



2 Amir visits Azayez farm, receives martyrs' children



9 Pak killing unleashes rage over extrajudicial murders



11 Far-right figure embraces Islam over 'moral decline'



16 No Love in Cavaliers' loss, Wizards win without Wall



Court delays expat health charges ruling till March 4

Sabeeh wins no-confidence vote by big margin

conspiracy theories

Please rain!



By Badrya Darwish

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Everybody I meet lately is depressed. This is not a once-in-a-blue-moon emotion (like the one we witnessed yesterday). There are no smiles anymore on the faces of people. I go to the co-op and find people are weary and crushed to the maximum of their abilities. I walk in the street and see the same. Drivers are angry - be they Kuwaitis, expats or Japanese tourists. Everyone is in a rush and hurry and everyone looks angry and frustrated. Maybe if you ask someone why are you angry and not paying attention on how you're driving, they won't even know!

I told myself: Let me take a walk in the park - I'll feel better. But the minute I entered the gates, the soil is dry, the trees are drooping, devoid of color and full of dust. The lack of rain has its toll on the city and all of us. We have nice buildings but they don't look fresh. We have beautiful and architecturally-interesting high-rises and lovely villas, but our gardens need rain. Our walls need rain and the streets are filthy and dry. Leave alone that, people are sick and the air is not clean. Flu viruses are spreading like mad. Whoever I see has the flu, cough or fever. I don't want to even go to the clinic to see the queues.

The lack of rain is a metaphor for all that Kuwait is lacking right now. Is it this year only? When you talk to businessmen and shop owners, they ask why is there no business? Why business is not good in Kuwait anymore? The population is at its peak with expats and Kuwaitis and they all need to buy food, furniture, clothes and cars and pay school fees and rents. Some need to buy necessities, and for many others, luxuries too.

So why the dour attitude? Why isn't there more confidence and optimism in the market? Everyone I talk to doesn't have faith in the market. People have lost faith. Why is that? There is no shortage in our oil or in our revenues and income. In fact, Kuwait's oil prices have been steadily climbing, even higher than those projected in our budget. I know we have a deficit, but compared to other countries, it's a trivial amount, and we have plenty of reserves if we have to tap them.

So why all the gloomy faces and attitudes and behaviors? I think people should have more hope and faith. Yes, maybe Kuwait is going through something of a dark and dry spell, but we have always risen before. And we will rise again, insha'Allah. So be a little bit more optimistic guys. Maybe it will rain tomorrow, God willing, and bless us all.
Have a rainy weekend!

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The appeals court yesterday delayed until March 4 a petition filed by a Kuwaiti lawyer calling to overturn a ruling by the lower court that considered as legal a hike in health charges for expatriates. The delay came to allow the government to submit its defense in the case filed after the health ministry significantly raised health charges at public hospitals only for expatriates and excluded citizens. The lower court had rejected the case, saying it was the right of the health ministry to increase charges at its facilities. The new charges took effect in October and saw some charges rise several-fold.

Lawyer Hashem Al-Refai said in his challenge to the lower court ruling that the court had ignored his arguments which said the decision to raise health charges was unconstitutional and violated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which calls for equality among people regardless of nationality or creed. He also insisted that the decision also violated medical practice laws and regulations.

Refai insisted before the appeals court that the decision is also illegal because raising medical charges requires a law and not a ministerial decision, based on a law issued by the National Assembly in 1995.

Continued on Page 11



KUWAIT: MPs congratulate Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh after she survived a vote of no-confidence at the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Fiscal strengths mask long-term challenges: Fitch

LONDON: Kuwait's recent budget outturns and the government's draft budget proposal point to the country's continuing fiscal and external strengths, which are reflected in its 'AA/Stable' sovereign rating, Fitch Ratings says. Nevertheless, the slow pace of fiscal reform and economic diversification increases long-term risks to Kuwait's public finances.

"We have raised our estimate for Kuwait's fiscal surplus in FY18 (ending March 31, 2018) to 1.9 percent of GDP,

from 0.2 percent previously. Recent data published by the ministry of finance indicates that Kuwait's budget was close to balance in the first nine months of FY18, with revenues at 84 percent of original budget allocations, but spending considerably lower, at 63 percent.

Our forecast incorporates our expectation that spending execution will pick up significantly in the final quarter of the fiscal year, when a lot of spending typically takes place. It also takes into account estimated investment income of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) amounting to around 13 percent of GDP, which is not included in the 9M data," Fitch said.

"Rising oil prices are a key driver of the outturns. The FY18 budget assumed an oil price of \$45/bbl, but the price of the

Continued on Page 11

Kuwait to spend \$500bn on oil projects by 2040

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: OPEC member Kuwait plans to spend more than half a trillion dollars by 2040 to boost its oil and gas output and refining capacity, a top executive said yesterday. The announcement of the huge investments comes despite Kuwait projecting a budget deficit in the next fiscal year for the fourth year in a row due to low global oil prices.

The chief executive officer of state-

run Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC) Nizar Al-Adsani said the firm plans to carry out a number of major projects to boost oil production to 4.75 million barrels per day by 2040. "To achieve these targets, KPC plans to spend \$114 billion in capital expenditure over the next five years and an additional \$394 billion beyond that to 2040," Adsani told the Energy Strategy Forum in Kuwait City. "KPC has launched the 2040 strategy which focuses on growth in all its activities that require significant funds to finance the mega projects," he said.

Adsani noted that the energy industry faces complex and diverse challenges, but dealing with it professionally focuses on the strategy of investment, innovation and cooperation.

Continued on Page 11

154,000 illegals in Kuwait; amnesty won't be extended

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Assistant Director General of Residency Affairs Major Gen Abdullah Al-Hajeri said there are strict instructions from the higher leadership to completely end the incidence of residency violators in Kuwait, who number 154,000 people of both genders. Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah

issued a decision last month allowing residency violators to leave the country before Feb 22, 2018 without paying fines.

Hajeri said the ministerial decision comes eight years after a similar amnesty given by HH the Amir in Feb 2011. He added the government is serious about implementing the law without exception, and will crack down on violators as the grace period will not be extended.

Continued on Page 11



Abdullah Al-Hajeri



KUWAIT: Deputy Chairman and CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation Nizar Al-Adsani speaks during the Petroleum Economist Energy Strategy Forum yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Trump appeals for unity, talks tough on immigration, to keep Gitmo open

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump appealed Tuesday for national unity and strong borders in his first State of the Union address, calling for "one American family" after a year marred by acrimony, division and scandal. Delivering his biggest speech of the year, this most polarizing of presidents sought to put the spotlight on a robust economy, while pointedly calling on a packed joint session of Congress to enact tough curbs on immigration.

"Tonight, I call upon all of us to set aside our differences, to seek out common ground, and to summon the unity we need to deliver for the people we were elected

Continued on Page 11



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump delivers the State of the Union address as US Vice President Mike Pence (left) and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan look on in the chamber of the US House of Representatives on Tuesday. — AFP



KUWAIT: A super blue blood moon is seen during a partial lunar eclipse behind a minaret yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 32)

Amir attends luncheon banquet at Azayez farm



KUWAIT: Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at his Azayez Farm in Abdali yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photos



(From left) His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



(From left) The Chief of Amiri Protocol and Chamberlain Sheikh Khaled Abdullah Sabah Al-Masser Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended a luncheon banquet held at Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's Azayez Farm in Abdali yesterday. The banquet was attended by His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Faisal Al-Soud Al-Mohammad, Sheikh Nasser Al-

Mohammad Al-Ahman, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other Al-Sabah family members. — KUNA



First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (center) is seen in attendance.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen during the gathering.



Amiri Diwan Affairs Deputy Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (center) attends the gathering.

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Amir receives martyrs' overachieving children



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah pose for a group photo with Kuwaiti martyrs' children. — Amiri Diwan photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Martyr's Office Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and Kuwaiti martyrs' sons and daughters who excelled in their studies during 2013-2014 and 2016-2017 school years.

His Highness the Amir lauded the efforts of Kuwaiti students, noting that their hard-work would be beneficial for the future development of the country. Meanwhile, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs called on the students to continue their outstanding academic performance, stressing that knowledge is a valuable tool that would serve Kuwait.

Director General of the Office Fatima Al-Amir thanked His Highness the Amir for his encouraging words, saying that such sentiments from the leader of the country could only push students to excel more in their studies and academic ventures. His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince were given two presents during their reception. Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince, as well as National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem.

In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince and his accompanying delegation are set to leave for Saudi Arabia today in order to represent His Highness the Amir in attending the closing ceremony of the second version of King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Riyadh, as per the invitation of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets a Kuwaiti martyrs' child.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a present during the meeting.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Children enjoy an afternoon outing with their families. —KUNA photo

Kuwait partakes in Arab League meetings on Palestinian cause

Kuwait urges comprehensive settlement to Middle East conflict

KUWAIT/BRUSSELS: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah partakes in scheduled ministerial meetings at the Arab League headquarters today to re-examine the Palestinian cause namely the question of the holy city of Jerusalem.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled will participate in a meeting of the Arab Peace Initiative Committee, membership of which includes the State of Kuwait, and a meeting of the Arab League Ministerial Council, which is a follow-up session to be held as part of the council extraordinary session held on December 9, 2017.

Arab ministers and officials, during the December meeting, discussed ideas and proposed plans for facing repercussions of the United States' decision to "recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital" and shift the American embassy from Tel to the sacred city. The two meetings will convene in light of the mini Arab ministerial meeting, hosted by Jordan on January 6, 2018, and on basis of the Arab League Council resolution, taken during the December extraordinary session, stipulating that the council would reconvene in a month.

The Arab states' officials had taken the decision to consider the council meetings as 'open' for assessing 'the situation' and seek to reach consensus on future steps in the face of Washington's step, as well as for intensifying efforts to reach a political settlement to resolve the Arab-Israeli strife and establish the independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Kuwait's delegation to the meetings includes the State of Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt Mohammad Al-Thuwaikeh, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Arab World Ambassador Aziz Al-Daihani, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Premier Bureau Affairs Ambassador Saleh Al-Loughani, the State of Kuwait Permanent Delegate at the Arab League Ahmad Al-Bakr and senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Arab Peace Initiative is a 10-sentence plan for an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, endorsed by the Arab League in 2002 at the Beirut Summit and re-endorsed at the 2007 Arab League summit and at the 2017 Arab League summit. The initiative calls for normalizing relations between the Arab states and Israel, in exchange for full withdrawal from the occupied territories (including East Jerusalem) and a "just settlement" to the Palestinian refugee problem based on UN Resolution 194.

Israel has rejected the Arab peace plan and Washington's recent decision on Jerusalem has further

complicated efforts for paving the way for a viable settlement to the conflict, the start of which dates back to the 1940s.

Comprehensive solution

Meanwhile, Kuwait called for a just, comprehensive and definitive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, based on the two-state solution and relevant UNSC resolutions and international references and Arab Peace Initiative.

Speaking at the special session of the international donor group for Palestine in Brussels yesterday, Kuwait's ambassador to the EU, Belgium, NATO and Luxembourg,

Jasem Al-Budaiwi urged the commitment of the international community to the historical, religious and political status of the city of Jerusalem and the need to ensure that it is not compromised by any unilateral actions. Further, he called for the condemnation of Israel's continued violation of resolution 2334 on its illegal settlement activities.

Budaiwi urged the international community to support the activities of UNRWA as one of the most important United Nations agencies serving some six million Palestine refugees, to move away from any 'politicization' of its activities and to preserve the nature of its humanitarian activities. He stressed that the State of Kuwait has made every effort to support the Palestinian cause, which has always been the highest priority of its foreign policy.

Kuwait is committed to providing UNRWA with annual support of \$2 million and is contributing to the Agency's budget deficit and to meet its emergency needs over the past years, the last of which was to provide \$5 million to the Agency in the month of December. He expressed regret that the work of the technical commissions and international agencies, such as the Committee on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, has not achieved the desired goals because of the lack of political will and willingness of one of the parties to this protracted conflict.

GCC resolutions

In other news, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met yesterday with visiting GCC Secretary-General Abdul-Latif Al-Zayani. During the meeting, they addressed action programs and plans for the GCC Secretariat's sectors to put in place resolutions taken during the 38th GCC summit held in Kuwait on December 7, 2017, given that Kuwait holds the current rotating presidency of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Several senior officials of the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry were present at the meeting. —KUNA



Kuwait calls for global support to UNRWA



GAZA CITY: A Palestinian boy pulls his brother as he sits in a wheeled-suitcase as he walks down a street in a refugee camp in Gaza City on January 23, 2018. —AFP photos



Palestinian schoolgirls pose for a group picture outside their classrooms at a school belonging to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in Gaza City on January 22, 2018, during a visit by the UNRWA Commissioner General as they hold kites reading in Arabic and English "dignity is priceless."

Local

Woman, boyfriend sentenced to death in disabled girl's murder

Kuwaitis 79% in public sector, 21% in private sector

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The criminal court yesterday sentenced a woman and her boyfriend to death for the first degree murder of her daughter, said legal sources. The mother and the boyfriend admitted they both beat the disabled girl to death because they were annoyed by her screams and cries, the sources noted. The criminal court also sentenced a former Ministry of Health assistant undersecretary to two years in prison with labor over charges of forging a degree from Egypt for his son.



Expats make up 70% of population

79 percent

The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) statistics show that 79 percent of the manpower working for the government and 21 percent working for the private sector are citizens. Statistics also showed that citizens form only 30 percent of Kuwait's population (1,372,998), while non-Kuwaitis make up 70 percent (3,162,180) of the total population of 4,535,178.

Government spending

MP Mubarak Al-Harees expressed amazement at increasing government spending in the 2018-2019 budget, because it comes at a time when the government is calling for and confirming its seriousness in rationalization and cutting expenses. Harees added that the government has been repeatedly making the same mistakes on setting its budgets. "We have been hearing the same since we came to the 2013 parliament - the government increases spending and at the same time fails to fulfill citizens' needs," he said, noting that the government had refused amending the social security law with regards to early retirement, yet it increased spending in the new budget. "The government should not have expected stability in oil prices on setting the budget because they are subject to international circumstances beyond our control," he noted, calling for stopping waste without affecting citizens' incomes.



The Palace of Justice.

Arab League

The Cabinet yesterday urged various ministries and government bodies to address the Arab League Secretariat General only via the foreign ministry. A letter sent by the Cabinet Secretary General Abdullatif Al-

Roudhan to all ministries and government bodies stressed that some of these bodies had been directly contacting the Arab League Secretariat General, adding this is a violation of the foreign ministry's regulations and the related Amiri decree.

Three car inspectors fight in Jahra

KUWAIT: Jahra vehicle technical inspection department was the venue of a fight between three inspectors due to disputes not related to their jobs. One of them was suspected of being under the influence of drugs, while the other disappeared after he claimed that he wanted to go home to bring his ID, but did not return. Two inspectors had a verbal exchange with a colleague, and it escalated to exchanging blows. One of them then stabbed his colleague with a pen, before the rest of the employees broke the fight up. The injured inspector went to hospital for treatment, then lodged a complaint at Saad Al-Abdullah police station. The other two inspectors were summoned, and one of them

was in an abnormal condition, while the other claimed his ID was at home and went to bring it and did not return. Detectives are investigating.

Head injury

A citizen was rushed to Adan Hospital after sustaining injuries on the way to Zour. The citizen and his friend were busy with the boat, when one of them got inside it, while the other drove off. While on the road, the boat fell on the street with the man inside it, and he sustained a head injury. Police and paramedics rushed to the site and transferred the injured man to hospital in a critical condition.

Body found

A man was found dead in his vehicle in Waha. The man was noticed by a citizen, who called police, and paramedics confirmed he was dead. The deceased is a citizen in his thirties and there were no signs of foul play. Investigations are underway.

Nugra fire

Thirteen people suffered burns and suffocations due to a fire in a Nugra apartment. Policemen rushed to the build-

ing and found the fire was caused by a gas cylinder that exploded in the apartment. A source said nine persons were treated onsite, while four were taken to hospital.

Under the influence

A Kuwaiti woman in her thirties and a citizen in his twenties were taken to the Drugs Control General Department after being found under the influence of drugs. Police noticed the two were in an abnormal condition when their IDs were being checked, so the car was searched and a liquor bottle was found, along with a light bulb containing a white substance, a small bag of drugs and three other liquor bottles.

Search for thieves

Jahra prosecutor ordered detectives to arrest two persons who robbed an Indian man of his car and mobile in Qashaniya, after they threatened him with a knife. The Indian works as a foreman in an engineering company and was near the gate of an oil company in Rawdatain in his pickup truck, when he was surprised by the two thieves.

— Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

KFAED offers Uzbekistan loan of KD 9 million

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the Uzbek government on Tuesday inked an agreement by virtue of which the fund will loan Uzbekistan KD nine million (some \$30 million). The funds will be used in financing the development of infrastructure in rural areas in the Central Asian nation, according to a KFAED press release. The project will help provide many job opportunities to the residents of these areas in the sectors of construction and industry, the statement said. The agreement was signed by KFAED Deputy Director General Hisham Al-Woqyan and Uzbek Deputy Minister of Finance. The loan is the ninth one offered by KFAED to Uzbekistan. The total value of the previous loans amounts to KD 44.9 million in addition to two technical grants amounting to KD 500,000. —KUNA



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A ferry sinks in the Pacific

'Brainwashed' children of Islamist fighters worry Germany



HATAY, Turkey: A Turkish military truck carries a tank as it is dispatched to the border in Hatay, near the Turkey-Syria border yesterday as part of the Turkish cross-border operation 'Olive Branch' against the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) militia in Syria. —AFP

Turkey ramps up Syria incursion

France warns against a full-blown 'invasion'

AFRIN: Clashes raged between Turkish-backed forces and Kurdish militia in Syria's Afrin region yesterday, as wounded civilians fled intense Turkish air strikes. Turkey and allied Syrian rebels have pressed on with Operation Olive Branch in the Kurdish-controlled Afrin enclave despite mounting international concern and reports of rising civilian casualties.

Yesterday, French President Emmanuel Macron warned he would have a "real problem" with Turkey's intervention if it turned into a full-blown "invasion." An AFP correspondent in Afrin heard warplanes flying overhead, and Kurdish officials said rocket fire on the town wounded 12 civilians. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said heavy bombardment and Turkish air strikes were accompanying ground fighting around Jandairis and Rajo, two areas to the west of Afrin near the Turkish border.

The Britain-based war monitor reported that Turkish-backed forces had seized control of the border village of Shinkal to the northwest. "Turkish forces dispatched new military reinforcements overnight, including fighters and equipment, to Shinkal in an attempt to consolidate their control over several points and support attacking forces," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman.

Turkey and its Syria rebel allies launched Operation Olive Branch against the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), on January 20. The group has been a key ally of Washington in its fight against the Islamic State jihadists but Ankara regards it as an offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has waged a deadly insurgency in southeastern Turkey since 1984. Ankara has denied hitting civilians in its military operations, but hospitals in Afrin say they are receiving civilian casualties on a daily basis.

'The whole world knows'

At region's main hospital late on Tuesday, a heartbroken family was seen carrying out the body of their father, killed in shelling several days earlier. A sobbing woman touched her head to the casket. Nearby, an elderly

man was yelling to anyone who would listen. He had survived heavy Turkish bombardment of his neighborhood, but 12 of his family members—including two infant grandchildren—had not. "The whole world knows what's happening here. Everyone know that civilians are dying," he screamed.

"A four month old and a nine month old—as if we're the Daesh of Afrin," he said, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group. The Observatory says the Turkish operation has left 67 civilians dead so far, 20 of them children. Turkey strongly rejects the figures, saying it is doing everything it can to avoid civilian casualties. Defense Minister Nurettin Canikli said on Tuesday that the Turkish army and its rebel allies "have not harmed any civilian" during the operation.

Turkish teen killed

Yesterday, the Turkish army said it destroyed 22 YPG targets overnight. Since launching the assault, Turkey and rebel allies have captured 11 villages and the strategic Barsaya hill, according to the Observatory. Barsaya overlooks both the rebel-held Syrian town of Azaz, and Kilis across the border in Turkey. Advancing fighters were facing "fierce resistance from YPG fighters holed up in the mountains, in spite of Turkey's massive firepower," said Abdel Rahman. The Observatory said that 85 YPG fighters and 81 pro-Ankara rebels had been killed in the fighting so far. Turkey says seven of its soldiers have been killed. Yesterday, rockets launched from Syria killed a 17-year-old girl and wounded another resident of a Turkish border town, officials said. The US and France have repeatedly expressed concern over the cross-border offensive, which Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last week threatened to expand. Erdogan has vowed to "clean up" the YPG-held city of Manbij east of Afrin, where the US has troops as part of its operations against IS. In response, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said on Tuesday that if the operation turned into an "occupation" of parts of Syria, it would be "totally reprehensible." —AFP



Clashes rage in Syria's Afrin region

Bahrain condemns 2 Shiites to death

DUBAI: Bahrain's criminal court yesterday sentenced two Shiites to death and 19 others to life imprisonment in a ruling against a cell convicted of terror attacks. The court sentenced a total of 58 people on terrorism charges and stripping citizenship from 47, state news agency BNA reported. The ruling is the latest in a series of scores of harsh penalties in the Western-allied Gulf kingdom for defendants accused of Iranian-backed militancy but who activists say are mostly peaceful opposition members.

The defendants were convicted of forming a "terror" cell that carried out a number of attacks, killing at least two policemen and wounding several others, and of smuggling weapons by boat. It also convicted them of attacking a prison and helping some prisoners to flee, of travelling to Iraq and Iran for military training and engaging in a gunbattle with police. All the convicts are from the Shiite majority in the small Sunni-ruled Gulf kingdom. Large quantities of weapons including grenades and light machine-guns were seized from the group, according to the ruling. Thirty-six members, including the two condemned to death, are already in jail while the rest were sentenced in absentia, including 12 defendants living in Iran and Iraq and one in Germany, a judicial source said.

The London-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) immediately condemned the ruling. "Today's ruling is the latest episode in Bahrain's travesty of justice, and likely one of the most cruel," said the director of BIRD, Sayed Ahmed Al-Wadaei. BIRD said two women were among those convicted while the fate of two other female defendants in the case was not immediately known. Twenty-one Bahrainis are now on death row in "political cases", 14 of them convicted in 2017, it said. Authorities have cracked down hard on dissent since mass street protests in 2011 that demanded an elected prime minister and constitutional monarchy in Bahrain.

Shiite cleric in hospital

In another development, Bahrain's Shiite spiritual leader Sheikh Isa Qassim was returned to hospital yesterday to undergo a new round of surgery, a rights activist said. "Sheikh Isa Qassim was admitted today to the Bahrain International Hospital to receive surgery for a hernia," Sheikh Maytham Al-Salman from Bahrain Center for Human Rights said.

He said authorities had delayed for two weeks before allowing the cleric to visit the hospital. Qassim, in his late 70s, is suffering from high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease. Rights activists say he underwent a previous round of surgery in early December. The cleric was a leader of Arab Spring-inspired 2011 protests in the Sunni-ruled kingdom, and has been under de facto house arrest since a 2016 court order revoking his citizenship. He was sentenced to a suspended one-year jail term on the charge of "serving foreign interests". Located between regional arch-rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain is home to a Shiite majority that has long complained of political marginalization. —Agencies

Iraqis maimed in battle struggle to survive as amputees

BAGHDAD: Karrar Hassan, 25, is just one of tens of thousands of Iraqi fighters wounded battling the Islamic State group. Now disabled, he struggles to survive on a \$400 pension. In 2014, he was unemployed and joined the Hashed Al-Shaabi, a paramilitary coalition dominated by Iran-backed groups that fought alongside Iraqi government forces against the jihadists. Months later, during fierce fighting for the city of Fallujah west of Baghdad, his left calf was ripped open by a blast and Karrar lost the leg. The Hashed sent him for treatment to both Iran and Lebanon, and he returned with a prosthesis from the knee down.

This gave him enough mobility to allow a return to the front. In 2015, Karrar was fighting in Baiji city, north of the capital, when he was hit again. This time two bullets shattered his right knee, putting him out of action once and for all. Iraq declared victory over IS in December 2017, after a grueling three-year onslaught that also wounded tens of thousands of fighters. The Hashed says it lost 8,000 men in the war on IS, and 26,000 were wounded. Iraq's government, which mobilized tens of thousands of members of the security forces for the campaign, has not given its own toll.

Karrar, a father of three small children, has been left incapacitated. Unemployed and now unable to drive, he spends his days at home trying to figure out how to provide for his family on a monthly pension of 500,000 Iraqi dinars (\$400). This amount represents a bit less than a medium salary in Iraq, but for

Karrar it is not enough to buy medicine for his injuries as well as food for his wife and three children. He says the ointment he needs to rub on his skin to avoid chafing from the prosthesis "costs \$800" and lasts for 10 months. Karrar would like to work, "but with my legs I can't even drive a taxi" or carry anything heavy.

Abu Mehdi Al-Mohandis, second-in-command in the Hashed, says hospitals run by the paramilitary unit provide free medical care for 60,000 fighters and 300,000 civilians. Dhia Hussein runs Al-Razi hospital for the Hashed in Baghdad, where he says 1,450 amputees have received treatment over the past six months alone. Iraq has a long history of bloody conflict, from the 1980-1988 war with its neighbor Iran to the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein and to the later struggle against IS. Each conflict has resulted in a heavy toll of casualties, many of whom are amputees. Tahsin Ibrahim has been making prosthetic limbs in Baghdad for more than 30 years.

He says the number of amputees has risen since the 2003 conflict, and the number of workshops specializing in prostheses and shops selling medical equipment has increased tenfold over the past 15 years. Most of Ibrahim's clients are war wounded, and he says many are forced to borrow money to pay for their artificial limbs. The most rudimentary prosthesis costs around \$1,000 in Iraq—more than twice the average monthly wage. Ahmed, 32, was deployed with the federal police to second city Mosul, one of the jihadists' main hubs before they were driven out by a fierce offensive that lasted for months. An IS mortar blast tore through his right leg, and Ahmed says his pension of 575,000 Iraqi dinars is simply inadequate.

