by member Humoud Al-Enezi to discuss the landmines recently exposed by heavy rain.

Charges dropped

The public prosecutor Dherar Al-Assoussi ordered shelving a state security report made against a bedoon (stateless) young man, and which accuses him of threatening to murder the director of the central apparatus for illegal residents Saleh Al-Fadhalah. The prosecutor ordered that all charges against the accused Mohammad Al-Enezi be dropped.

Trademarks' registrations

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan issued a ministerial decision on publishing



KUWAIT: An artist's rendition of the College of Art and College of Education at Sabah Al-Salem University.

various trademarks through the International Organizations and Foreign Commerce link on the ministry's website. Roudhan's resolution number 687/2018 further stipulates publishing trademarks' registration,

modification, change, cancellation or renewal at the following link: www.ifta.gov.kw. The link is available on the ministry's website, and will be launched on December 16.

News in brief

12,000 disclosure forms received

KUWAIT: Kuwait's anti-corruption body said yesterday that a total of 12,000 personal disclosure statements have been turned in this year, which is equivalent to 95 percent of people subject to the law. Kuwait's anti-corruption watchdog disclosed the information to mark the UN's International Anti-Corruption Day, which falls on December 9 of each year, it said in a statement. Such initiatives are significant given the fact that corruption continues to run rampant all over the globe, the statement added, urging the international community to take the measures needed to crack down on the social ill. — KUNA

Telephone faults repaired

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Communication announced yesterday that it repaired most of telephone faults caused by heavy rain witnessed in the country in the past weeks, in accordance with maintenance contracts signed between the Ministry and the executing contractor. Assistant Undersecretary for supportive telecommunication services Rashid Al-Othaina said a number of copper cables were damaged because water gathered in drainage system that led to stopping the telephone service. "Currently, the remaining cables are being repaired, but the completion of this work requires many procedures that must be carried out by the ministry in coordination with the Ministries of Public Works and Interior," he added. "We need permissions from some administrations to be able to proceed in this process which will take some time. We need to close some roads located within the Ministry of Works project areas to carry out the maintenance required," he explained. — KUNA

KD 23.8 m granted for housing

KUWAIT: The total number of property loans and grants given by Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB) in November amounted to KD 23.8 million (\$78 million), KCB said in a statement yesterday. The real estate portfolio's total loans amounted to KD 119.5 million (\$393 million) in November, the bank said in a press statement, adding loans for construction of private units reached KD 1.54 million (\$5 million). Furthermore, KCB mentioned lending around KD 14.8 million (\$48.6) loans for building government units, and about KD 4.4 million (\$14.4 million) for house purchasing. It also lent KD 159,000 (\$522,000) for private housing expansion projects, KD 975,000 (\$3.2 million) for expanding government houses, and KD 1.85 million (\$6 million) to citizens of special needs. Overall loans from the KCB portfolio (for maintenance and expansion projects) amounted to KD 80,000 (\$263,000), said KCB. — KUNA

Economic researcher awards

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait launched the 'economic researcher' award for Kuwaiti researchers and the 'economic student' prize for college and higher education students. Individuals who wish to join the competition can find the details and apply on www.kibs.edu.kw website from 9 December to 31 January. Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Chairman of the Institute of Banking Studies, Mohammad Al-Hashel, said in a press statement yesterday. The award aims to develop research skills for Kuwaitis and encourage them to use scientific methods in dealing with banking and economic topics. The success of the economic researcher award in its first session encouraged officials to allow students to engage in a similar award. It can boost their skills and qualify them to work in the banking field in the future, he noted. Winner of the first award will receive KD 10,000 (about \$32.8 thousand), while the student award winner will receive KD 5,000 (about \$16.4 thousand), Hashel said. The winning research will be printed out and published so that people in the field can benefit from, he added. — KUNA



SHARM EL-SHEIKH: Minister of Investment and International Cooperation Dr Sahar Nasr (center right) and KFAED's General Director Abdulwahab Al-Badr (center left) attend the signing ceremony. — KUNA

Egypt, Kuwait Fund ink \$135 million loan deals

SHARM EL-SHEIKH: The Egyptian Government and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) inked yesterday an agreement according to which the fund lends KD 15 million (\$50 million) to Cairo as a contribution to funding construction of four water desalination plants in South Sinai. The two sides, also yesterday, signed another loan deal, where KFAED would present an additional loan worth KD 25 million (\$85 million) to Egypt.

The two accords were signed on behalf of the Egyptian Government by Minister of Investment and International Cooperation Dr Sahar Nasr and KFAED's General Director Abdulwahab Al-Badr — on sidelines of the Africa 2018 conference, which kicked off yesterday. The inking ceremony was attend-

ed by the State of Kuwait Ambassador to Egypt, Mohammad Al-Thuwaiikh and South Sinai Governor Khaled Foda.

The project envisages building four water desalination stations in Bahr Al-Baqar, South Sinai, to meet mounting demand, save waste due to transfer, safeguard public sanitation and help in efforts to improve the population living standards. It also envisions back-up for expanding agricultural production, processing agricultural products and creating up to 100,000 jobs. Moreover it encompasses a station with a 15,000 cubic meter output in Abu Rdais, another one in Nabaq and a third in Taba. The mega venture, forecast to conclude by 2022, includes diverse phases and sub-projects for water distribution and sanitation. — KUNA

Wataniya Airways' operating certificate annulled

KUWAIT: Directorate General for Civil Aviation (DGCA) announced yesterday the cancellation of Kuwait Wataniya Airways' operating certificate permit after three months of suspension. DGCA official spokesperson Saad Al-Otaibi had said in a statement to Al-Jarida daily that DGCA applied its legal measures gradually as it first suspended Wataniya Airways permit for three months due to delays of the 1,500 passengers whose

flights on the aircraft had been cancelled since August 26 which allowed the company an opportunity to make tangible overhaul of its services, but it was not utilized nor did the company introduce immediate reforms to its operations. Otaibi noted that this decision comes from DGCA's keenness on preserving air traffic control in the national aviation sector and Kuwait's image abroad, as well as passengers' interests and safety. — KUNA

Two Kuwaiti 'change makers' honored in creativity conference

BEIRUT: Two Kuwaiti figures were honored yesterday for efforts to advance society through making a change. Celiac awareness activist Dr Suad Al-Fureih and senior citizens' care advocate Dr Eman Al-Tabtabaee were honored at the second conference for Arab creativity and pioneering (change makers) for their respective and respected efforts: each one within her field.

"Honoring Dr Fureih and Dr Tabtabaee crowns their efforts in enriching both Kuwait and Arab societies," said Consul Fawaz Al-Qahtani, who represented the Kuwaiti embassy in the inauguration of the conference in Beirut, Lebanon yesterday. He reaffirmed that the State of Kuwait "is keen to continue supporting voluntary-driven creativities."

Meanwhile, Dr Al-Fureih said that she was honored for "motivating people to develop their society and contribute in making lives of others better: a notion inspired by His Highness the Amir (of Kuwait) Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah." Dr Fureih won the conference's first prize for shedding light on Celiac disease in the Arab world, calling for establishing a factory solely designed and designated to manufacture gluten-free products in Kuwait, with all stuff subsidized by the government. In the meantime, Dr Tabtabaee won second place for issuing a book documenting Kuwait's care for the elderly, which eventually led to Law 18/2016 that provided this segment of society with many privileges to help ease their day-to-day living. — KUNA

Kuwait strongly supports OPEC's decisions: Minister

VIENNA: Kuwaiti Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheedi re-affirmed on Friday robust support for OPEC's resolutions, intended to maintain the oil market stability. In a statement he made ahead of the fifth meeting of ministers from OPEC and non-OPEC crude producing countries, the minister indicated that "certain mechanisms could preserve the reserves."

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, between January and end of November, was able to 'absorb' more than 30 million barrels for sake of maintaining the market, minister Rasheedi said. He described as very successful OPEC's latest decisions, namely the 2016 'historic decision' of cutting the output by some 32 million bpd. OPEC is keen, he continues, on keeping the agreement between OPEC and non-OPEC countries on the crude production ceiling. Asked on Qatar's decision to quit the organization, he said that the State of Kuwait respects Doha's decision. It is Qatar's right to decide whether to stay in OPEC or leave it, he added.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Minister of Oil Thamer Al-Ghadban said that there are several scenarios during OPEC's ministerial meeting, regarding the issue of



Bakheet Al-Rasheedi

production and prices. Low prices serve neither interests of Iraq nor those of the member states, he said. Indicating that Iraq needs higher income, he said that the state budget is in the range of 20 percent. He concurred with his Kuwaiti counterpart on respecting Qatar's decision. In the meantime, Qatari Minister of Oil Saad Al-Kaabi has affirmed that OPEC can 'protect itself' and control the production ceiling according to the market needs. Qatar, currently, favors not to engage in any 'initiative' in the oil sector, he says, noting that it produces small amounts of crude. — KUNA

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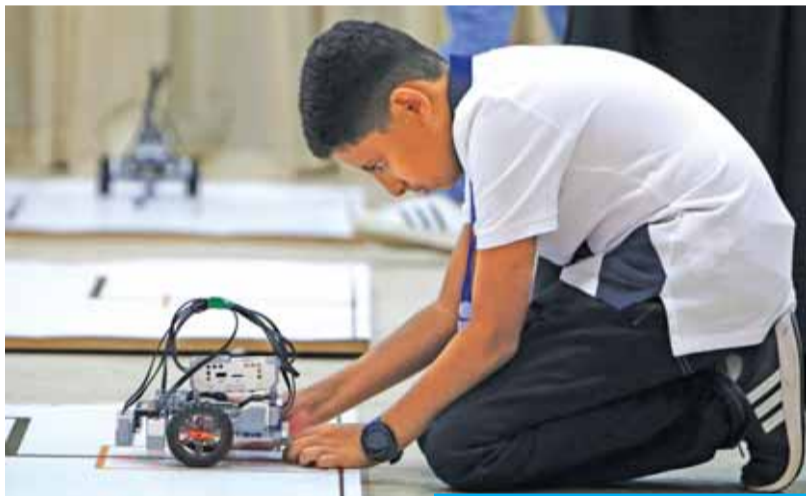
100 YEARS OF TIMING THE SKIES

Morad Yousuf Behbehani

Marina Mall: 2576 3116 • Souq Sharq: 2243 3770
The Gate Mall: 2205 6366/67 • The Avenues: 2259 7727
Behbehani Complex: 2245 3863 • TIK TOK (SoKu, The Avenues): 2220 0726

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Students operate their robots as they participate in a local competition for schools in Kuwait on December 6, 2018, to qualify for the Arab Robotics Championship, which will take place in Kuwait in January 2019. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Cutting, bending company helps reduce manpower cost, time for construction projects in Kuwait

‘The answer to a much-needed faster and reliable steel service’

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Kuwait Global Steel Services, a subsidiary of Al-Yousifi Group, brings to Kuwait for the first time a new venture for cutting and bending steel for construction projects in the country. “This company is the answer to a much-needed faster and reliable steel service for the growing construction business in Kuwait. This is a first in the country, covering around seven percent of the market,” said engineer Carlo Micoli, Managing Partner - Kuwait Global Steel Services.

“In 2019, we want to cover at least 12 percent of the market and we are expanding to meet the huge demand of the construction business in Kuwait. I am sure with our entry, there will be more companies who will try the business and some have indicated to do so. We welcome them, since we only have this much factory output,” said Micoli. The clients, according to Micoli, are mostly private firms, but they are working on government projects.

“I just came after meeting our new client (the Maternity Hospital in Al-Sabah health zone). We have more clients and they are big companies. The goal is for faster, reliable and less human involvement in cutting and bending steel. With the help of machines, the usual 12 people you need at a conventional construction site are now reduced to just one. So it's a cut of manpower from 12 to only one. You don't need that many people if you entrust the job to us



Carlo Micoli

and the machine will do it faster and precisely,” he added.

The Kuwait Global Steel Services facility is located in Amhara industrial area near Jahra. “Thanks to our Italian machines, a lot of projects will get completed faster because we can easily cut and bend the steel needed for construction projects. If you want to finish your project faster, contact us - we are ready to help complete your projects in the best possible time,” he said.

Hailing from Italy, Micoli introduced this system in the United Arab Emirates. His presence was also felt in the construction of Abu Dhabi Airport, Dubai Metro, Dubai Mall, Burj Al-Arab, The Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi Presidential Palace and the Grand Mosque.

The company was supposed to be fully operational by the first quarter of 2016, but due to some government requirements, the company started operations towards the middle of 2017. “We have been fully operational since the past one year. The company is receiving many clients now.



KUWAIT: The new steel bending and cutting machine at Kuwait Global Steel Services' factory. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

The contractor buys steel from a local steel company and they deliver it to us in the factory for cutting and bending. They will tell us the rebar specifications they need - we

will do the work as per the customer's requirements. In this way, we are not only cutting their costs, but also their time in doing all this hard work,” he said.

Zain platinum sponsor of 6th E-Gov Forum

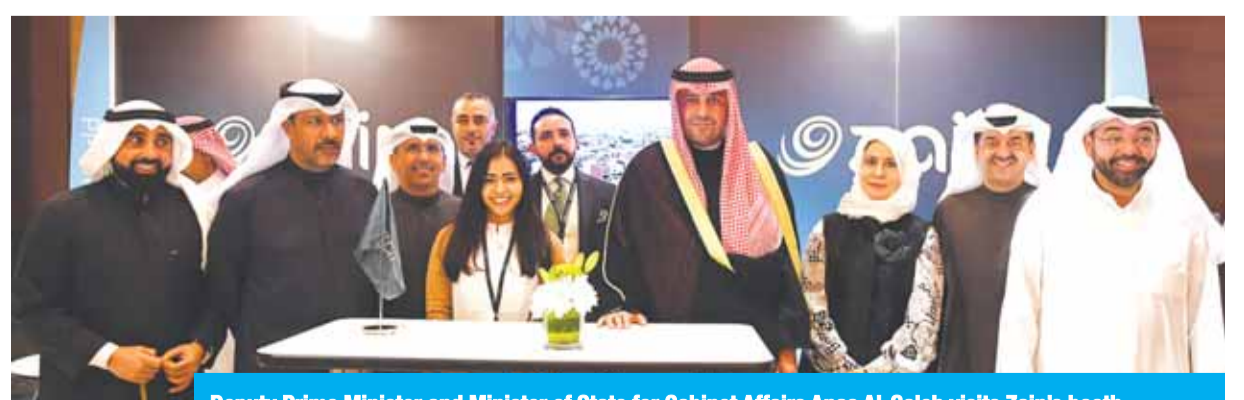
KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its platinum sponsorship of the sixth E-Government Forum (EGOV6) for the second consecutive year organized by NoufEXPO and the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) under the theme ‘Managing Change towards Digitization.’ The event, held at Crowne Plaza Hotel from 4 - 6 December, came under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The forum's inauguration ceremony witnessed the attendance of several prominent figures, led by HH the Prime Minister's representative Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, General Manager of NoufEXPO Yousef Al-Marzouq,

Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Qussai Al-Shattli, Chief Executive Officer of Zain Kuwait Eaman Al-Roudhan, as well as a number of experts, professionals, and leaders from both the public and private sectors.

Zain's platinum sponsorship of the forum for the second consecutive year highlights the company's keenness on being an active participant in shouldering the various local and regional initiatives that contribute to advancing the community and the further progress of national economy. Being a leading national player in the Kuwaiti private sector, Zain believes in the importance of the active collaboration between the public and private sectors to enrich Kuwait's future.

During the event, Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan took part in awarding the Public Authority for Industry with the Distinguished E-Service Award. The award, organized for the third consecutive year, is given to the governmental entity with the most distinguished electronic service offered on the State of Kuwait's official E-Gate website e.gov.com.kw as per strict standards set by the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT). Roudhan also took



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh visits Zain's booth.

part in awarding the forum's sponsors and contributors. The 6th E-Government Forum (EGOV6), entitled ‘Managing Change towards Digitization,’ witnessed many specialized workshops and panel discussions that focused on how change management affects the development of e-government programs, the challenges

these programs face, and how to execute them in an efficient manner. The forum also discussed the challenges related to the scarcity of qualified human resources to manage and develop such programs, and more. The forum was held with the presence of the GCC E-Government Executive Committee.

Local

Amir congratulates actress Suad Abdullah on Arab award

Veteran actress presented with 2018 Arab Women award during ceremony in London



LONDON: Honored Kuwaiti veteran stage and TV actress Suad Abdullah addresses the audience during the ceremony. —KUNA



Winners of the 2018 Arab Women award.



Actress Suad Abdullah (right) with the Kuwaiti Ambassador Khaled Al-Duwaisan (center) and his spouse.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to actress Suad Abdullah. Enclosed in the cable were His Highness's best wishes for the artist on being presented with the Arab Women Foundation 2018 award during a ceremony held in London last Thursday. The honoring came for the veteran actress's significant contributions to enriching Arab arts and drama through her colorful and distinctive career that spanned five decades. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak

Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent similar cables to Abdullah. The Arab Women Foundation honored Abdullah for her significant contributions to enriching Arab arts and drama through her long colorful and distinctive career that spanned five decades. The Foundation presented the 2018 Arab Women award for best actress to Abdullah in a ceremony held in London last night to honor a number of creative Arab women in various fields. The event was attended by Kuwaiti Ambassador and Dean of Diplomatic Corps in London Khaled Al-Duwaisan and the Mayor of

London's representative. The veteran actress expressed her utmost joy of such privilege, which also included other prominent Arab women, noting the Arab woman has become an important factor and indispensable supplement in societies. She dedicated her award to all those affiliated with the cultural and arts movement in Kuwait, expressing her appreciation and gratitude to the event's curators for choosing her as one of the best Arab actresses. Furthermore, Abdullah expressed her pride in receiving such honoring in a country like Britain, adding it will make her carry a tremendous responsibility on her

shoulders to preserve her long historic acting career, and present the best to Arab audiences. Meanwhile, Ambassador Duwaisan expressed his pride to take part in honoring one of the pillars of Arabic drama, indicating that Abdullah is not only a Kuwaiti actress, of whom her country is proud, but also an Arab star who brought so much creativity throughout her historic acting career. He also lauded all the works the Kuwaiti actress had done during her acting years, indicating that she is one of those actors who pick and play roles aimed to boost virtues and valuable principles in societies. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Thailand to Kuwait Dusit Manapan hosted a reception on the occasion of his country's national day at Crowne Plaza Hotel over the weekend. Senior officials, diplomats, members of the Thai community and media persons attended the event. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

MNH co-sponsors Horeca 2019

KUWAIT: Preparations for the 2019 Horeca Kuwait exhibition are moving forward steadily as it continues to attract companies to take part in an event that provides a golden opportunity for them to exchange expertise to best serve the local market's needs and future expansion plans. The exhibition is due to be organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Company at Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref in the period of January 14-16, 2019.



Gabriel Faraon

In this regard, Mohammed Nasser Al-Hajery and Sons Ltd Company (MNH) recently announced joining the exhibition's sponsors, adding that it has been keen on participating in the event since its inception. Commenting on his company's participation, MNH's executive manager Gabriel Faraon stressed that MNH realizes the significance of maintaining high level of professionalism in its business in order to keep up with the rapid changes going on in local, regional and international markets. He also noted that MNH was always keen on excelling in serving both its customers and suppliers. "The 'Cafes and Restaurants' section is responsible for the operation of many of our most famous brands, such as Haagen Dazs Café which was one of our first achievements in this area. We serve our famous ice cream in a cozy atmosphere along with our delicious coffee Ily Café. We have expanded and currently run 5 Haagen Dazs Café's across Kuwait," he underlined, pointing that, as usual, MNH would display its basic exclusive brands of Ily Café, Dilmah tea, Haagen Dazs Ice Cream and Italian coffee machines. Further, Faraon added that MNH had recently launched its Espresso Café serving Ily Café with an Italian twist, as well as 'Sutis', a Turkish restaurant that serves delicious Turkish dishes, in addition to 'Khanec', 'Hatay' and 'Solia' restaurants that serve Middle Eastern dishes prepared by professional chefs at the company's Central Kitchen. Finally, Faraon stressed that the key to MNH over 70 years of success has been serving various dishes following accurate standards that highly appeal to customers' tastes and win their satisfaction.

2019

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GOING PLACES TOGETHER



Muslims rally to defend privileges in multiethnic Malaysia

As election approaches, religious tensions surge in Indian village



WASHINGTON: Former FBI Director James Comey (center) talks to reporters following a closed House Judiciary Committee meeting to hear his testimony on Capitol Hill on Friday. — AFP

Russian offered Trump campaign cooperation

US govt seeks 'substantial' jail term for Cohen • Comey grilled again in Congress

NEW YORK: US prosecutors have revealed that a Russian offered cooperation to Donald Trump's campaign as early as 2015, declaring that the president's ex-lawyer Michael Cohen had provided "relevant" and "substantial" help to the Russia investigation. In a separate case, federal prosecutors Friday demanded "substantial" jail time of between 51 to 63 months - four to five years - for Cohen for bank fraud and campaign finance violations to which he plead guilty in August.

US Attorney Robert Khuzami accused the 52-year-old, who once vowed to take a bullet for the president, of being motivated by "personal greed" and of "repeatedly" using his power and influence for "deceptive ends". "Totally clears the President. Thank you!" Trump tweeted cryptically as television networks were consumed by the Cohen documents - which the White House dismissed as revealing "nothing of value".

The campaign finance violations to which Cohen plead guilty - unrelated to the Russia investigation - concerned hush payments he made on Trump's behalf to alleged former lovers of the president, including porn star Stormy Daniels. In the 40-page document Khuzami drew a direct link between Cohen's illegal behavior and Trump. "In particular, and as Cohen

himself has now admitted, with respect to both payments, he acted in coordination with and at the direction of Individual-1," the document reads, referring to Trump.

Robert Mueller, the special counsel heading up the probe into Russian meddling in the 2016 vote, followed up with a separate filing saying Cohen had made "substantial and significant efforts to remediate his misconduct, accept responsibility for his actions, and assist" the special investigation, a thorn in Trump's side. Cohen continued to provide "relevant and truthful information" to assist the probe, holding seven sessions with investigators, "many of them lengthy, and continues to make himself available to investigators," it said.

He had provided information about contacts with Russian interests during the campaign, attempts by Russians to reach the campaign and about contacts with "persons connected to the White House" in 2017-2018, the filing added. Around Nov 2015, some five months after Trump launched his bid for the presidency and well before previously reported contacts, Cohen spoke to a purported "trusted person" in the Russian Federation who offered the campaign "political synergy" and "synergy on a government level." Cohen said the unidentified person "repeatedly pro-

posed" a meeting between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, claiming it could have a "phenomenal" impact "not only in political but in a business dimension as well". "Cohen, however, did not follow up on this invitation," the filing added.

The former fixer last week pleaded guilty to lying to Congress in connection with a Moscow real estate deal, which was being pursued as late as one month before Trump officially became the Republican nominee for president. Due to his help, Mueller declined to recommend additional jail time for Cohen for lying to Congress. Recent filings in the Mueller probe have suggested the White House knew that Cohen planned to lie to lawmakers about his contacts with Russians. They also suggest Trump and his family were in the loop on discussions with Russians on a Moscow project, even after the real estate tycoon secured the Republican nomination in mid-2016.

In Washington, Mueller also detailed multiple "lies" that former Trump campaign chief Paul Manafort told investigators, leading to a termination of his cooperation deal, which could lead to a stiffer jail sentence for the 69-year-old. A heavily redacted court filing said that Manafort's "lies" included untruths about his dealings with Konstantin Kilimnik, a business associ-

ate who US officials suspect is a Russian intelligence operative, and about his contacts with Trump administration officials after striking a plea agreement. The White House similarly dismissed that filing, arguing it "says absolutely nothing about the President". "Once again the media is trying to create a story where there isn't one," said Sanders.

Comey testifies

Meanwhile, former FBI director James Comey testified before US lawmakers for the first time in over a year Friday, with much of the discussions centering on Hillary Clinton's email use. Comey had pleaded for a public hearing after he was subpoenaed by the outgoing Congress in November, but House Republicans including some of Trump's allies insisted on a private session before the judiciary and oversight committees.

Comey was questioned as part of a Republican-led House inquiry into possible Russian interference, and Clinton, who lost to Trump in 2016, featured prominently. "Hillary Clinton's emails, for heaven's sake," Comey said after testifying for six hours. "I'm not sure we need to do this at all." Clinton had set up a private email server before becoming secretary of state in 2009. — Agencies

Trump taps Nauert as UN envoy, Barr as new attorney general

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Friday nominated State Department spokeswoman and former Fox News anchor Heather Nauert as his next ambassador to the United Nations - a swift elevation for a supporter who had no diplomatic experience until last year. Nauert, who has shown poise in front of the cameras and mostly avoided gaffes, would succeed Nikki Haley, a former South Carolina governor seen as entertaining ambitions for higher political office.

Trump said he was impressed by the 48-year-old Nauert, a former anchor of "Fox and Friends", one of the television-loving president's favorite shows. "She's very talented, very smart, very quick, and I think she's going to be respected by all," Trump told reporters. Nauert said on Twitter she was "humbled" by Trump's confidence in her and looked forward "to continuing the outstanding job Amb. Haley has done representing your administration and the American people."

Nauert, who had been rumored as the top pick for the job since Haley's resignation, become the spokeswoman of the State Department after Trump's election despite no previous background in foreign affairs. Representative Eliot Engel, the incoming Democratic chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said he was "uneasy" about Nauert's lack of experience, as the UN job "requires face-to-face negotiations with important allies and hardened adversaries". But the Senate, which alone needs to confirm Nauert, is still under the control of Trump's Republican Party.

It is widely expected that the position will lose its current cabinet status, meaning she would be clearly subordinate to Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, her current boss. Pompeo said on Twitter



Heather Nauert

that he had "great confidence" in Nauert and called for her quick confirmation. Praise for the appointment came from Israel, which has long counted on the United States to veto unfriendly resolutions on the UN Security Council. Haley, in what could be a final diplomatic push, on Thursday failed in a bid for the UN General Assembly to condemn the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas for firing rockets at Israel.

Trump also on Friday tapped William Barr, a conservative lawyer who was attorney general in the administration of the late George HW Bush, to lead the US Department of Justice. Barr would succeed Jeff Sessions, who Trump sacked last month amid rising pressure on the White House from the Russia collusion investigation of Special Counsel Robert Mueller. "Bill Barr will be nominated for the United States Attorney General position. I think he will serve with great distinction," Trump told reporters. "He was my first choice from day one. Respected by Republicans and respected by Democrats," he added, describing Barr as "a terrific man, a terrific person, a brilliant man".

Barr had emerged in recent days as a consensus candidate for the highly sensitive post. He does however have a record of endorsing strong executive powers, which could play into high-stakes legal battles on everything from immigration policy to war powers to whether the president can be required to give testimony in the Russia investigation. He expressed support in May 2017 when Trump fired then-FBI director James Comey, which has led Mueller to investigate whether Trump obstructed justice, and last year backed Trump's calls to reopen investigations into his 2016 rival Hillary Clinton. — Agencies

Tillerson and Trump trade insults

WASHINGTON: Former US secretary of state Rex Tillerson said Donald Trump was "undisciplined" and repeatedly wanted to break the law - leading the US president to respond Friday that his onetime cabinet member was "dumb as a rock". Tillerson, who was fired in March, made no attempt to deny his poor relationship with Trump during a rare interview Thursday night as part of a charity dinner in his native Texas. "I think part of it was obviously we are starkly different in our styles. We did not have a common value system," Tillerson told veteran journalist Bob Schieffer of CBS News, which broadcast an excerpt of the interview.

"I'd have to say to him, 'Well, Mr President, I understand what you want to do, but you can't do it that way - it violates the law, it violates a treaty.' He got really frustrated," he said. "I think he grew tired of me being the guy every day that told him you can't do that and let's talk about what we can do." Trump voiced anger hours later in a harsh tweet, saying that Tillerson "didn't have the mental capacity needed" to be the top US diplomat. "He was dumb as a rock and I couldn't get rid of him fast enough. He was lazy as hell. Now it is a whole new ballgame, great spirit at State!" Trump wrote from Air Force One as he returned from a conference in Kansas City about crime.

Trump praised Tillerson's successor, the brusque former congressman and CIA chief Mike Pompeo, for "doing a great job". He becomes the latest cabinet member on which Trump has turned his knives. He repeatedly denounced attorney general Jeff Sessions, who was ousted last month, as "very weak" for not blocking a probe into whether the Trump presidential campaign colluded with Russia.