Every month, half of this goes towards "paying for medical treatment", including doctor's visits and medicine, leaving him with just half to buy food for the family. That "is not enough". A doctor's visit also means



BAGHDAD: An Iraqi man arranges prosthetic limbs at a workshop in the capital Baghdad. —AFP

a taxi fare, he said. "The bus is not adapted for handicapped people so I have to take a taxi," said the father of four. One doctor who spoke to AFP, Ghassan al-Alussi, believes that the pensions allocated to war veterans are "insufficient". "Public and health institutions must do more for amputee fighters because they have defended the country," Alussi said. —AFP

International

South Yemeni separatists pin down government in the de facto capital

Fighting leaves 38 people dead

ADEN: Yemeni ministers were holed up in Aden's presidential palace yesterday after separatist forces seized effective control of the southern port city, dealing another blow to the country's embattled government. Pro-separatist forces backed by the UAE known as the "security belt" fanned out across the city-the country's de facto capital-after three days of fighting that left 38 people dead. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have backed the beleaguered government of President Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi since intervening against Shiite Houthi rebels in Yemen's civil war in March 2015.

But the Arab allies, whose military coalition was launched to roll back rebel gains and restore Yemen's "legitimate" government to power in Sanaa, have not intervened to prop up Hadi against his separatist rivals. The coalition has instead urged the separatists to exercise restraint and called on the government to weigh up the demands of its rivals. While Yemen's president resides in the Saudi capital, the infighting in the anti-Houthi camp has left Prime Minister Ahmed bin Dagher and a number of senior government figures holed up in the Aden presidential palace. A high-ranking military source said the separatists had also taken over the bin Dagher's office chief overnight.



Another blow to embattled government

remains at Aden port unable to be released," the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said via Twitter.

"We are also particularly concerned for those newly displaced in Aden who have fled other areas in Yemen. More than 40,000 people fled to Aden and nearby governorates since December and we anticipate more displacement as people continue to flee from hostilities in the west coast." At least 38 people have been killed and 222 wounded in Aden since Sunday, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The separatists, who for months have pushed for the reinstatement of South Yemen as an independent country, now control most of the city. Since 2015, Aden had served as a refuge for tens of thousands of Yemenis fleeing conflict in their hometowns across the country, as the Saudi-backed government battled Houthi rebels allied with Iran. A coalition offensive along the Red Sea coast has

sent new waves of displaced to the government's de facto capital in recent weeks. Save the Children on Tuesday said it was also suspending work in Aden out of fear for the safety of its staff in what the agency called the "shattered" former refuge.

Demand for self-rule

Separatists, mainly based in Aden, have gained traction since April in their push for self-rule, demanding the reinstatement of South Yemen under a self-proclaimed Southern Transitional Council. Before the fighting broke out, the STC had called on Hadi to make changes to his government, accusing it of corruption and mismanagement.

The clashes have sparked fears of a repeat of South Yemen's 1986 civil war, a failed



ADEN: Fighters from the separatist Southern Transitional Council stand at the entrance of a military camp after they took control of the pro-government position in the Dar Saad district, in the north of Aden yesterday. —AFP

socialist coup which killed thousands in just six days and helped pave the way for the 1991 unification of South and North Yemen. The separatists, who enjoy popular support and are backed by some regular troops, have rapidly gained control over all but one district in Aden since Sunday. The Saudi-led coalition said it would take "all necessary steps to

restore security" in Aden but has not intervened on the government's behalf.

The UAE—a pillar of the coalition—has close ties to separatist leader Hani bin Breik while its "security belt" force backs the STC. A Yemeni government source said the coalition had, however, secured guarantees the separatists would not storm the presidential palace in Aden. More than

9,200 Yemenis have been killed since the coalition intervened in the war three years ago, triggering what the UN has called the world's largest humanitarian disaster. The coalition's original mission of rolling back Houthi gains has expanded to include fighting jihadist groups that have flourished during the war, and now keeping the peace between its allies on the ground. —AFP

Texas executes man who murdered his girlfriend and wife

CHICAGO: The US state of Texas executed an inmate Tuesday for the brutal killing of his girlfriend while he was on parole for the murder of his wife. William Rayford lost his final appeals just hours prior to his evening execution, including at the US Supreme Court. The appeals delayed the process for a few hours, but the lethal injection was ultimately carried out and Rayford pronounced dead at 8:48 pm (0248 GMT). The 64-year-old was convicted of killing his girlfriend Carol Lynn Thomas Hall in 1999, after an argument the two had in her home. At the time, Rayford was on parole, having served eight years of a 23-year sentence for the 1986 murder of his estranged wife Gail Ann Rayford.

His last statement included a request for forgiveness from the family of his second victim, according to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. "Please find it in your hearts to forgive me," Rayford said. "By no means am



William Rayford

I happy for what I've done. I have asked the Lord to forgive me." Both of Rayford's murders were brutal attacks that occurred in front of the women's children. Hall's body was found beaten, strangled and stabbed. Hall's then 11-year-old son was also beaten and stabbed when he tried to stop the attack. He survived and was a witness in Rayford's trial.

Rayford's attorneys had asked the US Supreme Court to halt the execution, alleging the convict, who was black, had insufficient representation and that his initial sentencing may have been marred by race-based prejudice. In another appeal, they claimed recent tests showed Rayford suffered decades-long brain damage caused by lead poisoning from bullets and bullet fragments lodged in his body, and from contaminated water. None of the appeals panned out, as judges rejected them all. The number of executions in the US declined to a near-historic low of 23 last year, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. —AFP

'Brainwashed' kids of Islamist fighters worry Germany

BERLIN: Germany's domestic intelligence chief wants the government to review laws restricting the surveillance of minors to guard against the children of Islamist fighters returning to the country as "sleeper agents" who could carry out attacks. Hans-Georg Maassen, head of the BfV agency, told Reuters that security officials were preparing for the return of Islamic State fighters to Germany along with potentially "brainwashed" children, although no big wave appeared imminent.

Nearly 1,000 people are believed to have left Germany to join up with the Islamist militants. As the group's presence in the Middle East crumbles, some are returning with family members. Only a small number of the 290 toddlers and children who left Germany or were born in Syria and Iraq had returned thus far, Maassen said. Many were likely to still be in the region, or perhaps moving to areas such as Afghanistan, where Islamic State remains strong.

He said Germany should review laws restricting surveillance of minors under the age of 14 to prepare for the increased risk of attacks by children as young as nine who grew up in Islamic State schools. "We see that children who grew up with Islamic State were brainwashed in the schools and the kindergartens of the IS," he said. "They were confronted early with the IS ideology ... learned to fight, and were in some cases forced to participate in the abuse of prisoners, or even the killing of prisoners." He said security officials believed such children could later carry out violent attacks in Germany. "We have to consider that these children could be living time bombs," he said. "There is a danger that these children come back brainwashed with a mission to carry out attacks." Maassen's comments were the first specific estimate of the number of children affected, following his initial warning in October that such children could pose a threat after being indoctrinated in battlefield areas. The radicalization of minors has been a big topic in Germany given that three of five Islamist attacks in Germany in 2016 were carried out by minors, and a 12-year-old boy was also detained after trying to bomb a Christmas market in Ludwigshafen.—Reuters

Germany raises anti-Semitism alarm

BERLIN: German leaders are increasingly alarmed about a resurgence of anti-Semitism 73 years after the Holocaust, stemming from an emboldened far right and an influx of refugees from countries hostile to Israel. Germany is marking the 1945 liberation of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz with solemn ceremonies, but also warnings of the need for stronger vigilance. On the anniversary on Saturday, Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned revisionist forces seeking to call into question the country's commitment to atoning for its Nazi past.

She said fighting anti-Semitism and racism must be a "daily task". "It is inconceivable and shameful that no Jewish institution can exist without police protection, whether it is a school, a kindergarten or a synagogue," she said. Merkel, who a decade ago became the first German chancellor to address the Israeli Knesset, has committed to creating a new position of commissioner on anti-Semitism under the new government she hopes to form by March. The move was prompted in part by demonstrations in Berlin in December against the US decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital which saw some protesters chant anti-Semitic slogans and torch Israeli flags.

Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said at the time that although Berlin opposed the move by US President Donald Trump, it strongly condemned the aggressive rallies in German cities. "One has to be ashamed when hatred of Jews is put on display so openly on the streets of German cities," he said. The demonstrations heightened a sense of anxiety expressed by the Germany's Jewish community, now more than 200,000 strong, over the arrival since 2015 of more than one million predominantly Muslim asylum seekers. —AFP

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International

Babies in the House: UK's MPs seek family reforms

British lawmakers eye proxy voting

LONDON: As Prime Minister Theresa May's minority government pushes crucial Brexit legislation through parliament, British MPs cannot afford to miss a vote—even if it means taking their babies with them. Darren Jones found himself caring for his newborn daughter Ophelia when he was called to vote this month against a law that would repeal Britain's membership of the European Union. He took her past the green benches of the House of Commons chamber, and through the so-called division lobbies where MPs cast their votes.

"She slept through the whole thing," the opposition Labor lawmaker said, adding: "Sadly her vote didn't count." When MPs were called last year to authorize the government to start the Brexit process, Conservative MP Chloe Smith broke her maternity leave to vote with her baby Alastair. "Whichever way you look at it, this was a bit of history and it'll be a privilege to be able to tell our son he was there," she said afterwards.

She was hesitant about bringing him into the chamber, but Speaker John Bercow said: "Don't be sheepish about it, the little baby is welcome to come in! There's no problem." However, there are many who believe these MPs should not have to bring their babies in for late-night votes, and are pushing for a change in the rules.

Accused of hiding baby

MPs from across the political divide have joined forces to call a Commons debate on allowing new parents to vote by proxy—asking another MP to vote for them. "It's quite a small change but would have a big impact, and bring the House of Commons up to date," former Labor minister Harriet Harman told AFP.

She had three children in the 1980s while serving as an MP—and the atmosphere was very different. "I was accused

of smuggling my baby through the division lobbies under my coat," she said, saying she received a "horrible, hostile" reaction. She was doing no such thing—"I was still fat from just having had my baby. I shouldn't have been voting at all." The announcement earlier this month by New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern that she was pregnant shows how much times have changed. But she still promised to be "available" even while taking time off after having the baby.

New Zealand is among a number of countries, including Germany and in Scandinavia, that offers paid parental leave. This is not yet available in Britain, although Harman is pressing for the change. There are now more than 200 women in the 650-seat Commons, and 17 have had babies since 2010, with at least two others currently pregnant. Men also want to play a more active role in their children's lives, and the motion does not discriminate between mothers and fathers. It also includes adoptions.

Accused of laziness

The whips, who enforce party discipline, often allow MPs to miss votes and debates due to ill-health and for family reasons, but the system is informal and in tight votes, can be limited. It is also private, and some MPs with young children have been criticized for being "lazy" by their political opponents after missing votes or debates.

Proxy voting would allow them to publicly register their position on an issue—particularly important when, with May's fragile Conservative government, every vote is on a knife-edge. "When we have such a balanced parliament it means that MPs have to be here to register their views, and indeed want to be here," Maria Miller, chair of parliament's women



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament's Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows Conservative MP Chloe Smith (left) walking to vote in the commons holding her baby. —AFP

and equalities committee said. In Spain, lawmakers can cast votes electronically for reasons of parental absence or serious sickness.

There have long been calls for electronic voting in Britain, where Commons votes are already recorded on iPads, although there is little sign of reform. This week's motion on "baby leave" is not binding but if passed, would

indicate to the parliamentary authorities an appetite for change. The speaker has already revised sitting hours to make them a little more family-friendly, and opened a late-night creche nearby on the site of a popular former bar. "The place needs to work around people having families. You want people who are having families to be part of the debate," said Jones.—AFP

News in brief

Helicopter crashes in US

LOS ANGELES: Three people were killed when a tour and flight-training helicopter crashed into a house in coastal southern California yesterday, witnesses and emergency personnel said. Witnesses described seeing a plume of smoke as the four-seat Robinson 44 craft plunged to the ground and appeared to clip the roof of one home before skidding along the ground at an intersection and smashing into another house. A nearby resident told the local ABC7 news channel it "sounded like a train coming through." Upon arriving at the scene she said she "saw one man out, I'm not sure if he fell out, and there was body parts." "I put my hand on the back of the helicopter and started praying over them. Because I knew at that point there weren't any survivors," she added.—AFP

Headscarf protests 'childish'

TEHRAN: Iran's chief prosecutor has played down recent protests by women removing their headscarves in public, saying they were "trivial" and "childish" moves possibly incited by foreigners. "This is a trivial matter and not a matter of concern," Mohammad Jafar Montazeri said in comments carried by the ISNA news agency yesterday. "This was a childish move by a young girl taking off her scarf, where some are carrying on with their daily lives." He had been asked about one of at least two women detained this week after standing on pillar boxes in busy streets without the mandatory headscarf. Unprecedented images of at least 11 women protesting the same way have been widely shared on social media.—AFP

Three gunned down

PHNOM PENH: Three Cambodians patrolling a protected forest in the remote east were gunned down after seizing a chainsaw from illegal loggers, authorities said yesterday, in violence highlighting the murky world of the country's timber trade. A military officer, a park ranger and an employee of the prominent NGO Wildlife Conservation Society were shot dead on Tuesday as they were leaving Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary in Mondulkiri province, national police spokesman Kirth Chantharith said. He said police suspected Cambodian border forces, who were assigned to investigate a stolen chainsaw, were responsible for the killings. "We suspect it was them who fired" on the group, Kirth Chantharith said, declining to elaborate further. Authorities are still investigating the incident and searching for suspects, he added.—AFP

Vatican rebukes cardinal

VATICAN CITY: The Vatican yesterday rebuked a senior cardinal who said its diplomats were "selling out" Chinese Catholics loyal to the pope as part of a deal aimed at normalizing ties with Beijing's communist government. In a sharply worded statement, the Vatican said it was surprising and regrettable that some people in the Church were "fostering confusion and controversy". It came a day after Cardinal Joseph Zen, the outspoken former archbishop of Hong Kong, caused a stir with a long post on his Facebook page that was highly critical of the Vatican. The statement, which did not name Zen but which official Vatican sources said was prompted by the controversy he began, said it was "surprising and regrettable" that some were promoting "a presumed difference of thought and action" between Pope Francis and his top aides over China strategy.—Reuters

Husband admits grisly killing that gripped France

BESANCON: A French IT worker on Tuesday admitted to killing his wife in a case that has gripped the country since her charred corpse was found in a wood in October. The body of Alexia Daval, a 29-year-old bank employee, was found hidden under tree branches near their town of Gray-la-Ville in eastern France. Her husband Jonathann Daval, 34, had previously insisted that Alexia had gone jogging on October 28 and never come back.

In the days after her death he cut a distraught figure, appearing in tears at a press conference with her parents and leading one of the running outings organized across the country in her memory. But his lawyers told reporters that Daval had finally admitted he killed his wife, though "he says it was an accident, that he did not want to do it, and that he regrets it". "He strangled her," lawyer Randall Schwerdorffer told the press, adding that his client's motivation "was not criminal".

"There were some very strong tensions in their relationship as a couple," he added. "Alexia had an overwhelming personality, so he felt diminished, stifled. At one point too many words were said, a fit of anger proved too much, and he couldn't control himself." Following the announcement, local prosecutor Edwige Roux-Morizot announced



GRAY: In this file photo, Alexia Daval's husband Jonathann Daval walks behind her portrait during a silent march in Gray in memory of Daval, 29, whose burnt body was found three days after her disappearance on October 28 while she went jogging. —AFP

that Daval had been charged with his wife's murder. Schwerdorffer said Daval maintains that he acted alone but he added that his client insists he did not set fire to his wife's body. The murder case shocked the couple's peaceful town, with nearly 10,000 people turning out for a silent march in her memory.

'Marital problems'

Daval, initially questioned as a witness, had told police an argument with his wife turned physical on the day before her disappearance, which he said explained the scratches and bite marks on her hands. Several sources told AFP the couple were

experiencing marital problems. Police arrested Daval on Monday and searched his home after interviewing more than 200 people over the past three months.

Police sources said a neighbor had reported hearing a car leaving the couple's home on the night before Alexia was reported missing—a fact backed up by a tracking device on his work car. Traces of tyres matching those of his car were also discovered close to where Alexia's body was found, Schwerdorffer said. A source close to the inquiry also said the body was covered in a sheet that was thought to come from the couple's home.—AFP

Melania braves public eye after cheating claim

WASHINGTON: First Lady Melania Trump made a very visible return to the public stage Tuesday by attending her husband's maiden State of the Union address, her first official appearance since accusations of infidelity surfaced about the president. The enigmatic wife of Donald Trump emerged publicly for the first time since she fed the Washington rumor mill by cancelling her trip to Davos, Switzerland, leaving her husband to attend last week's World Economic Forum on his own.

Melania's no-show in Davos came on the heels of a bombshell report that Trump had a fling with porn star Stormy Daniels in 2006, just months after his wife gave birth to their son. But for Trump's big night in Congress, Melania arrived smiling and waving, to warm and extended applause—dressed in a crisp cream white pantsuit that stood in contrast to the black donned by Democratic lawmakers in solidarity with the victims of sexual harassment.

Minutes later, her husband took the floor and exchanged waves with his wife. Among Trumps' guests in the first lady's box were a US Marine corporal who

stepped on an explosive device and lost both legs while deployed in Iraq in 2007; first responders who helped save hurricane victims in Louisiana and Texas, and parents of children killed by the gang MS-13.

Breaking with tradition, the first couple arrived separately to the Capitol, because, according to the first lady's spokesperson Stephanie Grisham, she was accompanying guests. Afterwards, the first lady was seen being escorted out of the gallery by a military officer, as Trump spoke with lawmakers and administration officials on the House floor. It was not immediately clear whether the Trumps returned together to the White House.

The Melania mystery

As the 47-year-old wife of a 71-year-old man known for past lewd remarks about women, and whose two past divorces became public spectacles, Melania Trump is dogged by speculation that they lead largely separate lives. Speculation flared anew when The Wall Street Journal reported on January 12 that Trump had paid Daniels \$130,000, one month before the November 2016 election, to keep their adulterous liaison quiet. The porn star was questioned anew about the reports as a guest given star billing Tuesday on late night ABC talk show "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" But Daniels, reportedly bound by the non-disclosure agreement about the alleged fling, revealed little—laughing awkwardly, flashing tight-



WASHINGTON: US First Lady Melania Trump looks on as she arrives for the State of the Union address at the US Capitol in Washington, DC. —AFP

lipped smiles and deflecting Kimmel's questions at every chance.

"I thought this was a talk show, not a horror movie," she said as Kimmel read from the transcript of a 2011 In Touch magazine interview, only recently published and reportedly about the liaison. As for Melania, her opinions and goals have remained a mystery to millions of Americans. She is a

former model who once posed nude in her husband's private jet, and the first foreign-born wife of a US president in nearly 200 years. She spent her first months as first lady living in New York, and refused to move to the White House until her young son Barron finished the school year. She makes few public speeches, and is rarely seen in Washington.—AFP

International

Pakistani killing sparks rage over extrajudicial murders

Bullet-riddled bodies dumped in barren neighborhoods

KARACHI: The killing of a young social media star in Pakistan's chaotic port city of Karachi has unleashed festering anger at a rash of alleged extrajudicial murders and the police accused of orchestrating them. Hundreds of people die each year at the hands of law enforcement officers under pressure to crack down on kidnapping, murder and gang crime in a city routinely ranked among the most dangerous in the world.

But the fatal shooting of 23-year-old Naqeebullah Mehsud, an aspiring model whose goofy dance videos and airbrushed brown locks had earned him a large Facebook following, brought thousands of people onto the streets to urge an end to impunity. "We demand that his killer be hanged publicly," said Mohammad Khan Mehsud of a national outcry over his son's death. "We saw people from all the four provinces (of Pakistan) - men and women, kids, youngsters and sisters-show solidarity with Naqeebullah".

Mehsud was shot dead along with three other people in what police say was an operation targeting Taliban insurgents on January 3rd. Friends and relatives insist the internet celebrity had no connection to militancy. They say he was the victim of a so-called "encounter killing" - an "encounter" being police shorthand for when a suspect resists arrest. Such deaths have surged in Karachi since 2013 when paramilitary forces and police launched a massive "clean up" operation targeting Taliban militants, organized crime networks and armed political muscle.

In its wake, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRC) said there were at least 598 extrajudicial killings in 2014 and an additional 343 the following year. A preliminary investigation headed by Sanaullah Abbasi, chief of

Karachi's Counter Terrorism Department, said the encounter involving Mehsud was probably staged. "We have interviewed some militants (purportedly linked with the case) in jail and inspected the scene of crime that seemed to be very doubtful," Abbasi said. "Prima facie, it was a fake encounter."

Much of the anger following the social media star's death has focused on Rao Anwar, senior superintendent of the Karachi police force. Anwar, who rose through the force's battle-hardened ranks in the 1990s, has been accused of spearheading hundreds of killings including that of Mehsud. Last week a Karachi lawyer filed a petition in the Sindh High Court, listing 250 allegedly fake encounters involving Anwar since 1992. The police officer has also been added to a travel ban after trying to flee the country. He has missed successive court summonses and is now believed to be on the run, according to a senior

police official familiar with the case.

One option

Yet as anger grows against him, experts warn that the campaign is not the work of a few bad cops, but rather the result of institutional shortcomings in the sprawling and violent megacity. Long before Anwar, bullet-riddled bodies were being dumped in barren neighborhoods as police with little faith in the courts took on dangerous armed political factions and often heavily-armed insurgents. "The investigation procedures are archaic," said Asad Iqbal Butt, director of HRC. "So they (police) are left with only one option... pick a guy, hang him, beat him and if he survives that is his fate and if he dies, just dump him in the bushes." The rise in encounter killings accompanying the clean-up offensive has



KARACHI: A Pakistani protester holds a photograph of 23-year-old man Naqeebullah Mehsud, during a protest in Karachi. The killing of a young social media star in Pakistan's chaotic port city of Karachi has uncorked festering anger over a rash of alleged extrajudicial murders and the powerful police accused of orchestrating them. —AFP

coincided with a drop in violent crime-with instances of kidnapping, murder and terrorism all dramatically down. "It is good that crimes and violence have come down in the city as police and (paramilitary) Rangers have been killing the terrorists and criminals. But common and innocent people must

be not the victims," said Umeed Ali, an auto rickshaw driver in Karachi. Rehmat Khan, a retired senior police officer, said that in developed countries, "encounter" killings were rare. "Here it takes place because we are incompetent professionally, we look for short cuts." —AFP



City ranked among most dangerous in the world

A ferry sinks in the Pacific

WELLINGTON: More than 80 people were aboard a ferry that sank in the remote Pacific, officials confirmed yesterday, as a senior Kiribati lawmaker called for an independent inquiry into the vessel's disappearance. A multinational rescue operation is scouring vast swaths of ocean for survivors, but only seven people have been found alive so far and hopes are fading of locating any more.

Initial estimates of how many people were on the MV Butirai when it went missing ranged from 35 to more than 100, but officials said the numbers were slowly becoming clearer. "Kiribati authorities have confirmed that about 80 passengers plus crew of likely about five were on the ferry," Rescue Coordination Centre NZ said in a statement. The centre said four aircraft from New Zealand, Australia and the United States had helped conduct sweeps in the area where the ferry went missing. It said the search was concentrating on finding a life raft that was launched from the sinking ferry.

"The life raft is designed for 25 people but more can be squeezed in uncomfortably," it added. Former Kiribati Prime Minister Ieremia Tabai, who represents the island of Nonouti from where the ferry departed on January 18, slammed the government's handling of the disaster. Tabai said his grief-stricken constituents on the island of 2,000 wanted to know why it took eight days to raise the alarm and how the unseaworthy vessel was allowed to sail in the first place. "This tragedy demands an independent commission of inquiry," he told Radio New Zealand.

"We need to know why it happened and (who is) responsible." The MV Butirai, 17.5-metre (57.4-foot) wooden catamaran, set off on a planned two-day voyage to Betio, the largest township of Kiribati's capital, South Tarawa. Local authorities said it ran aground and underwent repairs to its propeller shaft before it left Nonouti.



Boys jump off the deck of the ferry MV Butirai, a 17.5-metre wooden catamaran, at an unknown location. More than 80 people were aboard the MV Butirai that sank in the remote Pacific, officials confirmed yesterday. —AFP

Tabai said the vessel was not believed to be carrying mandatory safety equipment such as an emergency locator beacon. "The government is responsible because they did not look after the situation well, they should have ensured that particular vessel should not have sailed in the first place," he said.

He said the ferry was a free inter-island service that was carrying a large number of high-school students

returning to Tarawa before the start of a new term. Tabai said the ferry's loss was a tragedy for Kiribati, a nation of 33 atolls and reefs with a population of about 110,000, that lies some 3,460 kilometers (2,150 miles) northeast of Fiji. "It's a real sad day for those who lost their loved one. For my village two or three people that I personally know, that live next door in my village, were on that boat and perished." —AFP

Taliban active in 70 percent of Afghanistan

WASHINGTON: The Taliban are openly active in 70 percent of Afghanistan's districts, fully controlling 4 percent of the country and demonstrating an open physical presence in another 66 percent, according to a BBC study published on Tuesday. The BBC estimate, which it said was based on conversations with more than 1,200 individual local sources in all districts of the South Asian country, was significantly higher than the most recent assessment by the NATO-led coalition of the Taliban's presence.

The coalition said on Tuesday that the Taliban contested or controlled only 44 percent of Afghan districts as of October 2017. Afghanistan has been reeling over the past nine days from a renewed spate of violence that is adding scrutiny to the latest, more aggressive US-backed strategy to bolster Afghan forces battling the Taliban in a 16-year-old war.

A bomb hidden in an ambulance struck the city center and killed more than 100 people, just over a week after an attack on the Hotel Intercontinental, also in Kabul, which left more than 20 people dead,



FARAH: An Afghan National Army soldier fires an artillery shell during an ongoing anti-Taliban operation at Farah province. —AFP

including four US citizens. Although the BBC counted 399 districts in Afghanistan, the NATO-led force counted 407 districts. The reason behind the discrepancy was not immediately clear. The BBC study said the Afghan government controlled 122 districts, or about 30 percent of the country. Still, it noted that did not mean that they were free from Taliban attacks.

"Kabul and other major cities, for example, suffered major attacks - launched from adjacent areas, or by sleeper cells - during the research

period, as well as before and after," the report said. Asked about the BBC's study, the Pentagon did not comment directly, but pointed to the latest figures by the NATO-led coalition asserting that about 56 percent of Afghanistan's territory was under Afghan government control or influence. The study by Britain's public broadcaster quoted a spokesman for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani playing down the findings. The BBC study also said Islamic State had a presence in 30 districts, but noted it did not fully control any of them. —Reuters

Daring Himalayan rescue spotlights the 'Ice Warriors'

WARSAW: The daring Polish rescue of a stranded French mountaineer in the Himalayas this weekend was made possible by a long tradition of climbing that has seen Poles become first to reach the summit of most of the world's highest peaks in winter. France's Elisabeth Revol was facing death on a Pakistan peak nicknamed "killer mountain" when an elite group of Polish climbers scaled part of the 8,125 metre (26,660 foot) Nanga Parbat in darkness early Sunday to rescue her. Poor weather meant Polish duo Denis Urubko and Adam Bielecki were unable to reach fellow countryman Tomek Mackiewicz, who had been climbing with Revol and who she left behind to save her life.

Pakistani climber Karim Shah, who was in contact with the expedition, said the rescue effort was unmatched in the climbing world, with the team ascending 1,200 meters in complete darkness along a treacherous route without a fixed rope. "It's the next generation of 'Ice Warriors'," said Piotr Pustelnik, president of the Polish Mountaineering Association (PZA), referring to the nickname that Poles acquired in the 1980s after coming up with the idea to tackle the Himalayas in winter.

They invented the sport, and they dominate it. Poles were the first to reach 10 out of 13 of the world's 8,000-metre-plus peaks during the harsher conditions of the colder months. One summit still remains to be conquered. "We had the misfortune of living behind the Iron Curtain, so we didn't have the opportunity to conquer the Himalayas in previous decades like our Western counterparts," Pustelnik told AFP. "When we were finally able to go there, all the summits had already been conquered. So our friend Andrzej Zawada had the idea of climbing them in winter, something no one had done before." —AFP

News in brief

Earthquake kills child

KABUL: A 6.1 magnitude earthquake struck northeast Afghanistan yesterday, shaking large parts of the region and killing a child and injuring several people in neighboring Pakistan, officials said. The quake, which rattled buildings in the Afghan capital and was also felt in parts of India, struck 270 km (167 miles) northeast of Kabul in the Hindu Kush mountains, at a depth of 180 km, the European Mediterranean Seismological Centre said. A baby girl was killed and 10 people were injured when roofs of mud-walled houses collapsed in the southwestern Pakistani province of Baluchistan, a district deputy chief, Shabbir Megnal, said. There were no immediate reports of any serious damage or casualties in Afghanistan. Large parts of the region are seismically active because a tectonic plate, known as the Indian plate, is pushing north into the Eurasian plate. —Reuters

'Nazi songbook' fraternity

VIENNA: Austria's chancellor said yesterday that one of the country's controversial nationalist fraternities would be disbanded after it emerged that it had printed song texts celebrating the Holocaust and other Nazi atrocities. The lyrics in the book produced in 1997 by the Germania zu Wiener Neustadt organization included "Step on the gas, old Germanics, we can make it to seven million", according to media reports. Six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust during World War II, many of them in gas chambers. Other songs in the book praised the Waffen SS and Nazi paratroopers behind war crimes committed in Greece. The scandal took on a political dimension because until recently the vice-chairman of the fraternity was Udo Landbauer, a candidate for the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) in local elections in Lower Austria state last Sunday. —AFP

Islamic academic detained

PARIS: Prominent Swiss academic Tariq Ramadan, a professor of Islamic studies at the University of Oxford, has been taken into custody by French police following accusations of rape, a judicial source said yesterday. The source said a preliminary investigation was opened after two complaints were filed against Ramadan, a well-known figure in the Middle East. He is the grandson of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt, Hassan Al-Banna. Ramadan took a leave of absence from Oxford last November after two women filed complaints in France alleging rape. He has denied the allegations and filed a complaint for slander against author Henda Ayari, one of his accusers. —Reuters

Indecent dance party

PHNOM PENH: Ten foreigners, charged in Cambodia with producing pornography related to indecent dancing at a party, have tested negative for drugs, police and their lawyer said yesterday. The 10 were arrested on Jan. 25 along with 77 other foreigners in a raid on the "Pub Crawl or Let's Get Wet" event in Siam Reap province, home to the ancient Angkor Wat ruins. A Cambodian police officer assigned to the case told Reuters, on condition of anonymity, that urine tests had not found any "addictive substance". Sourng Sophea, an attorney for the foreigners, who include five Britons, a Dutch citizen, two Canadians, a New Zealander and a Norwegian, said police had carried the drug tests at the prison where they are being held on Tuesday. —Reuters

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

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Davos: Brazil is back

By Michel Temer
President of the Federative Republic of Brazil

Last Wednesday, I set out on my first 2018 international activity. I participated in the World Economic Forum in Davos in Switzerland. It enabled me to address a global audience comprising political leaders, business men and women and opinion makers at various points during the forum. Once again, I spoke about the reform program which has been transforming Brazil.



President Michel Temer

We have turned the page of the economic crisis because we were able to say no to populism and acted responsibly. Moved by a long-term vision, our government has been building, through a permanent dialogue with the National Congress and the society, the foundations of an efficient state, which provides its citizens with quality services within a balanced budget. These also constitute the foundations for sustainable growth, indispensable to advance the development of Brazil and effectively remove millions of Brazilians from poverty. In a little less than a year and a half of management, in practical terms we have corroborated our commitment to fiscal balance. The results are here. Inflation has fallen and it is once again under control. The exchange rate has been stabilized. The interest rates have shrunk to their lowest historical levels. It was with achievements and not voluntarism that we succeeded in restoring the confidence in the Brazilian economy - confidence which has already been reflected upon the increasing industrial activity, the vitality of foreign trade and renewed job creation.

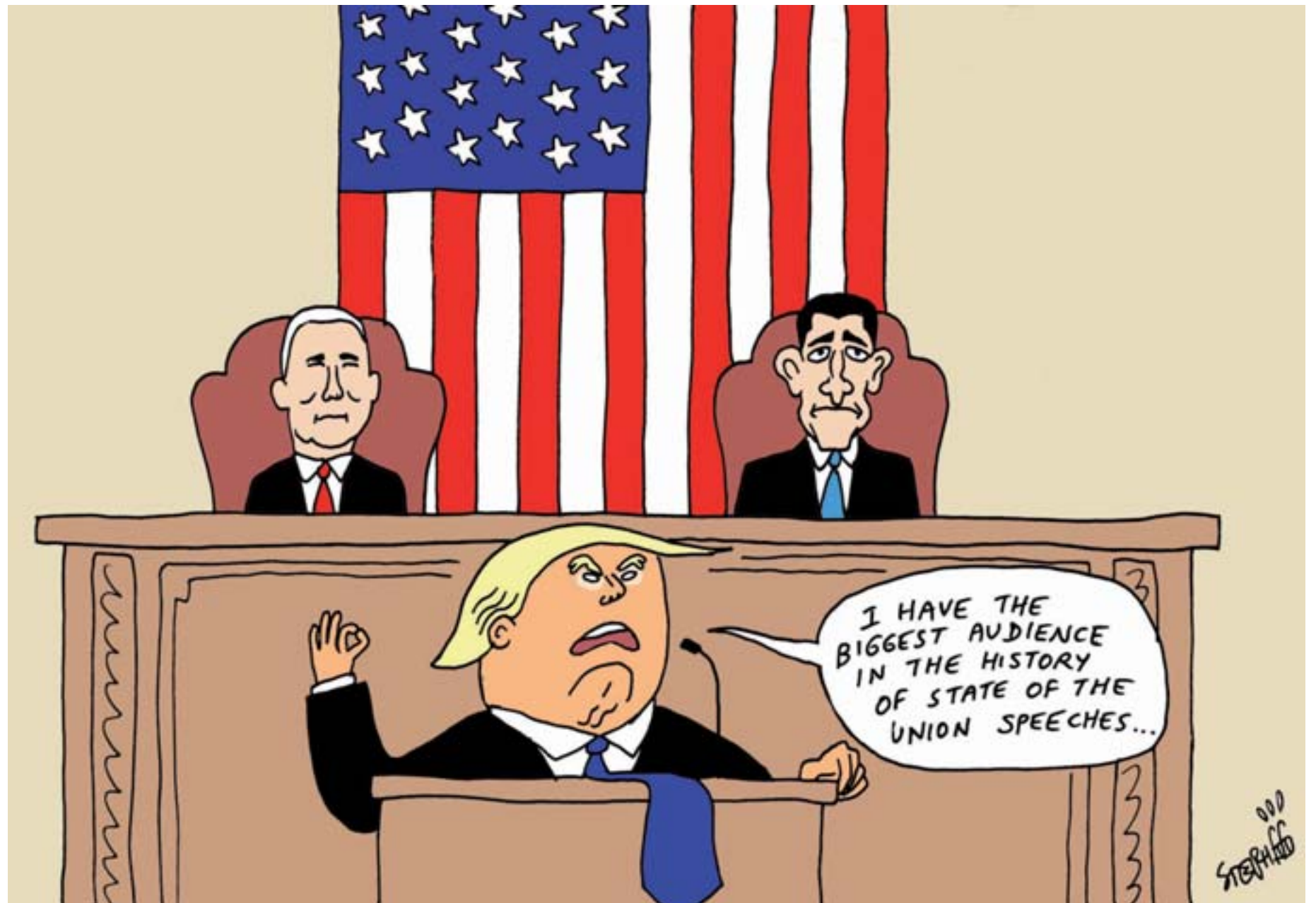
The investor who observes Brazil today is able to see a government working with precise diagnostic, applying solutions which actually work. They will note that it is an administration engaged in making the business environment ever more dynamic. Everywhere, we have been removing bureaucratic obstacles, which used to obstruct the pathways for entrepreneurs - it has become easier to start a business, import and export. The modernization of employment law, which has already come into force, is a particularly relevant milestone in our efforts to tune Brazil into the realities of the current economy, without affecting workers' rights. On our horizon, a tax simplification is still to come in order to make tax payments swift and rational. In all of those actions, what the trend heralds is a Brazil where there is an ever increasing economic freedom.

Public accounts in good order and a competitive private sector are essential for sustainable growth as much as is quality infrastructure, consonant with the vast economic potential of our country. That is why, in Davos, I presented the various opportunities of the Advancing Partnerships Program (Avancar, Parcerias), comprising federal government concessions and privatizations. The model which we have instituted offers clearly defined and stable rules, assuring legal security. It is not by chance that it has been attracting attention throughout the world. To date, we have completed over 70 projects including roads, ports, airports, power transmission lines, gas and oil fields. Investments have been estimated at R\$142 billion. In 2018, there will be another 75 project proposals, which also include railways, likely to attract over R\$130 billion. The reform will strengthen the credibility of the economy, enabling it to join in an enduring growth cycle.

Changes

The changes which Brazil has been undergoing, which have indeed better prepared it for the 21st century challenges, are not exhausted at the domestic level. In the foreign area, we have acted in the spirit of openness, considering that it is fallacious to think that there can be development in an environment of a closed economy in the current world. Our endeavor in achieving more and better integration begins in our region, in the Mercosul jointly with all of the other partners. Brazil has been setting in motion a program, which advances free markets as one of its key pillars. In addition to removing inter-block trade barriers, we have been fostering a rapprochement with the countries of the Pacific Alliance. For the first time in twenty years, we have a realistic perspective to conclude the Mercosul-European Union trade agreement - an agreement which we wish to be wide-ranging and balanced, and which is truly able to cater for the interests of the Brazilian society. In addition, we have been opening new negotiation fronts with partners from a variety of quarters. An undeniable fact for those who keep a sense of objectivity is that Brazil has already travelled a long way under our government, and at speed. We have achieved a great deal, always on the basis of dialogue, the raw material of democracy: with a genuine disposition too, aimed at bringing alignments closer together and articulating efficient solutions for the needs of the country. The challenge which remains now, and to which we are fully committed, is the Social Security reform. At Davos, I ratified my commitment to a fair and sustainable social security system able to correlate with the demographic evolution of our population. This is a commitment which I renew, firstly, before the Brazilian people, and particularly the less privileged: after all, the system as it is, transfers income from those who have less to those who need it the least. The reform will abolish privileges and will ensure the payments of all current and future pensions. It will reinforce the credibility of the Brazilian economy enabling it to join in a lasting growth cycle. Bravely and with renewed resolve, we have been facing the issues with which the historical juncture presents the whole nation. I am left without any doubt whatsoever, that once again, the challenges will be overcome and common good prevail.

Brazil is great country which garners assets of all sorts. It is a consumer market with over 200 million people, with abundant natural resources. Our people are creative and hard-working. We have got a diversified industry, a highly productive agriculture. Our energy matrix is one of the cleanest in the world. We are a country with continental dimensions, located far from geopolitical tensions. These are the reasons which have always made Brazil an attractive destination for investors. In recent times, the problem was that the country had somewhat lost its bearings. Well then, what our government did again was to bring Brazil back on course. From the outset, we were clear about the course which we ought to follow: the course of responsibility, of openness, of freedoms. And we will not divert from such a course; neither will we divert ourselves from it. This is the message which I have conveyed to the Brazilian people and which I took to Davos.



Can Trump follow through talk?

In his State of the Union address on Tuesday, US President Donald Trump spoke of unifying the country and delivering for the American people - and he has the opportunity to back up his words with action almost immediately. Trump faces a series of policy choices in the next few weeks and months that will show whether he is sincere in his pledge to "seek out common ground" and could also shape his presidency and legacy.

With congressional elections nine months away, Trump's course of action could decide whether his Republicans maintain control of the US Senate and the House of Representatives, or if one or both flip to a Democratic majority, an outcome that would almost certainly derail his policy agenda. Trump faces near-term deadlines on reaching an agreement to protect young immigrants known as "Dreamers" and on avoiding another government shutdown. He also hopes to muscle an infrastructure bill through a divided Congress.

In his address, Trump pushed a hard line on immigration, insisting on a border wall and other concessions from Democrats, even as he urged lawmakers toward bipartisan compromises. "Substantively, he didn't move the needle on policy, but the much sunnier and more optimistic tone was a welcome change," Michael Steel, a Republican strategist, said of Trump's speech. "Now let's see if he can and will stick with it."

The consistency of Trump's focus and tone has been a serious issue since his term began. A year ago, he delivered a well-received speech to Congress, only to render that an afterthought when he began alleging that former President Barack Obama had ordered his phones wiretapped during the 2016 presidential campaign. As he looks for wins on domestic policy issues, Trump's handling of a special counsel's probe of alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election will be closely scrutinized.

Media reports that Trump last year considered firing Special Counsel Robert Mueller, who is conducting the Russia investigation, drew new attention to a probe that

has hung over Trump since the start of his presidency. Any move against Mueller or Rod Rosenstein, a top Justice Department official who oversees the probe, would likely spark a political firestorm. And each day, Trump risks undermining any goodwill he builds with an errant tweet or outburst.

Trump's speech on Tuesday came just a week after he gleefully accused Democrats of losing their nerve during a brief government shutdown. Now, he is asking them to "come together" to solve the nation's problems. The address was filled with lofty calls toward a higher duty



Trump was speaking to two audiences

that transcends party, an ideal that presidents often urge in the State of the Union addresses but rarely fulfill. "This is, in fact, our new American moment," Trump said, adding that "all of us, together, as one team, one people, and one American family can do anything."

Trump and Congress face an early February deadline for avoiding another government shutdown over the same issues that led to the last one this month: Federal spending and an agreement on a program to protect hundreds of thousands of Dreamers. Trump devoted the largest portion of his remarks to immigration, saying he was "extending an open hand" to working with both par-

ties toward a comprehensive agreement but also insisting that it include increased border security measures and changes to restrict legal migration programs. He also called on Congress to pass a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure bill, one that would need Democratic votes to have any chance of survival.

Two Audiences

As the congressional elections approach, Trump remains mired at about 40 percent approval in polls, a historic low for a president this early in his tenure. Trump was, in fact, speaking to two audiences on Tuesday: His passionate base of supporters, and the rest of the country that has yet to embrace him. Accordingly, he had to talk tough on issues such as immigration, trade, foreign policy, and the national anthem, to reassure his base that he was the same hardliner he elected, while also suggesting to other voters that he supports helping "Dreamers," rebuilding infrastructure, fighting the opioid epidemic and reforming the prison system.

Republicans likely will need voters from both those camps to hold onto the House and Senate. "If he could give that speech every day for the rest of the year, the midterms wouldn't be a problem," said Alex Conant, a former top aide to Republican Senator Marco Rubio. But Trump's history suggests he cannot, or will not, do that, said John Geer, an expert in public opinion at Vanderbilt University. "Given expectations, he did well," Geer said. "But his tweets get as much coverage as any speech, so he will likely undermine any gains he might have made within 48 hours."

Trump's constant tweeting could quickly diminish the significance of his State of the Union speech. His recent predecessors, including Obama and President George W. Bush, used the bully pulpit much more selectively. Now, Americans hear from the president almost every day and, frequently, throughout the day. That puts more pressure than ever less on the president's words and more on his actions. —Reuters

Crumbling bridges? Fret not America, it's not that bad

In his State of the Union address on Tuesday, President Donald Trump called out the nation's crumbling infrastructure and called for more spending on bridges and roads. "Together, we can reclaim our great building heritage. We will build gleaming new roads, bridges, highways, railways, and waterways all across our land," Trump said, calling for public and private infrastructure investments of at least \$1.5 trillion over 10 years.

The details of Trump's plan are nebulous, so it is unclear how much will go to what projects. But Trump, along with other politicians and lobbyists, has frequently cited bridges as a danger to people and commerce. Business groups as diverse as the National Stone and Gravel Association and the American Beverage Association have called for more spending.

However, a Reuters analysis of nationwide bridge data reveals the fretting over the safety of bridges and other road infrastructure is overblown and could distract from more serious problems elsewhere:

- About 9 percent of highway bridges were considered structurally deficient in 2017. But only 4 percent of bridges carrying significant traffic, at least 10,000 daily vehicle crossings, were deficient. That does not mean an imminent danger of collapse, just that repairs are needed.
- For those with more than 200,000 crossings, roughly the nation's 1,200 busiest bridges, that figure drops to under 2 percent, or fewer than 20 bridges.
- The share of all bridges deemed structurally deficient has been falling for decades, down from 22 percent in 1992 and 12 percent in 2009.

Indeed, though a 2014 academic study of bridge failures found roughly 120 bridges collapse or partially collapse every year, most do so because of floods, fires and collisions rather than structural decline. And most failed bridges have fewer than 755 daily crossings, with only about 4 percent involving fatalities.

"We the public should feel safe," said Wesley Cook, a structural engineer at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology who authored the 2014 bridge

failure study. The Reuters analysis squares with independent assessments that US road infrastructure is still among the world's best. America's road network, which includes its bridges, was ranked third among the largest advanced economies by company executives, behind Japan and France but superior to those of Germany, Britain, Canada and Italy, according to the World Economic Forum's latest global competitiveness report.

The United States comes only slightly behind Japan and France in rankings of overall infrastructure quality. Experts agree boosting public and private investment in infrastructure by \$1-2 trillion over the next decade might meet or come close to meeting the growing economy's needs. However, the distortion of the debate by Trump and other politicians creates a danger that resources will be misdirected from more pressing infrastructure needs, such as aged water pipes leaching lead and schools - or from projects that will have a considerable regional economic impact.

"Fixing bridges is fine until unmaintained pipes break and interrupt your commute," said Shalini Vajjhala, founder of infrastructure design firm re-focus partners. The American Society of Civil Engineers reckons US mass transit is in worse condition than any other infrastructure in terms of its quality and funding. In a 2017 report, the lobbying group also scored U.S. dams, levees and drinking water facilities as in worse condition than bridges.

Shadow of Fee Fee Creek

America was jolted by infrastructure concerns in 2007 when the Interstate 35 bridge over the Mississippi River in Minneapolis collapsed during rush hour. Thirteen people died, fueling calls for more bridge investment and shaping any discussions of US infrastructure ever since. Federal investigators, however, blamed a design flaw rather than deterioration for the collapse. The reality of US bridge problems is better reflected where Interstate 270 crosses Fee Fee Creek outside St. Louis.

That bridge carries about 223,000 vehicles every day and is among the busiest in America, according to the Department of Transportation's 2017 National Bridge Inventory analyzed by Reuters. The inventory catalogs America's 615,000 highway bridges longer than 20 feet. The Missouri state government considers the Fee Fee Creek bridge structurally deficient and has set aside \$5 million for repairs. The problem is deterioration in and



US President Donald Trump claps after the State of the Union address in the chamber of the US House of Representatives in Washington on Tuesday. —AFP

around the structures supporting the ends of the bridge, said Dennis Heckman, an engineer at Missouri's transportation department. While bridges in need of repair stand a higher risk of collapse they do not necessarily pose an imminent danger.

The state had four bridges in the 2017 inventory rated as structurally deficient with more than 200,000 daily crossings. "If they were at a point of being dangerous, they would be closed," said Heckman. The fact is, state and local governments constantly repair highways and bridges. Together with the federal government, they spent \$16.4 billion fixing bridges in 2012, according to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) latest report detailing public sector highway investments.

Public spending on transportation and water infrastructure rose modestly in 2009 and 2010 as governments countered the Great Recession, but outlays fell in the subsequent four years when taking inflation into account, according to a 2015 report by the Congressional Budget Office. For bridges, increasing spending modestly - just enough to keep up with inflation - would cut the share of those needing repairs by about two thirds by 2032, the FHWA said in the report, published in 2017. Governments need to boost spending by about \$37 billion a year to sufficiently maintain and expand roads and bridges, according to the FHWA. —Reuters

News

Trump appeals for unity, talks tough...

Continued from Page 1

to serve," he said. "Tonight, I want to talk about what kind of future we are going to have, and what kind of nation we are going to be. All of us, together, as one team, one people, and one American family."

Trump's opening tone was uncharacteristically conciliatory, although it bridged no compromise on his drive to reduce immigration - which he painted as responsible for a plethora of social ills. He touched on a range of foreign policy issues - including, in an emotive moment, offering the spotlight to crippled North Korean amputee defector Ji Seong-ho, who waved his crutches in the air as he received a prolonged standing ovation. Trump warned that Pyongyang's "reckless" nuclear drive could "very soon" threaten the US homeland, while also eyeing the geopolitical challenge posed by adversaries China and Russia.

But Trump's State of the Union, the third longest on record at one hour 20 minutes, was overwhelmingly focused on domestic concerns. Among those looking on were dozens of cross-armed Democratic lawmakers, some decked in black to honor the victims of sexual harassment and still others wearing butterfly stickers in support of immigrants - two social issues that more than any others have roiled America in the age of Trump.

Also in the audience were members of Trump's own family including the first lady, Melania, who recently cancelled a joint trip to Davos, Switzerland and has not been seen with her husband in public since reports alleged he paid porn actress Stormy Daniels hush money over an affair, which the White House denies. Breaking with tradition, the first couple arrived separately to the Capitol, because, according to the first lady's spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham, she was accompanying guests.

Over the years the State of the Union address, a set piece of the American political calendar, has lost some of its impact and pizzazz. But the primetime address, watched by as many as 40 million Americans, was still a once-in-a-year opportunity for Trump to speak to the nation and mend his

sunken approval ratings, languishing around 40 percent. A CNN poll released afterward suggested people who watched the address were underwhelmed by it.

Seeking to enliven his own base, Trump spoke at length on the need for immigration reform, drawing hisses from the opposition as he equated immigrants with criminality and economic tension and spoke of "chain migration". For decades, he lamented, "open borders" had allowed "drugs and gangs to pour into" the United States. He again called for the construction of a border wall that remains unfunded in Congress. "They have allowed millions of low-wage workers to compete for jobs and wages against the poorest Americans. Most tragically, they have caused the loss of many innocent lives."

Two couples whose daughters were murdered by MS-13, a Salvadoran gang, were among those joining the first lady to watch the address. "The United States is a compassionate nation" he said, "but as president of the United States, my highest loyalty, my greatest compassion, and my constant concern is for America's children, America's struggling workers, and America's forgotten communities."

The 71-year-old real estate mogul and reality TV star touted a long bull run on Wall Street and improving growth rates, something the White House has dubbed a "Trump bump". "The stock market has smashed one record after another, gaining \$8 trillion in value," he said, even though that narrative suffered a setback Tuesday when stocks posted their biggest drop in eight months amid fears of a bubble.

Trump also lifted his economic gaze beyond the United States, calling for "fair" trade and declaring that "the era of economic surrender is over". "America has also finally turned the page on decades of unfair trade deals that sacrificed our prosperity and shipped away our companies, our jobs, and our wealth - our nation has lost its wealth but we're getting it back so fast."

And there was a partisan-tinged focus on terror, which had been a central message of his campaign. Trump vowed to keep the Guantanamo Bay prison open - anathema to Democrats and many Republicans. The CNN poll of people who watched the speech found 48 percent said they had a "very positive" impression of it. That compared to 57 percent after Barack Obama's first State of the Union address, the network said. Trump's number was the lowest since CNN first started conducting the poll in 1998, it added. — AFP

Far-right figure embraces Islam over 'moral decline'

BERLIN: A member of Germany's far-right and anti-Muslim Alternative for Germany party (AfD) who recently converted to Islam said he did so in protest at what he sees as the "moral decline" of the Protestant church. Arthur Wagner, 48, until recently a leading party member in the state of Brandenburg, told the Bild newspaper yesterday that his decision was in part sparked by the church's acceptance of same-sex marriage and the presence of priests at gay pride marches.