Relationship soured early

Tillerson, a former chief executive of oil giant ExxonMobil, had no government experience and had never met Trump when his nomination was promoted by Republican Party insiders, who hoped for a stable figure who could nonetheless appeal to the tycoon-turned-president with his outsider status and business



WASHINGTON: In this file photo taken on Feb 1, 2017, US President Donald Trump (left) speaks after Rex Tillerson was sworn in as Secretary of State in the Oval Office at the White House. — AFP

background. But Tillerson immediately struggled to fit in, focusing on internal State Department streamlining rather than broader foreign policy goals and avoiding the press as his rapport frayed with Trump.

"It was challenging for me coming from the disciplined, highly process-oriented ExxonMobil Corp to go to work for a man who is pretty undisciplined, doesn't like to read, doesn't read briefing reports, doesn't like to get into the details of a lot of things," Tillerson said at the event in Houston. Trump is proudly anti-intellectual, saying that he succeeds by following his instincts and knows better than experts. Asked about his reading habits in an interview shortly after taking office, Trump said he was "looking at a book" but was distracted by phone calls every time he tried to get started. When he selected him, Trump offered a vastly different assessment of Tillerson than on Friday, saying his "tenacity, broad experience and deep understanding of geopolitics" made him an "excellent choice". But it quickly became clear that the two had little chemistry. — AFP

International

Merkel protegee seeks to unite CDU after leadership battle

Paul Ziemniak takes over as party secretary general

HAMBURG: Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the new leader of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats, sought to bind the party together after a divisive leadership battle by promoting a rival's ally to a key post yesterday. Delegates from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) elected Kramp-Karrenbauer, 56, on Friday to replace Merkel as party leader, a decision that moves her into pole position to succeed Europe's most influential leader as chancellor.

Kramp-Karrenbauer, the continuity candidate favored by the party elite, won a narrow victory over the more conservative Friedrich Merz in a run-off. Health Minister Jens Spahn, also a more conservative candidate, was knocked out in a first round. Yesterday, Kramp-Karrenbauer proposed Paul Ziemniak, head of the Junge Union, the conservatives' youth wing, to replace her as CDU secretary general - a role in which he will organize the party, election campaigns and congresses, and support her.

Party delegates duly elected Ziemniak, 33, but with just 62.8 percent of the votes cast - a far narrower margin than the overwhelming 98.9 percent support with which Kramp-Karrenbauer was elected to the secretary

general post in February. After the bruising leadership election, Ziemniak and other leading CDU officials sought to rally the party. "Now the task is to renew the party with a clear course and clear communication," Ziemniak said. "Let's believe together and let's win together!"

The tight nature of Ziemniak's victory reflected the divisions in the CDU after a robust campaign for the leadership. Kramp-Karrenbauer's first job as new party leader is to try to unite the CDU ahead of European and regional elections in 2019. "Paul Ziemniak is from the home region of Friedrich Merz. He's a close friend, from the Junge Union, of Jens Spahn," David McAllister, a member of the CDU's executive committee, told Reuters. "So this move to choose Paul Ziemniak is a step forward by Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, trying to unite the different camps which endorsed the three different candidates," he added.

However, the move quickly drew criticism from some. "I am not going to hide that I would have liked a secretary general from the east," Ingo Senfleben, Brandenburg CDU chief, told the NBR media group. He said Kramp-Karrenbauer must fulfill her promise

to pay attention to the east before three state elections there next year.

Bridge builder

Merkel needs Kramp-Karrenbauer to unite the CDU to help steady her ruling coalition with the center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) - an awkward alliance that has come close to collapse several times since being formed in March. After a series of electoral setbacks, Kramp-Karrenbauer must use her ability to reach beyond party lines to shore up the CDU. The party bled support to the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) in last September's federal election and is also losing support to the Greens, who are now running second in national polls behind the Christian Democrats. In October, the CDU lost over 10 percentage points in a state election in Hesse. Merkel announced she would stand down as party leader after that damaging result. Kramp-Karrenbauer is a renowned bridge-builder - a skill set that helped win her the party leadership, and in her home state of Saarland, where she led an experimental three-way coalition with the pro-business Free Democrats and the Greens.



HAMBURG: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (left) bids farewell to her successor, newly-elected leader of the Germany's conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, at the end of the CDU congress yesterday. — AFP

Merkel's decision to stand down as CDU leader is part of her slow, stage-managed exit from politics. She wants to remain chancellor until the next federal election, due by October 2021 and should be able to work comfortably

with Kramp-Karrenbauer. However, some commentators have suggested that with her preferred candidate in charge of the party, Merkel may decide she could step down early and leave Germany in her hands. — Reuters

US accuses Russia of lying on Syria attack to dent truce

WASHINGTON: The United States and Britain accused Russia on Friday of fabricating a story about chemical weapons use by Syrian rebels and warned Moscow against undermining a shaky truce. Russia's defense ministry said rebels fired weapons containing chlorine on Nov 24 on the regime-held city of Aleppo, with Syrian state media reporting that around 100 Syrians were hospitalized for breathing difficulties. Russia responded to the purported attack with air raids on Idlib, the latest major stronghold of rebels and militants battling President Bashar al-Assad, throwing into question a truce reached in mid-September.

The United States said it had "credible information" that the chlorine account was false and that Russian and Syrian forces instead had fired tear gas. "The United States is deeply concerned that pro-regime officials have maintained control of the attack site in its immediate aftermath, allowing them to potentially fabricate samples and contaminate the site before a proper investigation of it by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons," State Department spokesman Robert Palladino said in a statement.

"We caution Russia and the regime against tampering with the suspected attack site and urge them to secure the safety of impartial, independent inspectors so that those responsible can be held accountable," he said. He said that Russia and Syria were "using it as an opportunity to undermine confidence in the ceasefire in Idlib".

In a similar statement, Britain said it was "highly unlikely" that chlorine or the opposition were involved in the incident. "It is likely that this was either a staged incident intended to frame the opposition, or an operation which went wrong and from which Russia and the regime sought to take advantage," a Foreign Office spokesperson said, also backing an investigation by the OPCW, the international chemical weapons watchdog. — AFP

Six dead, dozens hurt in Italy nightclub stampede

CORINALDO, Italy: Six people, including five teenagers, died and 120 were injured in a stampede when panic broke out during a rap concert at a packed Italian nightclub early yesterday. The suspected use of a pepper spray-like substance is thought to have sparked the chaos at the venue in the town of Corinaldo, near Ancona in central Italy, the fire service said in a statement on Twitter. But carabinieri police spokesman Cristian Carrozza later said they were still "trying to ascertain what had caused the youths to rush out", adding: "There are three exits and one of these was used."

The victims include three girls and two boys aged between 14 and 16 and a 39-year-old woman who accompanied her daughter to the concert. Some 10 people are in a critical condition, doctors said, with at least 120 injured in total. "Around 1,400 tickets were sold for the concert and the place could only accommodate 870 people," said Monica Garulli from the prosecutor's office in Ancona. The exit used led to a small bridge and the car park. The force of the fleeing crowd made a railing collapse and dozens of people fell, crushing those at the bottom of the pile, according to a preliminary investigation.

Grainy mobile phone footage appeared to show part of a walkway collapsing, sending dozens of people tumbling down. Ironically, those who remained inside the nightclub were unharmed. "We were dancing and waiting for the concert to start when we smell this pungent odor," a 16-year-old boy who was taken to hospital told the media. "We ran to one of the emergency exits but we found it blocked, the bouncers told us to go back." — AFP

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International

Malaysian Muslims rally to defend privileges amid growing tensions

First major rally since Mahathir won a shock victory in May

KUALA LUMPUR: Tens of thousands of banner-waving Muslims rallied in the Malaysian capital yesterday to defend their long-cherished privileges, at a time of growing racial tensions in the multi-ethnic country.

About 55,000 people dressed in white flooded a historic square in downtown Kuala Lumpur, according to police, chanting "God is great" and brandishing banners that read "Long live the Malays".

Large numbers of police were on the streets and major roads were closed for the event, which was the first major rally since Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad won a shock election victory in May and toppled the scandal-mired old regime. Race and religion are sensitive in Malaysia, which is home to sizeable ethnic Chinese and Indian communities, and the Muslim Malay majority appears to be feeling increasingly insecure under a new government that is more representative of minorities. The rally was originally intended as a protest against a plan by the government to ratify a UN convention which aims to eliminate racial discrimination. Authorities abandoned the plan after opposition from conservative politicians and Malays, who feared the treaty could erode their privileged position in society. But Muslim groups pushed ahead with Saturday's demonstration, which-alongside the convention-became about the bigger issue of defending Islam and decades-old affirmative action policies that benefit Malays.

"If Islam is disturbed, is race is disturbed, if our rights are disturbed, then we will rise," opposition leader Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, whose United Malays National Organization

(UMNO) party was ousted at this year's election, told the gathering. Participant Arif Hashim, 26, told AFP that other races must not "challenge the rights of the Malays. As a Muslim, I want Islam to be the first (priority) in Malaysia."

Ousted party in crisis

Among those attending was disgraced ex-premier Najib Razak, who has been arrested and charged over the scandal surrounding state fund 1MDB since losing power in May. Police said the gathering passed off peacefully and the crowds dispersed in the late afternoon. Malays—who make up some 60 percent of the country's 32 million people—have for decades enjoyed substantial state benefits, such as financial handouts and help getting government jobs. Critics argue the system has been abused by a corrupt elite and is in urgent need of reform, although there is no indication Mahathir's administration is about to make major changes in such a sensitive area. UMNO—which ruled Malaysia at the head of a coalition for six decades until its election defeat—was a major backer of the rally, with analysts saying it was using the event to divert attention from its troubles.

The party, long a champion of the Malays, has been engulfed in scandal and infighting since being ousted.

As well as Najib, new leader Ahmad Zahid has been charged with corruption. Policies favoring Malays were introduced after riots between members of the Malay and Chinese communities in 1969 that left nearly 200 people dead. —AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: Protesters display placards during a rally organized by Muslim politicians against the signing of the UN anti-discrimination convention (ICERD) at Merdeka Square in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. —AFP

US scraps UN meeting on North Korea human rights

UNITED NATIONS: The United States has dropped a bid to hold a UN Security Council meeting on North Korea's human rights record after failing to garner enough support for the talks, diplomats said Friday.

The decision to scrap the meeting held every year since 2014 also comes as the United States is seeking a second summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

North Korea had written to council members last month to urge them to block the US request for the meeting that shines a spotlight on Pyongyang's dismal record.

The US has, every year since 2014, garnered the nine votes needed at the council to hold the meeting, despite opposition from China. But diplomats said that only eight countries supported the US request this year, with non-permanent member Ivory Coast refusing to bow to pressure to lend its backing. China, which has strong expanding ties in Africa, has argued that the Security Council is not the venue to discuss human rights as a threat to international peace and security.

Beijing says it should be raised in the Geneva-based Human Rights Council. Every year, China has requested a procedural vote but failed to derail the meeting due to the nine "yes" votes secured by the United States. "They don't have the numbers this year," a Security Council diplomat told AFP. "Cote d'Ivoire is not on board," he added, using the official name of Ivory Coast.

The meeting had been tentatively set for tomorrow. A US official however suggested the meeting could still take place at a later date, but not in December, when Ivory Coast holds the monthly rotating presidency of the Security Council.

"If we are unable to hold this important discussion this month, we hope to revisit holding this meeting in the new year," said the US official.

"We continue to believe that discussions on human rights—and particularly concerning human rights abuses in North Korea—are a crucial part of the maintenance of international peace and security and worthy of the UN Security Council's attention."

Swimming against the current

North Korean Ambassador Kim Song last month told council members in a letter that criticism of Pyongyang's human rights record would "swim against the current trend" of rapprochement and "stoke confrontation."

A historic summit between Trump and Kim in June opened up dialogue on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula between the two countries after months of military threats.

A second summit is expected to be held next year, but North Korea has taken few concrete steps to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Security Council has slapped a series of tough economic sanctions on North Korea over its nuclear tests and ballistic missile firings.

The United States maintains that UN sanctions will remain in place until North Korea has fully scrapped its weapons programs.

A landmark 2014 report by a UN Commission of Inquiry documented human rights abuses on an appalling scale in North Korea, describing a vast network of prison camps where detainees are subjected to torture, starvation and summary executions.

The report accused leader Kim Jong Un of atrocities and concluded that he could be prosecuted for crimes against humanity. North Korea has rejected the report as a fabrication, based on testimony from dissidents living in exile. —AFP

Papua massacre shines light on forgotten conflict

JAKARTA: The recent massacre of civilian workers by separatist rebels in Indonesia's restive Papua province has cast a spotlight on one of the world's longest-running insurgencies, with no end to the bloody conflict in sight.

The killings are a marked escalation from decades of mostly sporadic skirmishes between poorly armed and disorganized guerrillas and a powerful Indonesian military accused of gross human rights abuses against civilians.

Some 16 employees of a state-owned contractor were murdered at a remote jungle work camp on Sunday with at least three more workers still missing.

They were building bridges and roads in a major infrastructure push for Indonesia's most impoverished region, but rebels claimed they were legitimate targets, raising concerns that the independence struggle has taken a dangerous new turn.

"There has never been an attack of this type of scale by separatist guerrillas," said Damien Kingsbury, professor

of international politics at Australia's Deakin University.

"The outbreaks of mass violence to date have been perpetrated by the Indonesian military."

'Act of Free Choice'

The conflict in mineral-rich Papua traces its roots to Dutch de-colonisation in the early 1960s, with more recent grievances fanned by marginalisation of the ethnic Melanesian population and widespread rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings. Papua, which shares a border with island nation Papua New Guinea, just north of Australia, remained a Dutch colony for more than a decade after the Netherlands relinquished its former East Indies territories to a newly independent Indonesia in 1949.

Despite laying the groundwork for Papuan self-government, the Netherlands came under pressure from a White House fearful about communism spreading across Southeast Asia.

So it agreed in 1962 to place Papua under temporary UN administration before it was ceded to Indonesia a year later, on the condition it hold an independence referendum.

The vote-called the Act of Free Choice—is widely viewed as a sham. About 1,000 handpicked Papuans unanimously chose to remain part of Indonesia, allegedly under the threat of violence.

Jakarta cites the referendum as proof its control is legitimate. But for some

the youth leaders were sentenced on Friday to six months in prison and fined about \$320 each.

Kachin is in the grip of one of the world's longest-running civil wars, as rebels have clashed with the powerful military for six decades over autonomy, ethnic identity, drugs, jade and other natural resources in the northeast. Fighting surged dramatically this year, forcing thousands to flee to camps in remote parts of the state with inadequate access to aid. In late April, amid public anger over the fresh violence, the three youth leaders organized a peaceful protest demanding help for the people taking refuge in camps.

It also sparked protests in Yangon and Mandalay in a rare show of solidarity. The defence told the court that the leaders had "no intention" of defaming the Tatmadaw, as the military is called in Myanmar, and were more concerned with the fate of the displaced people, lawyer Doi Bu told AFP.

Myanmar activists jailed over anti-war protests

YANGON: A court in Myanmar's restive Kachin state has jailed three activists for defaming the military, their lawyer said yesterday, as campaigners slammed the "chilling warning" the verdict sends critical voices in the country. Lum Zawng, Nang Pu and Zau Jet had helped organise an anti-war demonstration in April in the state capital Myitkyina to highlight the plight of thousands displaced by fighting between the military and ethnic Kachin insurgents.

#MeToo takes fight for gender equality to new heights: UN Women chief

ISLAMABAD: The global #MeToo campaign has taken the battle for women's rights to "where we have never been before", the head of the UN's agency for gender equality told AFP during her first official visit to Pakistan Friday.

"The challenge for you and me now is to keep it going," Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, executive director of UN Women, said, calling the movement a "stage in the ongoing journey to fight for gender equality". Mlambo-Ngcuka was visiting Pakistan, where society remains deeply patriarchal with shockingly high rates of violence and abuse by men targeting women, as part of her travels to mark the United Nations' 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, which ends on December 10.

The #MeToo movement began in the United States more than a year ago in response to accusations of sexual abuse and harassment by powerful men in the

entertainment industry and other sectors.

It soon became a global movement as women shared their stories of harassment or gender-based discrimination.

"It's moving from the time when the word 'consent' did not even exist as a legal trend, when domestic violence was not even a crime, when sexual harassment did not even have a face," Mlambo-Ngcuka said. "The struggles of women who have fought for decades and decades have made this possible and Me Too has been able to take this to the highest stage."

But, she warned, "we are not there yet, the pendulum might still swing backward, so that's why we have to work even harder".

The UN is promoting the hashtag #HearMeToo as a part of that push, to give voice to women far away from Hollywood or positions of power, in rural areas including in Pakistan, she said.

Though Pakistan has seen some high-profile #MeToo cases, the campaign has not had the same impact as in other countries, and women continue to struggle for their rights.

Child marriages, domestic abuse and so-called "honour" killings—in which men kill women, usually their relatives, for slighting a patriarchal, outdated social code—remain rampant.



MAKASSAR: A widow, whose husband was killed in a massacre by suspected separatist rebels, grieves following the arrival of her late husband's casket in Makassar, South Sulawesi, on Friday. —AFP

Papuans, who are ethnically different and share almost no cultural ties with the rest of the sprawling archipelago, it was the start of another colonial occupation that has seen them dispossessed of land where their ancestors lived for centuries.

Much of the insurgency has centred around a huge gold and copper mine operated by US-based firm Freeport McMoRan, seen locally as a symbol of environmental devastation and exploitation of Papua's enormous mineral wealth.

Since his 2014 election, President Joko Widodo has overseen an unprece-

dent development push, including the ambitious 4,300-kilometre (2,700-mile) Trans-Papua highway.

But analysts say it may be too little, too late. "If Papua is part of Indonesia, it should've been built up in the same way as other regions," said Adriana Elisabeth, a Papua expert at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences.

The depth of discontent was underscored last year when 1.8 million Papuans signed an ultimately unsuccessful petition asking the UN to recognize a self-determination vote. —AFP

"But the court viewed them as harming the Tatmadaw," she said, adding that they plan to appeal on Monday. The European Union said it "deeply regrets" the court's decision and called for the sentences to be reviewed. Three other activists protested the verdict by marching in front of the court, prompting police to charge them for "protesting without permission".

They were bailed and will face trial at a later date. "These jail sentences reflect a pattern of continued attacks" against civil society speaking out against the military, said Amnesty International's Tirana Hassan. "It sends a chilling warning to (anyone) who wants to tell the truth about the Myanmar military's brutality in Kachin and northern Shan states."

Rights groups estimate more than 106,000 people languish in displacement camps across conflict-torn Kachin and Shan states. —AFP



ISLAMABAD: UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (top row, fifth right) and Pakistan Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazarri (top row, 6th left) poses for photographs with guests after a dialogue on the harassment faced by women with disabilities in Pakistan, during her visit to Islamabad on Friday. —AFP

Prime Minister Imran Khan, a former cricket star and international politician, caused controversy during his election campaign this summer for saying that feminism has degraded motherhood.

However Mlambo-Ngcuka said she wanted to focus on what Khan and his administration are doing: seeking to take on

child marriage, "honour" murders and giving women access to family planning. "I want to encourage the government under the leadership of this prime minister to do more of the things that they have been talking about," she said.

"We are working with them, hand-in-hand." —AFP

International

As election approaches, religious tensions surge in an Indian village

UP village symbol of deepening communal divide

NAYABANS, India: Nayabans isn't remarkable as northern Indian villages go. Sugar cane grows in surrounding fields, women carry animal feed in bullock carts through narrow lanes, people chatter outside a store, and cows loiter. But this week, the village in Uttar Pradesh state became a symbol of the deepening communal divide in India as some Hindu men from the area complained they had seen a group of Muslims slaughtering cows in a mango orchard a couple of miles away.

That infuriated Hindus, who regard the cow as a sacred animal. Anger against Muslims turned into outrage that police had not stopped an illegal practise, and a Hindu mob blocked a highway, threw stones, burned vehicles and eventually two people were shot and killed - including a police officer.

The events throw a spotlight on the religious strains in places like Nayabans since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power at the national level in 2014 and in Uttar Pradesh in 2017. Tensions are ratcheting up ahead of the next general election, due to be held by May.

The BJP said it was "bizarre" to assume the party would benefit from any religious disharmony, dismissing suggestions that its supporters were largely responsible for the tensions. "In a large country like India nobody can ensure that nothing will go wrong, but it's our responsibility to maintain law and order and we understand that," party spokesman Gopal Krishna Agarwal said. "But people are trying to politicize these issues."

Nayabans, just about three hour's drive from Delhi, has about 400 Muslims out of a population of 4,000, the rest are Hindu. Relations between the communities began deteriorating around the Muslim holy month of Ramadan last year when Hindus in the village demanded that loudspeakers used to call for prayer at a makeshift mosque be

removed, local Muslims said. "For 40 years mikes were used in the mosque, calls for prayer were made five times a day, but no one objected," said Waseem Khan, a 28-year-old Muslim community leader in Nayabans.

"We resisted initially but then we thought it's better to live in peace then create a dispute over a mike," he said. "We don't want to give them a chance to fan communal tensions." Reuters spoke with more than a dozen Muslims from the village but except for Khan, no one else wanted to be named for fear of angering the Hindu population.

Several among a group of Muslim women and girls standing outside the mosque said they have been living in fear since the BJP came to power in the state in 2017.

They said that Hindu groups now hold provocative processions through the village during every Hindu festival, loudspeakers blaring, something that used to happen rarely before. They said they felt "terrorized" by Hindu activists. "While passing through our areas during their religious rallies, they chant 'Pakistan murdabad' (down with Pakistan) as if we have some connection to Pakistan just because we are Muslims," Khan said.

Hindu priest CM

The subcontinent was divided into Muslim Pakistan and Hindu-majority India at the time of independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

During the violence on Monday, many Muslims in Nayabans locked themselves in their homes fearing attacks. Some who had attended a three-day Muslim religious congregation some miles away stayed outside the area that night to avoid making themselves targets for the mob. Muslim villagers say they are particularly fearful of the top elected official in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who is a Hindu priest and senior BJP figure. Hindu hardliners started asserting themselves more in



JODHPUR: Indian women stand in queue to cast their vote at a local polling station during Rajasthan's Legislative Assembly election, in Jodhpur. The Indian state of Rajasthan voted on Friday in an election that is a key test for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. — AFP

the village after he was elected, they say. Uttar Pradesh sends 80 lawmakers to the lower house of parliament, the largest of any state in the country. Considered the county's political crucible, it has also been the scene for spiralling Hindu-Muslim tensions. Adityanath said the lead up to the

rioting in Nayabans was a "big conspiracy", but did not elaborate. In the only statement from his office on the incident, Adityanath ordered police to arrest those directly or indirectly involved in the slaughter of cows and made no mention of the death of the police inspector. — Reuters

Modi's maharani fights key Indian state election

JODHPUR: An Indian princess allied to Prime Minister Narendra Modi faced a tough battle for re-election on Friday as the hard-fought desert state of Rajasthan went to the polls.

Defeat for Vasundhara Raje, Rajasthan's chief minister, in the western state of 47 million people would be a blow for Modi's image as a sure-fire vote-winner ahead of general elections in 2019. That the charismatic but fiery Raje is a maharani, or princess, is nothing unusual in Rajasthan, a state famous for its forts and grand palaces with peacock-filled lawns. It is one of India's few regions where the local royal families going back centuries-and outlasting British rule-have flourished in democratic politics since independence in 1947.

Raje, 65, is the daughter of a former maharaja and married an erstwhile ruler of another dynasty. Her main challenger in her constituency is Manvendra Singh, another blue blood from western Rajasthan.

Another is Siddhi Kumari, also a princess and a two-time state lawmaker who lives in a wing of her ancestral palace in Bikaner around 340 kilometers (210 miles) from the state capital Jaipur. The rest, its walls decorated with family portraits of resplendent kings, queens and princes of yore and mounted heads of hunted beasts, has been converted into a hotel. "I do my work and go. No one needs to know (me) apart from my work," said Kumari, 45, perched on a sofa next to a stuffed leopard.



This picture taken on December 4, 2018 shows supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) greeting Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje (right) during an election rally in support of BJP candidates in Kotri village in Rajasthan state's Bhitwara district. — AFP

"I don't take the people's trust in me or the family I come from lightly. But the trust that is there has to be earned every day. I take it very seriously and work every day," she said.

Ayodhya Prasad Gaur, author of a book on one of the state's leading royal families, said the nobility's popularity had to do with their "permanence" compared to ordinary politicians who just "come and go". "The erstwhile rulers of Jodhpur still receive a wedding invite-just like kings of earlier times-from hundreds if not thousands of people in the region each year. And they maintain that relationship by sending a token amount as a gift for every invite they receive," Gaur told AFP.

"Family name only works in the first election," cautioned Vishvendra Singh however, a Congress lawmaker running in the state election from the erstwhile royal family of Bharatpur,

around 190 kilometres from Jaipur. "I have been in politics for three decades and have been elected multiple times as parliamentarian and a state lawmaker. I am in constant touch with the people, meet everyone and that is what works in politics," he told AFP.

Raj Singh, a voter in Bikaner, said he voted for Kumari in the last two elections. "Unlike ordinary politicians, (royals) won't indulge in local schemes to make money or shield criminals as that could tarnish the family name," he told AFP.

State premier Raje, representing Modi's ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), swept to power in a landslide in 2013, much like Modi did nationally a year later. But her personal popularity has waned, with critics calling her aloof and autocratic and out of touch with the interests of ordinary people. Like Modi, she never holds press conferences. — AFP

India's ruling BJP seen losing ground in key state polls

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party is likely to lose two heartland states while a third is too close to call, exit polls showed on Friday in the final test of popularity before a national election due by May next year.

Surveys broadcast at the end of voting for five state assemblies showed the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) trailing behind the rival Congress party in some areas.

The actual votes will be counted on Tuesday, and exit polls have been wrong in the past, partly because of the sheer scale of Indian elections involving millions of votes.

Still, nearly all the polls showed that the Congress - led by Rahul Gandhi, the scion of the Nehru-Gandhi family - will win a clear majority in western Rajasthan state and scrape through in eastern Chhattisgarh, according to a survey of surveys pulled together by NDTV.

In Madhya Pradesh, the same polls suggested the BJP and the Congress were locked in a fight down to the wire.

The combined surveys showed the BJP winning 110 seats, the Congress 108, and smaller groups 12 in the 230-member house. To rule, a party requires 116 seats. The three states are part of the northern Hindi belt, a bastion of the ruling Hindu nationalists.

Clues

"The BJP is struggling everywhere, for all its bravado," said Juh Singh, a spokesman of the regional Samajwadi Party. Modi, who came to power with a sweeping majority in 2014, has been praised for improving governance and cutting some red tape, but has been criticized for failing to create enough jobs for the thousands of young people entering the jobs market every month.

He has also faced criticism for allowing hardliners in his party to undermine India's secular foundations.

Foreign investors who largely remain bullish on India's long-term prospects, are watching the state polls closely for clues to the national vote. "The result would be consistent with what most polls are showing: that we are heading for hung parliament," said Jan Dehn, head of research at emerging markets fund manager Ashmore.

"The market may discount the results a little bit given these are state elections and there are often protest votes." But a divided parliament would make it difficult for the incoming government to carry out reforms in the banking sector and other areas, he said. — Reuters

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Analysis

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P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Washington Watch

Turning a corner

By Dr James J Zogby

US supporters of Israel are in a bind: Public opinion is changing; there are more actors publicly challenging Israel; and the crude, heavy-handed tactics they have successfully used in the past to silence criticism now only aggravate the situation. A few examples:

A few weeks back, Airbnb announced that they would no longer list rental properties located in the occupied West Bank. The reaction in Israel and among its supporters in the US was predictably hysterical. They termed the action taken by Airbnb as "anti-Semitic". Israel announced that it would enforce its anti-boycott law by banning Airbnb from operating anywhere within the country. And some American political leaders said that they would press US states that have passed their own anti-boycott legislation to also take action against Airbnb.

This Airbnb decision and the reaction to it are instructive in that they bring together a number of issues that define exactly where the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is today. Sometimes, in order to see an issue clearly, it is important to reduce it to its essence. In this instance, the omnipresent, ever-comical Rabbi Shmuley Boteach provided us with just such an example of the core Israeli argument against Airbnb in a costly full page newspaper ad this past week. More than just reducing Israel's case to its essence, Boteach has revealed its absurdity.

The ad features an opening headline calling "Airbnb: Anti-Semitic", falsely claiming that the company has "singled out Jews for discrimination...deliberately punishing Jewish residents of Judea and Samaria based solely on their nationality, ethnicity, and religion." He then accuses Airbnb of a double-standard because they haven't delisted rental properties in other occupied territories, giving these examples: Turkish-occupied Cyprus, Russian-occupied Crimea, or Chinese-occupied Tibet (an interesting implicit recognition of Israel as an occupier in the great company of other occupiers!). The ad concludes with the stark black banner stating that "Boycotting Israel Is Anti-Semitic."

The entire ad is a deliberate distortion of reality. Airbnb isn't boycotting Israel or Jews. They still list rentals in Tel Aviv and a host of other Israeli cities, and they continue to list rentals owned by Jews everywhere in the world. What Airbnb has decided not to list are Jewish settler-owned properties in occupied Palestinian lands. And as for Israel's argument that Airbnb is guilty of a double-standard since the company continues to list properties in other occupied territories, there are two things to point out: (1) Airbnb has already said that they were "evaluating how we should treat listings in occupied territories around the world," and (2) in none of the cases cited by Boteach is there comparable evidence that the rentals in question are owned by settlers living in illegal developments built on confiscated lands.

In the end, however, it's not about the lies contained in this ad or any of the other efforts to combat Airbnb. What is important is that in the face of declining public support and diminishing capacity to dominate the narrative about the nature of their conflict with the Palestinians, Israeli supporters are flailing about, striking blindly at opponents in their effort to pummel into submission anyone who would dare to challenge them.

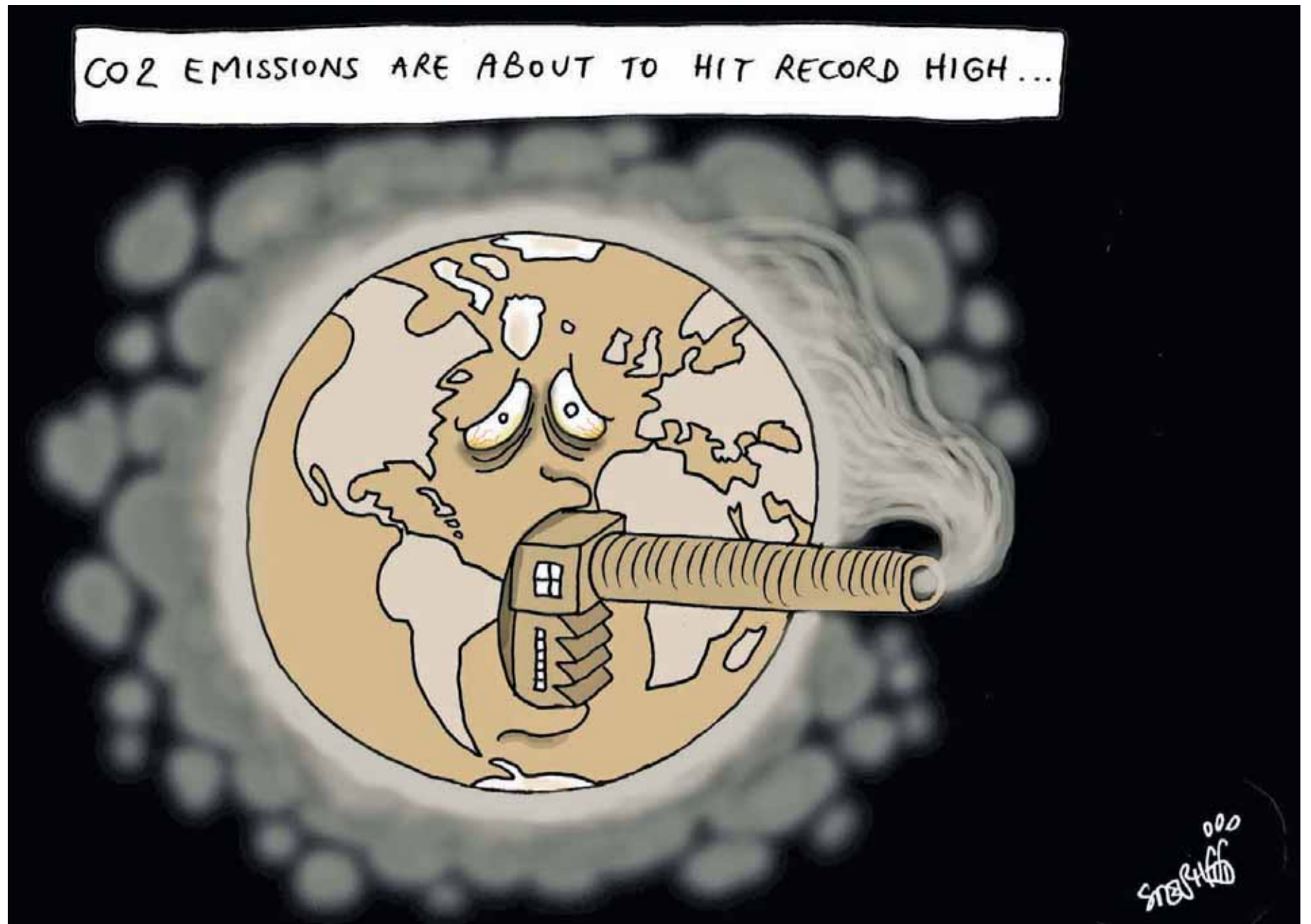
The campaign against Airbnb is but one recent example. Here is another: Just last week, significant pressure was brought to bear on CNN, forcing them to fire one of their on-air political commentators, Dr Marc Lamont Hill. Hill's "crime" was that upon his return from a visit to occupied Palestinian lands he spoke at the annual UN-sponsored "International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People". After detailing the abuses of Palestinian rights he had witnessed, Hill concluded his speech with a call for a "free Palestine, from the river to the sea".

While it was clear from the entirety of his remarks that Hill was calling for justice and equal rights for Israelis and Palestinians, supporters of Israel immediately assumed the role of victim and leapt to attack. Hill was denounced for "inciting violence", "calling for genocide", "promoting anti-Semitism" and more. Instead of refuting these outrageous charges and standing by their commentator, CNN cowered and fired Hill. Shortly after that, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Temple University, where Hill is a professor, accused Hill of "hate-speech" and floated the possibility of firing him.

These two cases - the decision of a major company to respect international law and a mainstream commentator speaking out for justice - are but two examples of the changing political landscape in the US. Polls show that Israel is losing ground in US public opinion - most especially among the demographic groups that form the Democratic coalition (young people, "minority" communities, and educated women).

In reaction, pro-Israel lobby groups, after realizing that they are unable to silence critics by striking out against them individually as they speak out, are now trying to pass bills in Congress to penalize and/or criminalize criticisms or actions against Israel. The bills in question are: the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act (AAA) and the Israel Anti-Boycott Act (IABA). Should they pass Congress and be signed into law, a company like Airbnb could be penalized and a person like Marc Lamont Hill could be fired.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute



The demise of Kuwait's liberation hero

By Naif Al-Dhafaery

The sacrifices and noble deeds of any leader are always considered to be rejuvenating, aspirational and just for the nation. The aforementioned is applicable to late US president George HW Bush, whose decisive, courageous and noble deeds and stances will remain inscribed in the memories of all Kuwaiti people. During his tenure (1989-1993), a new global regime started to appear, which was characterized by the following events:

- The reunification of West and East Germany after the collapse of the Berlin

Wall. That historic event touched the hearts and passions of the German people.

- The endorsement of the strategic arms race limitation agreement with the then Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev.

• The Desert Shield operation during which President Bush rallied 34 countries' forces to join the US-led global coalition against the barbaric Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and curbing the despotic Iraqi regime's expansionist ambitions towards Saudi Arabia.

- The Desert Storm operation which began on Jan 15, 1991 to liberate Kuwait

Brexit stockpiling bears little fruit for wholesaler

Fresh fruit and vegetable entrepreneur Franco Fubini knows all about the importance of goods arriving on time, as Brexit threatens to delay delivery of produce into and out of Britain. Preparing for possible transit chaos at the border following Britain's formal departure from the European Union on March 29, UK companies from supermarkets to carmakers are preparing to stockpile. However for Fubini's company Natooora - a wholesaler, retailer and food producer - stockpiling fresh fruits and vegetables is not an option.

"For us, the freshness of the product is essential," CEO Fubini told AFP, speaking from company headquarters and warehousing facilities housed in a viaduct on a site once occupied by London's first railway terminus in Bermondsey. Whether his imported avocados, peaches and tomatoes will continue to arrive at the capital's finest eateries on time is far from certain as lawmakers prepare for next week's crucial UK parliamentary vote on the Brexit divorce deal. "There is a huge amount of product that doesn't grow in the UK, primarily a lot of the fruit," said the Argentinian-Italian, who founded the high-end and seasonally-driven business 14 years ago. "We are forced to bring product from the continent."

Through the Tunnel

Natooora supplies more than 1,000 mostly top-end restaurants in a business spanning London, New York and Paris, with fresh produce sourced from farms in the UK, Italy, France, Spain and the US. "The consumption that happens at restaurants and the consumption in our retail stores, particularly eating out, is very sensitive to immediate consumer concerns"



Franco Fubini, founder and CEO of Natooora, a fruit and vegetable distribution company, poses for a photograph in the company's warehouse in south London on Dec 5, 2018. — AFP

surrounding Brexit, Fubini, 44, told AFP.

As boxes filled with imported lemons and limes and Christmas-season favorite Brussels sprouts were loaded onto lorries, Fubini also said that Natooora job applicants were down sharply over the past year amid Brexit uncertainty, especially among Eastern Europeans. As for the supply chain, "there definitely is a concern about disruption", he said. Natooora's produce from mainland Europe comes into the UK on refrigerated lorries through the Channel Tunnel linking Britain and France.

"On average across all the regions, you're looking at 36-48 hours" from harvesting the product to arriving in restaurants, explained Fubini, who runs an operation comprising around 300 staff and an annual turnover of £30 million (\$38 million). "I am hoping that common sense, particularly in the case of something as critical as fresh food, will help us get through this." He added: "There is very little that we can do within our supply chain. We can't stockpile, we can't shorten our supply chain, unless we helicopter things in! In order for us to plan, the only thing we can do is wait and see."

Stockpiling dry goods

One-fifth of the company's turnover comes from goods that could be stockpiled, however, such as cured meats, cheeses, olive oils and beans. "We can carry more stock" of these items, said Fubini. "Fortunately because we've taken on a new site we have quite a bit of spare capacity to utilize." In the UK, British group Premier Foods has said it plans to stockpile to protect against a risk of delays at ports.

Britain's biggest retailer, supermarket giant Tesco, said it could begin stockpiling tinned goods from January. Another company, Majestic Wines, said it planned an additional inventory of bottles with a combined value of up to £8 million. Away from the food industry, Britain's key carmaking and pharmaceutical sectors have said they are also looking at possible stockpiling, as has engines maker Rolls-Royce. — AFP

from the yoke of the most vicious kind of occupation ever known in history. The liberation of Kuwait was completely achieved on Feb 26, 1991. American forces formed 74 percent of the US-led military coalition.

I still remember some of the most beautiful excerpts of his eventual speeches, such as: "Mr Al-Sabah, tonight Kuwait is free." This phrase was uttered by the late George HW Bush as he directly addressed the Kuwaiti ambassador, the late Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, who was a pioneering figure in explaining his country's plight to the global community.

"At the right time, at the right place we

will liberate Kuwait", "Wait, watch and judge" and "The invader must not be allowed to continue his occupation of Kuwait." These highly honored words which were impatiently longed for by all Kuwaitis will never be forgotten and will remain engraved in every Kuwaiti citizen's mind.

President Bush's courageous and noble stances made him a humanitarian and global symbol and an exemplary leader who inspired generations of leaders for the public service of the human community. May God Almighty rest his pure soul in peace and paradise and provide his lovers with patience and consolation.

Grave dilemma: South African cities short of cemetery space

In the middle of the vast Avalon cemetery in Johannesburg's Soweto township, two gravediggers shovelled soil out of an old grave containing remains buried years ago. They were preparing the grave to be reused as towns across South Africa are fast running out of space to bury the dead. Population growth, migration to urban areas and an influx of foreigners has put huge pressure on land in urban areas. Adding to the problem is a cultural resistance to the practice of cremation.

Between 45 and 60 graves are re-opened each week on average to allow for second burials in Johannesburg, the country's largest city and economic hub. Authorities warn that if no action is taken to change how the dead are laid to rest, urban areas will run out of room in as little as 50 years. "Burial space is fast diminishing. This is caused by the fact that Joburg is currently experiencing high migration," said Reggie Moloi, the city's cemeteries and crematoria manager. Johannesburg is not the only city in South Africa battling the shortage. The southeastern coastal city of Durban raised the alarm more than a decade ago. The city had an unusually high death rate in the 1980s, having been particularly hard hit by political violence and HIV/AIDS, say officials.

Run out of burial space

"We noticed that cemeteries then filled up in a shortest period of time and that quite soon... (we were) going to run out of burial space," Theminkosi Ngcobo, the head of parks in eThekweni, which includes Durban, told AFP. People seeking burial space could soon be turned away, he warned. "We are facing a very serious problem." "The situation is dire and not readily understood... because to the eye it seems there is sufficient (space)," said Denis Ing, deputy chairman of the South African Cemeteries Association. The public did not grasp the scale of the problem, he said.

The crisis has pushed officials to think creatively about how best to dispose of the dead. While recycling graves has helped ease the situation, cremation still faces significant resistance from African communities, which see it as

unnatural and against tradition. At Roodepoort near Soweto, the Sipamla family buried 87-year-old mother and grandmother Caroline Sipamla in the same grave as her son. "Graveyards are very full," said Puleng Sipamla as undertakers covered the remains of her mother. "We thought it would be easier for us to re-open and it's cheaper than digging a new grave." Sipamla had made her feelings known on the matter, said her granddaughter Zoleka Sipamla, 23. "She was pretty clear - no cremation."

Reverend Harold Ginya of the Church of the Nazarene encourages his worshippers to reuse graves - but discourages cremation. "We are promoting this kind of thing. No one will complain that you are on top of me," he said. While many older people are opposed to cremation, the younger generation may prove more open.

'People need to be cremated'

"It would be helpful if people understood why people need to be cremated - because there is a problem of land," said Zoleka Sipamla, a law student. But the limited appeal of the crematorium has a lot to do with what some people associate with it: The fires of hell. "They say, 'Why would I send my loved one to hell?'" said Moloi. Others opposed to cremation believe a bodily form is required to reach the afterlife - not ashes. "Cremation is culturally prohibitive for people... bodies matter, human bodies have power and they have value," said University of New Hampshire anthropologist, Casey Golomski.

Few black Africans are cremated in Durban, with just one a week on average compared to dozens of burials. During a recent campaign to raise awareness of the crisis, it became clear that some traditionalists in the port city were even skeptical of shared graves, said Ngcobo. One elderly man told officials he had never shared a bed with his daughter-in-law. "How do you expect me to share a gravesite with her?" he asked. "That is totally unacceptable."

The increasing land demands of the living could mean that cremation and grave recycling become mandatory, officials warn. "There is going to come a time when the people of Johannesburg will not have a choice but to go to the crematoria or reuse a grave," warned Moloi. "We cannot be having land reserved for cemeteries." The situation could be eased by a controversial constitutional amendment proposed by the government, which would allow the forcible transfer of land to redress the inequalities of apartheid and colonialism. — AFP

Business

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KHARTOUM: Bader Al-Kharafi with President Bashir of Sudan

President Al-Bashir of Sudan welcomes Bader Al-Kharafi

Al-Bashir praises Zain's socio-economic contribution

President Al-Bashir: "Appreciative of Amir of Kuwait and its people for standing with Sudan, recognizes Zain's success as a model to attract foreign investors"
Bader Al-Kharafi: "We are committed to investing and encouraging digital innovation and entrepreneurship in the country"

KHARTOUM: Zain Group announces that the President of the Republic of Sudan, Omar Al-Bashir has received Zain Group Vice-Chairman and CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi at a meeting held in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital. Also present at the meeting was Zain Sudan Managing Director, Elfatih Erwa.

During the meeting, Al-Kharafi took the opportunity to brief President Al-Bashir on the transformative developments taking place at Zain Sudan, and the numerous successes the company has scored over the years. Additionally, he re-affirmed the confidence Zain Group has in the economy of Sudan, despite its many challenges, and pledged that the Group would continue to invest significantly in cutting-edge technology to provide the people of Sudan with exceptional communications services.

Al-Kharafi also noted Zain's commitment to promote and encourage digital innovation to the country, with the company planning to launch online payment platforms as well as implementing a range of initiatives to empower the youth of Sudan and encourage them to enter the world of innovation and entrepreneurship.

During the audience with the President of Sudan, Bader Al-Kharafi stated his desire to follow in the



footsteps of his late father, Nasser Al-Kharafi, who was known for his interest and affection for Sudan and its people.

Bader Al-Kharafi said, "Sudan is a strategically important market to Zain Group, and it has the full support of the Board and executive management to

multiple financial institutions, the court heard, with a maximum sentence of 30 years for each charge.

No decision was reached after nearly six hours of arguments and counter-arguments, and the hearing was adjourned until Monday 10:00 am Pacific Time (1800 GMT). Meng, 46, was arrested in Canada on Dec 1 at the request of the United States. The arrest was on the same day that US President Donald Trump met in Argentina with China's Xi Jinping to look for ways to resolve an escalating trade war between the world's two largest economies.

The news of her arrest has roiled stock markets and drawn condemnation from Chinese authorities, although Trump and his top economic advisers have downplayed its importance to trade talks after the two leaders agreed to a truce. Friday's court hearing was intended to decide on whether Meng can post bail or if she should be kept in detention.

The prosecutor opposed bail, arguing that Meng was a high flight risk with few ties to Vancouver and that her family's wealth would mean that even a multi-million-dollar surety would not weigh heavily should she breach conditions. Meng's lawyer, David Martin, said her prominence made it unlikely she would breach any court orders.

"You can trust her," he said. Fleeing "would humiliate and embarrass her father, whom she loves," he argued. The United States has 60 days to make a formal extradition

request, which a Canadian judge will weigh to determine whether the case against Meng is strong enough. Then it is up to Canada's justice minister to decide whether to extradite her.

A spokesman for Huawei said on Friday the company has "every confidence that the Canadian and US legal systems will reach the right conclusion." The company has said it complies with all applicable export control and sanctions laws and other regulations.

Iran business

The US case against Meng involves Skycom, which had an office in Tehran and which Huawei has described as one of its "major local partners" in Iran. In January 2013, Reuters reported that Skycom, which tried to sell embargoed Hewlett-Packard computer equipment to Iran's largest mobile-phone operator, had much closer ties to Huawei and Meng than previously known.

In 2007, a management company controlled by Huawei's parent company held all of Skycom's shares. At the time, Meng served as the management firm's company secretary. Meng also served on Skycom's board between February 2008 and April 2009, according to Skycom records filed with Hong Kong's Companies Registry. Huawei used Skycom's Tehran office to provide mobile network equipment to several major telecommunications companies in Iran, people familiar with the company's

operations have said. Two of the sources said that technically Skycom was controlled by Iranians to comply with local law but that it effectively was run by Huawei.

Huawei and Skycom were "the same," a former Huawei employee who worked in Iran said on Friday.

A Huawei spokesman told Reuters in 2013: "Huawei has established a trade compliance system which is in line with industry best practices and our business in Iran is in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations including those of the UN. We also require our partners, such as Skycom, to make the same commitments."

The United States has been looking since at least 2016 into whether Huawei violated US sanctions against Iran, Reuters reported in April. The case against Meng revolves around her response to banks, who asked her about Huawei's links to Skycom in the wake of the 2013 Reuters report. US prosecutors argue that Meng fraudulently said there was no link, the court heard on Friday. US investigators believe the misrepresentations induced the banks to provide services to Huawei despite the fact they were operating in sanctioned countries, Canadian court documents released on Friday showed. The hearing did not name any banks, but sources told Reuters this week that the probe centered on whether Huawei had used HSBC Holdings to conduct illegal transactions. HSBC is not under investigation. — Reuters

US accuses Huawei CFO of Iran sanctions cover-up; hearing adjourned

VANCOUVER/LONDON: Huawei Technologies Co Ltd's chief financial officer faces US accusations that she covered up her company's links to a firm that tried to sell equipment to Iran despite sanctions, a Canadian prosecutor said on Friday, arguing against giving her bail while she awaits extradition.

The case against Meng Wanzhou, who is also the daughter of the founder of Huawei, stems from a 2013 Reuters report about the company's close ties to Hong Kong-based Skycom Tech Co Ltd, which attempted to sell US equipment to Iran despite US and European Union bans, the prosecutor told a Vancouver court.

US prosecutors argue that Meng was not truthful to banks who asked her about links between the two firms, the court heard on Friday. If extradited to the United States, Meng would face charges of conspiracy to defraud

Business

Burgan Bank appoints Al-Haqhaq as CEO for its Kuwait operations

Al-Ajeel: Al-Haqhaq is the right professional to lead our operations in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the appointment of Raed Al-Haqhaq as Chief Executive Officer for its operations in Kuwait after obtaining approval from the Central Bank of Kuwait. Al-Haqhaq played a vital role in shaping and executing the strategic direction of Burgan Bank - Kuwait under his previous role as Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Kuwait and will continue to lead the bank to the next phase. Al-Haqhaq assumed his new responsibilities as of 3rd December 2018.

Majed Essa Al-Ajeel, Chairman of Burgan Bank Group said: "I would like to congratulate Raed Al-Haqhaq on his new role. With an exemplary track record and a solid understanding of the market and banking industry, Al-Haqhaq is the right professional to lead our operations in Kuwait. We have every confidence that under his leadership Burgan Bank - Kuwait will continue its solid performance achieving its strate-

gic goals and capitalizing on opportunities ahead. On behalf of myself and the Board, we wish him all the success in his new role." Al-Haqhaq commented: "I am honored by the trust the Chairman and Members of the Board have placed in me. I look forward to this next phase in my career. Under the direction of the Board, the support of the executive team and with the diligence of commitment of our employees, I am confident that Burgan Bank - Kuwait will continue in its current trajectory, delivering high quality results and creating value for all of its stakeholders."

Al-Haqhaq is an industry veteran with more than 20 years of local and international banking experience in various sectors which include corporate, private, and investment banking. While heading different business groups, Al-Haqhaq was responsible for numerous achievements and noticeable growth in performance and profits. Al-Haqhaq holds a



Majed Essa Al-Ajeel



Raed Al-Haqhaq

Bachelor of Science majoring in Strategic Management from California State University, Sacramento, USA.



US Fed on quest for unicorn of monetary policy: The soft landing

WASHINGTON: The US central bank is on a quest for a mythical goal: keeping steady economic growth without allowing inflation to catch fire. This so-called soft-landing is the unicorn of central banking, rarely if ever seen. The Federal Reserve's job might seem simple: the economy is closing in on the longest period of growth in recorded history, with unemployment at the lowest in nearly 50 years and inflation right on target at two percent.

By those measures the Fed can declare victory. Full employment and stable inflation are the goals that Congress set for the central bank. But the wild ride on US stock markets in recent weeks, and in particular the past four days, show the challenge for central bankers in an environment where President Donald Trump can change economic policy and shake business confidence with each tweet.

Economic data have started to flash early warning signs and anxiety among businesses is amplified by Trump's use of uncertainty as a negotiating tool while he pursues a confrontational trade policy, targeted at allies and adversaries alike-but in particular against China. The Fed's role is a balance between cheerleader, therapist and sheriff for financial markets.

And lately senior officials, including Fed Chairman Jerome Powell, have had to change their messaging to calm jittery investors: signaling it might slow the pace of increases in the key lending rate.

The US stock market took another dive on Friday, with losses of more than two percent, or close to 600 points for the Dow.

Strong economy—but how long?

The critical employment report on Friday gave a mixed message about the state of the economy. Job gains slowed to 155,000 last month, lower than expected and well below the 209,000 monthly average of the last 12 months. That slowdown, possibly reflecting the lingering effects of the hurricanes in the prior two months, is in keeping with an economy hitting its peak.

"Signs of a maturing, but still robust labor market," Greg Daco of Oxford Economics said of the report, echoing the view of other analysts.

But the data also showed wages continued to rise and were 3.1 percent higher than a year earlier, outpacing inflation. And the Business Roundtable's quarterly survey released Friday showed that while chief executives remained confident about the economy, they cited labor as the primary cost pressure their companies face.

That same sentiment has been reflected in the Institute of Supply Management's surveys of the manufacturing and services sectors, as well as the Fed's "beige book" national survey, showing widespread labor shortages and increasing reports of wage and price increases in many industries as a result. Rising wages always make the Fed sit up and take notice since this feeds into inflation.

Tight labor markets have even caused some companies to delay projects but the primary risk businesses see-including 82 percent of those in the Business Roundtable survey-is tariffs.

Trump has imposed steep tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, and on \$250 billion in goods from China, raising costs, notably in the auto sector, which has seen major job cut announcements, and delaying expansion and investment plans.

A Fed pause

The key challenge for the Fed effort to achieve a soft landing will be to address the contrary forces of rising price pressures and a slowing economy. Although Trump announced a 90-day tariff truce with China's President Xi Jinping, doubts about the timeline and likely policy outcomes have increased fears that the US economy could slow and even contract in the next two years, sending investors scurrying for cover this week.

Powell has presided over three rate increases this year, and a fourth is widely expected in December and the Fed has for months has repeatedly said it intends to continual gradual increases.

But from one speech to the next in recent weeks, Powell changed his tune amid the pessimistic market reaction, changing gears from highlighting the strength of the economy and the plan for continued rate increases, to stressing that the finish line is close.

And the most direct sign of the central bank's intentions came Thursday when The Wall Street Journal reported the Fed was "considering whether to signal a new wait-and-see approach" since "they are becoming less sure how fast they will need to act or how far they will need to go, and they want to assess how the economy is holding up under moves they have already made." —AFP

China's surplus with US hits new record in November

BEIJING: China's trade surplus with the United States ballooned to a record \$35.6 billion in November, official data showed yesterday, as exports across the Pacific remained strong despite a raft of US tariffs while imports shrank. Relations between the world's top two economies continue to be tense despite a trade war truce struck between US President Donald Trump and his counterpart President Xi Jinping last week.

Trump and figures in his administration have said China would immediately start buying US goods in bulk, but Beijing has refrained from confirming those claims.

The increasingly lopsided trade in goods between the two nations threatens to further derail prospects for a trade deal during a 90-day negotiation period. The ballooning trade deficit with China is a particularly sore point for Trump, who campaigned on turning around the situation.

China's exports to the US rose 9.8 percent for November on-year, while imports for the month fell 25 percent on-year, the data from China's customs administration showed.

American farmers have been hit particularly hard by the trade tensions. Trump tweeted this week that China

would begin buying products from US farmers "immediately".

Usually Chinese buyers have snapped up American soybeans in the final months of the year as the harvest hits the market and beans from competitor Brazil dry up. But this year, Chinese buyers have passed on US soybeans which face a 25 percent border tax upon import, part of the \$50 billion in US goods Beijing hit with higher duties this summer in retaliation for US tariffs.

China's soybean imports fell 38 percent on-year, to 5.4 million tons for the month, the data showed.

The trade surplus with the US expanded to \$293.5 billion for January-November, up from \$251.3 billion during the same period last year.

Global trade

China's overall trade-what it buys and sells with all countries, including the US-logged a \$44.7 billion surplus in November, up from \$35 billion the previous month, the data showed. But growth of exports and imports slowed from October, with exports rising 5.4 percent for November on-year, short of the 9.4 percent forecast by Bloomberg News, and imports rising 3.0 percent on-year, also below the forecast.

The sagging export and import growth is another bad sign for China's economy, which grew at its slowest pace for nine years in the third quarter, expanding 6.5 percent on-year for July-September.

While exports to the US have held up so far this autumn, the row has sapped confidence.

The Shanghai composite stock index has fallen by about one-quarter from its

Huawei arrest stokes fears of China reprisals among America Inc executives

HONG KONG/SHANGHAI: At a closed-door security meeting of US companies in Singapore on Thursday, one topic was high on the agenda: the arrest of a top executive at Chinese tech giant Huawei and the potential backlash on American firms operating in China.