"One of the reasons (for the conversion) is tied to changes that have taken place in the church, which no longer reflects my values," he told the daily. Explaining his decision, he singled out the church's position "with regard to the AfD, its support for marriage for all and the participation of pastors at Christopher Street Day, where there are children. It's unacceptable!" Christopher Street Day is an annual gathering of the LGBT community in several German and Swiss cities.

Wagner's conversion is perhaps all the more surprising given that he formerly held an official position within the Protestant church. He converted in October but only announced the decision last week,



Arthur Wagner

when he quit his leadership role in the AfD, although he remains a party member. His decision has not gone down well in the party, which is strongly anti-Islam. One of his local party colleagues, Kai Berger, said he was "very disappointed". "Many members are waiting for him to quit the party. Unfortunately our statutes do not allow us to kick him out," he said.

Wagner told Bild he had received several threats since announcing his decision. "Someone told me I should leave Germany before I start making bombs," he said. Wagner later told reporters at an impromptu news conference that he wanted his party colleagues to open up a dialogue with Muslims. "I call on our conservatives and nationalist conservatives: Turn on your brains - we have problems, we need to talk to each other," he said. — AFP

Kuwait to spend \$500bn on oil...

Continued from Page 1

"KPC is working with fast-changing variables and challenges locally and internationally, and we continue to focus on strategies that will transform Kuwait into a better position to deal with future challenges," he said. The forum brought together an international audience, attracting over 200 delegates from 20 countries including the United Kingdom, Japan and the United States.

Kuwait currently has a crude production capacity of around 3.1 million bpd, excluding some 250,000 bpd from the neutral zone with Saudi Arabia which has remained shut since Oct 2014. It plans to raise its output capacity to four million bpd by 2020. Adsani said the firm also plans to raise free natural gas production to 2.5 billion cubic feet a day by 2040 from just 200 million cubic

feet a day currently. Free gas production will reach half a billion cubic feet in April and one billion cubic feet in 2023, he said.

Kuwait also produces about 1.2 billion cubic feet a day of associated gas, which is produced along with crude oil. The state plans to raise its refining capacity to two million bpd by 2035 from less than 800,000 bpd now, Adsani said. Around 90 percent of Kuwait's state revenues come from oil. Kuwait amassed around \$600 billion in surpluses in the 16 years till 2014, when world prices were high.

For supplier nations, the new energy market poses significant challenges and opportunities, while oil and energy companies continue to consider changes in their business models and strategies for development. One of the key areas of discussion at the event was what to expect from the oil market in 2018. Will production cuts last and if so, will they balance the market; the Russian-Saudi cooperation; what to expect from shale and non-OPEC producers, plus other critical issues for the market. Also discussed was how to finance energy in a shifting market and longer-term investment strategies.

154,000 illegals in Kuwait; amnesty...

Continued from Page 1

He asked sponsors to hand over violators' passports so they can leave and take advantage of the amnesty, unless they are wanted in other cases.

He said the following categories of violators are allowed to leave during the grace period:

- Those whose regular or temporary residencies expired before Jan 24, 2018.
- Those who entered the country on a visit, residency, tourism or transit visa whose stay period expired before Jan 24, 2018.
- Those whose passports expired before Jan 24, 2018 but have valid residency permits, and wish to

leave the country.

• Newborns that are given residency permits sponsored by their family should refer to the residency affairs department to correct the newborn's status during the amnesty period.

• Those reported to have absconded before Jan 24, 2018 regardless of the type of residency they have.

• Those who absconded after Jan 4, 2016, whether working in the private or domestic sectors.

Hajeri said item 2 of the law says that those wishing to remain in the country must pay fines without being referred for questioning, then settle their status if they meet the conditions. He added item 4 of the ministerial decision says expats in violation of residency law who have administrative or judicial obstacles that keep them from leaving must go to the residency affairs department to discuss the conditions of getting a residency permit according to the legal rules set during the grace period.

Court delays expat health charges...

Continued from Page 1

He told the appeals court that the lower court overlooked his arguments and called for a correction to the judgement. The Assembly in 1995 issued a decision stating that the government cannot raise charges on public services without a law by the Assembly. That law did not make exceptions based on nationality.

Meanwhile, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour Hind Al-Sabeeh yesterday comfortably defeated a no-confidence motion by a big margin, with 29 MPs voting in her favor and only 13 lawmakers against. Only elected MPs are allowed to vote on no-confidence motions and Cabinet ministers are barred. The vote came in a special session following a brief debate in which two MPs spoke in her defense, while two others opposed her.

The no-confidence motion was filed last week by 10 MPs after a marathon grilling in which the minister was accused of committing administrative and financial violations. The minister denied the charges. MPs who supported Sabeeh yesterday said she has performed her duties in a good manner and clamped down on visa traders. Her opponents stressed that she has failed to check the influx of expatriate manpower into the country.

National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday he will be travelling to Geneva with a number of MPs to meet with officials of the International Parliamentary Union to defend Kuwait against complaints by a current and a former MP and by "Zionists". He was referring to a complaint filed by MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri against the jailing of two lawmakers and another complaint by former Shiite MP Abdulhameed Dashti, who has been living abroad since the past two years. Dashti tweeted yesterday statements against Ghanem and vowed to continue targeting him with more complaints.

Fiscal strengths mask long-term

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait export blend has already averaged \$51.7/bbl in the fiscal year to date. Our projected surplus highlights the fact that, at around \$50/bbl, Kuwait has the lowest fiscal break-even Brent price in the GCC. With estimated sovereign net foreign assets at around 500 percent of GDP, it also has the largest fiscal and external buffers.

Our fiscal forecast still implies a financing need of nearly \$19 billion in FY18, as the government cannot spend most of the KIA investment income and is required by law to transfer 10 percent of its revenues (or around 4 percent of GDP) to the KIA's Reserve Fund for Future Generations. If, as we expect, Kuwait's parliament approves the new debt law increasing the sovereign borrowing cap to KD25 billion (\$83 billion), then a significant part of this could be met through more local and international bond issuance," the report said.

"The FY19 budget approved by the Cabinet this week proposes a broadly unchanged total spending allocation of KD20 billion (from KD19.9 billion in FY18), with a rising allocation for investment and energy subsidies but restrained spending elsewhere. However, despite likely

under-execution on capital spending, overspending is a risk as rising oil prices push up subsidy costs further, and limiting public sector hiring and wage growth may be politically difficult.

As Fitch noted when affirming Kuwait's sovereign rating in October, a generous welfare state and the public sector's large economic role present long-term challenges to the public finances. We estimate that the public-sector wage bill alone could grow by 6 percent of GDP over the next five years if the trend of absorbing new labor force entrants into the public sector persists," said Fitch.

"Kuwait's exceptionally strong balance sheet position, which reduces pressure to take action, and parliamentary opposition have led to slower fiscal reform than elsewhere in the GCC. Parliamentary questioning and no-confidence motions against ministers are common and led to the government's resignation in October 2017. We do not think the Cabinet reshuffle that followed will accelerate reform, and do not expect VAT or excise tax to be implemented this year.

The subsidy system remains largely unreformed. Petroleum prices were raised in October 2016 but remain the lowest in the GCC, and the immediate fiscal benefit has been consumed by rising oil prices. Phased utility price hikes came into force in last year, but prices remain low and have not directly affected most Kuwaiti households," the report concluded.

Kuwait Times

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Sports

Greased lightning! Tongan pin-up makes 'crazy' Olympics return

Travelled to Brazil as a taekwondo fighter

WELLINGTON: Pita Taufatofua captured global attention as Tonga's oiled and topless flagbearer at the Rio Olympics, but he says things didn't get really weird until he decided to qualify for the Winter Games in Pyeongchang. The 34-year-old found himself strapping planks of wood to his feet to recreate the rigours of cross-country skiing in sweltering Australian heat.

He embarked on mad dashes through blizzards and across icy roads to reach qualification races on the ski-fields of Europe. Pre-dawn training sessions became the norm as Taufatofua—a self-proclaimed beach lover—struggled in the snow, a substance he had seen only once before.

"It was all just so new to me. I had no idea there was wet snow, dry snow, cold snow, hot snow," he told AFP. "And you need specialised skis for each of them. I had one pair and here I was giving myself less than a year to qualify for the Winter Olympics."

He admitted the bid to become a dual Olympian at times seemed "crazy". Taufatofua, Brisbane-born but fiercely proud of his Tongan heritage, was determined to reach Pyeongchang after his Summer Games experience in Rio in 2016. He travelled to Brazil as a taekwondo fighter, losing in the first round but not before making his mark at the opening ceremony. Bare-chested, torso dripping with oil and wearing only a traditional ta'ovala mat round his waist, Taufatofua became an online sensation as he enthusiastically waved the flag of his tiny Pacific nation.

Within hours, he racked up 45 million

mentions on Twitter and the normally staid Wall Street Journal hailed "perhaps the grandest entrance by any flag bearer in recent history". Appearances on US talk shows followed but Taufatofua said he was already looking for his next challenge.

'IT FEELS LIKE A MIRACLE'

There was much skepticism when he announced his Winter Games bid. A Norwegian Olympic champion said: "I think he looks better covered in oil than with skis on his feet". But Taufatofua said



Training in Australia was more difficult

athletes from what he terms "summer countries", including Mexico, Portugal and Colombia, rallied to support their fellow outsider.

"We would pool resources," he said. "We'd share skis and tips on technique. We'd sleep in a hostel with three beds together and just eat pasta and tuna because that was all we could afford." "We drove through blizzards for eight hours in Iceland trying to avoid avalanches and raced across Armenia and Georgia. "To us, that was the Olympic creed right there, it

was all about participation and people coming together."

Training in Australia was even more difficult. "We had to find ways to mimic skiing without having snow or skis, so I'd strap bits of wood to my feet and run on the sand," he said. "And there were the roller skis. They've got no brakes and are the worst things ever. I think the Devil invented them."

Chasing his dream full-time, Taufatofua relied on a funding website <https://goo.gl/7Kofnz> to help pay for his campaign. After a number of falls and equipment failures, he appeared set to miss out before dramatically clinching a place this month at the final qualifying round in Iceland.

"It feels like a miracle. It feels like a gold medal just to qualify," he said. With his place assured, Taufatofua does not expect to repeat his topless Rio exploits at Pyeongchang's opening ceremony, where temperatures will be well below freezing and hypothermia a real risk.

"My goal is just to participate," he said. "If that leads to other people trying something that everyone else says is impossible then it will be worth it." Bruno Banani was Tonga's first winter Olympian, appearing at the 2014 Games in Sochi where he finished 32nd out of 39 in the men's luge.

But he was by no means the first cross-climate athlete. The Jamaican bobsled team set the standard at the 1988 Calgary Olympics and were later immortalised in the film "Cool Runnings". — AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: File photo taken on August 5, 2016, shows Tonga's flagbearer Pita Taufatofua leading his delegation during the opening ceremony of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro. — AFP

Tournament of late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak begins today

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Tournament of the Late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Cup starts today at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex in the Olympic Skeet, Trap and double trap for men, women and juniors.

Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi said Kuwait Shooting Sports Club is proud of organizing the tournament of Late Sheikh Abdullah

Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah annually, as it brings memories of one of Kuwait's men who gave a lot and had many contributions to Kuwait's development.

He said the late Sheikh was a leader that cared for the country's interests, and was committed to the security of Kuwait.

Al-Osaimi said the club brings back the good deeds of this generous personality, so that the young generation can take it as an example in their lives.

He said this tournament comes on the heels of HH the Amir Seventh International Shooting Grand Prix, that was held in Kuwait from 12/1 until 19/1, during which Kuwait shooters made unprecedented achievements as they competed with well established world champions.

Al-Osaimi concluded by thanking the family of late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah for their continued support of the shooting sport.

He also wished shooters all success during the tournament.

Ice hockey sisters face off for rival nations at Olympics

SEOUL: They were born thousands of kilometres apart but grew up together, skated together, and went to school together. When they take to the ice at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, though, the Brandt sisters will once again represent different countries.

Marissa was given up for adoption soon after her birth in South Korea, one of hundreds of thousands of children who found new families overseas as the country—once known as the world's top baby exporter—underwent rapid industrialisation.

Aged just four months, Greg and Robin Brandt took her home to the frozen lakes of Minnesota. Months later Robin gave birth to her sister Hannah. Typically for their state, the girls grew up skating regularly, and now both

have won national ice hockey team places.

But while forward Hannah will play for the US at next month's Games, Seoul restored Marissa's South Korean citizenship as it sought recruits to bolster its side, and she will represent the country of her birth.

It is a family story that blends issues of identity, ethnicity and adoption against a backdrop of sporting rivalry. As a young Asian girl growing up in an American family, Marissa sought to ignore the colour of her skin, and sought to emulate blonde, pale Hannah. "I just wanted to fit in and not look different from my sister," Marissa told AFP.

NATIONAL PRIDE

Sport was one of the ways she did so, switching from figure skating to ice hockey to follow in Hannah's blade tracks. "We were always best friends and did everything together," said Hannah, 24. They played on the same teams—Marissa is a defender—until they went to different colleges.

And their trajectories moved even further apart when the Korea Ice Hockey Association started scouring through colleges across North America, looking for ethnic Korean players as it scrambled to create a team good

enough to avoid humiliation when it hosts the Olympics. South Korea has only 319 registered female hockey players of its own, according to an International Ice Hockey Federation survey last year. Marissa was identified as a likely prospect, and invited to try out for the side in 2015.

It was the first time she had returned to her birth country since her adoption, after years of distancing herself from its culture and language. "I was excited and curious but also nervous and didn't know what to expect," she said. Sailing into the squad, she received a South Korean passport the following year, and her jersey is emblazoned "Park Yoon-Jung", the name on her US adoption papers. "I chose to wear my Korean name on the back of my jersey because that was really my only tie to Korea," she said.

The past three years have been a journey of reconnection, and now Marissa loves to go out for Korean style beef barbecue bulgogi and meat dumplings, and cranking up K-pop music with her teammates in the locker room.

Now, she says, "I consider myself Korean-American. Whereas before I would only consider myself American. "I can finally say that I am proud to be Korean." — AFP

Korean skating back on thin ice ahead of Pyeongchang

SEOUL: Four years after the Korea Skating Union (KSU) was supposed to have cleaned up its act, allegations of favouritism and athlete mistreatment have again roiled South Korean sport just weeks ahead of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

Short track powerhouse South Korea has won 21 of the 48 gold medals awarded in the sport since it joined the Olympic programme in 1992 but stories of destructive rivalries, physical abuse and favouritism have long cast a shadow over the KSU. Public anger with the organisation boiled over in 2014 when Viktor Ahn, who won three gold medals for Korea at the 2006 Games, won three more for Russia in Sochi, raising questions about what drove him to turn his back on his homeland.

With then-President Park Geun-hye demanding answers and the Sports Ministry promising to "review the entire system," the KSU's vice chairman Jeon Myung-gyu, widely reported to be the most powerful figure in the short track set-up, stepped down.

The KSU has enjoyed a period of relative calm over the last few years but with the eyes of the world trained on Korea ahead of the Feb. 9-25 Winter Games, the

organisation has again blackened the host's sporting reputation.

A short track coach was banned from the sport for life last week after admitting to physically assaulting Shim Suk-hee, one of the country's top female skaters.

The KSU also came under fire after speed skater Noh Seon-yeong said she no longer wanted to compete for the national team due to favouritism in the selection process after an "administrative error" almost cost her a place at the Games. Coupled with the fact that the KSU welcomed its former vice chairman Jeon back to the organisation last year, the fresh controversies suggest the post-Sochi investigation has done little to foster long-lasting change in Korean skating.

'CHRONIC PROBLEMS'

A sports ministry official told Reuters the incident involving Shim, who won gold, silver and bronze medals in Sochi, showed the KSU had not truly reformed.

"The KSU released a statement after the Sochi Olympics saying it would undergo reform in order to fix internal chronic problems such as factionalism and unfairness in selecting athletes," said the official. "But the Shim case shows those chronic problems are still there," he added. "The problem seems to lie in the people who are running the federation, including the executive team."

The surprising absence of two Russian skaters from their Olympic contingent has since allowed speed skater Noh to regain her spot at Pyeongchang but she told local media she was tired of favouritism and bias at the KSU. — Reuters

Cool runnings too as Malaysia, Singapore take up Winter Olympics challenge

KUALA LUMPUR: In tropical Malaysia and Singapore, Winter Olympics medals are rarer than snowflakes—but a dedicated group of athletes are hoping to change that as they make their countries' debut Games appearances.

A Singaporean speed skater, as well as a figure skater and skier from Malaysia will compete in the Games, a huge achievement for countries better known for palm-fringed beaches and year-round heat than winter sports. It is the latest sign of an unlikely, yet growing, interest in ice and snow sports in a winterless, steamy region, where temperatures rarely drop below 20 degrees Celsius (68 Fahrenheit) in most places.

A major milestone for winter sports in the region came last year when they featured for the first time at the Southeast Asian Games in Malaysia, with ice hockey, figure skating and speed skating making their debuts. But it was not without problems—puddles formed on the hockey rink during matches, slowing down the puck and forcing marshalls with squeegees to dash onto the ice to mop up the water. Figure skater Julian Yee, who will represent Malaysia at next month's Games, is typical of athletes from the region who have had to overcome a lack of facilities, limited official support and public scepticism to pur-



KUALA LUMPUR: File photo taken by and released courtesy of photographer Annice Lynn to AFP yesterday shows Malaysian figure skater Julian Yee taking part in a practice session in Kuala Lumpur on August 25, 2017. — AFP

sue their dreams.

When growing up, the only places he could find to practise were a handful of small, crowded rinks in the shopping malls scattered around the capital Kuala Lumpur. Figure skating on the tiny rinks was "like trying to get an A380 (world's biggest airliner) to land on a very small runway", the 20-year-old told AFP. But he persevered and began training in the morning and evening when the rinks were less crowded. "I skated two times a day, six days—sometimes six-and-a-half days—a week," he said.

'ARE YOU MAD?'

There were no official programmes or funding for figure skating so Yee's parents had to spend huge amounts of their own money on his training. They also sent him to

train abroad during school holidays, in China and South Korea.

"People said: 'Are you mad? You're sacrificing all this money,'" his mother Irene Cheow told AFP. "We're looked at differently now." Yee's efforts paid off and he won gold at last year's Southeast Asian Games, and came eighth in the 2017 Asian Winter Games. His crowning glory was qualification for Pyeongchang, alongside Malaysian skier Jeffrey Webb. Speed skater Cheyenne Goh has faced similar challenges in neighbouring Singapore, where even a modest cold snap can set the population shivering. This month a freak monsoon surge sent the mercury plummeting to almost 21 degrees Celsius (70 Fahrenheit) — chilly by Singapore standards—sending people rushing to the shops to buy scarves and winter jackets. — AFP

Sports

Henrique's two goals help Anaheim earn a 3-1 victory over Boston

Pittsburgh defeat visiting San Jose

BOSTON: For the first time in nearly two months, the Boston Bruins lost a game in regulation. Adam Henrique had two goals and Jakob Silfverberg also scored to help the Anaheim Ducks earn a 3-1 victory Tuesday in Boston, snapping the Bruins' league-best, 18-game points streak. Anaheim won its third straight game. Boston had won five straight and entered the night 14-0-4 since its last setback in regulation, a 5-3 defeat at Nashville on Dec. 4. John Gibson stopped all 25 shots he faced in net for the Ducks, but departed with 7:25 remaining in the game after being shaken up on a shot from Boston's Patrice Bergeron earlier in the period. He was replaced by Ryan Miller, who finished with five saves.

Rantanen had two assists. The Avalanche took their third consecutive loss since the end of their 10-game winning streak. Making matters worse for Colorado, Nathan MacKinnon, the NHL's second-leading scorer, left in the second period with an upper-body injury. MacKinnon, hurt in a collision with Vancouver defenseman Alex Edler along the end boards, went to the dressing room favoring his left shoulder.

PENGUINS 5, SHARKS 2

Evgeni Malkin scored three goals, including the tiebreaker in the third period, as Pittsburgh defeated visiting San Jose. The go-ahead goal came when San Jose goalie Martin Jones tried to clear the puck from behind the cage. However, his pass went just a few feet, and Patric Hornqvist picked it off and quickly fed Malkin, who put it into the empty cage 6:01 into the third for a 3-2 lead. Bryan Rust added his second goal of the game for insurance later in the third period, and Malkin completed his hat trick with an empty-net goal with 1:13 left for the 5-2 lead. Rust finished with two goals and one assist.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 4, FLAMES 2

Eric Haula and Jonathan Marchessault stunned Calgary with goals 10 seconds apart late in the third period, and visiting Vegas scored three times during a 53-second span for the win. Moments after Haula evened the game 2-2 with 1:45 remaining, Marchessault potted the winner. David Perron added an empty-netter with 53 seconds left to round out the scoring. The Golden Knights, who sit atop the Pacific Division and Western Conference, won for the 33rd time this season, which ties them



COLUMBUS: Sergei Bobrovsky #72 of the Columbus Blue Jackets makes a save on a wrap around shot by Joel Eriksson Ek #14 of the Minnesota Wild as Seth Jones #3 of the Columbus Blue Jackets looks to clear any rebounds during the third period at Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio. Minnesota defeated Columbus 3-2. — AFP

with both the 1993-94 Florida Panthers and 1993-94 Anaheim Mighty Ducks for the most wins by a first-year expansion team.

BLUES 3, CANADIENS 1

Ivan Barbashev, Patrik Berglund and Alexander Steen provided the scoring as St. Louis maintained its momentum in the first game back from the All-Star break, beating visiting Montreal. The Blues have won three consecutive games. Goalie Carter Hutton, who started his sixth straight game, finished with 34 saves and was just 1 minute, 7 seconds away from his third shutout of the year. Carey Price had 28 saves and took the hard-luck loss for the Canadiens, who have lost three of their past four games.

HURRICANES 2, SENATORS 1

Victor Rask scored on a third-period power play, lifting host Carolina to a win

over Ottawa. Sebastian Aho tied the game earlier in the final period. Hurricanes goalie Cam Ward stopped 29 shots. Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored in the second period for the Senators, who lost their sixth consecutive game. Senators goalie Craig Anderson made 37 saves.

JETS 3, LIGHTNING 1

Michael Hutchinson won in his first NHL action of the season, and second-period goals by Patrik Laine and Kyle Connor ignited host Winnipeg to a win over league-leading Tampa Bay. Hutchinson, who was part of the AHL all-star festivities in Utica, N.Y., on Monday, took to the net for his first big-league start since last season and provided a 23-save performance to reward Jets coach Paul Maurice on his 51st birthday. Laine erased a 1-0 deficit early in the second period by taking advantage of a

five-on-three power play to net his 12th man-advantage marker of the campaign. Connor netted the game winner just after another power play expired when he buried his second rebound opportunity against Lightning goalie Louis Domingue.

BLACKHAWKS 2, PREDATORS 1

Vinnie Hinostroza notched a goal and an assist while Anton Forsberg made 42 saves as Chicago posted a road win over Nashville. Chicago handed the Predators just their fifth regulation loss at home this season. Forsberg came up with 22 saves in the third period to guide the Blackhawks across the finish line, including five on the Predators' only power play of the night. He also got some help from the goal post, which denied Austin Watson a potential tying tally about five minutes into the period. — Reuters

WILD 3, BLUE JACKETS 2 (SO)

Zach Parise goal in the fourth round of a shootout gave Minnesota a 3-2 road victory over Columbus. Jason Zucker and Charlie Coyle scored in regulation as the Wild improved their road record to 10-14-1. Panarin led the Blue Jackets with a goal and an assist in regulation time, while David Savard also tallied for the hosts. The loss spoiled a 41-save effort from Columbus goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky. Minnesota netminder Devan Dubnyk posted 28 saves for the win.



Anton Forsberg made 42 saves for Chicago

CANUCKS 4, AVALANCHE 3 (OT)
Sven Baertschi's goal 1:07 into overtime gave host Vancouver a victory over Colorado. Bo Horvat, Michael Del Zotto and Daniel Sedin also scored for the Canucks, while Chris Tanev had three assists. Gabriel Landeskog led the Avalanche with two goals, J.T. Compher supplied a single marker, and Mikko

First McIlroy, now Malaysia as China's Li aims to extend streak



DUBAI: File photo shows Li Haotong of China plays a shot during the Dubai Desert Classic at Emirates Golf Club on January 28, 2018, in Dubai. — AFP

KUALA LUMPUR: China's rising golf sensation Li Haotong hopes his life-changing win over Rory McIlroy will pave the way for another title quest at this week's Maybank Championship in Malaysia.

The 22-year-old became the first Chinese men's golfer to break into the world top 50 after he edged four-time Major winner McIlroy at the Dubai Desert Classic last week. Brimming with confidence after outclassing the Irishman, the now 32nd-ranked Li is aiming for another good outing.

"Sometimes one week can change everything, sometimes it doesn't happen. My game is pretty solid, and I've been putting well," said Li, ahead of Thursday's opening round.

"This week I'll try to save as much energy and have low scores. It's a little bit warmer out here, but I'll go out and try to enjoy the pressure. The key is good tee shots and to get low scores."

In Kuala Lumpur three weeks ago, Li gave Team Asia two-and-a-half points in their 14-10 defeat to Europe at the Ryder Cup-style EurAsia Cup.

Top-ranked Henrik Stenson, who played for Team Europe, is expected to contend

with Li at the \$3.0 million event as he seeks his first individual victory on Asian soil.

"Now I would like to get an individual victory in Asia, and this is one of the opportunities," said Stenson, 41.