Officials from major US companies who attended the event, a scheduled meeting of the local chapter of the US Department of State's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), voiced concerns about retaliation against American firms and their executives, two people with knowledge of the meeting said. A number of attendees said their companies were considering restricting non-essential China travel and looking to move meetings outside the country, one of the people added.

Security executives for companies including Walt Disney Co, Alphabet Inc's Google, Facebook Inc, and PayPal Holdings Inc attended the meeting, according to the sources and a LinkedIn posting by one of the attendees.

The companies all declined to comment or did not respond to requests for comment prior to publication.

Following publication of this story, Google spokesperson Taj Meadows said in a statement that it "misrepresents" what happened at the meeting. He asserted that there was "no discussion on the record or behind closed doors about the arrest of a top Huawei executive or about American companies operating in China."

Meadows also said he was not at

the meeting and could not say whether attendees discussed China travel informally. The discussions at the meeting underscore concerns rippling through US businesses in the world's second largest economy, already facing a delicate balancing act amid a tense trade standoff between Washington and Beijing.

The formal agenda for the meeting, held at Google's Asia-Pacific headquarters in Singapore, included presentations on economic crime and terrorism in the region. OSAC promotes "security cooperation between American private sector interests worldwide and the US Department of State," according to its website. But informal conversations among attendees soon turned to possible risks in China prompted by the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer and "heiress" of Chinese telecom network equipment giant Huawei Technologies Co Ltd, who was detained in Canada on Dec. 1. The news of the arrest was made public on Wednesday.

Meng, the daughter of Huawei's founder, was held at Washington's request as part of a US investigation of an alleged scheme to use the global banking system to evade US sanctions against Iran, people familiar with the probe said.

The arrest has roiled global markets amid fears that it could further inflame the Sino-US trade row.

Risk consultants and analysts said that the arrest could prompt Beijing to retaliate in some form.

"This will pressure a lot of Chinese officials to look strong in this dispute," said Nick Marro, Hong Kong-based Asia analyst at the Economist Intelligence Unit, who added that technology companies were particularly at risk.

"This could mean either taking a stronger stance on trade negotiations, or taking a stronger stance on US tech firms in China right now." Asked whether there would be any retaliation against any foreign executives in



BEIJING: This file picture shows US President Donald Trump (left) and China's President Xi Jinping leaving a business leaders event at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. —AFP

January high, while the yuan has slipped about nine percent against the dollar.

Trade truce

The trade tensions with Washington come at a tough time for Beijing, which is battling to tackle a mountain of debt as credit tightens and infrastructure investment falls. Last week, as part of the trade war truce, Trump agreed to hold off on plans to raise tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese imports to 25 percent beginning January 1, leaving them at the current 10 percent rate.

But unease over the agreement has dented stocks this week with major US indices falling more than two percent to close the market's worst week since March and one that left both the Dow

and the S&P 500 in negative territory for the year. China also reacted furiously after a top executive and daughter of the founder of Chinese telecom giant Huawei was arrested in Canada this week following a US extradition request.

In addition to buying US goods immediately, Trump claimed this week that China would roll back tariffs of 40 percent on US made cars-but China's commerce ministry declined to confirm this move when asked about it Thursday. Still, Beijing remains outwardly optimistic on prospects for a trade deal.

"We are fully confident that we can reach an agreement in the coming 90 days," commerce ministry spokesman Gao Feng said Thursday. Trump tweeted out the quote, adding: "I agree!" —AFP



Customers are served at a Huawei stand in a store in Sanya on China's tropical Hainan Island yesterday. —AFP

China, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said on Friday China has always protected the lawful rights of foreigners in China in accordance with the law.

"Of course in China they should respect China's laws and rules."

Early Christmas trip?

OSAC says it is made up of 34 private and public sector member organizations. It lists its events on its website, including the Dec. 6 meeting in Singapore. There was also a separate listed meeting held in Shanghai on the same day. Prashant Nayak, Disney's Asia Pacific director of corporate security, posted about the Singapore meeting on LinkedIn, tagging other executives at Google, Facebook, Amazon.com Inc, Marriott International Inc, Microsoft Corp and others. Nayak did not respond to a LinkedIn message seeking further comment.

The second person with knowledge of the event said the Huawei arrest and potential fallout was a hot topic at the meeting. A senior diplomat from the US embassy in Singapore gave open-

ing remarks, but an embassy spokesperson said she left before any discussion.

Asia-based risk consultants said they had seen a rise in the number of clients asking about the Huawei issue and potential concerns related to the impact on US firms in China.

Jakob Korslund, CEO of Singapore-based consultancy Deutsche Risk, said his firm had received a number of enquiries in the last two days asking about the risks of travelling to China.

"For a few we have advised postponing trips that were not time critical, telling clients to wait for the next few weeks to see the situation," he said. James McGregor, chairman of APCO Worldwide's Greater China region, said companies would likely err on the side of not sending executives to China for the time being.

"It's all about avoiding risk, because what do you do if somebody is arrested?" he told Reuters, adding anxiety was also spreading among executives already in China. "People are joking about it a little bit and saying 'maybe I should take an early Christmas trip home.'" —Reuters

Business

Al-Sayer and Lexus unveil the all-new Lexus UX

The compact crossover for a refined luxury drive



KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons (MNSS), a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding and Lexus have unveiled the all-new UX, the compact crossover for a refined luxury drive.

The launch event held at Al-Sayer Ballroom at Ardiya was attended by Faisal Bader Al-Sayer, Chairman, Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer, CEO, Bengt Schultz, Chief Operating Officer, Mahmoud Abou Zahr, Lexus Business Director, MNSS, Philip Burruck, General Manager MNSS Lexus Vehicle Sales, Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative and Naomichi Hirose Manager from Middle East and North Africa Representative Office in Dubai along with distinguished members from the press and media.

Speaking during the occasion Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer said, "Lexus is successful in launching many first-time technologies in the market including active safety, car manufacturing and on-board premium features. Other innovation includes first premium cross over with the RX. Lexus has also the largest range of self-charging, industry leading hybrids which is testimony of experience amazing, selling over 1.3 million units globally. As you know Lexus brand is continuing to evolve with an increased emphasis on technology, performance, art, fashion - to offer "experience amazing". The recent launch of the all new ES is an example."

Imbuing a youthful appeal to its lineup, Lexus launches the all-new Lexus UX in the Middle East today, an innovative addition to the Luxury Compact Crossover segment. The all-new model combines the brand's latest luxury offerings and safety technologies in a package that combines new charismatic design elements and ultra-efficient powertrains.

While the UX name is derived from the guiding concept of the vehicle's design team and describes the vehicle's mission as Urban + X-over (crossover), the all-new model is engineered to deliver a quick and engaging driving experience with a Lexus-smooth demeanor, making it a unique entry in the luxury compact crossover segment.

"The Lexus UX is designed for the modern urban explorer seeking a fresh, contemporary, and dynamic take on luxury driving," said Chika Kako, Executive Vice President of Lexus International and Chief Engineer of the UX. "We designed the UX to appeal to young buyers who seek not only what is new and exciting, but what is also relevant to their lifestyles."

She added: "I wanted to positively overturn the image of a crossover and offer a car with nimble performance and excellent maneuverability that makes it as easy to drive like a sedan."

New design global strategy

"Lexus new design global strategy was a major success in Kuwait and the region. Additionally, the new technologies that had been introduced into the Lexus model lineup had given our customers a new feeling for the driv-

A MARK OF INDEPENDENCE

- Compelling 'Creative Urban Explorer' design sets new standards in its segment
- Exceptional body rigidity and low center of gravity for sport-hatch agility
- Newly-developed 2.0-liter engine and advanced Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (DCVT)
- Innovative Lexus Safety System+ offers unrivaled protection

ing dynamics that had even surpassed the previous Lexus records," said Philip Burruck.

The all-new model is the first Lexus vehicle to be constructed on the new Global Architecture Compact (GA-C) platform. With a lightweight yet super-rigid structure, extremely low center of gravity, and a refined suspension tuning, the GA-C platform provides the UX with exemplary handling agility and ride comfort, along with a distinctive driving personality.

"We are very excited to launch the all-new Lexus UX, an innovative vehicle that is tailored to the evolving needs and aspirations of our customers in the region," commented Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation. He added: "Inspired by the vibrant energy of urban environments, its brave design and engaging driving dynamics are a reflection of our ongoing quest to create Amazing Experiences. We are grateful to our customers, who remain a constant source of inspiration, and are confident that they will embrace the UX's singular style and exciting performance as an expression of their individuality."

The 2019 Lexus UX has a front-wheel drive configuration and is powered by a new high-efficiency 2.0 liter, four-cylinder engine, which is coupled with a new Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (DCVT). It offers a host of exciting features, including a Drive Select controller with up to five modes that allows the driver to tailor the driving experience. The 2019 Lexus UX introduces world-firsts such as wireless lighting for the airflow knob and a unique aero ventilation design, which was developed to reduce air turbulence over the wheel surface. The all-new model also has a Lexus-first palm rest integrated audio control system, as well as Lexus' advanced safety technology package, Lexus Safety System+.

The introduction of the all-new Lexus UX continues the expression of the brand's design direction and commitment towards crafting vehicles with heightened excitement and passion, expanding the vision of the brand's future to a broader audience. The provocative elegance of the design starts up front with the latest iteration of the brand's signature Spindle Grille. It features a new block-

shape mesh pattern with individual elements that gradually change in shape as they radiate out from the central Lexus emblem. The grille also creates an intriguing three-dimensional appearance that varies according to the viewing angle.

The streamlined headlamp design completes the UX's face, giving it a determined, confident gaze. Arranged in an arrowhead motif above the headlights, the LED daytime running lights complement the Lexus L-shaped lighting signature. These appear like brows above the standard single-projector dual-beam LED headlights or the optional ultra-small 3-projector LED units.

The signature grille

The vehicle's sleek form flows out from the lines of the signature grille to envelop the cabin. Crisp, prominent sculpted surfaces and dramatically flared front and rear fenders reflect the vehicle's robust inspiration, while an aerodynamic profile, large wheels pushed to the corners and an impressive front fascia create an agile, sporty stance. The bold Lexus UX design culminates at the full-width rear lights, which project a distinctive nighttime signature formed by a sequence of 120 LEDs tapering towards the center, that measures just 3.17 millimeters thin at its narrowest point.

Complementing the all-new Lexus UX's emotional design is a thrilling drive personality. The UX 200 delivers a combination of engaging performance and high efficiency from a newly developed 2.0-liter inline four-cylinder engine, which produces 168 hp and 205 Nm of torque. Combining revolutionary laser-clad intake valve seats with an all-new intake port profile, and D-4S direct plus port fuel injection makes this one of the most efficient engines on the market.

The new Direct-Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (DCVT) combines the smooth, fuel-efficient performance of a continuously variable transmission with a more direct driving experience. The key to its distinct performance feel is a mechanical gearsset that is used to start from a stand-still and accelerate, before handing off to the continuously variable transmission pulley system. The result is a direct, linear, and quick initial acceleration, while maintaining the benefits of a continuously variable

transmission at mid- and higher speeds.

The Lexus UX's distinct personality is completed by its exquisite interior, which invites the driver and passengers to enjoy a range of advanced features that offer a refined cabin experience. These include an enhanced in-vehicle 10.3-inch multimedia display, colored and adjustable head-up display (HUD), 7-inch color multi-information display (MID), a wireless charging system for smartphones, and an analog clock with GPS correction function. The vehicle also offers the Lexus Climate Concierge with a 2-zone independent temperature control system, and a 13-speaker Mark Levinson sound system that incorporates advanced features such as Quantum Logic Immersion (QLI) to create a naturally enveloping soundstage, and Clari-Fi 2.0, which extrapolates compressed audio to achieve a sound as faithful to the original as possible. Additional features include multi-adjustable power front seats, as well as 60:40 split folding rear seats with cup holders, and a hands-free power trunk with a kick motion sensor.

Unrelenting focus on safety

Highlighting Lexus' unrelenting focus on safety, the all-new vehicle ensures complete peace of mind with Lexus Safety System+, an advanced safety technology package that includes Pre-Collision System (PCS) with pedestrian detection during daylight and certain low-light conditions, as well as daytime cyclist detection, all-speed range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC), Lane Departure Alert (LDA) with Lane Tracing Assist (LTA), and adaptive high beam system (AHS). In addition, the car features a comprehensive array of safety features to protect its occupants, such as 8 SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Traction Control (TRC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD), Brake Assist (BA), Panoramic View Monitor (PVM), Blind Spot Monitor (BSM), Parking Support Alert (PKSA), Rear Cross-Traffic Alert (RCTA), Active Cornering Assist (ACA), and Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), among many others.

Available in 13 distinctive exterior colors, the all-new Lexus UX allows customers to express their individuality with two exclusive colors for the F SPORT version. Three newly-developed exterior colors, Terrane Khaki Mica Metallic, Blazing Carnelian Contrast Layering, and Celestial Blue Glass Flake, further evoke the luxurious and glamorous atmosphere. On the other hand, the interior comes in a total of eight color combinations, with two newly-developed combinations called Cobalt and White Ash, and, an F SPORT exclusive, FLARE RED. Furthermore, the all-new model has been rearmored with four new wheel designs: two 17-inch wheels - incorporating a world-first aero ventilation design developed to reduce air turbulence over the wheel surface, an 18-inch wheel with run-flat tires designed for excellent handling stability, and an F SPORT exclusive 18-inch wheel.

Business

KIB sponsors GBSA Debt Capital Markets Conference in Dubai

Conference discusses regional economic outlook, changes in oil prices

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing efforts to promote the economic and financial development of the region, KIB sponsored the 2nd Gulf Bond and Sukuk Association (GBSA) Debt Capital Markets Conference. Held in Dubai, the invitation-only event gathered a number of senior government officials, thought leaders, credit rating agencies, and industry experts from across various fields throughout the Gulf area.

The exclusive conference featured high-level discussions with government officials and regulatory bodies, with topics including regional economic outlook, changes in oil prices, policy reform efforts, debt composition, challenges facing the Islamic Sukuk market and ways to unite efforts to develop the Sukuk market as an attractive funding tool, sovereign wealth, and various economic diversification efforts.

Karim Namek, General Manager of Treasury at KIB, attended the conference on behalf of the Bank - alongside many high-ranking executives from around the GCC. The conference sought to

promote best practice approaches to the debt capital market and support corporate treasury, in addition to strategically addressing and responding to disruptions impacting the business and broader industry. The conference also provided professionals with a platform to share expertise and experience that can transform the treasury function in businesses.

Karim Namek said that "KIB" remains committed to playing an active role in the regional and international banking industry. The Bank is also a firm believer in conferences such as the GBSA being critical to promoting the success and development of the banking industry in the region.

Within that vein, KIB's sponsorship of the GBSA came as part of the Bank's commitment to further developing the Kuwait market, by paving the road to innovations and trends that shape the GCC bond and sukuk market. KIB also lauded the hard work and efforts of government authorities and the GBSA for their efforts in establishing a professional debt management capacity.



26 new winners in Al-Hassad Islamic account

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 5th of December 2018. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

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

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Abdul Rahman Hussain Srour.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Ahmad Ruwaidh Alazmi, Omar Dheyaa Alasmi, Mona Hussain Alibrahim, Ali Abdula Ali Kmshad, Fajer Nawaf Al-Mutairi, Juzar Mohammed Bankodawala, Abdullah Marzouq Aladwani, Mitieb Hashhash Alanzi, Abdullah Ali Almutairi, Masoumeh Hassa Beigholosh, Noura Falah Alazmi, Abdulaziz Khaled Alshayji, Ibrahim Khaleel Al-Qallaf, Muneera Salem Al-Qattan, Heba Abdulwahab Alsayed, Ammar Abdulbaqi Ismail, A Rahman A.Hussain Jawahery, Mohd Baqer Baqer, Rabab Jaffar Majed, Martina Moran, Hareth Khalfan Aldhawyani, Mohd Mohd Abusamrah, Ahmed Hubail Ahmed, Fatima Hasan Ashoor, and Salman Saleh Almahmeed.

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

US stocks tumble to end bruising week as OPEC deal lifts oil prices

NEW YORK: Wall Street closed out a bruising week on an ugly note on Friday as unease over the US-China trade war prompted another sell-off, while an OPEC deal lifted oil prices. Major US indices fell more than two percent to close the market's worst week since March and one that left both the Dow and S&P 500 in negative territory for the year.

European and Asian markets were mixed, with London, Paris and Tokyo gaining and Hong Kong and Frankfurt falling modestly. The Dow finished 2.2 percent lower at 24,388.95. The blue-chip index lost 4.5 percent for the week.

The declines on Wall Street followed a mixed US jobs report that had initially helped lift stocks early in the session, in part because it was seen as boosting the likelihood that the US Federal Reserve could soon pause interest rate hikes.

But the market quickly went negative, with the losses accelerating following hawkish comments from White House trade advisor Peter Navarro in a CNN interview that emphasized that the United States would raise tariffs on China if a deal is not reached.

Investors have been rattled by the US-initiated arrest of a top Chinese Huawei executive that was seen as exacerbating the US-China clash. Huawei Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou, who appeared in a Canadian court on Friday, faces US fraud charges related to sanctions-busting business dealings with Iran.

"The market is kind of falling back into our interpretation of where we are in the US-China trade war," said Art Hogan, chief market strategist at B. Riley FBR.

The Huawei arrest dampened expectations that the United States and China could quickly hash out a deal, Hogan added. Navarro, in an interview with CNBC later Friday, said the stock market's volatility reflected the impact of higher interest rates much more than Trump's trade policy.

"I really think it is a false narrative to blame all of this volatility on China policy," Navarro told CNBC. "Trade is a very small percentage of our overall economy." —AFP

Warba Bank wins 'WIBC Performance Award 2018'

KUWAIT: As we approach the end of a successful year marked by major achievements added to the bank's record, Warba Bank has won a prestigious award from the World Islamic Banking Conference, held last November in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Warba Bank has won the WIBC Performance Award 2018 for its outstanding performance and rapid growth in all operations, particularly in terms of assets reporting growth rate of 18 percent reaching KD 1.972 billion till 30 September 2018.

Commenting on the award, Shaheen Hamad Alghanem, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, said: "This is a new merit award that doubles our responsibility to strive and save no efforts for excellence and innovation in our banking services and solutions,

which are today a benchmark in the Islamic banking industry proven to be at the highest international standards in the Islamic banking sector. "We are building upon the success of Warba Bank for realizing more achievements in the coming year, by increasing the Bank's investment and financing capabilities following the 50 percent share capital increase, highly subscribed by shareholders. Thanks Allah, this is in fact a key indicator of the deep trust that Warba Bank enjoys amid customers, the domestic and international finance and investment sectors. We will therefore exert all efforts for diversification of our banking services enabled by the state-of-the-art digital technologies, so that Warba remains the bank of choice for banking business whether in retail, corporate, and investment and finance sectors.

It's noteworthy that Warba Bank was selected out of five participating financial institutions in the region and was awarded based on the vote of the Conference Committee; the Committee voted according to specific metrics for this category of awards, that compromise: Participants' financial stability, financial performance, corporate governance and corporate social responsibility.



Shaheen Hamad Alghanem

The World Islamic Banking Conference, organized by Middle East Consulting International (MEGA), is one of the largest and most prestigious gatherings of Islamic banking and finance leaders in the world. Over the past 25 years, it has been steadily able to enhance its reputation and serve as an observer that tracks and evaluates the global Islamic banking and banking

industry given the conference members, who are renown in vital business sectors, of leading bankers, shareholders, decision-makers, academics and other stakeholders from around the world. WIBC has contributed towards the creation of a robust system to expand Islamic finance in order to keep abreast of new developments while preserving its core values.

ABK first Kuwaiti bank to adopt a fully cloud-based HR management suite

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continued its digital transformation journey with the launch of its new digital HR-Management system. Through the adoption of the full SuccessFactors HCM Suite by SAP, ABK is the first Kuwaiti bank to implement this cloud-based system to service its employees.

The SAP SuccessFactors software seamlessly integrates into the existing system to create a comprehensive human resource management system and streamlines the HR processes by analyzing employee data to provide real time results, recommendations and suggested actions. The user-friendly platform will help increase ABK's employee engagement and deliver improved agility to the workforce to achieve organizational goals. "With ABK's ongoing digital transfor-



mation, employees must be engaged and committed to our goal of creating a highly efficient work culture," said Hamza Enki, General Manager - HR. "The SuccessFactors HCM Suite by SAP and Tyconz is the best technology in the market to support our organization in understanding the employee experience, which will ultimately enable us to prepare a plan

of action to improve engagement and performance. Harnessing the latest digital technology including Artificial Intelligence and machine learning, SAP's SuccessFactors software will support ABK in creating a different work environment and will encourage employees to be more interactive. Through the enhanced interface, ABK aims to improve time man-

agement and simplify internal operational processes."

ABK has been named by Naseba as 'Employer of the Year' in Kuwait for three consecutive years, demonstrating its commitment towards its employees. The Bank is also known as one of the banks with the highest staff retention rates in the region.

KFH upgrades its centralized group SWIFT network system

KUWAIT: In continuation of its excellence in launching strategic initiatives and innovative financial solutions that cope with the latest banking industry technologies, KFH has successfully upgraded its centralized SWIFT network system for global payments at the group level. This system improves business excellence, achieves cost optimization, focuses on technical expertise and invests in strategic initiatives to provide the best customer service.

KFH has managed to add most of its worldwide spread branches under one umbrella in cooperation with SWIFT without changing any transfer channels or banking correspondence related to the network. This strategic change contributes in minimizing repeated expens-

es charged to the group and cause a remarkable saving in financial resources and technical expertise, while providing more opportunities to focus such efforts on better projects and initiatives that would achieve the best interest of customer and improve performance in accordance with the highest global standard in regard to speed, quality and safety.

The centralized SWIFT network system includes the correspondence network "SWIFT" that connects all world banks in a safe manner. Systems and subscriptions were connected to each group banks separately including Bahrain, Malaysia, Germany and Turkey.

KFH is keen to enhance and develop technological systems and banking services in accordance with the latest digital products strategy, thus providing a new customer service channels and achieving an added value for its banking transactions. KFH products and systems in various sectors have achieved leading and pioneering positions in the market.



Technology

BAE Systems shares insights with KU students on future technologies

Lecture held as part of BAE's education initiatives in Gulf

KUWAIT: Students at Kuwait University have learnt more about how disruptive technologies are shaping the future global aerospace and defense industry.

Matt Stevens, who is part of the team researching future technologies for BAE Systems, spoke to the students yesterday as part of a lecture organized by BAE Systems, as part of its education initiatives in the Gulf.

He spoke about the benefits of technologies such as augmented reality, quantum computing and robotics, which are already delivering solutions to challenges facing the defense industry.

The lecture, organized by Kuwait University, the British Council and BAE Systems, in cooperation with the British Embassy in Kuwait, was aligned to key areas of the New Kuwait Vision 2035 aimed at transferring technical skills and knowledge to Kuwait, and came as the anniversary of 120 years of partnership between the State of Kuwait and the United Kingdom approaches.

Stevens said: "Every day there are advances in science and technology which we must embrace if we are to



Matt Stevens

stay ahead of the curve. Technologies like rapid manufacturing and cyber resilience are all examples which have become common-place today.

"BAE Systems spends £1.7 billion (KD 680 million) on research and development every year to ensure our customers and partners around the world are able to meet the threats and challenges they face.

"This presents huge opportunities to our partners across the globe and we look forward to supporting the transformation of the Kuwait Air Force and playing a key role in supporting the Kuwait Vision 2035."

Michael Gordon, Country Director - Kuwait for

The British Council, said: "We are delighted to have this opportunity to make it possible for BAE Systems to engage with some of Kuwait's future engineers, and to enthuse them with this snapshot of what future technological changes could mean for those working in a large aerospace company such as BAE Systems."

Following the lecture, four BAE Systems employees from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Oman spoke with their counterparts from Kuwait University about their experiences and opportunities at BAE Systems. They spoke about their engineering roles working alongside the Royal Saudi Air Force and the Royal Air Force of Oman in support of their Typhoon fleets: Typhoon is the multi-role combat aircraft which is due to go in to service with the Kuwait Air Force in 2020.

Earlier this year, BAE Systems opened an office in the grounds of the UK Embassy in Kuwait as part of its commitment to deliver greater support to the State across air, land, maritime and cyber domains, supporting existing products as well as delivering new capabilities.



Five digital business trends to look out for in 2019

By Scott Gibson
Group Executive of Digital Business Solutions,
Dimension Data



Too many aspiring digital businesses aren't set up correctly for digital transformation. They're organized in silos around traditional functions instead of having a flexible network of teams that work on transforming key business processes.

The focus of many digital transformation efforts to date, has been on the adoption of new technologies. But without first doing some organizational redesign, this has been like forcing a square peg into a round hole. What does a successful organization restructure look like? Which technologies and strategies will accelerate a company's digital transformation journey next year and beyond? Dimension Data's

Technology Trends 2019 report explores seven key areas of focus for companies, with digital business playing a critical role. Here are five trends that will be dominant in the digital business in 2019.

1. Organizations will restructure to get ready for digital transformation

Many companies aren't set up correctly for digital transformation. Antiquated job functions and processes have resulted in a real lack of flexibility.

Encouragingly, we're now seeing more companies accepting that to transform successfully, they must first redesign their core business processes around the customer experience, and then reorganise the enterprise to align with these digital processes. Not every company wants - or needs - a radical, non-hierarchical structure like some digital natives have adopted. Most, however, should start by adding a network of project-based teams tasked with transforming particular areas. In 2019, more enterprises will abandon their 'technology first' attempts at digital transformation and embrace a 'customer first' approach.

Consequently, successful transformers will focus on what their customers want: using data to understand them, innovating relevant offerings, redesign business processes, restructure the organisation around them, and - only then - implement enabling technologies.

2. IoT is starting to deliver ROI

After much hype and buzz, companies are finally starting to enjoy a positive impact on corporate profitability from their internet of things (IoT) implementations, and this upward curve will accelerate into 2019.

The kind of projects that produce a concrete financial

improvement tend to be those that look at data through a new lens and apply IoT at multiple points in the value chain. The best business outcomes are obtained when you use IoT to monitor an entire business process and blend your own data with third-party sources.

The Royal Swaziland Sugar Corporation, for example, is using IoT throughout the process of growing, transporting, and processing sugar cane. This is increasing their efficiency at every point and improving corporate profitability. They use it to monitor the water levels in fields, rivers, and reservoirs - then combine this with remotely gathered data on crop growth and health. Weather forecast data is then used to consider the cost of the electricity required to pump water for irrigation.

3. Ready-made platforms are accelerating digital transformation

Accelerated digitalization is achieved by those who don't try to build everything bespoke, but rather exploit ready-made platforms that get them to their goals a lot faster.

Platform adoption is getting more popular in the infrastructure space, due to the unpredictability of the digital world. Buying into a pre-built platform that can adapt quickly is increasingly preferred to building and owning your own. Consuming information technology as a managed service not only increases agility and speed of execution, it reduces compliance and security risks. This allows organisations to pay for services as they use them. Research found that 60 percent of organisations are engaging in digital transformation through outsourcing and partnering, while a study by The Technology Industry Services Association reveals that technology-managed services are growing at 40 percent.

Barloworld Equipment and Handling decided to move their sales management capabilities from a standalone solu-

tion implemented 12 years previously to a cloud-based extension of its enterprise SAP platform. This not only increased the company's ability to provide time to value for its customers, it was also a beneficiary of time to value itself.

4. Digital leaders are looking at data through a new lens

Old ways of looking at data aren't cutting it. More of our digital transformation engagements with clients are starting with major data engineering exercises. A lot of data in organisations isn't structured appropriately for analysis. They have data they don't need, and need data they don't have. They need to add new kinds of data from external sources to shed new light on their businesses, and they need to focus on different metrics.

5. B2B digital trading platforms are coming

One of the biggest growth areas in 2019 will be B2B digital trading platforms. Bill McDermott, CEO of SAP, predicts a world where customers connect directly into your supply chain, and it's hard not to agree with him. The advantages, both in terms of customer experience and operational efficiency, are too exciting to ignore.

If you can show business clients not just current stock levels but the expected date of replenishment, they'll be more confident about ordering from you. If they can give you better data on their future demand, you can optimise your inventory and production accordingly. And future integration will go even further. Beyond today's supply chain collaboration linked to ERP, we'll see integration with CRM systems featuring artificial intelligence and robotic process automation. These will allow consumers to reach right back to your supplier's inventory through their mobile apps. That's true digital business.

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Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

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Dar Al Shifa Hospital
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@daralshifa
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

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Technology



Huawei Kuwait holds 'Seeds for the Future' program at ACK

In partnership with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs in Kuwait, Huawei Technologies, a leading global information and communication (ICT) solutions provider officially launched its global flagship CSR program "Seeds for the Future" in Kuwait for the fifth year in a row.

The event was held and supported by the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) on December 5, 2018. "I would like to thank Huawei for sending our alumni to China to gain the practice and the experience," said

Vice President of Administrative Affairs at ACK, Dr. Abdullah Karkouh.

This year, Huawei sponsored eight young talents to participate in the two week program to China. Seeds for the Future was launched in Kuwait in 2014. In 2017, Huawei Technologies Kuwait signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs to advance the ICT skills of the youth in Kuwait. The common goal for the program between Huawei and the MOY is to help young students enter

the Information and Telecommunication Solution (ICT) fields, develop their ICT skills, enhance knowledge transfer, improve young generations understanding of ICT and gain practical international work experience.

Since its inception in 2008, the program offered training programs to nearly 10,000 students globally and has facilitated knowledge transfer, cultivated local ICT talent and increased digital engagement with different entities, with over 280 partnerships with universities in 96 countries all over the world. The two week

program in China will start in Beijing where the students will receive Mandarin language classes and cultural training such as calligraphy and painting and also go on city tours.

The students then will spend time at Huawei's Shenzhen campus where they will learn about trends in mobile internet application and development, intelligent network application and development and many other cutting edge solutions through technology workshops and networking events.

Embassy of Palestine in Kuwait launches 'Color of Palestine'

Embassy of Palestine in Kuwait in corporation with Kuwait Journalist Association is proud to launch "Color of Palestine" student art competition under the patronage of Ministry of Education. The contest aims at making students in Kuwait more aware of the heritage, cultures and civilizations of other countries. The contests slogan motivates students to express their knowledge of Palestine State through art. Participants can draw about heritage, culture, waterfalls, Dead Sea & the natural beauty and history of Palestine.

Palestine does have lots more to offer besides religious and historical attractions. The theme for the art competition encourages students to express their knowledge of Palestine by drawing an icon, a natural scene, or any other expression they would find suitable for above titled. Participants can draw touristic, environmental or civilization pieces or icons or symbols that reflect the competitions slogan.

The contest will run from December 8 till January 20, 2019, and is open to students from all schools in Kuwait including special needs under the following age categories: 6 to 9 yrs old, 10 to 13yrs old, 14 to 17 yrs old. Drawing sheets will be offered to participants free of charge. The committee will be consisting of expert artists who will select and choose the best artwork according to the category, which will have 10 winners each.

The top 10 winners from each category will be given valuable prizes and certificates. Furthermore, certificates will be given to the schools for their honorable participation. The closing ceremony and the event will take place under the patronage of Minister of Education. In addition, ambassadors, sponsors, school principals and art teachers, winners accompanied with their parents along with Arabic and English media and TV will be invited for the event.



Burgan Bank sponsors 'Kids in Action' Marathon

Burgan Bank is delighted to announce its sponsorship of the 'Kids in Action' Super Race Marathon as part of its drive to encourage a healthy and active lifestyle. As part of the partnership with 'Kids in Action' club, the first 50 BubaKids Account Customers that register for the marathon will receive a discounted ticket of KD 10 per person. The marathon will take place on December 15, 2018 from 9:30 am to 12 pm at Alrashdan tracks in Kaifan.

'Kids in Action' Super Race Marathon is a Superhero themed race for kids aged 4-10 aimed at instilling a passion for sports from an early age. This year, it will attract more than 250 participants and their parents, who will also enjoy the activities held during the day. The race is divided into age groups wherein each group will compete for the top three winner's trophies.

BuBa Kids Account aims at providing creative solutions for parents who want to earn more from their savings for their children while also enjoy a wide range of benefits. The BuBa Kids Account is a savings account, with the minimum opening balance of KD 10. Children, up to 14 years old, will also enjoy special offers and promotions throughout the year as well as attractive discounts at selected merchants across Kuwait.



IEI Kuwait Chapter celebrates 51st Engineers' Day

The Institution of Engineers (India), Kuwait Chapter celebrated 51st Engineers' Day at Multipurpose Hall of Arab Organizations Headquarters Building. IEI observes 15th September of each year as Engineers' Day in memory of the country's great Engineer, Statesman and Bharat Ratna- Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya. As per the guidelines, a central theme of national importance is chosen and deliberated at various state and overseas chapters by IEI to educate the society in general and Engineering fraternity in particular. The Theme for this year's Engineers' Day is "Digital Transformation: A New Industrial Revolution".

Digital transformation requires strong leadership and vision. All kinds of businesses can experiment with - and benefit from - digital transformation. Whether it's the way individuals work and collaborate, the way business processes are run within the organization or the way a company understands and serves customers. Digital technology offers a lot of opportunities.

Dr. Mahendhran, Honorary Chairman, IEI Kuwait Chapter welcomed the Chief Guest, dignitaries, sponsors, members and guests in his welcome address. He thanked all the sponsors, Indian Embassy, Kuwait Society of Engineers, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development for their valuable support. He informed about the upcoming International conference in Kuwait on 12-13 January 2019 on theme "Engineering Challenges in Gulf Region". Dr Mahendhran conducted oath taking ceremony for code of conduct and ethics for engineers.

Raj Gopal Singh, DCM, Indian Embassy inaugurated the 51st Engineers' Day by lighting the lamp accompanied with other dignitaries symbolizing enlightenment through knowledge and wisdom. In his inaugural address he applauded the role of Indian Engineers in the development of society and congratulated them for doing excellent work in providing various opportunities to members for their professional development and career enrichment. Padmashri Dr Mylswamy Annadurai, Ex-Project



Director, ISRO (Indian Space Research Organizations) graced the occasion as Chief Guest and released 51st Engineers' day Souvenir to mark the occasion. After the great success of Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan mission, he has been commonly known as Moon and Mars Man. Born on July 2, 1958, at Kodhawady in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu, India, Annadurai graduated in Electronics and Communication Engineering from Government College of Technology, Coimbatore. He joined ISRO in 1982.

In his early days he worked as the Team Leader to design and develop software for satellite simulator. During the period 1988-1993, he worked as spacecraft operations manager for IRS-1A, IRS-1B, INSAT-2A and INSAT-2B. He worked as Mission Director for the period 1992-2005 and managed 10 INSAT missions. He led the team of engineers and scientists during 2004-2008 as Project Director for ISRO's first Lunar Mission and designed and developed a lunar craft, "Chandrayaan-1" with 11 scientific instruments on Board which eventually discovered the presence of water on moon. Under his leadership as Program Director, India's first interplanetary mission to planet Mars, "Mangalyaan" was meticulously planned and realized. This success brought unprecedented global accolade spiraling India to the pinnacle of glory.

In his lecture on Space, "Challenges and opportunities" he has shared wealth of information relating to both

Chandrayaan-1 and Mars Orbiter Mission and discussed lessons learnt. Dr. Mylswamy Annadurai has been listed among the 100 Global thinkers of 2014 and tops the innovator's list. He has been awarded the prestigious Padma Shree in 2016 by the President of India for his contributions in the field of Science & Engineering.

Guest of Honor Eng Ahmad Al Mershed, The Under Secretary, Ministry of State National Assembly, State of Kuwait in his address appreciated the role of Indian engineers. He went to the extent of remembering his experiences with Indian engineers in Power Station in his early time with Ministry of Electricity and Water. Guest of Honor Dr Osamah Alsayegh, Executive Director, KISR, delivered keynote speech on "Digitization of Power Systems in Kuwait" and the opportunities in the Country towards the development. He added that Kuwait is committed towards using renewable energy and projects have already started in this direction.

Dr S Neelamani a Senior Research Scientist, Coastal Management Program, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), Kuwait delivered a speech on the upcoming "International Conference on Engineering Challenges in Gulf Countries-2019". This conference is scheduled on January 12 and 13, 2019. He appreciated the IEI Kuwait chapter for this wonderful initiative which will result in knowledge sharing among large number of engi-

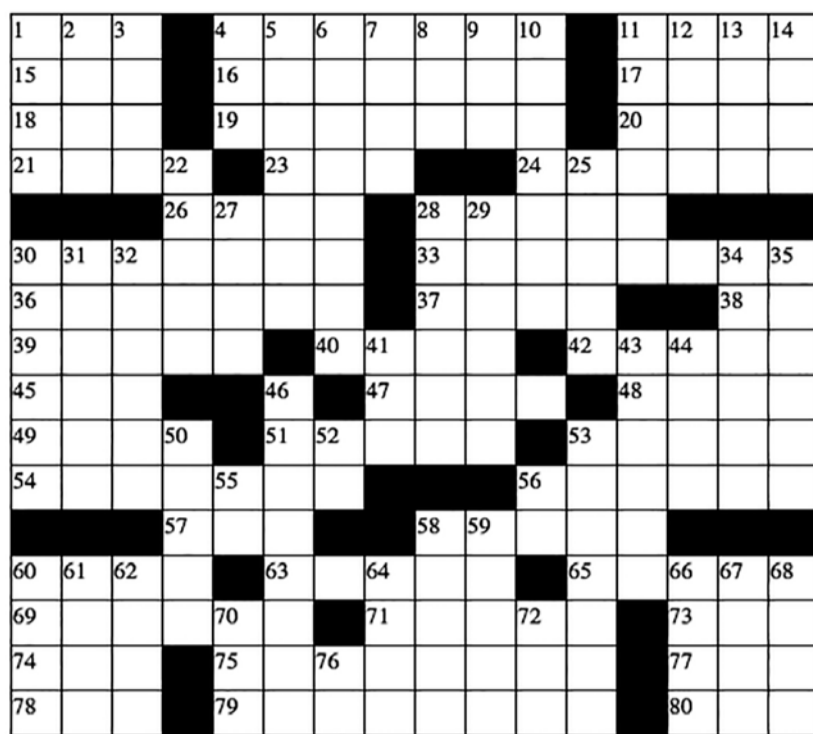
neers and participants. He highlighted that many topics of concern in gulf region will be addressed during the conference. He disclosed that record number of high quality papers have been received on the theme.

Dr. Manaf Behbehani, Professor, Kuwait University addressed the gathering with his humorous and thought provoking speech which left the audience in a hilarious spirit. Eng Hirak Kumar Mitra, Hon General Secretary, IEI Kuwait Chapter proposed the vote of thanks. He thanked all the dignitaries, guests, sponsors, members for making the event a grand success. Eng Sam Ananth Kumar, Executive member and Bhagyashree Koranne, Ladies Wing member alternately took the role of Master of Ceremony and ensured smooth flow of program proceedings.

As a token of appreciation, Mementoes were distributed to the Executive Committee members, Dignitaries and Sponsors. This event was attended by members, dignitaries, distinguished guests from Ministries, Universities, KSE, KISR, Also Technocrats, Consultants, Decision Makers and Business Leaders from Leading Engineering Firms participated in this unique gathering, celebrating the engineer's role in society. Dinner was served at the end of the program. Dignitaries were also taken on an exciting tour of the premises and were briefed on the various unique architectural features and preserved artifacts.

Stars

CROSSWORD 2079



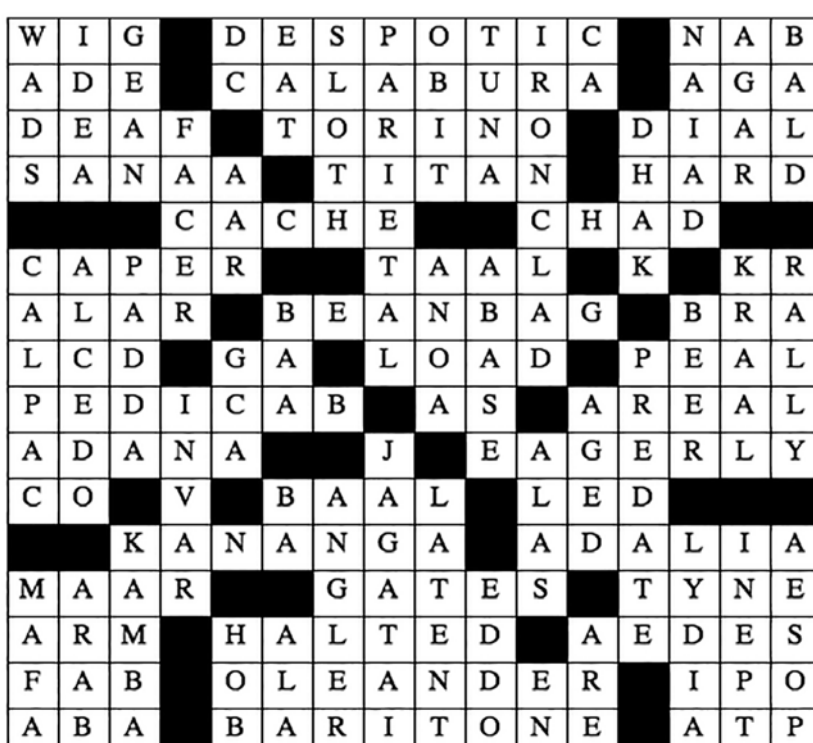
ACROSS

- The federal agency that insures residential mortgages.
- Decoration worn about the neck (fur piece or light necklace) as an ornament.
- A fastener for a door or lid.
- A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Spain or the people of Spain.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.
- A stronghold into which people could go for shelter during a battle.
- A person who lacks confidence, is irresolute and wishy-washy.
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Strike suddenly and with force.
- A port city in southwestern Turkey on the Gulf of Antalya.
- A protective covering that covers or forms the top of a building.
- In accordance with nature.
- A (temporary) relief from harm or discomfort.
- The great hall in ancient Persian palaces.
- An elaborate song for solo voice.
- Half the width of an em.
- Having had the bones removed.
- Powerful mackerel shark of the Atlantic and Pacific.
- The basic monetary unit in many countries.
- (used especially of persons) Having lived for a relatively long time or attained a specific age.
- (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- (prefix) Within.
- Evergreen trees and shrubs having only one-seeded fruits.
- Issue or terminate (in a specified way, state, etc.).
- A port city in southern Kenya on a coral island in a bay of the Indian Ocean.
- A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
- By bad luck.
- Squash bugs.
- (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
- A clay pipe with a short stem.
- Of or pertaining to any Shinto sect other than Kokka Shinto.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- One of four subclasses or superorders of Monocotyledones.
- A unit of length of thread or yarn.
- (informal) Roused to anger.
- A great raja.
- An associate degree in applied science.

DOWN

- A card game in which players bet against the dealer on the cards he will draw from a dealing box.
- A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
- The highest level or degree attainable.
- A committee in the executive branch of government that advises the president on foreign and military and national security.
- Of or relating to epizoa.
- A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Cataflam).
- Strike sharply.
- Either of two folds of skin that can be moved to cover or open the eye.
- The compass point midway between east and southeast.
- Herbs of temperate regions.
- A state in the United States in the central Pacific on the Hawaiian Islands.
- Fleshy and usually brightly colored cover of some seeds that develops from the ovule stalk and partially or entirely envelops the seed.
- (prefix) Half or partial.
- An informal term for a father.
- Not carefully or expertly made.
- A unit of elastance equal to the reciprocal of a farad.
- Toward the mouth or oral region.
- An industrial city in southern Poland on the Vistula.
- An organism especially a bacterium that requires air or free oxygen for life.
- Greek god of light.
- A bicycle with two sets of pedals and two seats.
- The public sale of something to the highest bidder.
- Convert ordinary language into code.
- The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
- Any plant of the genus Reseda.
- Again but in a new or different way.
- Any of various plants of the genus Sesbania having pinnate leaves and large showy pealike flowers.
- Lower in esteem.
- A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- Genus of chiefly small rock-loving ferns.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- A radioactive metallic element that is similar to tellurium and bismuth.
- (Assyrian) Chief god of the Assyrians.
- Any taillike structure.
- A Bantu language spoken in southern Zaire.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- The largest continent with 60% of the earth's population.
- The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
- The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
- A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
- Any of various trees of the genus Ulmus.
- A pilgrimage to Mecca.
- A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems as if you are entering a period of emotional change. You may have mixed emotions about some situations in your life, but you are torn between right and wrong and good and bad. You feel a great need to make some kind of changes in your lifestyle. The only thing that is bringing you any sense of peace is staying on the go and keeping your mind preoccupied to prevent dwelling on the problems at hand. Do whatever you need to do to keep peace in your world and stress at arm's length. This may be a time you have a great desire to further your education and gain as much knowledge as possible. We have always been told knowledge is power and it seems you long for power now. Spend your time taking in all this world brings your way.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Eternity is a measure of time you can not even begin to understand. Your thoughts are drawn to an imaginative and dreamy state. Your mind is a million miles away. The future is where you are focused. You want to know what tomorrow brings. You actually want to know you have total control of what tomorrow brings. To ensure a stable future you also know you need to make amends with your past. Your focus may drift to mending fences and repairing relationships. This is a very spiritual time in your life.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may experience dissatisfaction with what you have or the people you are surrounded right now. Love may be absent from your vocabulary today. You may feel unloved or unloving. This is a time you feel as if you could escape to a desert island and no one would miss you. You feel as if there is no one you would miss either and the thought actually sounds appealing to you. We all need breaks and escapes from time to time and today is your time for that feeling.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You seem to have a desire to become more involved with friends, family, and your neighbors. Exchanging stories and life experiences with each other seem to really satisfy a need for gaining knowledge. You may feel as if communicating your feelings to others and the support you receive is very rewarding for you now. You may find yourself more understanding of the "why's" and "how's" of the world around you. Knowing what makes me people tick and what emotions they are hiding beneath the surface seems to intrigue you. Once you open up and let your walls down for love ones you may find they are more open with you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

It seems like you have a few skeletons in your closet. Things could come back to haunt you from your past. You may find yourself realizing the past is just that. The past. Leave it where it belongs. You may find yourself emotional. Be sure to not let past experience prevent you from moving forward and bettering yourself. You deserve the best and now is a time to believe in yourself and move forward.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Being the center of attention may be very appealing to you today. Romance is in the air for you also. Remember the memories you make today can be looked back on for years to come with pride and adoration. Be sure and keep your emotions in check today and practice a bit of self-control when it comes to dealing with others. You may find it difficult to relax to day but take a deep breath and always remind yourself actions have consequences. Take each problem you encounter today and chalk it up to a new lesson learned. Today's issues may be best handled in a conservative manner even if that means taking some time to regroup and reorganize. Virgo, this small effort could help your day run more smoothly.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may feel your own inner need for change is facing opposition from someone in your life. It is a good time to keep watch over your shoulder. There may be some devious or underhanded things going on behind your back. Choose your company wisely and keep your circle small. Not everyone always has your best interest at heart. Jealousy seems to rear its ugly head when it comes to someone who is close to you. This will pass but handle them with care. The tension in the air will soon clear. Try to be understanding of other's feelings. Take time to weed out the fake and spend more time with those who are real in your life.



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

When it comes to fitting in with the younger crowd, you don't! You may find yourself at odds with a younger group. Wisdom is gained through experience. You know all too well until you have lived it you can not understand. How many times have you said, "If I knew then, what I know now?" No one could have convinced you back then. You have to realize you are speaking to deaf ears when giving advice to the younger generation. This could cause frustration but remember, it is through your mistakes that you gained your wisdom. Let them live. Let them learn.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

You tend to live one day at a time with little thought for the future. It works for you. But, it may cause conflict with someone you care about who is a controller and needs structure and long-term planning. If you need that person in your life, you may want to consider compromise. (It's not an ugly word.) Don't expect too much. Controllers rarely make major changes. You adapt more easily. You could consider asking what you can do to make the relationship work better. That may mean adjusting your schedule occasionally, even when it is inconvenient.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a great time to surround yourself with friends. You may find much encouragement and the support you are needing to move forward towards your goals. Others may begin to show much admiration toward you. You are noticed for your ambition and drive. You may find that others begin to come to you for advice. This is very flattering to you. They say imitation is the most sincere form of flattery and you are flattered that your peers seek your advice to become more like you. You may find yourself having a great appreciation of your thoughts and ideas. This is a great time to put some of this down on paper. Whether keeping notes or beginning a blog, keep a record of the thoughts that are running through your mind now. This may be very profitable for you in the future.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may be feeling two ways at once, you may not be truly sure just how you feel. There is a blur between right and wrong and you may not be able to tell the difference. You may feel a deep need for change. This may be a time you start to focus on developing new healthy habits. You may find yourself full of energy and drawn to see all the world has to offer. You are hungry for knowledge and may start to consider enrolling in classes or starting online studies. You are ready for a new venture. A new outlook and a new adventure may be about to begin for you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You feel as though there is a place for everything and everything has a place. Anything out of place seems to really bother you. You are organized and not only able to organize things, but you really have a knack for organizing people. Your management skills are high. You know just the right person for the job. You are ambitious and determined to get things done. You have no shortage of self-respect. This is a time you seem to demand respect from others. You may find yourself torn between two worlds now.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movies: Musicals

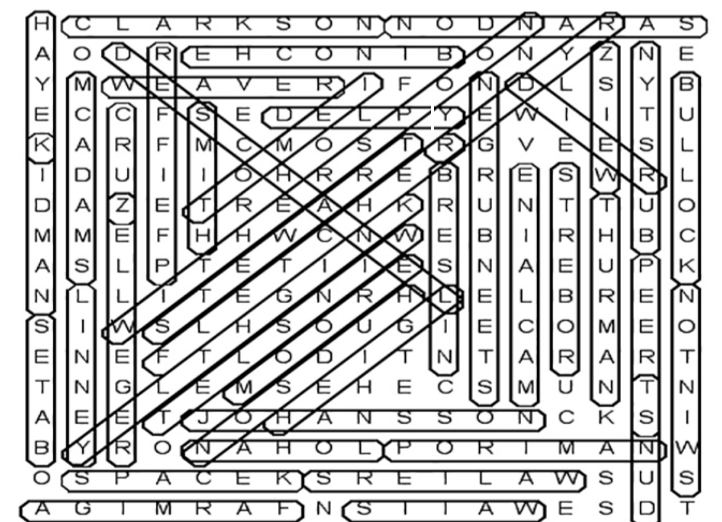
Find and circle all of the Movie Musicals that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an additional Movie Musical.



- A CHORUS LINE
- ALL THAT JAZZ
- ANNIE
- BLUE HAWAII
- BRIGADOON
- BUGSY MALONE
- CABARET
- CALAMITY JANE
- CAMELOT
- CARMEN
- CAROUSEL
- CHICAGO
- EVITA
- FAME
- FANTASIA
- FUNNY FACE
- FUNNY GIRL
- GIGI
- GODSPELL
- GREASE
- GYPSY
- HAIR
- HELLO, DOLLY!
- HIGH SOCIETY
- HOLIDAY INN
- JAILHOUSE ROCK
- LA TRAVIATA
- MARY POPPINS
- MOULIN ROUGE
- MY FAIR LADY
- NEWSIES
- OKLAHOMA!
- OLIVER!
- PAL JOEY
- SHOW BOAT
- SILK STOCKINGS
- SOUTH PACIFIC
- STATE FAIR
- SWEET CHARITY
- SWING TIME
- THE MUSIC MAN
- TOMMY
- TOP HAT
- WEST SIDE STORY

Friday's Solution

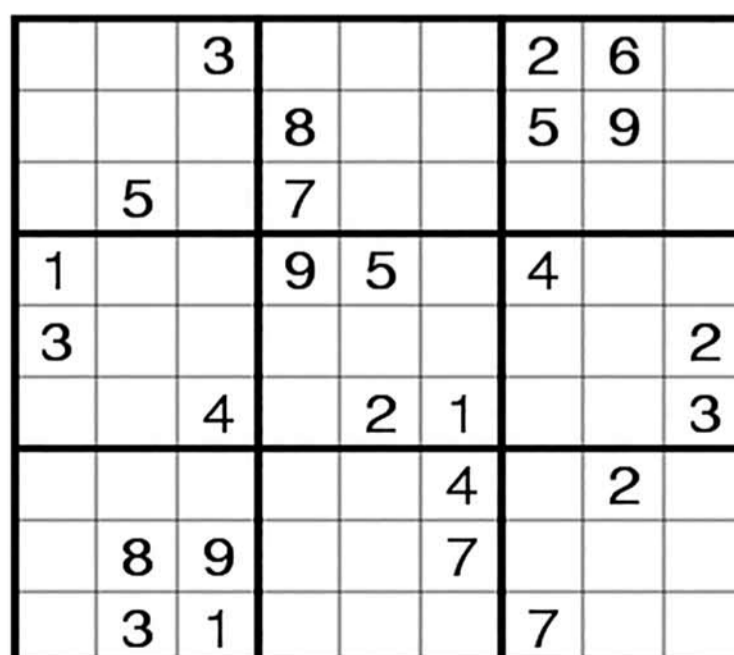
Movie Actresses 2



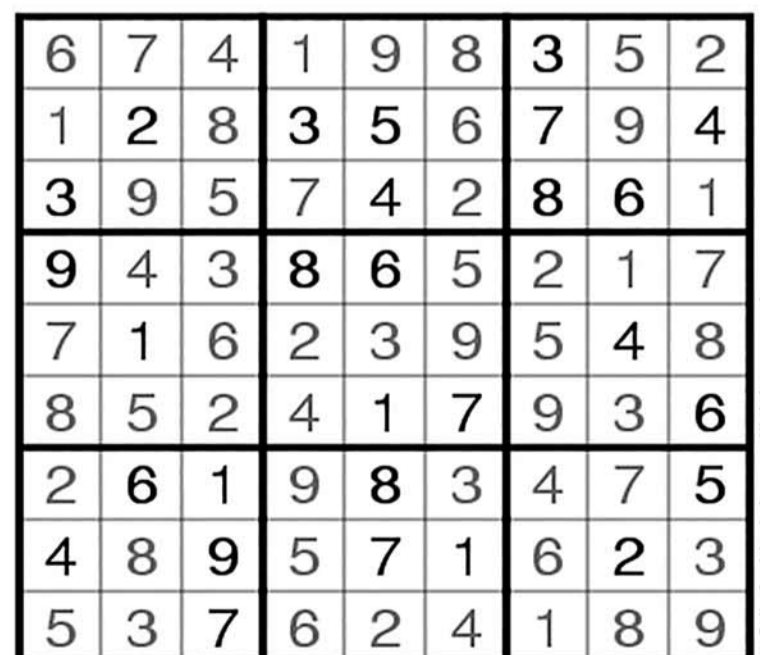
- BATES, Kathy
- BINOCHÉ, Juliette
- BRESLIN, Abigail
- BULLOCK, Sandra
- BURSTYN, Ellen
- CLARKSON, Patricia
- CRUZ, Penelope
- DELPY, Julie
- DESCHANEL, Zoë
- DUNST, Kirsten
- FARMIGA, Vera
- FLETCHER, Louise
- HAYEK, Saima
- HEIGL, Katherine
- HUDSON, Kate
- JOHANSSON, Scarlett
- KIDMAN, Nicole
- KNIGHTLEY, Keira
- LINNEY, Laura
- LOHAN, Lindsay
- MACLAINE, Shirley
- MCADAMS, Rachel
- MOORE, Julianne
- PFEIFFER, Michelle
- PORTMAN, Natalie
- REID, Tara
- ROBERTS, Julia
- RYDER, Winona
- SARANDON, Susan
- SMITH, Maggie
- SPACEK, Sissy
- STEENBURGEN, Mary
- STEWART, Kristen
- STREEP, Meryl
- SWINTON, Tilda
- THURMAN, Uma
- TOMEI, Marisa
- WALTERS, Julie
- WATTS, Naomi
- WEAVER, Sigourney
- WEISZ, Rachel
- WINSLET, Kate
- WITHERSPOON, Reese
- ZELLWEGER, Renee

The hidden movie title is: ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

Daily SuDoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2018



A diver dressed as Santa Claus performs during a Christmas-themed underwater show at the COEX aquarium. — AFP



'The King' of the road: German town puts Elvis on traffic lights

Cross the road, it's now or never. Or that's what residents in the German town of Friedberg may start humming when their traffic light jumps to green to reveal a hip-swiveling Elvis Presley. The jailhouse rocker performed his military service there between 1958 and 1960 and the town remains all shook up about its celebrated visitor. To commemorate the "Love me Tender" singer's link to Friedberg, located north of Frankfurt, local authorities have transformed three traffic lights into Elvis lights.