"If you've got a chance to win a golf tournament anywhere in the world these days, you've got to play well and we'll see if we can get that going this week." The world number 12 is in good form coming into the European Tour and Asian Tour event after consecutive top-10 finishes at the Abu Dhabi Championship and Dubai.

Austria's Bernd Wiesberger will also be

optimistic of another good week after creating fond memories at the Maybank Championship last year.

The 32-year-old carved his name into the record books after becoming the first player in European Tour history to notch nine consecutive birdies. Also in the hunt is Paraguay's defending champion Fabrizio Zanotti, who produced one of the biggest comebacks of 2017 to win by a single stroke.

Joining in the title race are Thailand's big hitter Kiradech Aphibarnrat and Englishman Lee Westwood, who previously won the Malaysian Open. — AFP

All Blacks take Bledisloe Cup clash to Japan with eye on 2019

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Rugby (NZR) have confirmed the third Bledisloe Cup clash with Australia later this year will be held in the Yokohama Stadium, the venue for the 2019 Rugby World Cup final.

NZR had already signalled they were keen on taking the trans-Tasman clash to Japan after announcing in May that they would face the Brave Blossoms before heading to Europe for the end-of-year tour. The world champion All Blacks face the Wallabies on Oct. 27 in Yokohama before

they play Japan at the National Stadium in Tokyo on Nov. 3.

"We're delighted to confirm that a Bledisloe Cup test match will be played in Japan for the second time in the history of this great rivalry," NZR chief executive Steve Tew said in a statement yesterday.

"The last match in 2009 was a fantastic event but this year's test at the 72,000-seat stadium in Yokohama will be at another level. "The All Blacks have huge support in Japan, so the Bledisloe Cup test will be important for the team as we build support ahead of Rugby World Cup 2019."

All Blacks coach Steve Hansen said having two tests on consecutive weeks in Japan would also help the side acclimatise for the 2019 World Cup. Hansen conducted a similar exercise in 2014 when he primed the All Blacks for their 2015 World Cup-winning campaign by replicating the final four weeks of the tournament on their end-of-season tour, with the team experi-

encing similar selections, tactics and preparation.

"It will be great for the team to prepare in two of the Rugby World Cup cities and play at the same venues," Hansen said of the two clashes in Japan. "As well as preparing for a huge Bledisloe Cup test and another important test against Japan, it'll also give the team a chance to have a really good 'dummy run' of the facilities, and experience the unique Japanese culture."

The All Blacks have held the Bledisloe Cup, the symbol of trans-Tasman supremacy, since 2003. The first Bledisloe Cup test, which doubles as the opening clash of the Rugby Championship, is in Sydney on Aug. 18, with the second match at Auckland's Eden Park on Aug. 25. After the Japan game, the All Blacks then face Eddie Jones's England side at Twickenham on Nov. 10, before meeting Ireland in Dublin on Nov. 17. They conclude their tour against Italy on Nov. 24. — Reuters

NHL results/standings

Anaheim 3; Boston 1; New Jersey 3; Buffalo 1; Florida 4; NY Islanders 1; Pittsburgh 5; San Jose 2; Carolina 2; Ottawa 1; Minnesota 3; Columbus 2 (SO); St. Louis 3; Montreal 1; Chicago 2; Nashville 1; Winnipeg 3; Tampa Bay 1; Los Angeles 3; Dallas 0; Las Vegas 4; Calgary 2; Vancouver 4; Colorado 3 (OT).

Eastern Conference						Western Conference							
Atlantic Division						Central Division							
	W	LOTL	GF	GA	PTS		W	LOTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Tampa Bay	34	13	3	176	128	71	Winnipeg	30	13	8	167	137	68
Boston	29	11	8	157	119	66	Nashville	29	12	7	146	125	65
Toronto	28	18	5	162	146	61	St. Louis	31	18	3	151	131	65
Florida	20	22	6	136	159	46	Dallas	28	19	4	155	137	60
Detroit	19	21	8	126	146	46	Minnesota	27	18	5	147	142	59
Montreal	20	24	6	130	159	46	Colorado	27	18	4	160	143	58
Ottawa	15	24	9	125	168	39	Chicago	24	19	7	148	137	55
Buffalo	14	27	9	115	166	37	Pacific Division						
Metropolitan Division						Las Vegas	33	12	4	168	130	70	
Washington	29	15	5	150	138	63	San Jose	26	16	7	145	138	59
Pittsburgh	28	21	3	156	155	59	Los Angeles	27	18	5	142	121	59
New Jersey	25	16	8	147	147	58	Anaheim	25	17	9	144	142	59
Columbus	27	19	4	133	140	58	Calgary	25	17	8	139	139	58
Philadelphia	24	17	8	141	141	56	Edmonton	22	24	3	135	157	47
NY Rangers	25	20	5	153	151	55	Vancouver	20	24	6	131	162	46
NY Islanders	25	21	5	173	184	55	Arizona	12	29	9	118	172	33
Carolina	23	19	8	139	155	54	Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)						

Tomic wants to return to tennis

SYDNEY: Australian tennis bad boy Bernard Tomic said he had a "huge wake-up call" after taking part in a reality TV show, leaving the programme early to return to the sporting world. Tomic, 25, has been pilloried for his poor attitude during a season to forget in 2017 where he admitted he was bored, and earlier this month missed out on the Australian Open after losing in the qualifiers.

He then took part in commercial broadcaster Channel Ten's reality show "I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here!", held in South Africa, but pulled out after just three days. "I don't want to spend half my time depressed here and thinking about how I played the last year and where I should be," Tomic said on the programme aired late Tuesday as he explained his departure to other participants.

"And me being here with my thoughts now has just gave me a huge wake-up call ... I need to be competing and playing in what I do best and that's why I've decided to leave." Tomic blamed himself for his situation over the past year, saying

he was not focused.

Just two years on from attaining his highest world ranking of 17, Tomic is currently 168th, with Davis Cup captain Lleyton Hewitt saying Monday he was doubtful the Australian would ever play for the team again.

Tomic's exit from the show garnered little sympathy from other Australian professional sportsmen, who took to Twitter to slam his actions, including neglecting a charity he had supported which helps sick children.

"Ya got millions Tomic so while your (sic) busy counting it all when you get back home how's bout you donate 10k to your charity that have missed out on much needed \$\$\$," retired Australian rules footballer Dane Swan tweeted.

Veteran Australian NBA star Andrew Bogut wrote on Twitter that he believed Tomic's TV stint was "all orchestrated". "Spin off - The Biggest Loser has announced contestant Bernie! Can they help get his career back on track....??? The suspense!"

Retired football player Sarah Walsh took a different stance, stating on the social media website that Tomic "clearly needs help not ridicule". "Simply just a kid that's battling some form of depression and happens to be good at tennis," she wrote. — AFP

Sports

Mominul's unbeaten ton powers Bangladesh to 374-4 on day one

Lakmal claims two wickets off successive deliveries

SCOREBOARD

CHITTAGONG, Bangladesh: Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the first Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in Chittagong yesterday:

Bangladesh first innings

Tamim Iqbal b D. Perera	52
Imrul Kayes lbw b Sandakan	40
Mominul Haque not out	175
Mushfiqur Rahim c Dickwella b Lakmal	92
Liton Das b Lakmal	0
Mahmudullah not out	9
Extras (nb 4, w2)	6
Total (four wickets; 90 overs)	374

To bat: Mosaddek Hossain, Mehedi Hasan, Taijul Islam, Sunzamul Islam, Mustafizur Rahman

Fall of wickets: 1-72 (Tamim), 2-120 (Kayes), 3-356 (Mushfiqur), 4-356 (Liton)

Bowling: Lakmal 17-3-43-2 (nb2), Kumara 12-1-64-0 (w1), D. Perera 24-4-98-1 (nb2), Herath 20-1-100-0, Sandakan 13-1-58-1 (w1), Dhananjaya 4-0-11-0

Sri Lanka: D. Karunaratne, D. de Silva, K. Mendis, D. Chandimal, N. Dickwella, R. Silva, D. Perera, R. Herath, S. Lakmal, L. Sandakan, L. Kumara.

CHITTAGONG: Mominul Haque hit a towering century to help Bangladesh take opening day honours in the first Test against Sri Lanka in Chittagong yesterday. Mominul hit an unbeaten 175 as the hosts reached 374-4 at stumps after electing to bat first at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

The left-hander shared a 236-run third-wicket stand with former captain Mushfiqur Rahim, who fell just short of his fifth Test hundred after scoring 92 off 192 balls. Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, on nine, was batting

“We were very positive and attacking from ball one”

alongside Mominul when stumps were drawn at the start of the two-match series.

Opener Tamim Iqbal gave the hosts a strong start with his brisk 52 and said it was “a fantastic day” for Bangladesh. “We were very positive and attacking from ball one. It was nice to see.”

Suranga Lakmal struck with the second new ball to claim two wickets off successive deliveries and give Sri Lanka some respite late into the final session. Lakmal, who returned figures of 2-43, forced Mushfiqur to edge behind the stumps after he had struck 10 fours in his relatively sedate innings.

The medium-pacer bowled Liton Das for a duck with the next ball, which swung late to uproot the off-stump after the batsman had attempted to leave the delivery. But Mominul was dominant at the other end, hitting 16 fours and a six off veteran spinner Rangana Herath during his stay, which has lasted 203 balls so far.



CHITTAGONG: Bangladesh cricketer Mominul Haque reacts after scoring a century (100 runs) during the first day of the first cricket Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. — AFP

The 26-year-old posted his fifth Test century and his first in more than three years off just 96 balls, with back-to-back fours off left-arm wrist spinner Lakshan Sandakan. He then hit Herath for his only six to reach 160 and bring up his 2,000 Test runs in his 47th innings.

Mominul was the fastest Bangladeshi to achieve the feat, overtaking Tamim's record of 53 innings. Sri Lankan batting coach Thilan Samaraweera was full of praise for Mominul, who is nicknamed Mini. “We should have bowled better than that. It is 40 runs too many for

our part...” he said. Mominul's masterful display at his favourite ground came after Bangladesh had lost both openers, Tamim and Imrul Kayes, in the morning session. Tamim made 52 off 53 balls, sharing a 72-run opening stand with Kayes (40), until off-spinner Dilruwan Perera bowled him with a beautiful delivery that pitched outside off-stump and spun sharply.

Tamim struck six fours, and a sweetly timed six off Perera over long-on, in his 25th Test fifty. Sandakan trapped Kayes leg-before on the stroke of lunch, ending the left-hander's 75-ball stay. — AFP

Eagles back-up Foles ready to seize chance

MINNEAPOLIS: Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Nick Foles is one win away from claiming his first Super Bowl crown. Next season, he could be out of a job. The 29-year-old Texan has confounded the sceptics since stepping up to start after a serious knee injury sidelined rising star Carson Wentz in week 14 of the regular season.

Foles produced an electrifying performance in the NFC Championship game on January 21, putting the best defense in the league to the sword as the Eagles routed the Minnesota Vikings 38-7.

Yet even if Foles inspires the Eagles to an upset win against the New England Patriots in the Super Bowl on Sunday, he is expected to return to a back-up role next season when Wentz returns to full fitness. Foles is philosophical about what his future may hold, insisting that for now, all he is thinking about is this weekend's shot at glory.

“I'm grateful to be here, to be part of this organization,” Foles told reporters on Tuesday.

“I can't wait to play the game. After the game, that's where you have time to sort of reflect on the year, and that's what we'll do.

“I'll spend time with my family and use that family time. The future will take care of itself. I'm grateful to have signed a two-year deal with the Philadelphia Eagles and be here.

“And I'm excited to watch Carson get healthy and get back on his feet and hopefully being part of him getting back to where he was.”

Unfulfilled promise?

Foles' career had looked set to be one of unfulfilled promise until this season's run to the Super Bowl. In his second year in the NFL in 2013, he went 8-2 as a starter, but injuries hampered his development and he was traded to the St Louis Rams in 2015.

He was released by the Rams in 2016, heading to the Kansas City Chiefs. After being released by the Chiefs in March, he joined the Eagles as Wentz's back-up. When Wentz suffered his injury in December, Foles was thrust into the starting spot. “Anytime you step in for a guy who's injured it's tough,” Foles said. “You never want to see anyone get injured. And I worked with Carson every day.

“And we're people-it is a game but we're people, and we care for one another. To step into the huddle and go out there it takes time.”

The scale of the task facing the Eagles quarterback when he lines up against five-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady is highlighted by their age difference. When Brady was winning his first Super Bowl in 2002, Foles had only just turned 13. Foles however says he can't remember watching Brady in a Super Bowl. “Honestly I didn't watch a lot of football growing up,” he said. “My dad always wanted me to and always wondered why I didn't. “But I was always out there in the yard playing the game. I would come in

and out and watch bits of the Super Bowl but I always just loved playing the game in the yard. If I did see them I don't remember.” — AFP

Nepal's 'Shane Warne' keen to soak up IPL experience

KATHMANDU: Nepal leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane says his breakthrough Indian Premier League deal will give him the chance to play alongside the cricketing elite and promote the sport back at home.

Lamichhane, 17, became an overnight hero after becoming Nepal's first cricketer to enter the lucrative IPL, with Delhi Daredevils picking him in a mega auction Sunday. His name was splashed across front pages of national newspapers and thousands took to social media to express their excitement. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba tweeted, “Not just me, but the entire nation is proud of you.”

Lamichhane, who has been likened to spin legend Shane Warne, made the meteoric rise to the IPL just two years after being selected for Nepal's national team. “If you get the chance to play in the IPL, lots of players will be there who are very experienced guys and I think I will learn a lot,” Lamichhane, the son of a railway worker, told AFP in Dubai.

Lamichhane's Delhi teammates will include Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell and pacemen Trent Boult (New Zealand) and Kagiso Rabada (South Africa), among others. The teenager is expected to make Nepal more of a force in international cricket. They are the only South Asian nation not to have Test,

Latif's appeal against spot-fixing ban rejected

KARACHI: Former Pakistan opener Khalid Latif yesterday lost an appeal against a five-year ban for spot-fixing but had his one million rupee (\$10,000) fine waived, the country's cricket body said.

Adjudicator Justice Faqir Khokhar upheld the ban, saying there was “overwhelming” evidence against Latif, but waived the fine as his career was almost over, Pakistan Cricket Board lawyer Taffazul Rizvi told reporters in Lahore.

Latif, who had shown tremendous early promise as a cricketer but failed to make an impact at international level, played five one-day internationals and 13 T20Is, the last of which was against the West Indies in Abu Dhabi in September 2016.

The scandal surfaced during the second edition of the Pakistan Super League in February last year when Latif was playing for Islamabad United. Latif, 32, was charged with orchestrating a deal with a bookie that would see his fellow opener Sharjeel Khan deliberately playing two dot balls — deliveries off which no run is scored-in the opening match against Peshawar Zalmi in Dubai.

Spot-fixing involves determining the outcome of a specific part of a match rather than the overall result,

one-day or T20 status, barring the isolated kingdom of Bhutan.

Lamichhane credits Nepal's senior players with popularising the sport among young people in a football-mad country. “The senior guys have done something for the new guys who are coming right now into the teams, and their contributions have made our country a cricket-crazy nation,” he said.

Lamichhane's talent was first noticed by former Nepal national cricket coach Pubudu Dassanayake, who spotted him at a training camp in 2015. The spin-bowling sensation then attracted the attention of Australian great Michael Clarke, when he played alongside the former captain in a Hong Kong Twenty20 Blitz tournament in 2016.

Clarke invited Lamichhane to train at his cricket academy in Sydney, an experience the teenager described as unforgettable. “Playing with a player like Michael Clarke is such as a big thing. It was amazing and sharing a dressing room with him and getting experience from him, it was something like a dream come true,” he said.

'NEW HEIGHTS'

Lamichhane is currently in Dubai training with Nepal's national team ahead of the World Cricket League Division Two tournament in Namibia next month. Nepal must finish in the top two to take part in the World Cup qualifiers in Zimbabwe in March. It has never qualified for the World Cup.

The sport's development has been hampered by the country's turbulent recent history, including a 1996-2006 civil war, and endemic corruption. The Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) was struck off by the sport's global governing body in 2016 for political interference.

Lamichhane's base price contract of \$31,499 may be



Sandeep Lamichhane

small fry in the cash-rich IPL, which shelled out a total of \$70 million for 169 players during the two-day auction. But back home, many hope his success will revive the country's scandal-tainted domestic cricket.

The controversy had hampered Nepali cricket and young talented players were losing out, said CAN's Chumbi Lama. “(Lamichhane) is a young talented cricketer and an impressive leg spinner,” Lama said. “If he gets good guidance his future is very bright. He will lead Nepali cricket to new heights.” — AFP



Khalid Latif

and is therefore harder to detect than match-fixing. Sharjeel was also banned for five years-two and a half years suspended and his appeal was rejected last November.

Paceman Mohammad Irfan and spinner Mohammad Nawaz were banned for one year and two months respectively for not reporting fixing offers. Another former opener Nasir Jamshed-alleged to have played a role as coordinator in the PSL fixing deal-was banned for one year for not cooperating with the inquiry.

The decision against another international player, Shahzaib Hasan, was reserved and will be announced on Saturday. Pakistani cricket has long been tainted by allegations of spot-fixing. The most infamous incident came on the 2010 tour of England, when then-captain Salman Butt and bowlers Mohammad Amir and Mohammad Asif were all given prison sentences for conspiring to bowl deliberate no-balls in the fourth Test at Lord's. — AFP

ICC probes UAE league after silly dismissals go viral

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) is investigating a private Twenty20 league in the United Arab Emirates, the sport's global governing body has said, after footage of some farcical dismissals went viral on social media.

A match in the Ajman All Stars League, which is not sanctioned by the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB), saw several batsmen appear to throw their wickets in bizarre fashion, by running themselves out or getting stumped without trying to return to the crease, even when the wicketkeeper fumbled.

“There is currently an ICC Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) investigation underway in relation to the Ajman All Stars League held recently in Ajman, UAE,” ACU general manager Alex Marshall said in a statement.

“The ICC Anti-Corruption Unit works to uphold integrity in cricket and in keeping with that role, we are talking to players and officials and will not make any further comment at this time.” The Ajman Cricket Council (ACC) has suspended all matches at the Ajman Oval.

“... we found the Ajman Oval breaching the code more than once and hence we have suspended their affiliation,” ACC secretary general Shaji Ul Mulk told ESPNcricinfo. “We have a zero tolerance policy towards corruption and are cooperating with the ICC in their ongoing investigation.” — Reuters

Sports

Kylian Mbappe sent off as PSG reach French League Cup final

Referee Mikael again turned to video technology

PARIS: Holders Paris Saint-Germain edged into the French League Cup final by beating Rennes 3-2 at Roazhon Park on Tuesday, despite seeing Kylian Mbappe sent off on his return from injury. Thomas Meunier put the visitors ahead with a magnificent volley, before Rennes winger Wahbi Khazri had a goal ruled out for handball after a video assistant referee review. Brazilian defender Marquinhos tapped in after half-time, before Giovanni Lo Celso was gifted PSG's third goal by a dreadful mistake from home goalkeeper Abdoulaye Diallo. Mbappe saw red after another VAR decision for a terrible foul on Ismaila Sarr, but consolations from Diafra Sakho on his Rennes debut and Sanjin Prcic couldn't prevent PSG from continuing their bid for a fifth consecutive League Cup. "I think the team kept calm and patient in the first half, and then we made the difference," said PSG coach Unai Emery. "But Kylian's red card gave them some opportunities to score and get closer to us... But I'm happy with the way the players responded."

“ I think the team kept calm in the first half ”

PSG are still on track to complete an unprecedented quadruple of the Ligue 1, Champions League, French Cup and French League Cup titles, after extending their winning streak in domestic cup competitions to 37 matches. The capital club will face either Monaco or Montpellier, who play at the Stade Louis II, in the final on March 31. Emery made six changes to the team which thrashed Montpellier 4-0 in the league on Saturday, with Mbappe returning from a two-game injury absence and Edinson Cavani rested after breaking the club's all-time goalscoring record at the weekend. Belgian right-back Meunier, no stranger to spec-

tacular strikes, broke the deadlock in the 24th minute with a wonderful finish from the edge of the area. The 26-year-old barged his way through a couple of tackles before flicking the bouncing ball with the outside of his right foot, sending it looping over Diallo and in off the far post for his fourth goal of the season.

KHAZRI GOAL OVERTURNED

The hosts thought they had equalised when Khazri took advantage of some woeful defending to stab into the corner, but the referee checked the VAR which showed that the former Sunderland player's first touch had bounced off his arm.

Mbappe had the ball in the back of the net early in the second half but saw the goal ruled out for offside, with the decision upheld after another video review.

The runaway Ligue 1 leaders did double their tally in the 54th minute as centre-back Marquinhos was on hand to tap in after Diallo parried Angel Di Maria's shot. Diallo was totally at fault for the third, as the Senegalese stopper allowed Lo Celso's tame effort to slip through his legs and bobble into the net. Mbappe was given a straight red card in the 63rd minute to give Rennes a glimmer of hope. The 19-year-old twice tried to foul Sarr, and succeeded by raking his studs down the back of the Rennes midfielder's leg while making zero attempt to play the ball. Referee Mikael Lesage again turned to the video technology before giving Mbappe his marching orders.

Sakho, who had come on at half-time for his debut after joining Rennes from Premier League outfit West Ham, headed home his first goal for the club in the 85th



RENNES: Rennes' French forward Thomas Brandon (L) and Rennes' French defender Joris Gnagnon (R) jump for the ball during the French League Cup football semi-final match between Rennes and Paris Saint-Germain at the Roazhon Park stadium in Rennes on Tuesday. — AFP

minute. French international Lassana Diarra was introduced for his first PSG appearance since signing last week, but a long-range strike from Prcic slipped through Kevin Trapp's grasp to set up a nervy final two

minutes for the away side. Although they held on to book their spot in the final, Paris will need to improve before the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie at Real Madrid on February 14. — AFP

Swansea stun Arsenal, Liverpool cruise

LONDON: Petr Cech's howler rocked Arsenal as they crashed to a shock 3-1 defeat at Swansea, while Liverpool cruised to victory over Huddersfield on Tuesday. Arsenal goalkeeper Cech's miscued attempt to clear allowed Jordan Ayew to slot home Swansea's second goal at the Liberty Stadium.

It was the killer blow for Arsenal, who had already seen Sam Clucas equalise just one minute after Nacho Monreal put the visitors ahead from Mesut Ozil's pass in the 33rd minute. Clucas claimed his second four minutes from time to finish off Arsenal, who have now won just once in their last five league games.

The result leaves Gunners manager Arsene Wenger still searching for his first away win of 2018, despite a second-half debut for substitute Henrikh Mkhitaryan following his move from Manchester United.

The Gunners are in sixth place, trailing eight points behind fourth-placed Liverpool in the race to qualify for the Champions League via a top-four finish. The arrival of Borussia Dortmund striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, set to sign on Wednesday's transfer deadline day, can't come soon enough for Wenger.

"We will know more about that tomorrow morning," Wenger said of the Aubameyang move. "I felt defensively we were very poor and made big mistakes. It's better not to talk about the second or third goals. Swansea were sharp, disciplined and hungry. Unfortunately I believe we were not good enough, we were not disciplined enough."

The result also completes remarkable back-to-back victories for Swansea over Liverpool and now Arsenal. They are out of the relegation zone and have transformed their season with three wins in five league games under new boss Carlos Carvalhal.

At the John Smith's Stadium, Liverpool got back on track in emphatic fashion thanks to goals from Emre Can, Roberto Firmino and Mohamed Salah in a 3-0 win. The Reds had endured frustrating defeats against



SWANSEA: Arsenal's Spanish defender Nacho Monreal (L) vies with Swansea City's English defender Kyle Naughton during the English Premier League football match between Swansea City and Arsenal at The Liberty Stadium in Swansea. — AFP

Swansea in the league and West Brom in the FA Cup.

'MATURE PERFORMANCE'

But Jurgen Klopp's men dominated possession and from the moment Emre Can rocketed home a long-range opener in the 26th minute the result was never in doubt. Firmino extended Liverpool's lead on the stroke of half-time when he somehow squeezed the ball home from the byline after being played in by a clever Sadio Mane back-heel. Klopp had left Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk on the bench, but the absence of the club-record signing was hardly noticed as the Reds continued in cruise control.

Salah completed the scoring from the penalty spot in the 78th minute after Can was tripped up in the box. "We had to keep the ball and score at the right

moments. Overall it was absolutely deserved," Klopp said. "It was exactly what we needed. It was not a brilliant performance, but it was very mature and exactly what we needed at the right moment." A Mark Noble penalty helped West Ham shrug off the disappointment of their embarrassing FA Cup fourth round defeat at Wigan with a hard-fought 1-1 draw against Crystal Palace.

Roy Hodgson's much-improved Eagles grabbed the lead in the 24th minute when Christian Benteke rose to steer an Andros Townsend cross home from close range. But the Hammers were level just before the break after Javier Hernandez was brought down by James Tomkins in the box. Hernandez came closest to a winner when his 51st-minute effort was brilliantly saved by Wayne Hennessey. — AFP

Higuain, Buffon put Juventus on brink of Cup final

BERGAMO: Gonzalo Higuain scored after three minutes and Gianluigi Buffon saved a penalty as Juventus stayed on track for a fourth straight Italian Cup on Tuesday with a 1-0 semi-final, first leg win at Atalanta.

Buffon-making his first appearance in goal since turning 40 and after a two-month layoff with a calf injury—showed he was back at his best as he made his first Cup appearance since 2012.

The holders got on the scoresheet in Bergamo after just two-and-a-half minutes when Argentine Higuain found a way through the Atalanta defence and curled into the corner. It was the quickest goal this season for Massimiliano Allegri's side who are sitting second in Serie A behind Napoli.

Atalanta thought they would level when the video assistant referee (VAR) awarded a penalty after Medhi Benatia handled in the box, but Alejandro Gomez's spot-kick was saved by the evergreen Buffon.