On red, they show the music icon standing at his microphone. On green, Elvis is seen mid-hip shake, performing his trademark move on tip toes. The town, which calls itself "the army home of Elvis", already has a giant Elvis statue on a roundabout near the former US barracks. "Elvis holds a special place here and that's why he is honored and appreciated," local resident Heidi Huebner told AFP after she snapped a picture of the novelty traffic light.

Although he served in Friedberg, Elvis actually lived off-

base in the neighboring town of Bad Nauheim, which proudly holds an Elvis festival every year. It was in Bad Nauheim that Elvis met his future wife Priscilla. The couple wed in the United States in 1967 but divorced six years later. Elvis died unexpectedly in 1977 at just 42 years old. German towns and cities have a lively tradition in customizing traffic lights, often to pay tribute to a famous resident.

The city of Bonn has installed some that light up with Beethoven's face, while the western town of Trier celebrated the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth with traffic lights of the bearded philosopher. A string of German cities have also adorned their traffic lights with same-sex couples to mark gay pride events. But best-known of all is Berlin's so-called "Ampelmaennchen" (traffic light man), a cartoonish, hat-wearing fellow that is a much-loved cultural relic from the former East Germany.—AFP



A street sign indicating the Elvis Presley Square is pictured in Friedberg, western Germany. — AFP photos



A pedestrian traffic light customized with a dancing Elvis Presley is pictured in Friedberg, western Germany.



This picture shows an Elvis Presley statue on a roundabout in Friedberg, western Germany.



A memorial for Elvis Presley is seen in Bad Nauheim, western Germany.

RAP STAR KENDRICK LAMAR, WOMEN NOMINEES LEAD GRAMMYS RACE

The soundtrack of Marvel's "Black Panther" propelled rap superstar Kendrick Lamar to the front of this year's Grammy pack with eight nominations, closely followed by fellow rapper Drake with seven, organizers said Friday. Women performers also made their mark in the top categories after being largely snubbed a year ago, with rapper Cardi B, pop diva Lady Gaga and folk-rock singer Brandi Carlile all nabbing key nominations for music's top awards.

Leading nominees to face stiff competition

Thanks to the blockbuster film "Black Panther," Lamar—whose album "DAMN." made him the first rapper to win a Pulitzer Prize for music—once again has a chance to win the coveted Album of the Year prize after three prior losses. His song from the Marvel superhero movie's soundtrack, "All the Stars," is also in the running for both Record of the Year, which recognizes the overall performance of a song, and Song of the Year, which awards songwriting.

Canadian rapper Drake meanwhile got love from the academy across the top categories for his album "Scorpion" and hit "God's Plan." The leading nominees will face stiff competition on February 10 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles from fellow rappers Cardi B and Childish Gambino as well as Lady Gaga, who snared nominations in both of those top categories for her hit "Shallow," performed with co-star Bradley Cooper in the film "A Star Is Born."

Women top the list

In May, the head of the Recording Academy—which includes more than 13,000 music professionals—said he would step aside when his contract expires near year, amid outrage after he said women artists should "step up." Then in June, the academy announced an expansion from five to eight of the 2019 nominee fields for Album of the

Year, Record of the Year, Song of the Year and Best New Artist.

The move did appear to have a positive effect for female artists, with five of the Album of the Year nominations going to women: Cardi B, Carlile, R&B singer Janelle Monae, R&B prodigy H.E.R. and country songstress Kacey Musgraves. Monae, whose futuristic blend of funk and psychedelic soul is a favorite of critics, teared up on hearing she had snagged the top nomination.

"Being a young, black queer woman in America, there was something I had to say and there was a group of people I wanted to celebrate," she said with glassy eyes on "CBS This Morning," where she was helping announce the nominees. "I'm happy to be representing them," she said. "I hope they feel seen, I hope they feel heard." Carlile—a folk-rock singer known for her bluesy, dynamic voice—is the woman with the most nominations this year at six, including three across the major categories.

And Cardi B—the New York rapper whose "Bodak Yellow" catapulted her to runaway success—scored five, including two of the most prestigious. The 26-year-old's saucy summer hit "I Like It"—which features Puerto Rican Latin trap artist Bad Bunny and Colombian reggaeton star J Balvin—is among those up for Record of the Year.

But last year's Grammy snub of bilingual mega-hit "Despacito" in the Record and Song of the Year categories has critics skeptical that a non-English track, no matter how popular, can score a major award.

Thank u, next... year

Among this year's major snubs, Jay-Z and his pop queen wife Beyoncé were left out of the top categories despite acclaim for their joint project "Everything is Love." The Carters did get nominations for Best Urban Contemporary Album, Best R&B Performance and Best Music Video. Rapper Kanye West—who despite his fame has never won a Grammy in a major category—earned just one nom-

ination for Best Non-Classical Producer, for work on his GOOD Music label's 2018 releases that included his own album "Ye."

Perennial favorite Taylor Swift—West's on-off foe—also appeared to fall out of grace, earning just one nomination for Best Pop Vocal Album for "Reputation." And woman of the moment Ariana Grande—whose smash hit "Thank U, Next" was



In this file photo Grammy trophies sit in the press room during the 60th Annual Grammy Awards in New York. — AFP photos

Six of the eight 2019 nominees for Best New Artist are women. After last year's show sparked a major backlash, the Recording Academy created a diversity task force responding to criticism that the show was consistently too male and too white, and ultimately expanded four of the top categories from five nominees to eight. Hip-hop dominated across the board for a second year running—though last year, rap mogul Jay-Z racked up the most nominations but left empty-handed, and Lamar was shut out of the general categories.

Can more nominees help Grammys boost diversity?

Cardi B, Drake and Ariana Grande are top contenders for Friday's Grammy nominations, with an expansion of the four big categories that could mean more recognition for women and minorities on music's biggest night. After the last gala in January quickly drowned in criticism that the winners were consistently too white and too male, the Recording Academy created a diversity task force. The head of the academy—which includes more than 13,000 music professionals—said in May he would step aside when his contract expires near year, amid outrage after he said women artists should "step up."

Then in June, it announced an expansion from five to eight of the 2019 nominee fields for Album of the Year; Record of the Year, for best overall song; Song of the Year, which honors songwriting; and Best New Artist. The other categories will remain at five nominees for the ceremony to take place on February 10 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. The last Grammys marked the first time that hip-hop dominated the nominations—but the academy fell under sharp criticism after pop funk revivalist Bruno Mars swept the top awards.

Rap mogul Jay-Z, who led with eight nominations, left New York's Madison Square Garden empty-handed. For the second time, Kendrick Lamar swept the rap awards but was shut out in the general categories. This year, Jay-Z and his superstar wife Beyoncé are expected to get a nod in the coveted Album of the Year category for their joint project "Everything is Love," which dropped in June to critical acclaim. Canadian rapper Drake is another likely nominee for his album "Scorpion," while perennial favorite Taylor Swift could snag a spot for "Reputation." Grande's fourth studio album "Sweetener" and Cardi B's debut "Invasion of Privacy" are other likely frontrunners for the top award, and critical darling Janelle Monae could enter the running with "Dirty Computer." "Golden Hour"—a smooth fusion of pop and country that showcases singer Kacey Musgraves' rolling drawl—is also a likely contender in the prestigious category.

Gaga: Globes and Grammys?

Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper—who each snared two Golden Globe nominations on Thursday for musical romance "A Star Is Born"—could get some Song of the Year love from the academy for their performance of the film's hit single "Shallow." The film's soundtrack however came out after the Grammy eligibility period so is therefore not in the running for the album prize. Other Song of the Year contenders include Ed Sheeran and Beyoncé for "Perfect," Maroon 5's "Girls Like You," or Swift's "Delicate."

Other possible nominees are Childish Gambino's "This Is America"—whose graphic music video went viral with its powerful message on gun violence and racism—or one of Drake's six singles from "Scorpion." Some overlap is likely in the Record of the Year category, which recognizes track producers and performers. Cardi B's saucy summer hit "I Like It"—which features Puerto Rican Latin trap artist Bad Bunny and Colombian reggaeton star J Balvin—is among the obvious choices. But last year's Grammy snub of bilingual mega-hit "Despacito" in the Record of the Year and Song of the Year categories has critics skeptical that a non-English track, no matter how popular, can score a major award. The controversial Best New Artist category is likely to again be contentious, after Canadian singer Alessia Cara won the 2018 award for a nearly three-year-old album.

Rapper Post Malone is reportedly out of the running as is former Fifth Harmony singer Camila Cabello, while late rapper XXXTentacion—who was shot dead in an apparent robbery in June—could be ruled out on a technicality over the number of songs he had released. Despite her year of whirlwind success, relative newbie Cardi B is also ineligible to garner a nomination for Best New Artist, having already been nominated in other categories for the 2018 Grammy Awards. Pop stars Dua Lipa and Troye Sivan are possible contenders, as is country singer Luke Combs, British singer Jorja Smith or rapper Lil Pump.—AFP



Rapper Cardi B, left, whose real name is Belcalis Almanzar, leaves at Queens County Criminal Court to face charges stemming from a strip club fight in Queens. — AFP

Cardi B in New York court over Queens strip club brawl

US rapper Cardi B appeared Friday in a New York criminal court, where she was served with two protection orders and warned against making threatening remarks on social media following a strip club brawl. The 26-year-old—dressed in a belted black coat with a fur collar and a wide-brimmed beige hat, with rainbow-colored hair and silver sparkly nail extensions—was in court as she received five Grammy nominations.

Her five-minute appearance in the Queens courtroom came four days after she failed to turn up as requested on Monday, leading prosecutors to demand a \$2,500 bail. But the judge deemed that unnecessary, saying she was not a flight risk. The star, whose real name is Belcalis Almanzar, was ordered to refrain from any contact with two alleged victims, which the judge said included not making any remarks on social media that could be deemed threatening.

She stood wordlessly with her hands clasped behind her back, before exiting with her lawyer through a throng of television cameras and photographers waiting outside and getting into a vehicle. On August 29, Cardi B was in the Angels Strip Club in Queens when her group reportedly lobbed bottles, chairs and a hookah smoking device, which police said bruised a female employee in the legs. On Friday, the singer waited more than half an hour in the basement arraignment courtroom, seated in the public gallery while six other defendants appeared before her.

In October, police charged her with one count of assault and two counts of reckless endangerment over the incident. US media reports say she allegedly ordered an attack on two sisters working at the club because one of them slept with her husband, the rapper Offset. She announced this week that the couple had separated. They secretly married in September 2017 and share a daughter, Kulture, born in July.

Cardi B has turned into one of the biggest new stars in US music since the runaway success last year of her song "Bodak Yellow," which touches on her former life making ends meet as a stripper. She was also involved in a fracas with fellow rapper Nicki Minaj at New York Fashion Week in September, later taking to Instagram to say that the older Minaj had questioned her parenting skills. At the Grammys in February, Cardi B will vie for two of the most prestigious awards—Album and Record of the Year.—AFP

Vienna premieres new opera on rise of far-right in Europe

World premieres are something of a rarity at the Vienna State Opera, but preparations are underway this week for the first performance of a new piece tackling the refugee crisis and the rise of far-right populism in Europe. It has been more than eight years since the State Opera, one of the world's most important music theatres, commissioned and premiered a brand new work.

The 44-year-old Austrian composer Johannes Maria Staud says being asked to write an opera for such a prestigious house was "invigorating." "It really focuses the mind," he told AFP. Staud has already written two operas and his third, "Die Weiden" (The Willows), is being premiered yesterday. The 135-minute work, scored for huge orchestra and live electronics, is based on a short story by British horror writer Algernon Blackwood and the novel "Heart of Darkness" by British writer, Joseph Conrad.

The libretto, by German poet Durs Gruenbein, tells of a pair of young lovers, Lea and Peter, who go on a canoe trip into the country of Peter's childhood. The further they paddle into a region whose inhabitants view everything foreign with suspicion, the fiercer the tensions between the two of them become.

No time for escapism

In a joint interview with AFP, both the composer and the librettist said they could not have foreseen the current global political situation when they received the commission four or five years ago. "But we knew even then that now was not the time to write an escapist piece," Staud said. He said he found it "deeply alarming" that a far-right populist party, such as Austria's anti-Islam, anti-immigration Freedom Party (FPÖ), should be in government in a western democracy.

Gruenbein noted that at the time they began work on the piece, "there was already a lot of debate about migration. People were already using terms such as 'streams of refugees.'" But the pair of artists could not

have anticipated "this spiral of hatred, the resentment, the unsayable becoming sayable", Staud said. Gruenbein insisted "Die Weiden" was not intended as "a piece of political theory" with which to lecture the audience from a soapbox. "It wasn't a narrative that we went looking for. It was already there, all around us," he said, while Staud felt he was driven by an almost "existential" need to write it.

Quoting Wagner

Neither was it the two men's intention to be controversial, "even if we know that the piece will divide" Vienna's culturally conservative audiences, Staud said. "We're not looking to drive another wedge between people. Because it's precisely a wedge that the populists are seeking to drive through the whole of society." Nonetheless, a feeling of outrage over today's politics was a key factor in the creative impulse, he said. It was the first time he had ever used musical quotations from another composer, in this case Richard Wagner, in any of his works, Staud added.

Wagner was "the central fixed star of Germany's dark romanticism" and "a great composer". But even though Wagner was also "an artist from whom I distance myself in many points"—particularly with regard to his anti-Semitism—Staud also felt the need to appropriate him from far-right, Nazi and identitarian thinkers. "We're taking back how we interpret Wagner and what his music means to us," Staud said.

"Die Weiden" will receive an initial run of five performances and is being revived next season. The staging is by German director, Andrea Moses, with German conductor and contemporary music specialist, Ingo Metzmacher, in the pit.—AFP



Austrian composer, Johannes Maria Staud, left, and his librettist German poet Durs Gruenbein talk about Staud's new piece titled 'Die Weiden' (The Willows) during an interview with AFP at the State Opera House (Staatsoper) in Vienna, Austria. — AFP



In this file photo Kendrick Lamar performs during the 60th Annual Grammy Awards show in New York.



US rapper Cardi B performs on stage during the Z100's iHeartRadio Jingle Ball show at Madison Square Garden in New York. — AFP photos



Canadian singer Shawn Mendes



Canadian singer Alessia Cara

iHeartRadio Jingle Ball Show



South Korean boy band Monsta X



British singer Dua Lipa



US rapper G-Eazy



US singer Khalid, left, and US singer Normani



US singer Meghan Trainor



US singer Bebe Rexha



US/Cuban singer Camila Cabello



(L-R) The cast of Jersey Shore Pauly D, Angelina Pivarnick, Deena Nicole (hidden), Vinny Guadagnino and Jennifer Farley

Black heritage museum, 'crucible of creativity', opens in Dakar



A museum showcasing black heritage from the dawn of time to the modern era opened in the Senegalese capital Dakar on Thursday. The opening came as African countries press harder for the restitution of artwork from their former colonial masters—and as France made its first steps in that direction, pledging to return artworks to Benin. The Museum of Black Civilizations will foster the “dialogue of cultures” and offer a “new view of Africa and its diaspora, which recognizes our part in the great human adventure,” Senegalese President Macky Sall said as he opened the museum.

“Today rekindles in us the precursors of pan-Africanism and African identity,” Sall said after cutting the symbolic ribbon at the ceremony. Among the guests was Chinese Culture Minister Luo Shugang, whose country financed the project to the tune of 30 million euros. Spread over 14,000 square meters, the museum has a capacity to house 18,000 pieces, said museum director Hamady Bocoum.

Both Bocoum and the museum’s lead scientist Ibrahima Thioub said the collection, which includes megaliths dating back more than 1,700 years ago alongside contemporary art, would both honor the past and look to the future. It should not be “a place of nostalgia but a crucible of creativity, a factory of self-esteem,” said Thioub, rector of Dakar’s Cheikh-Anta-Diop University.

A dream fulfilled

Such a museum was the dream of Senegal’s first president Leopold Sedar Senghor, among the drivers of the Negritude literary movement born in the 1960s. The poet, who was Senegal’s president from 1960 to 1980, spoke of it at the first World Festival of Black Arts, held in Dakar in 1966. “We are in the continuity of history,” Sall said Thursday. “Through the ages, Africa invented, fashioned and transformed, thus constantly participating in the flow of innovations. Our duty is to remain vigilant sentinels of the heritage of the ancients.”

The museum is among several new-or overhauled-facilities springing up around Africa that bolster growing demands for the restitution of artworks spirited out of the continent since colonial times. Late last month France announced it would return 26 cultural artefacts to Benin. It was a first gesture acting on the findings of a study commissioned by President Emmanuel Macron on repatriating African treasures held by French museums.

Senegal was quick to call for the restitution of some 10,000 pieces of Senegalese art from France. Ivory Coast followed suit the next day, asking for the return of around 100 works of art. In a reflection of the museum’s



Senegal's President Macky Sall, 3rd right, looks at Comoros' President Azali Assoumani, center, cutting a ribbon during the opening ceremony and inauguration of the new museum of black civilizations, in Dakar. — AFP photos

embrace of the ages. Thursday’s ceremony was followed by a show featuring traditional music and dance as well as rap and slam performances. The hundreds of guests also heard homages to giants of black civilization including American civil rights hero Martin Luther King and Burkinabe revolutionary Thomas Sankara.—AFP



People dressed with typical masks welcome guests during the opening ceremony.



Pieces of art are exhibited in the new museum of black civilizations.

Banksy's works on show in Madrid without his approval

Banksy has been Banksied. The guerilla artist who puts up his work in public spaces without asking authorization is the subject of a new show in Madrid featuring his works—without his authorization. “Genius or Vandal?” opened Thursday at the Ifema centre in the Spanish capital and will run until March 10. It has already pulled in half a million visitors at its previous venues Moscow and Saint Petersburg, according to a statement from the organizers.

The show’s curator Alexander Nachkebiya, who assembled the works from private collectors, describes Banksy as “a phenomenon and one of the most brilliant and important artists of our epoch”. The street artist himself remains something of an enigma. All he has revealed about himself is that he is British and that his home town is Bristol in southeast England. But the dark wit of his art and a certain talent for self-promotion has helped him build up an international reputation, to the point that his works have fetched more than a million pounds.

In August, Banksy used his

Instagram account — 5.1 million followers—to make his position clear on the original Moscow show. He posted an exchange of messages between him and a follower who tipped him off to the unauthorized exhibition. Told they were charging a £20 (\$25, 22 euro) entrance fee, Banksy replied: “I wish I could find it funny. What’s the opposite of LOL?”

But at the suggestion that he put out a statement denouncing the fact that it was made to look like an official show, he replied: “...not sure I’m the best person to complain about people putting up pictures without getting permission.” Nevertheless, his website does carry a message warning visitors about this and other shows. “They’ve been organized entirely without the artist’s knowledge or involvement. Please treat them accordingly.”

In the meantime, his subversive style continues to attract admirers. His most recent stunt was at the October auction of one of his works, “Girl with Balloon”, at Sotheby’s in London. Moments after it sold for £1,042,000 — a joint record for the maverick artist—it unexpectedly passed through a shredder hidden in the frame. Only partially destroyed, the buyer went through with the purchase and some art experts said it was probably now worth more than it had been before the stunt.—AFP

Sinatra auction fetches \$9.2m in New York

It was definitely “All” rather than “Nothing at All” at a Frank Sinatra auction in New York, where items owned by the late icon and his fourth wife fetched \$9.2 million, Sotheby’s said Friday. And 99 percent of the lots, spread out this week in the US financial and entertainment capital, and online, were snapped up, attracting 300 bidders from more than 30 countries, the auction house announced.

Up for grabs was furniture, art and personal effects dating back to the couple’s 22-year marriage—art and furniture from their homes in Palm Springs, Los Angeles and Malibu—as well as scripts and screenplays. The top lot was Barbara Sinatra’s 20-carat diamond engagement ring, given to her in the bottom of a champagne glass, which went for \$1.7 million. Many of the items fetched substantially more than their pre-sale estimates.

They included a Norman Rockwell portrait of Sinatra, which the singer commissioned, sold for \$687,000 and a script for “From Here to Eternity,” the movie for which he won an Oscar, went for \$35,000. The USA Drinking Team jacket marked “Coach” that Sinatra wore for nights on the town with his friends sold for \$35,000 — 70 times its \$500 estimate.

A police badge given to Sinatra by Essex County New Jersey and inscribed “chairman of the board, Frank Sinatra” went for a whopping \$18,750 and a hand-crocheted yarmulke emblazoned with Frank’s name fetched \$9,375. Of the memorabilia tracing Sinatra’s friendship with every US president from Harry Truman to Bill Clinton, a color photograph inscribed by Gerald Ford, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan sold for \$68,750.

The son of Italian immigrants and born in New Jersey in 1915, Sinatra was one of the best loved entertainers of the 20th century with hits such as “Strangers in the Night,” “My Way” and “All or Nothing at All.” He first married teenage sweetheart Nancy Barbato (1939-1949), with whom he had three children, then Hollywood stars Ava Gardner (1951-57) and Mia Farrow (1966-68). He married Barbara in 1976. She died last year.—AFP



In this file photo a Norman Rockwell Portrait of Frank Sinatra is displayed at Sotheby's in New York. — AFP

Classifieds

Sunday, December 9, 2018

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Mostly Sunny with light to moderate variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 24 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Cool with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 24 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 08/12/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	25 °C	16 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	25 °C	13 °C			
ABDALY	24 °C	12 °C			
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C			
JAHRA	24 °C	15 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	22 °C	16 °C			
SALMIYAH	22 °C	18 °C			
AHMADI	24 °C	19 °C			
NUWASIB	26 °C	14 °C			
WAFRA	25 °C	12 °C			
SALMY	22 °C	13 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	12/09	Sunny and Clouds will increase gradually	24 °C	12 °C	VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Monday	12/10	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	23 °C	14 °C	VRB-NE	06 - 26 km/h
Tuesday	12/11	Mostly Sunny	24 °C	14 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	12/12	Sunny	24 °C	12 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 24 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:05
Sunrise	06:29
Zuhr	11:39
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:50
Isha	18:12

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	24 °C
MIN. Temp.	13 °C
MAX. RH	95 %
MIN. RH	37 %
MAX. Wind	W 21 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Vasundara Avulakunta, holder of Indian Passport No: K7919429, Civil ID No: 276061304478, converted to Islam and has changed my name to Wahida, hereinafter all my dealings and documents. (C 5435)

6-12-2018

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EMERGENCY

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Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

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Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
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Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073

Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 9/12/2018				Departure Flights on Sunday 9/12/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	JZR	221	Riyadh	12:00
JZR	254	Amman	00:40	JZR	405	Kochi	12:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
SAI	441	Lahore	00:50	QTR	1075	Doha	13:00
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JZR	113	Doha	13:30
JZR	722	Alexandria	00:55	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:40	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
KAC	102	London	01:55	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	PGT	775	Riyadh	15:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:05
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	ETA	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	362	Colombo	06:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	JZR	261	Beirut	16:40
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
BAW	157	London	07:10	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
JZR	708	Luxor	07:15	KAC	675	Dubai	17:05
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	504	Beirut	17:15
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:35	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	QTR	1073	Doha	17:50
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
ETA	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
SAW	703	Damascus	10:30	KAC	621	Doha	18:25
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
KAC	624	Doha	10:40	JZR	501	Lahore	18:40
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:50	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
JZR	122	Dubai	11:20	JZR	253	Amman	19:15
TUP	8586	Delhi	11:30	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	252	Amman	12:30	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	SYR	342	Damascus	20:00
ABY	121	Sharjah	12:55	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
IAW	157	Al Najaf	13:25	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KIS	6032	Mashhad	13:30	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
JZR	602	Baku	14:10	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:20	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
KAC	672	Dubai	14:25	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
IRC	526	Mashhad	14:30	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	286	Dhaka	14:30	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	ETA	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
KAC	618	Doha	14:40	KAC	203	Lahore	22:15
KAC	512	Mashhad	14:40	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
KAC	412	Bangkok	15:00	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
KNE	683	Madinah	15:05	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
KAC	562	Amman	15:10	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
ETA	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
				KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
				ETA	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

Researchers explore new way of killing malaria in the liver

WASHINGTON: In the ongoing hunt for more effective weapons against malaria, international researchers said Thursday they are exploring a pathway that has until now been little studied - killing parasites in the liver, before the illness emerges. "It's very difficult to work on the liver stage," said Elizabeth Winzeler, professor of pharmacology and drug discovery at University of California San Diego School of Medicine. "We have traditionally looked for medicines that will cure malaria," she told AFP.

For the latest research, published in the journal *Science*, scientists dissected hundreds of thousands of mosquitoes to remove parasites inside them. Each parasite was then isolated in a tube and treated with a different chemical compound - 500,000 experiments in all. Researchers found that certain molecules were able to kill the parasites. After around six years of work, 631 candidate molecules for a "chemical vaccine" have been identified - a normal vaccine that would allow the body to make antibodies.

"If you could find a drug that you give on one day at one time that will kill all the malaria parasites in the person, both in the liver and in the bloodstream, and last for three to six months. Yeah, that'd be super but there is no drug like that right now," said Larry Slutsker, the leader of PATH's Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) programs.

Reducing the number of doses is crucial. That's because many medications available today must be taken over three days, said David Reddy, CEO of Medicines for Malaria Ventures. But often, after the first dose, a child begins to feel better and the fever lessens. Parents then keep the other two doses in case another of their children falls ill. "That has two impacts. First the child does

not get cured properly and secondly it builds drug resistance," Reddy said.

Malaria is caused by a minuscule parasite, called Plasmodium. Female mosquitoes transmit the parasite when they bite people for a meal of blood (males do not bite). Then, the parasite lodges in the liver and multiplies. After a couple of weeks, the population explodes and parasites run rampant in the blood. At this stage, fever, headache and muscle pain begins, followed by cold sweats and shivering. Without treatment, anemia, breathing difficulties and even death can follow, in the case of Plasmodium falciparum, which is dominant in Africa.

The research published Thursday offers a "promising path, as long as it last several months," said Jean Gaudart, professor of public health at the University of Aix-Marseille. Gaudart said new approaches are necessary because resistance is on the rise in Asia against the most effective treatment using artemisinin, derived from a Chinese plant. "We really need new compounds," he said. Now it's up to researchers to confirm which of the 631 molecules identified have a real shot at wiping out this global scourge.

The World Health Organization said last month that global efforts to fight malaria have hit a plateau, with two million more cases of the killer disease in 2017 - 219 million - than the previous year. Malaria killed 435,000 people last year, the majority of them children under five in Africa. The first malaria vaccine for children - called RTS,S - will be distributed in three African countries in 2019, though it only reduces the risk of malaria by 40 percent after four doses. Despite billions of dollars spent, the world still has not found a real effective solution to malaria. — AFP



OBUSAI, Ghana: In this file photo taken on May 1, 2018, a worker shows some of the mosquitos they breed at the Entomologist Research Centre. — AFP

Egypt Nile Delta threatened by climate change

KAFR AL-DAWAR, Egypt: Lush green fields blanket northern Egypt's Nile Delta, but the country's agricultural heartland and its vital freshwater resources are under threat from a warming climate. The fertile arc-shaped basin is home to nearly half the country's population, and the river that feeds it provides Egypt with 90 percent of its water needs. But climbing temperatures and drought are drying up the mighty Nile - a problem compounded by rising seas and soil salinization, experts and farmers say.

Combined, they could jeopardize crops in the Arab world's most populous country, where the food needs of its 98 million residents are only expected to increase. "The Nile is shrinking. The water doesn't reach us anymore," says Talaat Al-Sisi, a farmer who has grown wheat, corn and other crops for 30 years in the southern Delta governorate of Menoufia. "We've been forced to tap into the groundwater and we've stopped growing rice," a cereal known for its greedy water consumption, he adds.

By 2050, the region could lose up to 15 percent of its key agricultural land due to salinization, according to a 2016 study published by Egyptian economists. The yield of tomato crops could drop by 50 percent, the study said, with staple cereals like wheat and rice falling 18 and 11 percent respectively.

In Kafr al-Dawar in the delta's north, Egypt's irrigation ministry and the United Nations are working on eco-friendly

techniques like solar-powered watering that experts say emit less greenhouse gases and could help improve crop yields. On site, two farmers wearing traditional galabiyas show off shiny new solar panels framed by rows of corn, barley and wheat. Sayed Soliman, eyes bright and cane in hand, runs a group of about 100 farmers who work a plot of more than 100 hectares.

The seasoned farmer is delighted. He can now power the pumps that water his field without relying on Egypt's faulty electricity grid and expensive fossil fuels like diesel that are responsible for climate change. Diesel-powered generators are now only used "when necessary", he says, such as after sunset. After his success, a neighbouring village is also switching to solar-powered irrigation. "One of the priorities is innovation... so that Egypt can make the most of its water," says Hussein Gadain, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) representative in Egypt. "The delta plays an important role in the country's food security."

Ibrahim Mahmoud, head of the irrigation ministry's development projects, said plans were in place to modernize watering systems across the country by 2050. The strategy, he says, is intended to improve farmers' "environmental conditions, standards of living and productivity". But in a country in the tight grip of President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, the Nile Delta and its resources remain an ultra-sensitive topic. AFP's visit to Kafr al-Dawar was closely supervised by the ministry.

In front of officials, farmers stuck to well-worn talking points about the delta's bounty but politely skirted questions on water scarcity. Sisi has made the Nile's water a "life or death issue" for Egypt, particularly in the framework of negotiations with neighboring Sudan, as well as Ethiopia. Cairo fears Addis Ababa's controversial Grand Renaissance Dam will bring consequences downstream. — AFP



KAFR AL-DAWAR, Egypt: Farmers observe water pumping in this village in northern Egypt's Nile Delta on Nov 26, 2018. — AFP

China launches rover for far side...

Continued from Page 1

Adding to the difficulties, Chang'e-4 is being sent to the Aitken Basin in the lunar south pole region - known for its craggy and complex terrain - state media has said. The probe is carrying six experiments from China and four from abroad. They include low-frequency radio astronomical studies - aiming to take advantage of the lack of interference on the far side - as well as mineral and radiation tests. Xinhua cited the China National Space Administration as saying. The experiments also involve planting potato and other seeds, according to Chinese media reports.

Beijing is pouring billions into its military-run space program, with hopes of having a crewed space station by 2022, and of eventually sending humans to the moon. The Chang'e 4 mission is a step in that direction, significant for the engineering expertise needed to explore and settle the moon, McDowell said. "The main thing about this mission is not science, this is a technology mission," he said.

Chang'e-4 will be the second Chinese probe to land

on the moon, following the Yutu ("Jade Rabbit") rover mission in 2013. Once on the moon's surface, the rover faces an array of extreme challenges. During the lunar night - which lasts 14 earth days - temperatures will drop as low as minus 173 degrees Celsius (minus 279 Fahrenheit). During the lunar day, also lasting 14 earth days, temperatures soar as high as 127 C (261 F). The rover's instruments must withstand those fluctuations and it must generate enough energy to sustain it during the long night.

Yutu conquered those challenges and, after initial setbacks, ultimately surveyed the moon's surface for 31 months. Its success provided a major boost to China's space program. Beijing is planning to send another lunar lander, Chang'e-5, next year to collect samples and bring them back to earth. It is among a slew of ambitious Chinese targets, which include a reusable launcher by 2021, a super-powerful rocket capable of delivering payloads heavier than those NASA and private rocket firm SpaceX can handle, a moon base, a permanently crewed space station, and a Mars rover.

"Our country's successful lunar exploration project not only vaults us to the top of the world's space power ranks, it also allows the exploration of the far side of the moon," said Niu Min, an expert on China's space program. The project, he said in an interview with local website NetEase, "greatly inspires everyone's national pride and self-confidence". — AFP

US fails in UN bid to condemn Palestinian Hamas

UNITED NATIONS: A US resolution championed by Ambassador Nikki Haley to condemn the Palestinian Hamas movement at the United Nations for firing rockets at Israel failed to win enough votes for adoption on Thursday. The proposed measure won 87 votes in the General Assembly, falling short of the required two-thirds majority. Fifty-eight countries opposed the measure and 32 abstained. Haley, who steps down from her post at the end of the year, has repeatedly accused the United Nations of having an anti-Israel bias and has defended Israel in its latest confrontation with Hamas, the Islamist militant group that has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2007.

It was the first proposed resolution condemning Hamas to be presented to the 193-nation assembly, which has been meeting since 1946. Speaking ahead of the vote, Haley said the measure "would right a historic wrong" and "put the General Assembly on the side of truth and balance in the effort to achieve peace in the Middle East". "The question before us now is whether the UN thinks terrorism is acceptable if, and only if, it is directed against Israel," she told the assembly.

Hamas praised the outcome of the vote, describing it as a "slap" to President Donald Trump's administration which has taken a firm pro-Israeli stance in addressing the Middle East peace process. "The failure of the American venture at the United Nations represents a slap to the US administration and confirmation of the legitimacy of the resistance," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zahri wrote on Twitter, using a phrase commonly used to refer to armed groups that oppose Israel.

Israeli Ambassador Danny Danon lamented after the vote that a decision to condemn Hamas had been "hijacked" by procedural votes and hailed the "broad

support from the world" for condemning Hamas. Kuwait had asked the assembly, on behalf of Arab countries, to require a two-thirds majority, which was narrowly endorsed by a vote of 75 in favor, 72 against including EU countries and 26 abstentions.

The United States had won crucial backing from the European Union, with all 28 countries supporting the US measure that would have condemned Hamas for firing rockets into Israel and demanded an end to the violence. The European Union, like the United States, considers Hamas a terror group. The assembly also adopted by a wide margin of 156 to six with 12 abstentions a Palestinian-drafted measure, presented by Ireland, calling "for the achievement, without delay, of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East" based on UN resolutions. The United States, Israel, Australia, Liberia, Marshall Islands and Nauru voted against that measure.

The vote at the assembly took place as Haley prepares to step away from public life even as polls show she remains one of the most popular members of Trump's cabinet. Haley rattled the United Nations when she arrived in January 2017 vowing that the United States will be "taking names" of countries that oppose Trump's foreign policy. Ahead of the vote, the US ambassador sent a letter to all UN missions to make clear that "the United States takes the outcome of this vote very seriously". "She would like to go out with something," said a Security Council diplomat of the US-drafted resolution.

Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are non-binding, but they carry political weight and are seen as a barometer of world opinion. The US defeat at the General Assembly came as the Trump administration prepares to unveil long-awaited peace proposals, possibly in the first months of next year. The Palestinians have severed ties with the Trump administration since the decision a year ago to move the US embassy to Jerusalem and declare the city Israel's capital. The Palestinians see East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. International consensus has been that Jerusalem's status must be negotiated between the two sides. — AFP

Barricades burn in fresh...

Continued from Page 1

Shops along the Champs-Élysées and department stores around the city stayed shut with their windows boarded up to avoid looting. The Eiffel Tower, major museums and many metro stations were also closed as parts of central Paris went on effective lockdown.

Yet government calls for people to stay away fell on deaf ears as the protests against Macron's pro-business policies and top-down governing style show little sign of dying down. Officials estimated that 8,000 protesters had made their way to Paris from across France, among 31,000 turning out nationwide - numbers similar to a week ago. Denis, a 30-year-old forklift driver, travelled to Paris for the first time yesterday to make his voice heard after three weeks at the barricades in the Normandy port of Caen. "I'm here for my 15-month-old son. I can't let him live in a country where the poor are exploited," he told AFP.

Yesterday's protests attracted the attention of US President Donald Trump, who said they were evidence of a lack of public support for pro-environment policies like the Paris climate agreement. "The Paris Agreement isn't working out so well for Paris. Protests and riots all over France," Trump tweeted. "People do not want to pay large sums of money, much to third world countries (that are questionably run), in order to maybe protect the environment." The demonstrations are not linked to the climate agreement.

People began blockading roads on Nov 17 over rising fuel prices - partly due to taxes aimed at helping France to transition to a greener economy. But the demonstrations has since swollen into a broad movement against ex-banker Macron, whom the protesters accuse of favor-

ing the rich. Nationwide, 89,000 police officers were out in force in towns, cities and on numerous motorways which caused havoc on France's road network.

Police also clashed with protesters in the southwestern cities of Bordeaux and Toulouse, though elsewhere, such as Marseille, the demonstrations were peaceful. More than 950 people were detained across France, according to a police source. The US embassy had issued a warning to Americans to "keep a low profile and avoid crowds" in Paris, while Belgium, Portugal and the Czech Republic advised citizens to postpone any planned visits.

Macron last week gave in to some of the protesters' demands for measures to help the poor and struggling middle classes, including scrapping a planned increase in fuel taxes and freezing electricity and gas prices in 2019. The climbdown marked a major departure for a president who had vowed, unlike predecessors, not to be swayed by mass protests. But the "yellow vests", some of whom who have become increasingly radicalized, are holding out for more. Many want him to reverse his decision to slash taxes on France's wealthiest in a bid to boost investment and create jobs - something he has so far ruled out.

The policy, along with hikes on pensioners' taxes, cuts in housing allowances and a string of comments deemed insensitive to ordinary workers, has led critics to label Macron a "president of the rich". Protests at dozens of schools over university reforms, and a call by farmers for demonstrations next week, have added to a sense of general revolt in France.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe on Friday met a delegation of self-described "moderate" yellow vests, and a spokesman from the movement. Christophe Chalencon, said the premier had "listened to us and promised to take our demands to the president". "Now we await Mr Macron. I hope he will speak to the people of France as a father, with love and respect and that he will take strong decisions," Chalencon said. — AFP

Sports

Brooklyn Nets stun Raptors 106-105 in OT for rare win

Warriors avenge blowout loss to Bucks

NEW YORK: Jarrett Allen hit the go-ahead layup with 64 seconds left in overtime, and the Brooklyn Nets outlasted the Toronto Raptors for a 106-105 victory Friday night in New York, ending a pair of eight-game losing streaks. Allen helped the Nets end an eight-game home losing streak and an eight-game overall skid when he converted a reverse layup after getting the pass from Spencer Dinwiddie. The Nets then exhaled as Kyle Lowry missed a left-wing 3-point attempt with 49 seconds left and Fred VanVleet missed a 3-point shot right before the final buzzer. D'Angelo Russell led the Nets with 29 points and hit three jumpers in overtime after sitting down the stretch in the fourth quarter. Kawhi Leonard led all scorers with 32 points and blocked Dinwiddie's layup with one second left in the fourth quarter to ensure overtime.

SPURS 133, LAKERS 120

DeMar DeRozan recorded 36 points, nine assists and eight rebounds to lead San Antonio to a victory over visiting Los Angeles. LaMarcus Aldridge and Jakob Poeltl each had 14 points and eight rebounds for the Spurs, who avenged a Wednesday loss to the Lakers in L.A. Patty Mills also scored 14 points for San Antonio, and Davis Bertans added 13. Bryn Forbes and Marco Belinelli contributed 11 points apiece and Rudy Gay added 10 for San Antonio, which outscored Los Angeles 44-21 in the fourth quarter. LeBron James had 35 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds, and Kyle Kuzma added 27 points and eight rebounds for the Lakers, who had a four-game winning streak halted. Lonzo Ball registered 13 points and 11 assists.

WARRIORS 105, BUCKS 95

Golden State earned a measure of revenge against host Milwaukee, reversing an earlier blowout loss. Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson shared game-high scoring honors for the Warriors with 20 points apiece, each hitting four 3-pointers. Kevin Durant was held to 11 points on 3-for-14 shooting, so the Warriors turned to their depth to complete a 3-2 trip with a third straight win. Jonas Jerebko, Andre Iguodala and Alfonzo McKinnie combined for 10 3-pointers as the Warriors drained 19 from beyond the arc and outscored the Bucks 57-21 on threes. Giannis Antetokounmpo had 22 points and a game-high 15 rebounds for the Bucks, who won 134-111 at Golden State last month.

BULLS 114, THUNDER 112

Lauri Markkanen scored 24 points, including a

tiebreaking layup with 4.9 seconds remaining, to lift host Chicago over Oklahoma City despite another triple-double from the Thunder's Russell Westbrook. Zach LaVine finished with a team-high 25 points for the Bulls, and Justin Holiday contributed 20. Chicago snapped a seven-game losing streak and gave Jim Boylen his first win as a head coach four days after he replaced Fred Hoiberg. Westbrook had 24 points, 17 rebounds and 13 assists in 35 minutes. He also committed 10 turnovers. Westbrook posted his second triple-double in a row, his fifth of the season and the 109th of his career.

76ERS 117, PISTONS 111

Jimmy Butler poured in 38 points for the second consecutive game, and Philadelphia overcame the absence of All-Star center Joel Embiid to rally past host Detroit. The Sixers' Ben Simmons piled up 18 points, 14 rebounds and six assists while JJ Redick had 18 points and five assists. Embiid was rested by Philadelphia coach Brett Brown after a lethargic performance Wednesday in a loss at Toronto. Blake Griffin racked up 31 points, 12 rebounds and six assists to lead Detroit, which has lost three straight. Andre Drummond contributed 21 points and 10 rebounds.

KINGS 129, CAVALIERS 110

De'Aaron Fox missed his career high by one point, pouring in 30 points as Sacramento rolled to a win at Cleveland. Buddy Hield complemented his backcourt mate with 25 points for the Kings, who won their third straight, their second in a row to start a four-game trip. Jordan Clarkson had 26 points and rookie Collin Sexton 23 for the Cavaliers, who played without George Hill, who was held out as final details were being worked out on a trade to Milwaukee.

HORNETS 113, NUGGETS 107

Kemba Walker scored 21 points and hit four free throws in the final 15 seconds as Charlotte snapped a three-game losing streak with a victory over Denver. The Hornets exploded for a 40-point second quarter and led by as many as 16 in the first half, then pulled away in the fourth quarter after the Nuggets got as close as one point late in the third period. In the process, the Hornets snapped the Nuggets' seven-game winning streak.

GRIZZLIES 107, PELICANS 103

JaMychal Green scored a team-high 24 points to lead a strong bench effort for visiting Memphis to a win at



LOS ANGELES: LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers scores as he is fouled by LaMarcus Aldridge #12 of the San Antonio Spurs at Staples Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

New Orleans. Kyle Anderson added 19 points and 11 rebounds, Marc Gasol scored 15 and Joakim Noah came off the bench to contribute 13 for the Grizzlies. Memphis reserves outscored their Pelicans counterparts 53-11. Julius Randle led the Pelicans with 26 points and 13 rebounds, but he missed two important free throws late as New Orleans scored its last field goal with 5:18 remaining. Anthony Davis added 25 points and 11 rebounds, Jrue Holiday had 20 points and 11 assists, and Solomon Hill scored a season-high 14 for the Pelicans.

HEAT 115, SUNS 98

Fill-in starter Bam Adebayo scored 20 of his game-high 22 points in the first half and added 10 rebounds, leading Miami over host Phoenix. Miami reserve Justise Winslow added 20 points on 7-of-8 shooting, including 4-of-4 on 3-point attempts. Winslow also grabbed eight rebounds

and handed out six assists. Phoenix's De'Anthony Melton, a 20-year-old rookie and a 2018 second-round pick, made his first career start, posting 12 points and four assists. The Suns started two other rookies: center Deandre Ayton (16 points) and Mikal Bridges (12).

PACERS 112, MAGIC 90

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 26 points, and visiting Indiana cruised to an easy win over Orlando. Cory Joseph scored 15 points off the bench, and Thaddeus Young added 14 points and seven rebounds for the Pacers. The win was Indiana's eighth straight against Orlando and the 15th in the past 16 meetings. Nikola Vucevic had 22 points and 10 rebounds, and Aaron Gordon added 20 points and 14 rebounds for Orlando. The Magic have lost four of their past six games. — Reuters

Kuwait Martyrs 'Mini Goal' tournament

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Mulla Hassan Al-Kandary and Saeed Bin Al-Aas Schools qualified for the finals of the third Kuwait Martyrs "Mini Goal" tournament being held under the patronage of the martyrs office of the Amiri diwan, in cooperation with Ministry of Education with the knock out system, as the first beat the second by the score of 5-0 in the finals of Hawally education zone.

The finals will start on Feb 10, 2019 at Martyrs Fahad Al-Ahmad Center hall in Daeya, with the participation of two teams from each education zone, in addition to private education and two teams from the martyr's office, bringing the total to sixteen teams.

Hawally qualifications were held at Saeed bin Al-Aas School with the participation of 15 schools in the presence of the head of the information office Emad Mansour, head of activities Judai Al-Mutairi in addition to the senior supervisor of Hawally education zone



Dr Istiqlal Al-Raqom, and General Coordinator of the Tournament Hassan Al-Khawaja.

Dr Istiqlal Al-Raqom said following the end of Hawally qualification "Kuwait martyrs tournament carries a dear name to us all, adding that the qualifications saw strong competition, particularly in the final match, which saw Mulla Hassan Al-Kandari school end in first place.

Meanwhile, Emad Mansour said he saw many talents in this game during the qualifying matches, adding that the martyr's office

presents all means of support to ensure the tournament that immortalizes Kuwait martyrs, adding that the under secretary at the Amiri Diwan, Director of the Martyr's Office Fatima Al-Ameer, works on supporting all activities that serve the youth sector.

General coordinator of the tournament Hassan Al-Khawaja said "Hawally zone witnessed strong competition among the participating teams".

He said the qualifications began in Hawally then the rest of education zones will follow at the end of January.

Ooredoo's ambassador Rakan Al-Hasawi wins third place in Al Diriyah Equestrian festival

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait's brand ambassador, Rakan Al-Hasawi, won third place in the Al Diriyah Junior Jumping Championship which took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This competition is part of the Arabian equestrian tour which is a qualifier for the world championship. More than 93 equestrians and 147 horses participated in the competition from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Poland, and Italy. Al-Hasawi recently won third place in the 3rd AEF Junior Jumping Championship which took place in Taipei.

Al-Hasawi won a number of awards locally and regionally, such as the CHI Al-Shaqab horse hurdles competition in Qatar, in addition to the Kuwait Police Show Jumping Tournament and the Kuwait Riding Center Tournament, in addition to the Hala Febrayer 2017 which was sponsored by Ooredoo Kuwait recently, among other competitions.

Ooredoo takes great pride in the achievement of the young and promising Kuwaiti showjumper Rakan Al-Hasawi. The company's commitment to supporting youth is deep-rooted within the core values in Ooredoo Kuwait. Ooredoo is especially proud of the young athletes that it sponsors, such as



Kuwaiti champion Abdulaziz Al-Rashed, and Kuwaiti athlete Najlaa Al-Jeraiwi who represented Kuwait in the Asian Games this year.

Empowering youth is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. The company has recently signed a memorandum

of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, to support youth projects and initiatives. Ooredoo is continuously working with the Ministry to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields, with a focus on volunteerism.

Hirscher storms to 60th World Cup win at Val d'Isere

VAL-D'ISERE: Austrian ace Marcel Hirscher stormed to his 60th World Cup win yesterday with victory in the men's giant slalom at Val d'Isere. Despite continuous snowfall throughout the race, Hirscher held his nerve to coast to victory more than one second ahead of Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen.

Sweden's Matts Olsson completed the podium after finishing 1.31sec behind in third. Hirscher, a two-time Olympic champion who has dominated the overall World Cup seven years in succession from 2012-2018, would have been forgiven for worrying about potential distractions prior to his win.

One was the International Ski Federation's (FIS) investigation into German rival Stefan Luitz, whose maiden super-G win at Beaver Creek last week has since been marred by claims he illegally used oxygen between both runs.

If he is eventually disqualified, Hirscher, who finished second, will be handed the win. Another was the steady snowfall that left mushy snow on parts of the course. But Hirscher made light of both issues as he surged to his 29th giant slalom win on the circuit. It edged him closer to Ingemar Stenmark's all-time World Cup record of 86 wins, which is also being targeted by American Lindsey Vonn, who has 82.

But the Austrian said: "I'm here to enjoy myself, go as fast as possible and I'm not thinking about points or statistics. "I just want to give it everything and that's a great feeling."

Hirscher's win handed him the overall World Cup lead ahead of speed event specialist and compatriot Max Franz. Luitz, whose team have admitted to using oxygen last week but pleaded their innocence, finished 30th after making a huge mistake on his second run. — AFP

Chen tops Uno to take gold in Vancouver

VANCOUVER: American Nathan Chen overcame an early stumble during his free skate to win the Grand Prix figure skating final on Friday in Vancouver, defeating rival Shoma Uno of Japan to take gold for the second consecutive year.

Chen finished with a total of 282.42 points, comfortably ahead of Uno's 275.10, with 17-year-old Junhwan Cha of South Korea finishing third with 263.49 points. "It's a huge honor to be at the final with these two guys," said Chen.

"They have brought a lot to skating and I'm glad to be able to share the ice with them," he said. "There are a lot of things I can work on and improve." Chen came into Friday's free skate with a slim lead over Uno after Thursday's short program, where the favorites both made mistakes.

Skating to "Land of All" by Woodkid, Chen nailed his opening quadruple flip before failing to land the following quadruple Lutz. But the 19-year-old



VANCOUVER: US figure skater Nathan Chen performs in the Men's Free Skating competition at the ISU Grand Prix Of Figure Skating in Vancouver, Canada on Friday. Nathan Chen won the gold medal in the Men's Free Skating competition. — AFP

reigning world champion more than made up for his mishap as the program wore on, gaining confidence throughout his routine to seal a decisive victory before a supportive crowd in Western Canada. — Reuters

Sports

India take stranglehold on first Australia Test

Virat Kohli reaches another milestone to score 1,000 Test runs

ADELAIDE: India built a 166-run lead over Australia on the third day of an absorbing opening Test in Adelaide yesterday with dangerous Cheteshwar Pujara not out 40, although the late wicket of master batsman Virat Kohli gave the home team a glimmer of hope.

At stumps, the visitors were 151-3, adding to their first innings total of 250. Ajinkya Rahane was not out one, alongside Pujara who scored a gritty first innings century. It was looking ominous for Australia with Kohli and Pujara compiling a 71-run third-wicket partnership, but spinner Nathan Lyon got a massive breakthrough

when he snared the Indian skipper for 34 near the close of play.

"I think it's slightly in our favour," said Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah. "The late wicket was a good thing for them and the first session tomorrow will be very important. If we capitalise on that it will leave us in a very good place in this match."

He added that Pujara was key. "He's showed a lot of patience and that is the key element in Test cricket. A great knock and hopefully he continues tomorrow." Australia were dismissed for 235 just before lunch, with Travis Head top scoring on 72 on a day hit by rain delays, leaving them 15 runs adrift.

Batting in front of his home crowd, Head said he was disappointed to not add more runs but believed the game was "evenly poised". "It'll be a big first hour tomorrow, if we can get a couple of wickets and put them under pressure. I think the bowlers did a wonderful job to contain and continue to put pressure on them tonight."

India got off to a solid start, with KL Rahul and Murali Vijay enjoying a 63-run partnership. Both failed to fire in the first innings and are battling for one opener's spot once the injured Prithvi Shaw is fit again.

On a difficult batting track, Josh Hazlewood bowled four straight maidens to keep them contained before they began finding their range. Rahul hit a big six off Pat Cummins as the pair grew in confidence and they were racing along before Mitchell Starc enticed Vijay into nicking an attempted drive to Peter Handscomb in the slips and he was out on 18.

Rahul played some audacious strokes before a loose shot to a Josh Hazlewood ball found a big edge and he was caught behind for 44 by Tim Paine.

The unflappable Pujara crucially survived two decisions by the umpire giving him out, with both reversed on review in a cruel blow to Australia. In the first, he was initially dismissed caught behind off Lyon on eight, and in the second was adjudged out lbw, also to Lyon, on 17.

The prolific Kohli, who emerged to boos from a section of the crowd, shunned his trademark flamboyance to grind out runs before jabbing at a short ball from Lyon and Aaron Finch took an easy catch.



ADELAIDE: India's batsman Cheteshwar Pujara (C) bats against Australia during day three of the first Test cricket match at the Adelaide Oval yesterday. —AFP

On the way, he reached another milestone, joining a select few Indians including Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid to score 1,000 Test runs in Australia. Earlier, Australia added just 44 runs to their overnight 191-7 with Head's dismissal signalling a quick end, with the final wicket falling next ball.

After two days of stifling hot weather, play began 45 minutes late in gloomy conditions, with the Adelaide Oval lights on. It only lasted 3.4 overs before the drizzle began again and the umpires called them off after Starc

was caught behind for 15 by Rishabh Pant, getting an edge to a Bumrah delivery.

Play resumed after an hour with Lyon accompanying Head, who looked on track to better his previous best Test score against Pakistan in October before prodding at a Mohammed Shami ball.

Hazlewood padded up but was gone for a golden duck, again to the Shami-Pant combination, leaving Lyon unbeaten on 24. For India, Ravichandran Ashwin finished with 3-57 and Bumrah had 3-47. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scorecard at stumps on day three of the opening Test between Australia and India at the Adelaide Oval yesterday:

India 1st innings 250 (C. Pujara 123, R. Sharma 37; J. Hazlewood 3-52, M. Starc 206/3, P. Cummins 2-49, N. Lyon 2-83)

Australia 1st innings (overnight 191-7)

T. Head c Pant b Shami 72

M. Starc c Pant b Bumrah 15

N. Lyon not out 24

J. Hazlewood c Pant b Shami 0

Extras: (lb10, b6, nb2, w1) 19

Total: (10 wickets: 98.4 overs) 235

Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Finch), 2-45 (Harris), 3-59 (Marsh), 4-87 (Khawaja), 5-120 (Handscomb), 6-127 (Paine), 7-177 (Cummins), 8-204 (Starc), 9-235 (Head), 10-235 (Hazlewood)

Bowling: Sharma 20-6-47-2, Bumrah 24-9-47-3, Shami 16.4-6-58-2, Ashwin 34.9-57-3, Vijay 4-1-10-0

India 2nd innings

K.L. Rahul c Paine b Hazlewood 44

M. Vijay c Handscomb b Starc 18

C. Pujara not out 40

V. Kohli c Finch b Lyon 34

A. Rahane not out 1

Extras: (b2, lb12) 14

Total: (three wickets: 61 overs) 151

To bat: Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Ravi Ashwin, Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah.

Fall of wickets: 1-63 (Vijay), 2-76 (Rahul), 3-147 (Kohli)

Bowling: Starc 10-3-18-1, Hazlewood 16-9-25-1, Cummins 11-4-33-0, Lyon 22-3-48-1, Head 2-0-13-0.

Ability to bounce back key for NZ going forward: Williamson

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's fightback from a demoralising second Test defeat to clinch the third match, and first away series victory over Pakistan in almost 50 years, will help the team progress, captain Kane Williamson said.

New Zealand beat Pakistan by 123 runs in Abu Dhabi on Friday to clinch a 2-1 series victory, their first away to Pakistan since 1969, just days after they had been hammered in the second match in Dubai by an innings and 16 runs.

"To bounce back (and) to put out a performance that we're very much proud of ... to come away with the win against a very strong side like Pakistan, is a great game that guys will remember forever," Williamson said.

"(But) to stay with it ... throughout the three weeks, with some relatively inexperienced players who really stepped up ... is something we'll look back on and be really proud of, and hopefully that helps our progression." Williamson's side arrived in the UAE for the tour, which was also coach Gary Stead's first in charge, with an untested look about their slow bowlers, with left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel and late call-up offspinner Will Somerville both uncapped at Test level.

The 30-year-old Patel made his debut in the first Test and finished man of the match with second-innings fig-



ABU DHABI: New Zealand cricketers pose with the winner's trophy following the third and final Test cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand at the Sheikh Zayed International Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Friday. — AFP

ures of five for 59 that helped his side win the game by four runs. Somerville, who was working as an accountant in Sydney before he decided to give his cricket career another shot, moved back to New Zealand earlier this year and made his debut in the third game where he had match figures of seven for 127.

"I was so emotional after the game because it's been such a long road," the 34-year-old said. "I can't wait to see the kids and give the wife a hug and all of that stuff, because the sacrifices they have made for me have been amazing and I'm extremely grateful."

"It still feels like a dream, I'm still pinching myself, I'm just so incredibly proud." Williamson singled out the two slow bowlers for praise, despite the fact his own second-innings century enabled New Zealand to set a victory target of 280 on the final day in Abu Dhabi.