Buffon got down low to hold the Argentine's driven effort to the left. "I am glad we honoured the Italian Cup again this year," said Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri. "It's an important result, although nothing is decided until the second leg." Higuain missed a chance for a second after half an hour with two Blaise Matuidi efforts deflected over the bar. Buffon again saved two quick-fire attempts from top Atalanta scorer Gomez after the break, tipping over the second.

"I'm happy for Gigi (Buffon), who hadn't played in the Italian Cup for five years," Allegri added. "He hasn't forgotten everything he knew just for being out of action for 45 days."

"He had a rest for a few weeks, perhaps he needed to put his feet up, but he's back now and he's our first-choice goalkeeper. "Wojciech Szczesny did well in his absence and is a champion, but Buffon is Buffon."

Despite beating league leaders Napoli at the San Paolo Stadium to advance to the semi-finals, Atalanta could not find a way past Juventus who controlled the game. Higuain came close late on and Buffon again saved his team three minutes from time when he blocked Andrea Petagna's point-blank shot. Allegri's men now just have to maintain their advantage when they host Atalanta in the return leg on February 28 in Turin.

AC Milan and Lazio face each other in the second semi-final at the San Siro. — AFP

KIB football team completes training for 2018 Kuwait Banking Club League

KUWAIT: Within the framework of its social responsibility program aimed at supporting sports activities and youth, the Kuwait International Bank (KIB) football team recently completed its training for this year's annual Kuwait Banking Club Football League.

On this occasion, Corporate Communications Officer at KIB, Ahmed Alenzi, said: "In preparation for this season's tournament, our very own KIB team has completed yet another intensive training session. Now ready for a new season, the KIB football team hosts a number of highly-skilled, physically fit players that is sure to land us amongst this season's winners."

Alenzi added that the KIB team enjoys the management's ongoing support in participating in this thrilling tournament. In turn, their encouragement will play a crucial role in boosting the team's morale, undoubtedly impacting their performance and leading them to victo-



KIB football team.

ry. At the end, Alenzi pointed out that, as part of its leading social responsibility program, KIB remains dedicated towards supporting youth and sports-

focused activities and initiatives. By doing so, the Bank aims at promoting increased involvement in sports and healthy lifestyles.

Live Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

SPAIN COPA DEL REY
Barcelona v Valencia 23:30
beIN SPORTS HD 3

12 Greased lightning! Tongan pin-up makes 'crazy' Olympics return



14 Mominul's unbeaten ton powers Bangladesh to 374-4 on day one



15 Kylian Mbappe sent off as PSG reach French League Cup final



HOUSTON: Gerald Green #14 of the Houston Rockets drives to the basket against the Orlando Magic on Tuesday at the Toyota Center in Houston, Texas.— AFP

Historic night for Harden in Rockets' win

No Love in Cavaliers' loss, Wizards win without Wall

LOS ANGELES: James Harden scored a franchise-record 60 points while posting a triple-double, almost single-handedly carrying the short-handed Houston Rockets to a 114-107 victory over the visiting Orlando Magic on Tuesday. Harden shot 19 of 30 from the floor and 17 of 18 at the line while adding 10 rebounds and 11 assists. With Houston missing three rotation players, Harden logged a season-high 46 minutes. His 60-point triple-double was the first in NBA history. With the game deadlocked at 107-107, Harden nailed a step-back jumper with just under two minutes left before drilling a 3-pointer through a Mario Hezonja foul with 45.4 seconds to play. Harden completed the four-point play to surpass Calvin Murphy (57 points) in franchise annals. Orlando hung tough by placing six in double figures, led by Hezonja and Marreese Speights with 17 points apiece.

PISTONS 125, CAVALIERS 114

Stanley Johnson scored a career-high 26 points, and Detroit snapped an eight-game losing streak by defeating visiting Cleveland. Johnson also grabbed 10 rebounds, while Detroit's Andre Drummond piled up 21 points, 22 rebounds, seven assists, three steals and three blocks. Reggie Bullock supplied 22 points, Anthony Tolliver had 20 and Ish Smith added 19 points and seven assists for the Pistons. Cleveland lost All-Star forward Kevin Love in the early going. Love broke a bone in his left hand after Tolliver tried to swipe the ball away from him during the

first quarter. LeBron James led the Cavs with 21 points.

JAZZ 129, WARRIORS 99

Ricky Rubio scored 23 points and dished out 11 assists while Joe Ingles and Donovan Mitchell each chipped in 20 points to lead Utah past Golden State in Salt Lake City. Derrick Favors added 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Jazz, who snapped a five-game losing streak to Golden State extending back to the 2017 NBA Playoffs. Utah handed the defending NBA champions their most lopsided loss of the season. Klay Thompson scored 27 points to lead the Warriors. Kevin Durant added 17 points while Stephen Curry and JaVale McGee chipped in 14 apiece.

TRAIL BLAZERS 104, CLIPPERS 96

Damian Lillard scored 28 points as Portland held off a late surge by host Los Angeles for the win. CJ McCollum added 16 points and Jusuf Nurkic collected 14 points and 20 rebounds for the Trail Blazers, who have won three in a row and six of their past seven outings. Lou Williams scored 20 points off the bench for the Clippers, who lost for the fourth in six games. However, Williams was only 5 of 26 from the field, missing 16 shots in a row after a 4-of-8 start.

SPURS 106, NUGGETS 104

LaMarcus Aldridge scored 30 points and Manu Ginobili added 14, including a 3-pointer and a jumper in

the closing minutes, as host San Antonio outlasted Denver. Jamal Murray's 3-pointer with 31.6 seconds left gave the Nuggets a final chance, but Will Barton missed from beyond the arc with 1.5 seconds to go, allowing the Spurs to escape with the win. Kyle Anderson and Pau Gasol added 18 points each for the Spurs, who have won four of their past five games. All five Denver starters scored in double figures, led by Jamal Murray's 18 points.

KINGS 114, PELICANS 103

Zach Randolph had 26 points and 12 rebounds, and Sacramento pulled away for a win over host New Orleans. Kosta Koufos added 17 points and 17 rebounds for the Kings. De'Aaron Fox and Garrett Temple scored 15 each, and George Hill had 14. Anthony Davis had 23 points and 13 rebounds to lead the Pelicans, who fell to 0-2 since losing All-Star forward DeMarcus Cousins to a season-ending Achilles injury. New Orleans had won seven of eight prior to Cousins' injury. Jrue Holiday added 21 points, and Ian Clark scored a season-high 20.

KNICKS 111, NETS 95

Kristaps Porzingis had 28 points and Enes Kanter added 20 points and 20 rebounds as New York completed a season sweep of visiting Brooklyn. The Knicks, who won their first three games over the Nets this season by an average of more than 14 points, picked up their second straight win following three consecutive losses. Brooklyn,

which was playing without leading scorer Rondae Hollis-Jefferson (groin), dropped its fourth game in a row. DeMarre Carroll had 13 points to lead five Nets who scored in double figures.

RAPTORS 109, TIMBERWOLVES 104

DeMar DeRozan scored 23 points as Toronto edged visiting Minnesota. DeRozan produced his 36th game with at least 20 points despite shooting 6 of 18 from the floor and missing 5 of 6 3-point tries. The All-Star guard made 10 of 11 free throws and scored eight of his points in the fourth quarter. Jonas Valanciunas added 18 points and 11 rebounds for his 16th double-double as Toronto beat Minnesota for the 14th straight time at home. Jimmy Butler scored 25 points for the Timberwolves.

WIZARDS 102, THUNDER 96

Host Washington responded to some bad news about All-Star John Wall with a spirited victory over red-hot Oklahoma City. Otto Porter had 25 points while Bradley Beal added scored 21 for the Wizards, who snapped the visiting Thunder's league-best eight game winning streak. Wall will undergo a procedure on his sore left knee today, and he will be out six to eight weeks. Paul George scored 20 of his 28 points in the first half and Carmelo Anthony added 19 for Oklahoma City. Steven Adams contributed 16 points and 12 rebounds, and Russell Westbrook had 13 points and 10 assists. — Reuters

Formula One to stop using female models on the grid

LONDON: Formula One is ending the use of female models who parade and stand with the drivers' name boards before every grand prix, with immediate effect. The sport announced the decision in a statement yesterday and said the change would also apply to all support series on the programme.

"While the practice of employing grid girls has been a staple of Formula One grands prix for decades, we feel this custom does not resonate with our brand values and clearly is at odds with modern day societal norms," said commercial manager Sean Bratches.

"We don't believe the practice is appropriate or relevant to Formula One and its fans, old and new, across the world," he added. Formula One has not had a woman race

driver on the starting grid since the 1970s but is far more mixed off the track, with female engineers and mechanics as well as in media and marketing.

Two of the 10 teams have had female bosses, including former champions Williams, and Formula One management has a number of women in senior positions. The use of female models, even if not as scantily-clad as in the past, has been increasingly criticised in a sport that is now under US-based ownership following Liberty Media's takeover last year. Liberty, who ousted former supremo Bernie Ecclestone a year ago, have been looking to make the pre-race show more of a feature with the emphasis on entertainment for fans and promotion. "Formula One considers the time spent by teams and drivers on the grid before a race as one of celebration, where guests and various performers can add to the glamour and spectacle of the Grand Prix," the statement said.

It added that the change would allow promoters and partners "to showcase their countries and products". Ross Brawn, Formula One's managing director for motorsport, gave notice last December that the use of female models on the grid was under review for the season starting in Australia on March 25.

"There's a lot of people who respect the tradition of the grid



File photo shows Sebastian Vettel, then driving for Infiniti Red Bull, poses with grid girls at 2014's American GP.

girls and there's people who feel that it has become a bit dated, so we're addressing that," he told the BBC at the time. In 2015, men were deployed in place of the women at the Monaco Grand Prix—a move welcomed by some fans

and deplored by others. That same year, the FIA-sanctioned World Endurance Championship announced an end to the practice at the Le Mans 24 Hours sportscar race. — Reuters

Business

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2018

19 China's young shoppers breathe new life into its luxury markets**19** French supermarket boss hauled over Nutella frenzy**22** Virtual beaus are capturing Chinese hearts as female gaming blooms

BEIJING: British Prime Minister Theresa May speaks during a joint press conference with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang at the Great Hall of the People. — AFP

PM May eyes 'golden era' with China

Batted away critics of her leadership on Brexit, domestic issues

BEIJING: Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday forecast a "golden era" in Sino-British relations with deeper trade ties after Britain leaves the European Union, but her visit to China was dogged by Brexit rows at home. As she embarked on the three-day visit, May batted away critics of her leadership on Brexit and domestic issues, including within her Conservative party.

"First and foremost, I'm serving my country and my party. I'm not a quitter and there's a long-term job to be done," she told reporters travelling with her. The House of Lords is scrutinizing a key piece of legislation on quitting the EU, as a leaked government report shows only economic downsides to leaving the bloc. May discussed Brexit with Premier Li Keqiang when they met at the imposing Great Hall of the People, where both leaders boasted about their "golden era" of relations and the potential for better trade ties.

"We are determined to deepen our trading relationship even further and we are ambitious for what our future trade relationship will be," May said. The British leader said more than nine billion pounds (\$12.7 billion) in busi-

ness deals would be signed during her visit. The two countries also launched a joint trade and investment review to "identify priorities" on goods, services and investment, she said. They also agreed new measures to improve access to the Chinese market and remove trade barriers, including lifting a ban on British beef exports to China within six months.

In a nod to her hosts, May said "we welcome the opportunities" provided by China's cherished Belt and Road initiative, a massive infrastructure project aimed at reviving ancient Silk Road trade routes between East and West and creating greater market access for Chinese companies.

But she threw in a caveat, saying the two countries would continue to work together to ensure that the endeavor "meets international standards". Li said Sino-British rela-

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We welcome the opportunities

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tions "don't have winter, only spring" and their ties would not be affected by Brexit. "Brexit is a situation that both our countries face," he said. "Our bilateral relationship will not change with the changes of UK relations. We will have assessment and discussion on our trade relationship to make our economic and trade relationship move forward."

Rights and Hong Kong

May, who will hold talks with President Xi Jinping today and finish her visit Friday in the eastern business hub of Shanghai, was under pressure to address thorny issues with China. Before her trip the former British governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, urged her to address concerns about the political situation in the semi-autonomous city, which London handed back to Beijing in 1997.

In a letter to May's Downing Street office, Patten said Hong Kong was facing "increasing threats to the basic freedoms, human rights and autonomy" which its people were promised after the handover. Human Rights Watch also urged the British leader to "get tough with China" on rights. But business is the focus of her trip. "The UK and China will not always see eye-to-eye," she wrote in a Financial Times column. "But as partners committed to global free trade we can work together to confront and tackle challenges that affect all of our economies."

Britain has said it will leave the EU's single market and customs union so that it can strike its own trade deals with countries outside the bloc, making China's huge market an attractive target. In preparation, a number of British officials have travelled to China in recent months. Trade minister Liam Fox discussed market access for British exports, including its key financial services sector. Finance minister Philip Hammond worked on final preparations for a "stock connect" between the London and Shanghai exchanges, and mulled the possibility of linking their bond markets as well. — AFP

Israel, Lebanon argue over offshore energy block, Beirut slams threat

BEIRUT/TEL AVIV: Israel described as "very provocative" yesterday a Lebanese offshore oil and gas exploration tender in disputed territory on the countries' maritime border, and urged international firms not to bid. Lebanese President Michel Aoun, whose country considers Israel an enemy state, described the comments as "a threat to Lebanon".

"When they issue a tender on a gas field, including Block 9, which by any standard is ours ... this is very, very challenging and provocative conduct here," Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said. "Respectable firms" bidding on the tender "are, to my mind, making a grave error - because this is contrary to all of the rules and all protocol in cases like this," he told an international security conference hosted by Tel Aviv University's INSS think-tank.

Lebanon in December approved a bid by a consortium of France's Total, Italy's Eni and Russia's Novatek for two of the five blocks put up for tender in the country's much-delayed first oil and gas offshore licensing round. One of the awarded blocks, Block 9, borders Israeli waters. Lebanon has an unresolved maritime border dispute with Israel over a triangular area of sea of around 860 sq km (330 square miles) that extends along the edge of three of the blocks.

"Lieberman's words about Block 9 are a threat to Lebanon and its right to sovereignty over its territorial waters," Aoun said on his official Twitter account. Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri said the country would take up the comments with the "relevant international bodies to affirm its right to its territorial waters". "For the past few days Israeli officials have been deliberately sending threatening messages to Lebanon," Hariri said in a statement from his press office. Hariri said Lieberman's words were "blatant provocation".

The contracts are expected to be officially signed on Feb 9, the Lebanese Petroleum Administration said, allowing exploration to begin. The licensing round was re-launched in January last year after a three-year delay caused by political paralysis. Lebanon is on the Levant Basin in the eastern Mediterranean where a number of big sub-sea gas fields have been discovered since 2009, including the



KUWAIT CITY: Lebanon's President Michel Aoun attends a gathering with the Lebanese community in Kuwait City on January 23, 2018 during an official visit. — AFP

Leviathan and Tamar fields located in Israeli waters near the disputed marine border with Lebanon. Israel last went to war in Lebanon in 2006, against the Iran-backed Hezbollah militia. With tensions rising anew, Lieberman said Lebanon would "pay in full" for any new Hezbollah attacks on Israel. But he said Israel sought no war, adding: "We try to conduct ourselves determinedly and responsibly." — Reuters

Sisi inaugurates Zohr gas field

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi yesterday inaugurated the offshore Zohr gas field, aimed at making the Arab world's most populous country self-sufficient in natural gas by the end of 2018. "We are now entering into the self-sufficiency stage... and, God willing, by the end of the year we will have reached self-sufficiency," Petroleum Minister Tarek Al-Molla said at a ceremony in the northern city of Port Said, broadcast live on state television. In December, the oil ministry said it was starting production from the field discovered in 2015 by Italian energy giant Eni with an initial 350 million cubic feet (10 million cubic meters) a day. Molla, at the ceremony attended by Sisi, said Egypt expects it "will be able to stop importing liquefied natural gas... and therefore save what we import which is \$230 million per month, or \$2.8 billion annually". The Egyptian government is trying to roll back the impact of the 2011 uprising that toppled longtime ruler Hosni Mubarak and led to years of political, security and economic turmoil. — AFP

Business

Al-Mulla Industries thanks its partners and customers

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Al-Mulla Industries, headed by its transport and refrigeration department recently organized an event at Jumeirah Beach Hotel along with its partners. The event entitled 'You and Us, Partners Forever 2018' was organized to thank its partners for their continuing support and patronage of its products and services. It was attended by its local partners from various companies throughout Kuwait. Gohar Khan, General Manager-Manufacturing welcomed guests especially the new clients and partners. He thanked the Division General Manager Ala'a Al-Ali for his efforts to take Al-Mulla Trading and Manufacturing Group to the next level.

"We thank you for choosing Al-Mulla Industries to be a part of your business association because of our mutual passion to remain partners forever. Your passion helps us come together as one and the energy we create as one allows us to achieve our individual as well as organizations goals," he said. He went on to present the company's profile, products and services through a PowerPoint presentation. Al-Mulla Group Holdings is the umbrella under which all group operating companies, subsidiaries, and affiliates are held.

In 2010, Al-Mulla Group has consolidated its non-automotive trading and manufacturing activities under the 'Trading and Manufacturing Group'. This group also acts as an incubator for all new businesses, provided such businesses do not compete with or complement any of Al-Mulla Group's other business divisions. Al-Mulla Trading & Manufacturing group includes the



KUWAIT: Al-Mulla General Manager Gohar Khan and Ala'a Al-Ali pose for photo during the event yesterday.

engineering products, office automation solutions, manufacturing division and travel division. Al-Mulla Industries is a trusted market leader and initiator of best practices in Kuwait's steel products, transport refrigeration, air duct and air movement solutions and related market sectors.



KUWAIT: Attendees at the 'You and Us, Partners forever' event. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Harley-Davidson closes plant as shipments slump

MISSOURI: Harley-Davidson Inc said on Tuesday it will close a plant in Kansas City, Missouri as it consolidates manufacturing operations after its motorcycle shipments fell to their lowest level in six years, sending its shares down more than 8 percent. The Milwaukee-based company forecast a drop in shipments to dealers this year as it expects retail sales in the United States - the company's biggest market - to dip.

Despite generally higher US consumer spending, Harley is grappling with an ageing customer base and younger, more price-sensitive buyers hesitant to embrace the iconic brand as previous generations have done. Its shares fell 8.5 percent to \$50.59 on the New York Stock Exchange. The stock fell nearly 13 percent in 2017. Harley said it expects to ship 231,000 to 236,000 motorcycles this year after shipping 241,498 vehicles in 2017, the lowest number since 2011. That is at the low end of its previous forecast of 241,000 to 246,000 units. In the December quarter, Harley's U.S. sales declined 11.1 percent from the year before and overseas sales dipped 7.7 percent. Overall sales in the quarter were down 9.6 percent.

As it adjusts to lower demand, Harley said it will consolidate work at its motorcycle assembly plant in Kansas City, Missouri, into the one in York, Pennsylvania, eliminating about 800 jobs at the Kansas City plant but adding 450 at the York facility. Harley said the move would result in restructuring costs of \$170 million to \$200 million through 2019 but would save the company \$65 million to \$75 million a year after 2020.

It also announced the closure of its wheel operations in Adelaide, Australia, which will affect 100 employees. "HOG is restructuring the business for the demand reality," analysts at RBC Capital Markets in a research note. "A big concern of ours had been that the cost structure didn't seem right-sized for demand."

US President Donald Trump last year praised the motorcycle maker for its US manufacturing presence and blamed global tariffs for making it "very hard" for the company to do business overseas. Nevertheless, the company is looking overseas for growth this year. "Our assumptions include US retail dealer retail sales to be down, partially offset by growth in international retail sales," Harley's Chief Financial Officer John Olin told analysts on an earnings conference call. —Reuters

Global awarded 'Best Kuwait Asset Manager' by MENA Fund Manager

KUWAIT: Global Investment House (Global), a regional Asset Management and Investment Banking firm headquartered in Kuwait with offices in major capital markets in the MENA region, was awarded "Best Asset Manager in Kuwait" and "Best Saudi Equity Fund" by the "MENA Fund Managers Performance Awards". The awards were presented in an event held on Tuesday 30 January 2018 in Dubai and attended by professionals from the regional investment and asset management industry. Bader Al-Ghanim, Executive Vice President and Head of MENA Asset Management at Global received the awards.

The MENA Asset Management team was named "Best Kuwait Asset Manager", thanks to the consistent performance of the managed funds and portfolios as a result of the long-term strategy adopted that focuses on stocks with potential operational growth and good fundamentals while disregards speculative ones. On the other hand, Global Saudi Equity Fund, the second largest fund in the Kingdom with assets under management of SAR 502 million (USD 134 million), was

named "Best Saudi Equity Fund". The fund has outperformed the respective benchmark Tadawul All Shares Index ("TASI") reporting 120.8% since inception (TASI: 50.9%) and 5.8% in 2017 (TASI: 0.2%).

Al-Ghanim said, "We are delighted that MENA Fund Manager recognized our achieved and consistent performance on various products. We were able to accomplish these results by consistently placing our clients' interests at the forefront and continuously seeking to offer optimum quality products and services." "Our stock selection processes along with the investment strategy didn't only result in outperforming the funds we manage their respective benchmarks last year, but also on longer periods: the past two years, three years as well as since inception" he added.

Last December, the asset management team at Global issued their outlook on the GCC equity markets for the year 2018 with a generally optimistic view ranging from slightly negative to moderately bullish across the board supported by more accommodative fiscal policies and reasonable valuations. The teams'

outlook on Kuwait was upgraded from neutral last year to positive for 2018. Although Kuwait lacks any strong themes, the market can deliver positive returns driven by a sustained government spending, strong fiscal position due to lower breakeven oil prices, reasonable valuations (for selective large and mid-cap companies) and potential FTSE flows following the upgrade in September 2017.

While the team was neutral to slightly positive on Saudi in 2017, it turned more bullish on the kingdom for 2018 on the back of expansionary budget - underpinned by higher oil and non-oil revenues - and potential index inclusion by FTSE and MSCI. Al-Ghanim concluded by thanking the MENA asset management teams in Kuwait and Saudi for their efforts and hard work which have achieved very positive results, with all managed funds outperforming their respective benchmarks. It is worth noting that over a 3 years and 5 years window, the Fund performance was -7.2% and 37.5% respectively compared to -13.3% and 6.3% respectively for TASI.

US private sector opens year with big jump in hiring

WASHINGTON: Private US employment saw another big jump in January, though slower than December, as a large gain in services hiring offset a slower rise in other sectors, payroll firm ADP reported yesterday. Hiring in the services sector, long a major driver of the US economy, saw its biggest increase since November 2016, according to the report, which is closely watched for hints of what is to come in the key government jobs report due out Friday.

Total private non-farm employment increased by 234,000 in the first month of the year, slower than the 242,000 in December, but far outpacing the consensus forecast for an increase of 190,000. The total reflected 212,000 new hires in the services sector and 22,000 in the goods-producing sector which includes manufacturing and construction. "The job market juggernaut marches on," Mark Zandi, chief economist of Moody's

Analytics, said. "Given the strong January job gain, 2018 is on track to be the eighth consecutive year in which the economy creates over two million jobs," Zandi said in a statement. "If it falls short, it is likely because businesses can't find workers to fill all the open job positions." In fact, as the Federal Reserve prepares to conclude its first monetary policy meeting of 2018 later Wednesday, the scarcity of workers is a growing concern since it could drive faster wage increases that in turn could finally ignite inflation. The Fed is expected to keep the benchmark interest rate on hold, but if central bankers become more concerned about the threat of inflation they could raise rates faster this year than the three increases expected.

The manufacturing sector added 12,000 workers this month, slightly less than in December but far weaker than January 2017 when the industries hired 30,000, the ADP data showed. The picture was similar in construction-a sector particularly hard hit by the shortage of workers-which added just 9,000 employees, compared to 30,000 in December and 49,000 in January 2017. Within services, there were strong gains in trade and transportation, education and health services, and leisure and hospitality.