"For those guys to come over here and show their experience and perform the way they did was massive for us getting across the line," he said.

Williamson's side arrive back in New Zealand on Sunday ahead of two Tests against Sri Lanka, the first starting in Wellington on Dec 15. — Reuters

Bishop's 41 saves lead Stars past Sharks

DALLAS: Miro Heiskanen and Brett Ritchie found the net in a span of 1:48 of the third period, and Ben Bishop turned away a season-high 41 shots as the host Dallas Stars held off the San Jose Sharks 3-2 on Friday to win a season-high fourth consecutive game. Bishop, making his second start after returning from injured reserve, earned his third straight winning decision. He came through particularly at the end of the game when the Sharks forced the action. Mattias Janmark also scored for the Stars. San Jose's Evander Kane and Logan Couture scored, with Erik Karlsson assisting on both goals. Martin Jones made 27 saves for the Sharks, who fell to 2-4-1 in their past seven games.

HURRICANES 4, DUCKS 1
Brett Pesce and Justin Williams

scored third-period goals one minute apart as visiting Carolina ended Anaheim's season-best five-game win streak. Sebastian Aho scored a late empty-net goal for the Hurricanes, who became the first team in six games to score a third-period goal against the Ducks. Anaheim had outscored opponents 9-0 in the closing period of its previous five games. Clark Bishop scored his first NHL goal for Carolina. Jakob Silverberg scored the lone goal for the Ducks, the 100th of his career.

BLUES 1, JETS 0

Jake Allen made 26 saves for his first shutout of the season, and Colton Parayko scored the only goal of the game as visiting St. Louis blanked Winnipeg. Allen pushed his career shutout total to 17. The last time the two teams played, Winnipeg produced a season-high goal total in an 8-4 win at St. Louis on Nov. 24, a game that featured Patrik Laine scoring five goals on five shots. On Friday, Laine finished with just one shot on goal, but he also hit the goalpost on a power-play attempt in the second period. Connor Hellebuyck recorded 26 saves for the Jets, who had a season-high, four-game winning streak snapped. —Reuters

Windies seek to end ODI series drought in Bangladesh

DHAKA: The West Indies are looking to end their four-year wait for a one-day international series win when they take on hosts Bangladesh starting today.

Stand-in skipper Rovman Powell said winning the three-match series in Bangladesh would give his side the perfect boost ahead of the World Cup next year, for which they had to qualify after failing to secure one of the eight automatic berths.

"We haven't won an ODI series in a long time," Powell told reporters yesterday ahead of the first game in Dhaka. "The guys are upbeat and raring to go. No better opportunity to change it in Bangladesh."

"It will be good to get the series win under our belt" before the World Cup, Powell added. The West Indies were humiliated by Bangladesh in the preceding Test series, with the home side wrapping up both matches inside three days. The Caribbean side last won an ODI

series in 2014 when they beat Bangladesh 3-0 at home. They have since lost 11 series and drew against minnows Afghanistan last year. The streak includes a 2-1 loss to Bangladesh in July at home and a 3-1 loss to India in October.

Powell, who will be leading the side in the absence of the injured Jason Holder, said the Test defeats to Bangladesh are in the past. "We are focused on white-ball cricket. (The) guys are motivated and upbeat and hopefully we can get best possible result," he said.

"Both teams have good spinners, fast bowlers and batters. It will be a very competitive series." Bangladesh have been boosted by the return of batsman Tamim Iqbal and all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who both missed the ODI series against Zimbabwe in October because of injury. Shakib played in the Tests against the West Indies and was named man-of-the-series, while Tamim showcased his abilities with a blistering 107 off 73 balls in Thursday's 51-run warm-up match win over the visitors.

"Obviously having Shakib, Tamim in the team is a big advantage for us," said Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza. "In the practice game, Tamim played brilliantly which is a great relief for Tamim as well as for us," added Mashrafe, who is set to become the first Bangladeshi to play 200 ODIs today. — AFP

Arthur calls on beaten Pakistan to toughen up for Tests

ABU DHABI: Disgruntled coach Mickey Arthur demanded his players toughen up and seize key moments in Test matches after sloppy batting handed New Zealand an away series win over Pakistan for the first time in 49 years.

New Zealand pulled off a come-from-behind 123-run victory in the third and final Test in Abu Dhabi on Friday to end their long wait for a 2-1 series win.

Pakistan had dismissed the Kiwis for 153 in the first innings of the first Test in Abu Dhabi only to lose by a narrow four-run margin. Pakistan bounced back by winning the second Test in Dubai by an innings and four runs but again failed to build a sizeable lead in the first innings of the third Test, a fact Arthur believes cost them the series.

"We missed opportunities and despite winning most of the sessions in the two losses we could not grab the moments to force a win," Pakistan coach Arthur told AFP. "It was our series to win but we ended up as the losing side and that's highly disappointing."

Arthur said Pakistan not gaining big leads in the first and third Tests was crucial. "We have to have a look at our batting on the last day and that is tough in the UAE," said Arthur.

Pakistan lost all ten wickets on the final day in both the defeats. They have now lost all ten wickets on the final day six times since Arthur joined in May 2016. Apart from the three occasions in Abu Dhabi against Sri Lanka last year and twice against New Zealand in this series—they also collapsed at Birmingham, Hamilton and Melbourne—all in 2016.

Arthur said he backs his players, especially under-fire senior batsmen Azhar Ali and Asad Shafiq. "The quality is there as they are the best players in Pakistan who are working very very hard and I back them to the hilt," said Arthur.

"But we need to be tougher in the crucial moments and that comes to us grabbing moments and being tough and we could not do this in this series which is disappointing." He added: "I will defend Asad and Azhar to the hilt. Asad is a wonderful player. I rate him very highly and I still feel his best days are ahead of him."

Arthur now hopes Pakistan can do well in South Africa, a country where they have won only two Tests and were thrashed 3-0 on their last tour in 2013. "I reckon we can go to South Africa and do well," said Arthur.

"I believe and trust in these players, we have got some very talented cricketers and some good young players. "We need to nail down our good positions which we are not doing and that's the problem area." The first of three Tests starts in Centurion from December 26. —AFP

Sports

Manchester United romp to 4-1 win against struggling Fulham

Mourinho made four changes to the side that drew with Arsenal

MANCHESTER: Jose Mourinho answered his critics—for the time being at least—as his Manchester United side recorded their biggest league victory in 13 months with a 4-1 win over Fulham. Ashley Young, with his first goal in over 12 months, Juan Mata and Romelu Lukaku shot United into a commanding first-half lead.

But they struggled to add to that advantage after the break, even after Fulham were reduced to 10 men following the dismissal of Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa, moments after Aboubakar Kamara had pulled a goal back from the penalty spot.

Eventually, United were able to do so, completing the rout in the 82nd minute when Marcus Rashford beat Fulham keeper Sergio Rico at his near post with a curling shot from the edge of the area. Young struck early, receiving a short pass from Rashford and beating Denis Odofin far too easily as he cut into the Fulham area.

There was still much for Young to do to beat Rico but the former England international lofted a superbly weighted finish into the top corner to give the visiting keeper no chance. The second goal, just before the half-hour, was far more routine although no less impressive given the speed with which United launched a devastating counter-attack.

Lukaku slipped the ball down the left wing for Rashford and the England forward picked out Mata, arriving speedily into the Fulham area, with a perfect pass which his Spanish team-mate steered left-footed into the corner.

There was time for United to add a third in the 42nd minute, from a clever corner routine that saw Mata and Jesse Lingard exchange passes before the former crossed into an empty six-yard area where Lukaku gratefully converted the easiest of chances.

Mourinho made four changes to the side that drew with Arsenal in midweek, meaning he has made a league-high 50 changes over the course of the 16-game season. But

there was still no starting place for Paul Pogba, widely criticised for his performance in last weekend's draw at Southampton and benched for the much-improved midweek display against the Gunners.

Yet there was little wrong with the way in which United, so often accused of starting games slowly, set about handling Fulham. Even before Young's opening goal, teenage full-back Diogo Dalot sent over a couple of dangerous right-wing crosses that Fulham were forced to defend.

A first-time volley from Young also threatened, while Rico made a magnificent diving stop to keep out a sensational long-range shot from a Rashford free-kick while David De Gea's only first-half action was a routine stop from a hopeful Aleksandar Mitrovic attempt.

A three-goal lead for United was fully merited on balance and forced Fulham manager Claudio Ranieri into a double half-time substitution with Luciano Vietto and Kamara thrown on. Not that matters improved for the Premier League's bottom club. Within minutes of the restart, Rico parried a powerful Rashford shot and Lukaku planted the rebound wide and, moments later, the keeper showed quick reflexes to beat Lukaku to a Dalot cross with his goal again at the striker's mercy.

Ander Herrera also missed a glorious chance, shooting wide from Mata's pass, before Fulham pulled a goal back in the 67th minute. United claimed Kamara had fouled Phil Jones as he collected a pass but referee Lee Probert judged Herrera had tripped the Fulham substitute, who took and scored the resulting penalty himself.

Hopes of a Fulham fightback were short-lived, however, with Zambo Anguissa collecting a second yellow card, for fouling Rashford, within a minute and reducing his team to 10 men. With that extra-man advantage, Lukaku, Rashford and Scott McTominay all wasted glorious chances for more goals. — AFP



MANCHESTER: Fulham's French striker Aboubakar Kamara (C) vies with Manchester United's Brazilian midfielder Fred (R) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Fulham at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England yesterday. — AFP

Bayern climb to second, Sancho strikes as Dortmund win Ruhr derby

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski helped fire defending champions Bayern Munich up to second in the Bundesliga yesterday while Jadon Sancho led leaders Borussia Dortmund to a 2-1 derby win at Schalke.

Lewandowski scored twice in an impressive 3-0 home win against Nuremberg to lift Bayern up from fourth to second in the table, but they remain nine points behind Dortmund. Bayern will drop back to third if Borussia Mönchengladbach beat Stuttgart at home today. In Gelsenkirchen, England winger Sancho, who suffered a bereavement in midweek, slotted the winner 15 minutes from time to seal

Dortmund's first away derby win for five years. Thomas Delaney's first-half header for Dortmund was cancelled out by a Daniel Caligiuri penalty for mid-table Schalke before Sancho struck at the Veltins Arena.

Dortmund went ahead after just seven minutes when Delaney found space in the congested area to head home a floated free-kick by Marco Reus. Schalke drew level on 61 minutes when the video assistant referee judged Reus had fouled Amine Harit in the area and Caligiuri banged home the resulting spot-kick.

However, Sancho hit the winner by going clear in the box after trading passes with Raphael Guerreiro and tapping home. He pointed to the heavens in celebration before disappearing under a pile of team-mates.

In Munich, Bayern proved their October and November dip in form is behind them with a third straight victory as they crushed Nuremberg. Lewandowski struck after eight minutes at the Allianz Arena when he headed home a Joshua Kimmich corner with a deft flick.

The Poland goal ace then poached his second just before the half-hour mark when he followed up and tapped home after Leon Goretzka's long-range strike

clattered the crossbar. Bayern maintained the pressure after the break and the Nuremberg defence was again torn open when Serge Gnabry's fierce shot was saved, Franck Ribery reacting fastest to drill home the rebound on 56 minutes.

It was fourth heavy away defeat this season for Nuremberg having already been thumped 7-0 at Dortmund, 6-0 at RB Leipzig and 5-2 at Schalke. Fourth-placed RB Leipzig lost ground in the title race after crashing to a shock 3-0 defeat at Freiburg, a notoriously hard place to get an away result.

Germany striker Nils Petersen gave the hosts an early lead before Luca Waldschmidt converted a penalty just before the break. Captain Mike Frantz headed in their third to lift Freiburg to 12th.

Hoffenheim came from behind to seal a 2-2 draw at Wolfsburg thanks to Andrej Kramaric's late equaliser, while Bayer Leverkusen sealed a 1-0 win over Augsburg after Lucas Alario's goal. On Friday, Werder Bremen climbed to seventh with a 3-1 home win over bottom side Fortuna Dusseldorf as 18-year-old USA midfielder Josh Sargent capped his debut with the hosts' third goal when he came on for the last 15 minutes. — AFP

Three wins in a row for West Ham

LONDON: West Ham United continued their fine recent form with a 3-2 come-from-behind derby win at home to Crystal Palace in the Premier League yesterday.

Palace came into the contest having won once in their last 10 league games but got off to a perfect start with James McArthur breaking the deadlock with six minutes on the clock.

However, the introduction of striker Andy Carroll at halftime revitalised West Ham, who turned the match on its head with goals from Robert Snodgrass—his first in the league for the club—and Javier Hernandez.

Close-season signing Felipe Anderson fired a stunning third in the 65th minute—his fifth goal in his last six league games—to calm the nerves around the London Stadium.

But the hosts had to hang on for their third successive win—the first time they have done so since December 2016 — with Jeffrey Schlupp getting Palace back in it with 14 minutes left.

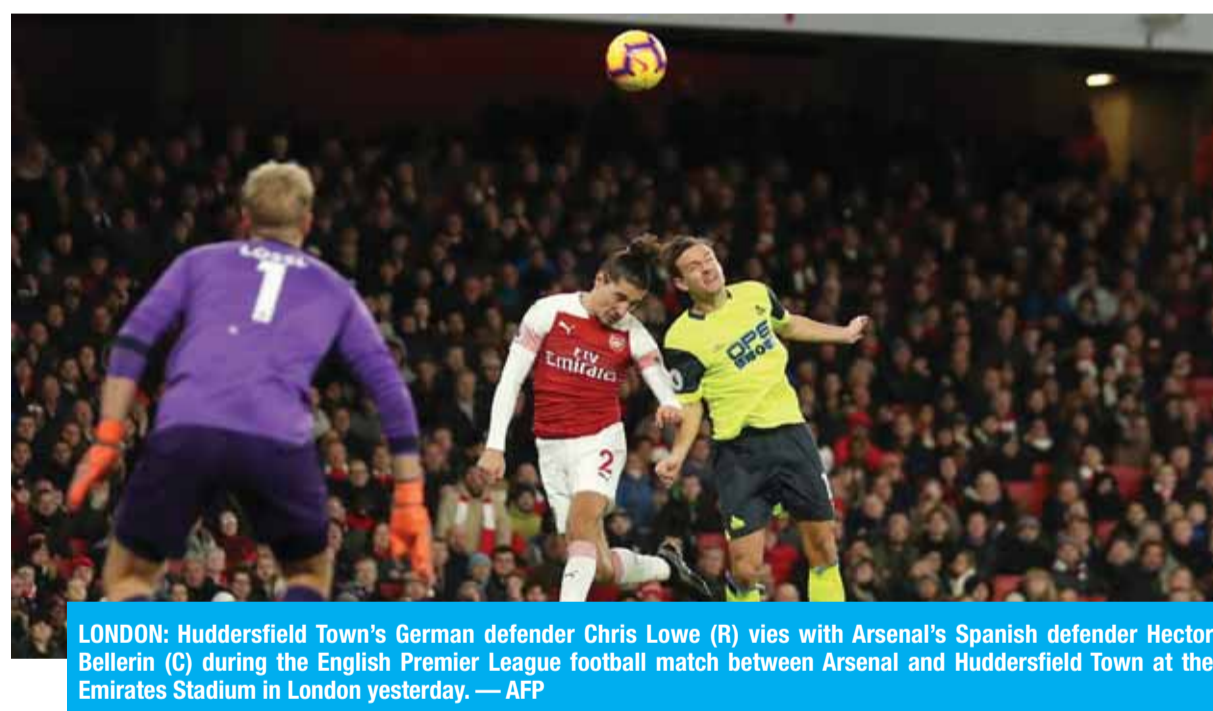
West Ham climbed to 10th while Palace's woeful run of form leaves them 16th, two points above the relegation zone.

Earlier, Burnley earned a badly-needed three points to move out of the Premier League relegation zone with a hard-earned 1-0 win over Brighton & Hove Albion yesterday.

On a rainy, windy afternoon at Turf Moor, nothing was going to wipe away the smiles of manager Sean Dyche and the Burnley fans as James Tarkowski's goal late in the first half proved decisive before they finished by soaking up late pressure. Though the goal was credited to Tarkowski, it was Jack Cork who was responsible for the 40th minute breakthrough when his shot deflected off the England defender's midriff into the net.

It was only what Burnley deserved though after they took control of affairs in the second part of the opening period with Chris Wood and Robbie Brady, who had already volleyed narrowly over, forcing fine saves from Mat Ryan.

Burnley, who had lost their last three fixtures at Turf Moor while conceding nine goals in the process, felt they should have earned a second-half penalty when Yves Bissouma's extravagant bicycle kick in his own box caught Phil Bardsley. It marked a special day for Burnley goalkeeper Joe Hart, who was making his 400th league appearance in English football and proved his quality in the late stages as the home side held on under severe pressure from mid-table Brighton. — Reuters



LONDON: Huddersfield Town's German defender Chris Lowe (R) vies with Arsenal's Spanish defender Hector Bellerin (C) during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Huddersfield Town at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. — AFP

Torreira's late winner moves Arsenal into third

LONDON: Lucas Torreira rode to Arsenal's rescue as the Uruguayan's impressive start to life as a Gunner continued with an overhead kick winner seven minutes from time to beat an obdurate Huddersfield 1-0 at the Emirates.

Torreira hooked home a Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang cross from close-range, yet the image that will endure of a feisty contest that saw Arsenal stretch their unbeaten run to 21 games will be of three of their players collecting yellow cards for simulation.

Granit Xhaka, Shkodran Mustafi and Matteo Guendouzi were all booked by referee Paul Tierney for flinging themselves to the ground. Mustafi and Guendouzi were trying to fool the referee into awarding a desperate home side a penalty, while Xhaka was simply trying to earn his side a free-kick unjustly in the middle of the pitch.

That desperation to make the breakthrough summed up a frustrating afternoon for Unai Emery's men until Torreira's late intervention. Emery again demonstrated a ruthless streak as after another titful first-half display from his side, he made a double substitution at half-time.

His introduction of Henrikh Mkhitaryan and Alex Iwobi triggered an Arsenal performance that was more centred on a determination to attack rather than to become embroiled in trading tackles, as they had in the first half.

The desire of the Huddersfield players not to give their

Arsenal counterparts a moment to dwell on the ball in midfield earned them the wrath of the Emirates crowd and no doubt influenced referee Tierney to caution Alex Pritchard, Danny Williams and Tommy Smith all within eight minutes of each other. Xhaka, one of five Arsenal players to see yellow, was at least responsible for the game's opening chance after 28 minutes. His intelligent ball to the near post ought to have been converted by Aubameyang. Yet, instead of meeting the ball with his right foot, the striker tried to use his left but could only stab the ball wide.

If that was a bad miss, Aubameyang was outdone by Alexandre Lacazette 60 seconds later. The Frenchman was found all alone inside the area by Guendouzi. He dallied too long and then slipped, scooping the ball embarrassingly over the bar from 12 yards.

Two minutes before half-time, Pritchard ought to have given Huddersfield the lead, swivelling to strike a Smith cross high and wide. Finally the match was living up and at the other end Torreira saw his curling effort from outside the area brilliantly palmed away for a corner by Huddersfield keeper Jonas Loss.

While the second half wasn't replete with chances, Mkhitaryan sent a low effort just wide within two minutes of his introduction, while Iwobi drove Arsenal forward constantly as they searched for the decisive goal.

Emery will have defensive problems to deal with over the festive period as Mustafi limped off just after the hour with an apparent hamstring injury, adding to the long-term absence of Rob Holding due to a cruciate knee ligament injury suffered in midweek.

However, the Spanish coach at least had another three points to console him when Torreira furthered his case as a cult hero among the Arsenal support with a spectacular finish to move the Gunners above Tottenham into third in the Premier League. — AFP



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Newcastle FC v Wolverhampton FC	beIN SPORTS HD 2	19:00
SPANISH LEAGUE		
SD Eibar v Levante	beIN SPORTS HD 3	14:00
Huesca v Real Madrid CF	beIN SPORTS HD 3	18:15
Real Sociedad v Real Valladolid	beIN SPORTS HD 3	20:30
Real Betis v Rayo Vallecano	beIN SPORTS HD 3	22:45
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
US Sassuolo Calcio v ACF Fiorentina	beIN SPORTS	14:30
Parma Calcio 1913 v AC Chievo Verona	beIN SPORTS	17:00
Udinese Calcio v Atalanta	beIN SPORTS	17:00
Empoli v Bologna FC	beIN SPORTS	17:00
Genoa CFC v spal	beIN SPORTS	20:00
AC Milan v Torino FC	beIN SPORTS	22:30
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
FSV Mainz 05 v Hannover 96	beIN SPORTS	17:30
Borussia Mönchengladbach v VfB Stuttgart	beIN SPORTS	20:00
FRENCH LEAGUE		
RC Strasbourg v Caen	beIN SPORTS	17:00
LOSC Lille v Stade Reims	beIN SPORTS	19:00
Saint Etienne v Olympique Marseille	beIN SPORTS	23:00

Asian football boss faces two challengers for presidency

KUALA LUMPUR: Asian Football Confederation president Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa will face two challengers when he seeks a fresh term at an election in April, the football body said yesterday.

Qatar's Saoud Al-Mohannadi, an AFC vice president, and AFC executive committee member Mohamed Khalifan Matar Saeed Alromaihi of the United Arab Emirates are standing against Sheikh Salman, the body said.

Saudi Arabia's Adel Ezzat—head of a new regional bloc, the South West Asian Football Federation—did not throw his hat into the ring, as had been widely expected. Al-Mohannadi, the Qatar Football Association vice president, was hit with a one-year FIFA ban in 2016 for refusing to cooperate with a corruption inquiry, but the ban was overturned after he appealed.

Anyone taking on Sheikh Salman, who is seeking a new, four-year term, faces a tough task. The Bahraini royal has held the top job at the AFC since 2013, and said at a congress in Kuala Lumpur in October that he had the support of 90 percent of the body's 46 full members.

He also warned against "third-party interference" in the vote. When he first took the reins, the Asian body was still reeling from a corruption scandal which saw his predecessor, Mohamed bin Hammam, banned from football for life.

Qatar's bin Hammam was accused of bribery during his 2011 campaign to unseat the now disgraced Sepp Blatter as president of world body FIFA. After having a life ban annulled by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, bin Hammam was handed a second lifetime ban by FIFA in 2012 for conflict of interest violations.

Sheikh Salman was elected in 2013 and completed the last two years of bin Hammam's term, before being re-elected unopposed to a full, four-year term in 2015. The vote for president and other AFC positions will take place on April 6 in Kuala Lumpur. — AFP

25 Nets stun Raptors in overtime for rare win



26 India take stranglehold on first Australia Test



27 Manchester United romp to 4-1 win against struggling Fulham



Salah hat-trick sends Reds top of EPL

Liverpool's fifth consecutive league win



BOURNEMOUTH: Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (centre) has an unsuccessful shot during the English Premier League football match between Bournemouth and Liverpool at the Vitality Stadium in Bournemouth, southern England yesterday. — AFP

BOURNEMOUTH: Liverpool delivered a clear sign they intend to push Manchester City all the way in the Premier League with an emphatic 4-0 victory at Bournemouth yesterday that was capped by a hat-trick from Mohamed Salah.

This victory, the Reds' fifth consecutive league win, secured with the additional help of a Steve Cook own-goal, extended Jurgen Klopp's side's unbeaten start to the league season. It also moved them one point ahead of City at the top of the table, hours before Pep Guardiola's side take on Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

Salah's contribution was central to Liverpool's success—the Egyptian has struggled to match his outstanding levels of last season but with 10 league goals to his name, he is now hitting his stride.

He may have benefited from a close offside decision for the 25th-minute opener that gave Liverpool a half-time lead, but the finishes for his two second-half goals were outstanding.

Overall, Liverpool manager Klopp could be satisfied with the manner in which his side eased their way to victory ahead of the midweek Champions League meeting with Napoli.

Liverpool had demonstrated resilience to win on Wednesday against a physical Burnley side whose approach drew an angry reaction from Klopp.

Joe Gomez was a casualty of the trip to Turf Moor, suffering a broken leg in a challenge with Claret's defender Ben Mee, and with a testing week ahead Klopp named Trent Alexander-Arnold among the substitutes and named James Milner at right-back.

Bournemouth's hopes of halting Liverpool's progress suffered a blow when Callum Wilson, the England international who has scored eight league goals this season, was ruled out with a hamstring injury.

The home side certainly felt Wilson's absence during the periods of the game when they pushed Liverpool onto the back foot. But defensive errors, combined

with a dubious offside decision for the opening goal, meant they had little chance to impose themselves on a Liverpool side that never had to find top gear to secure three points. The opening period suggested Klopp's side would again have to work hard for victory. Salah and Roberto Firmino took time to make an impact, with the Egyptian spurning the first real chance of the game when he sliced wide from close range.

And had David Brooks shown more composure when he was sent clear on Liverpool's goal in the 24th minute, the early momentum would have been in favour of the home side.

As it was, Liverpool responded immediately, taking control with some help from the assistant referee.

Salah and Firmino combined well 25 metres out, before the Brazilian fired in a shot at keeper Asmir Begovic. The Bosnia international should have done better than parry the ball into the middle of the penalty area, allowing Salah to react first and fire high into the

net from close range.

Eddie Howe's players pointed out that Salah had been in an offside position but their complaints were dismissed, although TV replays suggested they had a case. From that point in the game, Liverpool tightened their grip, particularly after the restart.

It helped the Reds' cause that Salah was gifted the chance to add a second three minutes after the restart when Steve Cook lost the ball near the halfway line. Firmino released the Egyptian, who ran 40 metres before placing the ball beyond Begovic.

A bad afternoon for Cook got worse when he diverted the ball past Begovic and into his own goal as he attempted to cut out a left-wing cross from Andy Robertson. And Salah produced the best goal of the game to wrap up the victory in the 77th minute after collecting Adam Lallana's through ball. The forward outpaced Cook and rounded Begovic twice to complete his treble. — AFP

Man City suffer first Premier League defeat of season at Chelsea

LONDON: Chelsea inflicted champions Manchester City's first Premier League defeat of the season as goals from N'Golo Kante and David Luiz handed the hosts a 2-0 win at Stamford Bridge and sent Liverpool top of the table.

Kante's goal just before half-time came against the run of play as the visitors dominated the first 45 minutes, but without the injured Sergio Aguero, City lacked a cutting edge up front and Luiz's header 12 minutes from time sealed a huge win for Chelsea.

Liverpool are now a point clear of City after Mohamed Salah scored a hat-trick in a 4-0 victory at Bournemouth earlier yesterday. Chelsea boss Maurizio Sarri had lost all of his previous three meetings against City boss Pep Guardiola and was growing increasingly frustrated at his side's inability to hold possession as the visitors dominated the first half.

Raheem Sterling should have scored when his weak left-footed finish was placed too close to Kepa Arrizabalaga before the world's most expensive goalkeeper also denied Leroy Sane from a narrow angle.

Only a brave block by captain Cesar Azpilicueta rescued Chelsea when City next threatened as Sterling eased past Marcos Alonso and Sane's fierce effort was deflected over by the Spanish defender.

Yet, for all City's possession, the visitors were stung by a sucker punch just before half-time as Sarri's decision to field Eden Hazard as the focal point of the Chelsea attack and maintain Kante in an advanced midfield role paid off.

Sarri has resisted calls to return Kante to the deep-lying midfield role where he shone in winning the World Cup with France and Premier League titles for Leicester and Chelsea at the expense of Jorginho.

Hazard was finally fed the ball to feet inside the City box and his pass picked out Kante, who side-footed the ball high past Ederson. The Brazilian goalkeeper had been a spectator before picking the ball out his net, but was called into action again to keep his side in the game just after the break when he palmed away Willian's free-kick.

Willian wasted another good chance on the counter-attack as having been behind only once before in the Premier League this season, City were rattled and rarely threatened to get back in the game in the second period.

Guardiola's men may also have to cope without David Silva for some of the festive season after the Spaniard hobbled off holding his hamstring. Defending set-pieces has often been a rare Achilles heel for City and it was exposed when Luiz made the game safe by rising highest to Hazard's corner and looping a header in off the underside of the bar. — AFP



LONDON: Chelsea's Brazilian defender David Luiz jumps for a header with Manchester City's Algerian midfielder Riyad Mahrez during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Manchester City at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. — AFP