The consensus forecast for the Labor Department's nonfarm payrolls report is for an increase of 180,000 in



NEW YORK: A building under construction is seen in front of the Empire State Building. —AFP

January, after the disappointing 148,000 in the previous month, and a gain of 175,000 expected for private employment. The ADP report covers 411,000 firms and 24 million workers and is used as a signal of the overall labor market, even while it does not always track the official jobs report faithfully, since the two reports use different data. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.764
Indian Rupees	4.730
Pakistani Rupees	2.718
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.952
Nepali Rupees	2.957
Singapore Dollar	231.120
Hongkong Dollar	38.426
Bangladesh Taka	3.597
Philippine Peso	5.915
Thai Baht	9.624
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.173
Qatari Riyal	82.575
Omani Riyal	780.795
Bahraini Dinar	798.330
UAE Dirham	81.878
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.500
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.930
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.207
Tunisian Dinar	126.240
Jordanian Dinar	423.770
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.003
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	33.346
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	300.450

Euro	375.860
Sterling Pound	429.340
Canadian dollar	245.870
Turkish lira	80.660
Chinese Yuan	324.810
Australian Dollar	245.770
US Dollar Buying	299.250
GOLD	
20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570
Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	300.300
Canadian Dollar	243.695
Sterling Pound	423.015
Euro	372.950
Swiss Frank	283.360
Bahrain Dinar	798.610
UAE Dirhams	82.165
Qatari Riyals	83.390
Saudi Riyals	80.975
Jordanian Dinar	424.830
Egyptian Pound	17.016
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.952
Indian Rupees	4.717
Pakistani Rupees	2.717
Bangladesh Taka	3.642
Philippines Peso	5.842
Cyprus pound	17.875

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.419851	0.427351
Czech Korune	0.006708	0.016008
Danish Krone	0.046028	0.051028
Euro	0.367349	0.374849
Georgian Lari	0.119185	0.119185
Hungarian O.001107	0.001297	
Norwegian Krone	0.034887	0.040087
Romanian Leu	0.063202	0.080052
Russian ruble	0.005313	0.005313
Slovakia	0.008916	0.018916
Swedish Krona	0.034060	0.039060
Swiss Franc	0.314931	0.325931
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.233988	0.245988
New Zealand Dollar	0.215156	0.224656
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.238363	0.247363
US Dollars	0.296350	0.300770
US Dollars Mint	0.298850	0.300770

Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003247	0.003831
Chinese Yuan	0.045929	0.049429
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036326	0.039076
Indian Rupee	0.004245	0.004886
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002674	0.002854
Korean Won	0.000270	0.000285
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073657	0.079857
Nepalese Rupee	0.002997	0.003167
Pakistan Rupee	0.002528	0.002818
Philippine Peso	0.005862	0.006162
Singapore Dollar	0.223685	0.233685
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001688	0.002268
Taiwan	0.010175	0.010355
Thai Baht	0.009214	0.009764
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.790382	0.798882
Egyptian Pound	0.014067	0.019785
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000084
Iraqi Dinar	0.000197	0.000257
Jordanian Dinar	0.419146	0.428146
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000448	0.000248
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021870	0.045870
Omani Riyal	0.774071	0.779751
Qatar Riyal	0.078236	0.083176
Saudi Riyal	0.079033	0.080333
Syrian Pound	0.001273	0.001493
Tunisian Dinar	0.121477	0.129477
Turkish Lira	0.074454	0.084754
UAE Dirhams	0.074454	0.084754
Yemeni Riyal	0.000976	0.001056

Business

China's young shoppers breathe new life into its luxury markets

They are the key demographic for luxury brands

SHANGHAI/HONG KONG: Guo Jiayi is typical of a new generation in China that is driving a sharp revival in luxury spending: young, female and unafraid to spend. An accountant in eastern Suzhou, Guo, 24, likes Coach and Louis Vuitton, and has bought Acne Studios scarves, a Daniel Wellington watch and a Mont Blanc belt as gifts. Of an annual salary of 50,000 yuan (\$7,898), she spends one-fifth on luxury items.

"Luxury is not a total necessity for me, I suppose, but whenever I've got enough money to spare, then I'll buy," she said. Guo and her peer group are behind a dramatic spike in luxury spending in China last year,

according to consultancy Bain & Co. They are the key demographic for luxury brands from LVMH to Gucci owner Kering and France's Hermes in tapping the world's top luxury consumers. Their willingness to spend - often more than they can afford comes with a note of caution. These consumers are typically less loyal to traditional brands, swayed by shifting trends online and increasingly looking for deals.

"Some of these youngsters, even when they don't really have enough funds, they're still going out and buying luxury products," said Huang Yue, 27, who runs the fashion section at the website "Loving Luxury." Yue added that the shift to millennials, those aged roughly 20-34, had been dramatic. It spurred the rise of new areas such as luxury "streetwear" and sporting attire, which Bain said were behind the recent fast growth. "In terms of the impact on the market, it's really given it a shot in the arm," Yue said.

Buoying the luxury market

Driven by general optimism, attracted by the ease of online shopping and helped along the way by parents who benefited from the country's fast growth and rising home prices, Chinese millennials are buoying the luxury market at home and abroad. Millennial shoppers pushed the Chinese market up to 142 billion yuan

(\$22.07 billion) in sales last year, about 20 percent higher than the year before. It is by far the steepest jump in over half a decade of sluggish growth, according to Bain. Luxury goods purchased in China make up 8 percent of the global total, while Chinese shoppers - who make three-quarters of their luxury purchases overseas - drive 32 percent of sales worldwide. LVMH's chief executive, Bernard Arnault, said China was a "very dynamic" market in which the Louis Vuitton brand was doing well. "China has had a good comeback," he told reporters last week. The company has seen a slow recovery in China since a weak start to 2016.

Gucci and cognac maker Remy Cointreau are among other well-known companies citing stronger growth in the market. Analysts and industry insiders, however, said shoppers were widening the range of brands they looked at, a challenge for some more traditional players. Tapestry Inc's Coach and British fashion house Burberry both reported

weaker ends to last year. Prada - which had seen sales slump in China - has been building partnerships with influential internet personalities and launched an online shop in December.

Online retailers like Alibaba Group Holding Ltd and JD.com have launched their own luxury platforms and lured in brands such as Yves Saint Laurent, Stella McCartney and Alexander McQueen. "Chinese consumers are going through several changes," Liao Jianwen, chief strategic officer at JD.com, told the Reuters Global Markets Forum at the World Economic Forum in Davos, adding that shoppers now want high-quality products at "competitive prices."

Brand new second hand

Even as consumers spend more, they are becoming thrifter. Zhang Xia, 24, an investment professional in the southern metropolis of Chongqing, has bought Dior bags, Louis Vuitton, Bulgari jewellery, and once paid 150,000 yuan (\$23,695) for a Piaget watch. She's now



BEIJING: People walk outside a shopping mall. — AFP

less easily won over. "Increasingly what I'm after now is original patterns and designs," she said, adding that, like Guo, she sometimes gets help paying for her purchases. "It's more about the quality and feel of the product, so if I can find that I won't necessarily choose a luxury brand."

The shift has meant the rise of areas not previously seen as being in the same space as traditional luxury, including casual wear, "streetwear" and even premium sports clothing. Shoppers are also more willing to buy used goods. That means people making new purchases can sell their goods later, defraying the cost of a big-ticket item.

"Because people know that they can sell things on second hand, they're not so strict with their luxury budgets," said Deng Yun, 33, the chief operating officer

of used luxury goods trading platform www.luxusj.com. He said the most popular brands on the site were handbags from Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Gucci and Fendi. Chloe, owned by luxury house Richemont, is popular with younger shoppers, while Hermes still has good cachet, he added.

The premium sportswear firm Lululemon, seeing strong demand from China's youth, is now "focused on exploring and developing new approaches to capture this audience," said Amanda Casgar, Lululemon's Asia Pacific director of brand & community. Winning over the parents of young shoppers like Guo could be helpful too - they are often a source of funds for a generation increasingly inclined to borrow or use credit. "Of course my salary is pretty low, so mum and dad do help me out a little," Guo said. — Reuters

Off-grid power push aims to light up incomes

KAKAMEGA, Kenya: Catherine Wakhu knows the value of a lighted room to a child's education - and also the expense. The resident of Mayoni, a village in Western Kenya's Kakamega County, has seven school-age children. Without money to pay for a connection to the electric grid, she used to spend 1,200 shillings (\$12) a month instead on kerosene, half of it to fuel a lantern so that her children could do their homework in the evenings. But for the past year Wakhu has been the owner of two solar-powered lanterns, which enable her children to study and save her fuel money.

New Light Africa, the company that makes the lanterns, accepts payments on installment over a period of six months, making the cost of 3,000 Kenyan shillings (\$29) per lantern more affordable to people like Wakhu, who might otherwise struggle to acquire the technology. The business is one of a number of enterprises across sub-Saharan Africa that are developing ideas for low-cost, high-quality and affordable clean energy products and services, from lighting to irrigation.

Improving lives

Some have received funding from the Renewable Energy and Adaptation to Climate Technologies (REACT) program, part of the Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund, backed by European and other donor governments. The clean energy REACT program provides up to half the needed funding to private companies trying to develop business models, services and products in renewable energy and energy efficiency that will improve the lives of the rural poor.

Under the program, up to 900,000 rural households across the region can now light their homes with solar lanterns, press their clothes with solar-powered irons or watch solar-powered televisions, said Victor Ndiege, who manages the REACT-supported portfolio of businesses. Village barbers also can earn a living shaving



KAKAMEGA COUNTY: Catherine Wakhu hangs a portable solar lantern in her house in Mayoni, a village in Western Kenya's Kakamega County. — Reuters

people using solar-powered shavers, and farmers can irrigate their crops with solar pumps, he said. In Miguye, a village north of the Kenyan city of Kisumu, Oliver Bill, a 24-year-old university graduate, irrigates tomatoes on his 1.3-acre piece of land using a portable solar-powered water pump acquired with a loan from Future Pump, another company that is part of the REACT scheme. "I decided to take the risk because the repayment scheme sounded fair enough," said Bill. He said he expects to have repaid the debt for the pump by March. Malayo Abuti, the assistant administrative chief for Ebuhalu sub-location in Kakamega County, said business-oriented funding for clean energy projects is an improvement on handouts and is helping more young people in off-grid villages start their own enterprises to earn an income. "This is a good culture because paying back the loan gives one a sense of ownership, self esteem and it makes them more responsible than receiving free tokens from organizations," he said.

price of a 950-gram pot of Nutella - a favored breakfast spread in France - from 4.50 euros (\$5.60) to 1.41 euros.

The three-day promotion prompted shoving and even full-blown fights in several stores, with one worker likening the scenes to "an orgy". Intermarche apologized to customers, but it has since continued with aggressive discounts on coffee and nappies. The DGCCRF consumer agency on Monday announced it was launching an investigation into the discounts. Le Maire urged Intermarche to "stop this kind of promotion", saying that the pushing and shoving seen as customers clamored to get their hands on the Nutella tubs must not become "normalized".

He reminded Intermarche's management that like other supermarket chains, it had already "signed a deal to no longer carry out these kind of promotions. They must keep their word." Videos of the shopping frenzy have been shared thousands of times on social media, with comedian Anthony Joubert racking up 700,000 plays on a song featuring the lyrics, "A euro for Nutella, I'd kill a mother or father for that." Ferrero, the Italian company that makes Nutella, said the discount decision was taken "unilaterally" by Intermarche and risked creating "confusion and disappointment" for consumers. — AFP

Competing for cash

The REACT scheme selects companies to support through competitions. So far, 78 companies across 23 sub-Saharan African countries have been awarded grants and interest-free loans to implement their proposals, Ndiege said. The companies are required to make services and products available to rural communities without requiring full payment upfront, he said.

New Light Africa won the competition in 2016 to make and distribute solar lanterns to rural communities through a community-based organization. "Between 2016 and 2017, we sold over 59,000 lanterns in Western Kenya and parts of the Rift Valley," said Jakob Werner, the company's head of sales. Each lantern comes with a small solar panel and is powerful enough to light one room. It is portable, meaning it can also work as a torch, and it has a port for charging at least three mobile phones. — AFP

French supermarket boss hauled in over Nutella frenzy

PARIS: The French government has implored supermarkets to refrain from the kind of promotion deals that have led to in-store scuffles over cut-price jars of Nutella, a minister said yesterday. Videos of French shoppers jostling as they tried to grab heavily discounted tubs of the chocolate spread in Intermarche stores have gone viral over the past week.

"I met with the director of Intermarche yesterday," Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire said, as his government prepared to unveil a bill later Wednesday that will tighten rules on supermarket promotions. "I told him that this must be stopped - we can't have scenes like this every few days in France," Le Maire told RTL radio. Intermarche sparked the shopping frenzy last Thursday when it slashed the



SAINT-GREGOIRE: This photo taken yesterday in Saint-Gregoire, near Rennes, northwest France, shows containers of Nutella. — AFP

Siemens says profits up on global upturn

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German engineering giant Siemens said yesterday that profits jumped in the first quarter of its financial year, driven by rising demand for its products in areas ranging from renewable energy and trains to industrial robots. Siemens, which runs its business year from October to September, said in a statement net profit jumped by 12 percent to 2.2 billion euros (\$2.7 billion) in the three months to December.

Underlying or operating profit was also up 12 percent at 2.2 billion euros while first-quarter sales grew by three percent to 19.8 billion euros. But chief executive Joe Kaeser warned there was much to do to future-proof the industrial behemoth. "Traditional conglomerates don't have a future. We have to lay the foundations now for the next-generation Siemens," he said. Kaeser's ambitious plans to restructure the sprawling group include planned factory closures in the struggling gas turbine business and a stock market flotation for the valuable medical devices division.

The medical devices unit saw orders, revenue and profits fall back slightly in the first quarter, due to "significant currency headwinds", but Siemens said the unit remained on track for its initial public offering. In the power and gas division, profits fell by almost half and orders and revenue declined as demand for its power plant turbines fell away. Siemens announced a massive restructuring in November, cutting nearly 7,000 job cuts worldwide in the traditional power plant building business.

"We are convinced there will be a global market for gas turbines, and that is why we are still investing," Kaeser said. "But the market will be smaller and won't be in Europe, rather in China, the US and in the Middle East." Other units of the Munich-based giant were in much healthier shape and "taking advantage of the global economic upturn," he added. Orders at Siemens' wind energy unit surged after a merger with Spanish firm Gamesa was finalised, even if profits shrank slightly over the quarter.

In the factory automation division, orders and revenue jumped, especially in China, although the effects of a recent acquisition sapped profits. The train construction division, which recently announced a tie-up with French rival Alstom, reported a surge in orders, revenue and profits after it secured new contracts in Europe, Israel and the United States and its latest high-speed trains entered service in Germany.

Looking ahead to the full year, Siemens was more cautious, saying that continuing headwinds in the energy market and "geopolitical uncertainties" painted a more "mixed picture". It said it was penciling in "modest growth in revenue" and earnings per share around the same level as in the 2016/2017 business year. Siemens shares added 0.8 percent to trade at 122.18 euros just after midday in Frankfurt yesterday, slightly outperforming the DAX index of German blue-chip shares which added 0.28 percent. — AFP

Business

Stocks eye second best start to a year

LONDON: World stocks pulled out of a two-day dive and were eyeing their second best start to a year ever yesterday, while the dollar came under renewed pressure ahead of the Federal Reserve's first meeting of the year. A controversy-free State of the Union address from US President Donald Trump had helped Asian bourses steady as bond markets also calmed after another round of selling had left US Treasury yields at 4-year highs.

Europe's pan-regional STOXX 600 and Wall Street futures then followed with modest 0.1 and 0.3 percent gains to bolster the 5.6 percent jump MSCI's 47-country ACWI index has made this month. That puts it neck-and-neck with 2012's fast start, after which only 1994's 6.5 percent leap would be better. "We can interpret the

remarkable January performance as a spill over from 2017 - growth gathering pace, low inflation and low volatility, and that has accelerated the momentum," said ABN Amro's Chief Investment Officer Didier Duret. "For me this is a prelude to the year where the equity market trend is not broken... there will be phases of people coming into the market and then correction phases as volatility spikes."

A market gauge of that volatility - the VIX - perked up to its highest levels since August 2017 and has nearly doubled this month. One of the big boosts for stocks though, especially in emerging markets which have seen the biggest gains, has been the weakness of the dollar. It fell by a quarter of a percent again yesterday against a basket of other top currencies on

course for its biggest monthly drop at 3.5 percent in nearly two years.

The day's most eye-catching move was a 2-1/2 year low against China's yuan of 6.3287. It has been the greenback's heaviest monthly drop against the Chinese currency since 1994 having lost more than 3 percent. Other Asian action saw the yen briefly slip when the Bank of Japan upped its medium-term Japanese government bond buys (JGBs) in a move seen as a warning shot against further rises in its bond yields and currency.

The dollar later pared its gains however and was last trading at 108.82 yen as it also backed off to \$1.2445 to the euro and \$1.4165 to the pound respectively. In the opening weeks of 2018, Europe recorded the highest equity

inflows across all major regions, adding to a strong 2017 which saw the region cornering over one-third of all global equity fund flows.

Fed ahead

All eyes will be on the outcome of the Federal Reserve's first meeting of the year later which will also be Janet Yellen's last in charge. With US growth humming and unemployment at a 17-year low rates markets are currently pricing in a little over 80 percent chance of another Fed rate hike in March and between two and three for the year as a whole. The Fed is due to release its policy statement at 2 p.m. EST (1900 GMT) but there won't be a news conference or new forecasts this month. "In light of the steady stream of favorable data, it is possible that the FOMC's

(Fed's) statement upgrades language on activity somewhat, which could be viewed as a marginally hawkish shift," analysts at BNP Paribas said in a note. There was the earnings treadmill too. US Health insurer Anthem reported a higher-than-expected quarterly profits ahead of the Wall Street opening bell though there had been some shockers in Europe.

British outsourcing group Capita lost 40 percent of its value after its new boss slashed profit forecasts and set out plans to raise cash to avoid the same fate as recently-collapsed builder Carillion. Poor results also sent telecoms equipment maker Ericsson tumbling over eight percent at one point and there were more woes for fashion retailer H&M as it said it would open far fewer stores in 2018 following a profits hit.—Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report			
Wednesday, January 31, 2018			
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing
Price Index	▲ 23.78	6,687.81	6,664.03
Weighted Index	▼ -2.82	411.98	414.80
KSX 15	▼ -8.10	940.81	949.91

Volume	107,546,554
Value (KWD)	15,443,827
Number of Trades	4,274

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KDI)	Trades	Last	Change
IPG	430	410	150	63	2	430	▲ 30.8
NAFESCO	800	790	10,912	8,678	4	800	▲ 0.0
ENERGYH	30.0	28.1	83,800	1,555	5	28.1	▼ -2.9
GPI	34.6	33.2	2,131,550	71,434	77	33.6	▼ -0.9
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	78	▲ 0.0
Oil & Gas			2,196,212	81,729	89	996.73	▲ 9.90
KFPOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	225	▲ 0.0
BPCC	712	703	20,057	14,155	11	712	▲ 0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	680	▲ 0.0
ALQURAIN	345	338	205,301	69,511	32	339	▼ -2.0
Basic Materials			225,358	83,667	43	1302.98	▼ -2.78
KCEM	470	450	2,408	1,101	3	470	▲ 0.0
CABLE	430	430	18,000	7,740	2	430	▼ -2.0
SHP	201	198	37,996	7,595	4	201	▲ 1.0
PCEM	1,010	1,010	363	367	1	1,010	▼ -0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0.0
MPC	65	65	38,350	2,298	11	65	▼ -0.0
AGICO	246	240	3,800	935	2	246	▲ 6.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	▲ 0.0
NICBM	190	170	1,330	248	2	190	▲ 0.0
EQUIPMENT	30.9	37.4	337,277	12,755	25	38.9	▼ -1.1
NCI	90	90	250	23	2	90	▼ -10.0
GYPSEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0
SALBOOKH	53	52	25,300	1,328	3	53	▲ 0.0
AGLTY	866	831	1,072,354	906,504	227	863	▼ -4.0
EDU	319	310	476,832	149,354	18	319	▲ 10.8
CLEANING	59	58	367,700	21,524	15	59	▲ 0.0
KGL	116	105	7,123,216	775,867	332	109	▼ -3.0
KPCP	150	150	15,491	2,324	2	150	▼ -1.0
HUMANSOFT	3,710	3,708	83,804	311,316	34	3,709	▼ -4.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	880	▲ 0.0
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	71	▲ 0.0
SHOOTING	25.9	25.6	7,250	187	6	25.6	▼ -0.2
COC	463	448	850	391	3	461	▼ -2.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700	▲ 0.0
ALAFQ	384	378	84,150	31,681	9	376	▲ 0.0
MUBARRAD	71	70	100,000	7,004	6	71	▼ -1.0
LOGISTICS	53	52	3,079,398	159,778	110	52	▼ -0.2
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	▲ 0.0
GCEM	86	85	62,950	5,355	7	86	▼ -1.5
QIC	76	70	80,110	5,920	5	76	▲ 5.8
FCEM	72	72	480	33	1	72	▼ -0.5
RKWC	88	83	54,210	4,503	9	86	▼ -3.5
SPEC	70	70	500	35	1	70	▼ -0.1
Industrials			13,871,289	2,416,162	840	1868.33	▼ -1.00
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▲ 0.0
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	226	▲ 0.0
DANAH	73	73	122,000	8,921	5	73	▲ 0.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,055	▲ 0.0
Consumer Goods			122,900	8,921	5	820.75	▲ 0.00
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▲ 0.0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▲ 0.0
Health Care			0	0	0	1,550.87	▲ 0.00
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,130	▲ 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	246	▲ 0.0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	87	▲ 0.0
CABLETV	19.0	19.0	315	6	2	19.0	▼ -0.5
IFAHF	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190	▲ 0.0
OULAFUEL	115	115	9,455	1,087	10	115	▲ 0.0
MUNTAZAHAT	71	71	10	1	1	71	▼ 0.0
JAZEERA	649	640	737	476	3	649	▲ 0.0
SOOR	115	115	11,014	1,267	12	115	▲ 0.0
FUTUREXID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	108	▲ 0.0
ALRAI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	114	▲ 0.0
Jyad	79	66	5,073,443	368,151	192	77	▲ 2
Meznan	778	778	26,000	20,220	1	778	▲ 0
Consumer Services			5,120,874	391,216	221	881.97	▲ 2.00
ZAIN	475	468	1,032,564	488,077	188	472	▼ -5
ORCIDOO	1,145	1,040	1,087	1,113	3	1,145	▲ 0
AAN	30.5	29.6	1,496,308	43,028	39	30.2	▼ 0
VIVA	790	762	59,720	48,584	44	790	▲ 8
Telecommunications			2,589,669	580,802	255	575.96	▲ 0.50
NBK	753	740	3,568,938	2,063,584	199	740	▼ -12
GBK	248	245	534,871	132,069	24	248	▲ 0
CBK	400	400	2,522	1,009	1	400	▲ 0
ABK	303	303	3,250	985	3	303	▲ 0
ALMUTAHED	350	347	55,250	19,275	12	349	▲ 1
KIB	230	225	861,032	149,802	64	225	▼ -2
BURG	317	313	219,782	68,909	11	317	▲ 2
KFIN	596	585	5,758,440	3,383,735	353	585	▼ -11
BOURBYAN	482	459	66,182	30,423	20	460	▼ -1
ALB	212	210	899,079	147,348	32	211	▼ -1
ITHMR	64	57	18,817,432	1,124,255	435	57	▼ -7
WARBABANK	225	224	242,338	54,372	72	224	▼ -1
Banks			30,829,227	7,775,623	1,216	955.10	▼ -17.10
KINS	280	270	10,000	2,797	2	280	▲ 10
GINS	700	615	2,384	1,577	7	700	▲ 0.0
AINS	430	430	1,252	538	1	430	▼ -0.0
WINS	64	60	22,500	1,356	4	63	▼ -4.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▲ 0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	85	▲ 0.0
WETHAQ	39.0	39.0	9,400	367	2	39.6	▲ 0.0
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0
Insurance			45,536	6,635	16	1022.71	▼ -0.80

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KDI)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKDOK	50	50	64500	3,238	4	50	▲ 0.0
KRE	59	58	1,544,379	90,873	40	59	▲ 0.2
URC	74	70	7,794	550	2	74	▼ -1.8
NRE	123	121	224,279	27,288	13	122	▲ 0.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	350	▲ 0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	399	▲ 0.0
AREEC	174	167	5,001	835	2	174	▲ 0.0
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	40.5	▲ 0.0
ARABREC	36.0	35.5	923,848	32,975	29	35.7	▼ -1.0
ERESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	35.6	▲ 0.0
MABANEE	735	731	35,008	25,812	13	735	▲ 2.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	92	▲ 0.0
INVESTORS	17.6	17.2	4,494,185	77,473	61	17.3	▼ -0.2
IRC	30.7	30.5	100,000	3,053	13	30.5	▼ -0.8
ALTUJARIA	94	92	1,248,372	115,925	28	92	▼ -2.9
SANAM	30.0	30.0	3,968	119	3	30.0	▲ 0.0
AAYANRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	▲ 0.0
ADAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	▲ 0.0
ALAGARIA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	34.8	▲ 0.0
MZAYA	114	113	5,954,595	675,596	71	113	▼ -2.6
TUARA	55	55	15,025	751	2	55	▲ 0.0
TAAMEER	34.6	32.5	348,303	11,544	27	33.7	▼ -0.3
ARKAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	89	▲ 0.0
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	160	▲ 0.0
ABYANR	23.0	22.4	1,198,500	26,373	30	22.5	▼ -0.2
MUNSHAAT	86	84	1,112,760	94,515	26	86	▲ 0.0
FIRSTDUBAI	52	50	946,390	48,035	37	51	▼ -0.6
KBT	51	49.0	6,607,473	329,189	224	51	▲ 2.4
REAM	837	837	7	6	1	837	▲ 123.0
MENA	17.9	16.0					

Business

AUB organizes an event on 'The Investment Outlook for 2018'



KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) recently held an event for Private Banking clients which included a lecture entitled 'The Investment Outlook for 2018', as part of its continued efforts in offering advice and consultancy services on investments to its current and potential customers. The lecture was held to provide greater awareness of investment opportunities across a number of different markets. The lecture, held in Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center, was delivered to a select group of the Bank's Private Banking clients, who have been keen to attend similar events organized by AUB, to keep abreast of the changing dynamics across the financial and investment sector.

The lecture was led by Oliver Rahe, Head of Distribution in the Middle East and North Africa and Fahad Al Saif, Executive Director GCC from Goldman Sachs Asset Management, who focused on the future of investments in different global markets shedding light on the general outlook for various economies. Moreover, they answered questions that revolved

around the continued growth of the equities market and the overall link to the reevaluation of assets and potential risks in 2018.

Medhat Tawfik, General Manager of AUB's Private Banking and Wealth Management, welcomed the attendees in his introductory address, and said, "We aim to organize such events to provide the opportunity for our Private Banking clients to benefit from an insight into global investment opportunities whilst highlighting the various risks associated with investments and markets performances."

"The resources and consultations that AUB provides our clients allows them to better manage their investments in an ever changing global environment," added Tawfik. In his closing note, Medhat Tawfik said: "We are very pleased with the outcome of this event. Hosting such sessions reflects the Bank's desire to provide improved services for its clients. AUB will continue to provide first class banking services for its



15 lucky ABK customers win 100,000 Skywards miles each

KUWAIT: Under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held a draw on Wednesday 11th January 2018, to announce the winners of its latest promotion, which was launched last month to celebrate a 15-year long partnership with Emirates Skywards. The draw was held at the Bank's Head Office, and rewarded 15 customers with 100,000 Skywards Miles each. The 15 winners of the campaign were:

- 1 Dr Faisal Ali Alhowell, Jabriya Branch
- 2 Dr Nadia Mohammed Alnaki, University Branch
- 3 Haidar Hasan Khaleel, Farwaniya Branch
- 4 Meysam Zamani Gerashi, Head Office Branch
- 5 Lahdan Adel Al Lahdan, Al-Andalous Branch
- 6 Ahmed Farah, Salmiya Branch
- 7 Hamoud Nassar Al Hassini, Jahra Branch
- 8 George Fouad Khoury, Head Office Branch
- 9 Salman Esam Bin Haidar, Mansouriya Branch
- 10 Vibash Gupata Kumar, Head Office Branch
- 11 Karim Sulaiman Al Mawash, Head Office Branch
- 12 Abdul Hafeez Mohammed, Khaitan Branch
- 13 Abdulatif Ahmed Al Sarraf, Mansouriya Branch
- 14 Saleh Abdullah Al Ateeqi, Head Office Branch
- 15 Jumana Fadhel Al Shatti, Galleria 2000 Branch



The Skywards Miles can be redeemed for reward flights and upgrades on Emirates, as well as luxury hotel stays, fulfilled family days out, or even tickets to a wide range of sporting and cultural events across the globe. With 100,000 Skywards Miles, the lucky winners could book 2 return Economy Class tickets from Kuwait to London or stay in some of the top hotels in the world with Emirates Skywards hotel partner Rocket miles. Stays start from only 5,000 Skywards Miles.

The Skywards Miles can also be used in combination with cash to redeem flights under Emirates Skywards' Cash+Miles product.

The month-long promotion covered all ABK Emirates Credit Cards through point-of-sale and cash withdrawal transactions, and the ABK Emirates Prepaid Card through point-of-sale transactions only. In order to be eligible to win, the cards needed to be issued before the promotion start date of 1st December 2017, and required a minimum spend of KD 100 during the transaction period.

NBK Capital Partners successfully exits pioneering \$157m private debt fund

DUBAI: NBK Capital Partners - an alternative investments firm that advises on providing flexible capital to mid-sized companies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) - has successfully exited its inaugural US\$157 million private debt vehicle. Returning a 17% gross Internal Rate of Return (IRR) on investments in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Turkey, NBK Capital Mezzanine Fund I ranks among the top performing private debt funds in its vintage year.

Raised in 2009, the region's first mezzanine fund - a hybrid of debt and equity financing - was a pioneer for flexible long-term direct lending launched in the wake of the global financial crisis to meet the financing needs of mid-sized firms unable to secure attractive terms with banks constrained by regulatory and structural changes. The closure of NBK Capital Mezzanine Fund I represents the successful exit of eight investments in the portfolio for NBK Capital Partners, the alternative investments arm of NBK Capital.

Yaser Moustafa, Senior Managing Director at NBK Capital Partners, said: "I am delighted with this milestone, which demonstrates the superior returns that we continue to

generate for investors and validates the tremendous opportunity for private debt strategies in the region. It builds on our track record that now totals 17 realizations from 29 investments, the highest number of profitable exits by an alternative investments firm in the region over the past decade. We remain focused on maintaining this level of success for investors across our private equity, private debt and real estate interests." Headquartered in the Dubai International Financial Centre, UAE - with a presence in Bahrain, Kuwait and Turkey - NBK Capital Partners secured funding from prominent regional endowments, pension funds, family offices, HNWIs and affiliates of NBK Capital for the NBK Capital Mezzanine Fund I.



NBK Capital Mezzanine Fund I's mezzanine debt portfolio included: UAE-based companies such as Eikon, a university operator that provides academic infrastructure and related services to Heriot Watt University of Scotland; Al Maaref Private School; and Metito Utilities Limited, the largest privately-owned water and wastewater treatment company in the Middle East. In Turkey, the fund invested in: Aras Cargo, a leading courier express and parcel provider; Dem Pharmaceutical, an importer and marketer of niche pharmaceutical products; and Kili Deniz, a leading aquaculture company. Its remaining two realized investments were Al Rowad Holding, one of the largest private K-12 educational operators in Saudi Arabia, and a regional bakery business.

In 2017, NBK Capital Partners - which has advised on investments exceeding US\$1 billion - raised \$160m for NBK Capital Partners Mezzanine Fund II backed by strong demand from a broad base of regional investors. It will continue to advise on direct lending to firms with a proven track record of profitability, market-leading positions and strong management teams.



Yaser Moustafa, Senior Managing Director at NBK Capital Partners

Six ways to 'future proof' your business

Every year, leaders from across the globe gather in Davos, Switzerland to discuss the most pressing issues facing the world and plan for the future. But thinking about what's coming next isn't just the preserve of multinational CEOs. Every good business leader thinks about future-proofing their company. They spend hours thinking about how and when to expand or diversify and where the next opportunity lies.

Sounds easy, but this kind of horizon gazing is hard. Time is precious, information is plentiful but not always accessible or reliable, and big change is notoriously difficult to manage. Listening to the debate in Davos got me thinking about the long-term trends that will have the greatest impact on the businesses I work with. Here are my top six:



Noel Quinn, Chief Executive, HSBC Global Commercial Banking

1. Watch out for Gen Z

Now 70 million strong, Gen Z'ers were born between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000s and are the first generation of true digital natives. They're known for their strong sense of community and desire to positively influence the world through their work. The eldest of this cohort are starting to enter the workplace and are likely to be managed by millennials, another group with strong views on job satisfaction. Successful brands will respond by developing strategies to address these groups, as employees and as consumers. And those companies which live up to their values and understand how to do business in the digital age will be at a competitive advantage. For instance, it's been shown that ethnically diverse companies are 35% more likely to outperform their peers.

2. From 'Like' to 'Buy', we are social shoppers

More people are buying via social media platforms. When these consumers see a product that they like, they want to be able to buy it there and then. While social shopping is still in its infancy, research suggests it could generate revenues of \$165 billion globally by 2021. Brands seeking to attract these consumers will need to dialup their social media strategies and move from "Like" to "Buy" buttons, putting their products just a click away from savvy shoppers.

3. Green is the new black

Consuming ethically has become more important in recent years. Many people today say they are interested in ethical and environmentally friendly products. It follows that if brands want to be commercially successful, they will have to meet these new consumer expectations. Big companies are acting on this. Smaller firms, too, are looking at their ecosystem of buyers and suppliers to make sure everyone meets their standards. This isn't surprising, because if just one company fails consumers, it puts the reputation of all parties at risk - just like a domino effect.

4. Trade skips borders

Services such as tourism, finance and education are expected to account for 25% of global trade by 2030. Digital technology makes new markets more accessible and more and more small firms are expanding overseas virtually, without ever setting foot abroad. This is a game-changer for trade, with expansion now being as much about a click of a button as bricks and mortar.

5. Blockchain

Today just 0.5% of the world's population use blockchain

(or Distributed Ledger Technology). But adoption is so rapid across so many industries that experts predict the market will be worth \$20 billion by 2024. While some firms are already pioneering the technology, every leader should know how blockchain is being applied to their sector, what proof of concepts have been developed and if there are any collaborative ventures they can join.

6. The AI march continues

Another tech buzzword, Artificial Intelligence (AI), continues its march into "business as usual". It's predicted that AI bots (applications performing automated tasks) will underpin 85% of customer service interactions by 2020, and that this technology could increase productivity by at least 40% by 2035. The most promising uses for business include customer segmentation, in which advanced analytics can be used to identify new customer trends, and segments or clusters of people who are more likely to be interested in a particular product.

Business leaders who not only understand these trends but act on them are more likely to find competitive advantage. That's because by future-proofing your firm over the long-term you win new customers, attract the brightest talent and anticipate where the best opportunities lie. And that is something common to every successful business, from the smallest start up to the largest multinational. - Article provided by Noel Quinn, Chief Executive, HSBC Global Commercial Banking

Brazil economy helps Santander earnings

MADRID: A strong performance in Brazil helped Santander offset weakness in Britain and boost its profits by 7.0 percent last year, the Spanish banking giant said yesterday. The eurozone's biggest bank in terms of market value said its net profit climbed to 6.6 billion euros (\$8.2 billion) last year, from 6.2 billion in 2016. "Throughout the year we have seen strong growth in Latin America, with our businesses in Brazil and Mexico performing exceptionally well," Santander's chief executive Ana Botin said in a statement.

Greater customer activity in Brazil and a recovery in the exchange rate of the Brazilian real helped the bank as the Latin American country bounces back from a sharp economic downturn. Profit there jumped 42 percent to 2.54 billion euros. Brazil was the leading contributor to earnings last year at 26 percent followed by Britain at 16 percent. Brazil's economy is projected to grow two percent this year, according to an annual report by the United Nations-backed Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean released last month.

That is far better than the 0.9 percent growth expected for 2017, or the preceding two years when Brazil's economy was mired in its worst-ever recession. Santander's profits in Britain, which until recently was its main market, fell by 9.0 percent last year to 1.5 billion euros as the drop in the value of the pound after Britain's vote to leave the European Union took its toll. In the United States, Santander said its profit fell by 8.0 percent to 332 million euros. The bank's results in 2017 were marked by the purchase in June of failing Spanish rival Banco Popular for the symbolic sum of one euro after the intervention of European regulators. —AFP

Gulf Bank Management welcomes Kuwait's newest and youngest Al Danah millionaire

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank welcomed Obaid Saad Al-Rishdi, Kuwait's newest and youngest Al Danah Millionaire, and his family to the Bank. Obaid won the Bank's annual and largest Al Danah account prize of One Million Kuwaiti Dinars on January 11th during the big draw event.

Obaid and his family met with a senior group of executives at Gulf Bank to celebrate his win. Commenting on the meeting, Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager for Corporate Communications, said: "We were extremely happy to meet Obaid and his family to congratulate them. The family opened Al Danah accounts for their children several years ago but never anticipated winning the big prize. This year Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is celebrating its ten-year anniversary of making millionaires and due to this, meeting with this year's Millionaire and his family was a highlight for us, we wish them all the best."

Until the end of March, Gulf Bank's Al Danah eligible customers will continue to have a chance to win in the daily draws in which two winners will be receiving KD1000 each,

every working day. However, from April onwards, Al Danah's draw line-up will be replaced with weekly draws, in which five-selected winners will receive KD 1,000 each, every week. This year's first Al Danah much-coveted quarterly draw offering a prize of KD 200,000 will be held on 28 March 2018. In January 2019, the award value will be replaced with KD 150,000.

Gulf Bank's Al Danah second quarterly draw 2018 for the prize of KD 250,000 will be held on 27 June 2018 and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 on 26 September 2018. The final Al Danah draw for KD 1 million - the Guinness World Record acclaimed largest prize linked to a bank account in the world - will be held on 10 January 2019, when the Al Danah millionaire will be announced. Gulf Bank encourages you to increase your chances by depositing more into your Al Danah account, immediately from any local bank, using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's Online and Mobile Banking.

Al Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al Danah winner. Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD200 to open an account and the same amount must be maintained as for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD200 at any given time, a KD2 charge will be made on a monthly basis to the account until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/ or deposit more will enter the daily draw within two days.



The youngest Al Danah Millionaire with his parents and CEO of Gulf Bank, Tony Daher

Technology

Virtual beaus are capturing Chinese hearts as female gaming blooms

A huge potential market for the gaming industry in China

SHANGHAI: With his dashing looks, it's little wonder that 28-year-old tycoon Li Zeyan has wooed hundreds of thousands of women across China—not bad for an avatar in a mobile game. Li is the most popular character in "Love and Producer", a Chinese simulation game that has been downloaded more than 10 million times since debuting in December, mostly by women seeking steamy fantasy affairs with its four virtual suitors.

Its viral popularity has highlighted a huge potential market for the gaming industry in China, where one in four mobile phone gamers is a woman—numbers that are expected to grow. The game, and a separate one also aimed at women in which users can "mother" an intrepid frog character, have leapt into the top ranks of China's most-downloaded mobile games.

The frenzy over the game has focused attention on China's "she economy"—the expanding consumer power of its hundreds of millions of smartphone-wielding women—just as game developers face slowing growth in the gigantic market for battle-and-

strategy games aimed largely at Chinese men. In "Love and Producer", players choose from four Prince Charmings—business CEO Li, a scientist, a special agent and a famous singer—attractive "catches" that tap into the rising relationship expectations of Chinese millennial women.

China's huge population of mobile users already increasingly live through their smartphones, communicating via messaging apps like WeChat, sharing on social media, and paying digitally for a range of goods and services with a tap on their phone screen. "Love and Producer" now also offers the chance to have a virtual

fling while sitting on the bus, said Liu Yixuan, a 19-year-old university student. "A third of my friends play the game and many insist on calling themselves Li's 'wife,'" Liu said. "I'm intrigued by the characters' good looks and the graphics, but other 'wives' are obsessed with talking to their 'husband', who will reply with sweet words in a deep and attractive voice."

Game on

Created by Nikki Games, a developer in eastern China, it was patterned on Japanese "otome", or "maiden" games, simulated-romance worlds generally aimed at women. China already is a mobile-gaming leader, with internet giant Tencent in particular raking in profits from games like the hit "Honour of Kings" in which players spend on things like outfits for their characters. In "Love and Producer", the player runs a fictional TV production company that they must save from bankruptcy, all while dating one or more of the male love interests.

Players complete tasks which allow them to collect cards that are in turn needed to realise a successful TV show—or an eventful "date" with one's lover. Cards can also be purchased. Steamy embraces occur, though the action stops there. In the "real" world, one unidentified fan wished Li Zeyan a happy birthday in a giant illuminated message projected on a skyscraper in the southern city of Shenzhen on January 13, a pricey stunt likely to have cost tens of thousands of yuan (several thousand dollars).

Various estimates put the percentages of US women



BEIJING: This file picture taken on August 30, 2016 shows a woman looking at her mobile phone at the entrance of a cinema. —AFP

who regularly play mobile games at 50 percent or higher, boosted by popular apps like the puzzle game Candy Crush. Chinese consultancy iResearch said women accounted for 24.1 percent of gamers in China in 2016, but that figure is projected to climb. "The overall mobile game industry faces a bottleneck in user growth, but female players have been unleashed in terms of playing time and their willingness and ability to pay," said Wang Guanying, an independent industry analyst.

"Female players are more inclined to share on social media, including their inner thoughts, and are more loyal. They will be the breakthrough point for game companies the next two years." "Love and Producer" was recently leapfrogged by a Japanese-developed game called "Travelling Frog", in which players prepare an amphibian avatar for a journey. For a week earlier this month, it was the top-downloaded app in China in the iOS Store. —AFP



Tap into rising relationship expectations

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Various estimates put the percentages of US women

In Waymo trial, what fired Uber exec may not say could be key

SAN FRANCISCO: One of the most dramatic moments in an upcoming trade secrets trial between Alphabet Inc's Waymo and Uber will likely come when the former chief of Uber's self-driving car unit takes the witness stand, as he is expected to repeatedly refuse to answer questions. Waymo sued Uber Technologies Inc last year, claiming that former Waymo engineer Anthony Levandowski downloaded more than 14,000 confidential files before leaving to set up a self-driving truck company, called Otto, which Uber acquired soon after.

Levandowski, regarded as a visionary in autonomous technology, is not a defendant in the case but is on Waymo's witness list. Waymo has accused Uber of benefiting from Waymo technology that it says Uber acquired through Levandowski. Uber has denied Waymo's allegations and has argued that the data in the files were not trade secrets.

The case hinges on whether Uber used the alleged trade secrets to further its autonomous vehicle program. It may help determine who emerges in the forefront of the fast-growing field of self-driving cars. It is the highest-stakes legal challenge on a list of litigation that Uber's chief executive, Dara Khosrowshahi, inherited when he joined the company in August.

Biggest case in Uber's history

"This is a case that is the biggest in the history of Uber," Uber attorney Bill Carmody told the court during a pretrial hearing on Tuesday. Jury selection in the civil case is set for Wednesday in San Francisco federal court, with testimony expected to begin next week. During a pretrial deposition in April, Waymo lawyers questioned Levandowski for hours about allegations that he took Waymo's trade secrets. He declined to answer any questions about his time at both companies, citing constitutional protections against self-incrimination over 300 times, according to a deposition transcript. Levandowski has never publicly addressed the allegations of taking the documents and law enforcement has not charged anyone with their theft. The US Department of Justice is conducting a criminal investigation into what transpired, according to court filings.

Given the ongoing probe, lawyers for both companies said at a hearing in September that they do not expect Levandowski to answer questions if called to the witness stand at trial. Uber, Waymo and Miles Ehrlich, an attorney for Levandowski, declined to comment. US District Judge William Alsup issued a ruling this month saying he would likely instruct jurors that they are allowed to draw negative conclusions against Uber should Levandowski take the stand and refuse to answer questions.

Elizabeth Rowe, a trade secret expert at the University of Florida Levin College of Law, said Levandowski refusing to answer questions on the stand, and the judge's instructions around it, would hurt Uber's case because it would reinforce Waymo's arguments that he was deceptive and took their information. To counter Levandowski's expected refusal to answer questions, Rowe said Uber should tell jurors in opening statements that the company's actions and those of Levandowski are separate, stressing that Uber fired the engineer last May. "They definitely might want to say, 'Whatever he did, it was for himself, by himself, on his own, and we didn't benefit from it,'" Rowe said. Alsup granted Waymo's request for a pretrial injunction in May, prohibiting Levandowski from working on Lidar, a sensor technology for self-driving cars that is the crux of the current litigation. If Waymo persuades a jury that Uber stole its trade secrets, it said it would seek a permanent injunction to prohibit Uber from using them in the future. —Reuters

Nintendo raises profit forecast on strong Switch sales

TOKYO: Nintendo raised its annual net profit forecast by more than 40 percent yesterday after its popular Switch console flew off the shelves during the holiday season, fuelled by a cheaper yen. The Kyoto-based video game giant said it now expects annual net profit of 120 billion yen (\$1.1 billion), a 41.2-percent rise from a forecast last October when it nearly doubled its previous net profit projection. Nintendo now expects to sell 15 million Switch units by March, an increase of one million from the previous forecast—which was already an upgrade from an earlier projection of as many as 10 million units. "For the nine months ended December 31, 2017, the Nintendo Switch hardware sold well following the launch and sales volume rose substantially during the holiday season," the company said in a brief statement.

The company now expects annual sales of 1.02 trillion yen and an operating profit of 160 billion yen, again marking sizable increases from earlier estimates. Analysts were quick to praise the firm, which gave the world Super Mario and Pokemon. "Switch is in excellent shape. Its demand remained strong during the Christmas season," said Hideki Yasuda, an analyst at Acc Research Institute in Tokyo, before the latest figures were announced. "Nintendo has been back in full force," he told AFP.

'Big hit'

Switch, which can be played both at home and on the move, blends Nintendo's console and handheld device business with its fledgling mobile gaming strategy, which scored a big brand win with Pokemon Go's success in the summer of 2016. Since its launch in March last year, Switch has become a pillar of the company, also known for its Nintendo 3DS handheld console as well as the household Wii console franchise. Among Switch game titles, Super Mario Odyssey "has been a big hit with global sales reaching 9.07 million units" since its debut in October, the com-

Facebook bans ads for cryptocurrencies

WASHINGTON: Facebook says it is banning all ads related to cryptocurrencies in an effort to fight scams. The social media giant said it is barring ads for "financial products and services that are frequently associated with misleading or deceptive promotional practices, such as binary options, initial coin offerings and cryptocurrencies." Initial coin offerings or ICOs are a way for companies to raise funds by selling investors cryptographic assets.

Fraud is common in the world of red hot digital currencies such as bitcoin. This week, for instance, the US Securities and Exchange Commission shut down an initial

Google yanks gay dating app from Indonesia online store

JAKARTA: Google has pulled one of the world's largest gay dating apps from the Indonesian version of its online store in response to government demands. Jakarta said yesterday, amid a crackdown on the LGBT community. Officials had called for the



TOKYO: This file photo taken on January 14, 2017 shows visitors gathering to play Nintendo's new Switch game console during a game experience session. —AFP

pany said. Mario Kart 8 Deluxe sold 7.33 million units and Splatoon 2 sold 4.91 million, Nintendo said. During the April-December period, Switch's unit sales marked 12.13 million, while software sales totalled 47.10 million units. Nintendo also managed to maintain solid sales of other key products. "Nintendo 3DS hardware sales did not weaken after the launch of Nintendo

Switch," the company said, adding that 3DS sales even rose in the US during the holiday season. While applauding Switch's successes, analysts said Nintendo should also delve further into smartphone operations to broaden its

customer base. "We want to focus on how Nintendo will develop apps for smartphones, which can make up for a slump when it transfers to new consoles," Yasuo Imanaka, an analyst at Rakuten Securities in Tokyo, told AFP before the latest earnings announcement.

For the April-December period, Nintendo said net profit reached 135 billion yen, up 31.3 percent from the same period in the previous financial year. During the nine months, the firm's operating profit soared to 156 billion yen from 26 billion yen in the previous year. Sales during the period also more than doubled to 857 billion yen. —AFP

coin offering by a Texas company called AriseBank. AriseBank was accused of relying on celebrity endorsers such as boxer Evander Holyfield and social media to cheat investors out of \$600 million of its goal of \$1 billion for a currency it called "AriseCoin." In a blog post announcing the news, Facebook product management director Rob Leathern hinted that Facebook may modify the new policy at some point to allow bona fide crypto-related businesses to advertise again.

"We want people to continue to discover and learn about new products and services through Facebook ads without fear of scams or deception," Leathern wrote. "That said, there are many companies who are advertising binary options, ICOs and cryptocurrencies that are not currently operating in good faith." "This policy is intentionally broad while we work to better detect deceptive and misleading advertising practices, and enforcement will begin to ramp up across our platforms including Facebook, Audience Network and Instagram. We will revisit this policy and how we enforce it as our signals improve," he added. —AFP



PARIS: A person holds a cryptocurrency hardware wallet at La Maison du Bitcoin. —AFP

tech giant to remove 73 LGBT-related applications, including dating services, from its Play Store, and urged people to shun apps that broke with cultural norms in the world's biggest Muslim-majority nation.

Communications ministry spokesman Noor Iza confirmed yesterday that gay dating application Blued—which boasts more than 27 million users globally—no longer appeared in the Google Play Store available to Indonesian users. "There was some negative content related to pornography inside the application," Iza told AFP. "Probably one or some members of the application put the pornographic content inside." As of yesterday, Apple's

online store still had Blued available. Google declined to say whether it would comply with the government demand to remove dozens of LGBT-related apps.

Homosexuality and gay sex are legal in Indonesia—except in conservative Aceh province, which is ruled by Islamic law—but same-sex relationships are widely frowned upon and public displays of affection between gay couples almost unheard of. In Aceh at the weekend, police forcibly cut the hair of a group of transgender women and made them wear male clothing, sparking protests from rights groups. —AFP

Health

Kifan Cooperative announces discount on leading brands



KUWAIT: Kifan Cooperative announced the launch of beauty, cosmetics and food supplements festival at Kifan Cooperative Pharmacy with a 20-50% discount on the world's leading brands. Cosmetics and beauty experts will be ready in the pharmacy to respond to any queries.

Board member and Head of purchase committee, Mubarak Jassim Al-Tanyeeb said that Kifan Cooperative will witness numerous festivals, special offers and competitive prices and that the marketing policy of the festivals will continue throughout 2018.



Indonesia traffickers sell crocs, pythons on social media

JAKARTA: A group of suspected animal traffickers have been arrested in Indonesia for selling crocodiles, pythons and other protected species through Facebook and the messaging service WhatsApp, police said yesterday. The

case is the latest example of how social media has become a key online market place for animal traffickers as conservationists warn that tech giants have not done enough to halt the trade on their platforms.

The seven suspects, who were arrested at separate locations in and around Jakarta last week, bought the animals for just 300,000 rupiah each before re-selling them online for between two million and five million rupiah, authorities said. "The suspects put the animals up for sale on a Facebook page or via WhatsApp," said Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono. "Interested buyers were asked to meet and the animals were handed over to them," he

added. The suspects have been charged under Indonesia's environment law which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison. The for-sale animals, including some rare species endemic to Indonesia, were brought to the capital Jakarta from the jungles of Java and Sumatra islands, Yuwono said. During their raids, police said they confiscated two crocodiles, two reticulated pythons, six jungle cats, a pair of gibbons, two Javan lutungs, a Javan surili, two owls, a brahminy kite eagle, and a slow loris.

The animals were handed over to Jakarta's conservation agency. Earlier this month conservation watchdog TRAFFIC warned that Facebook had emerged as the top

site for wildlife trafficking in the Philippines with thousands of endangered crocodiles, snakes and turtles illegally traded in just three months.

Indonesia is one of the world's most biodiverse countries making it a lucrative market for the illegal trade in wildlife, which has brought some endangered species to the brink of extinction, activists say. In November, Indonesian police arrested several smugglers who stuffed more than 120 exotic birds into drain pipes. TRAFFIC has also warned that the illicit sale of pangolins has seen thousands of the critically endangered animals smuggled out of Indonesia every year.—AFP

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What's On

Ibtikar Al-Kuwait launches educational training course



Chairperson of Al-Saad Knowledge and Scientific Research Foundation Sheikha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah said courses of 'Ibtikar Al-Kuwait for female students researches and projects' aim at polishing skills of innovative students by using scientific methods.



Sheikha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah

"The initiative seeks to achieve its goals through the use of modern technological tools, and develop electronic curricula and use them in a way that helps the educational process," Sheikha Fadia said on the sidelines of the launch of a training course of Ibtikar Al-Kuwait in cooperation with the education ministry.

She added that the training programs given by the initiative outside school hours provide a learning environment that allows students to discover their own interests in addition to gaining confidence as learners through the use of technology. The creative use of Ibtikar Al-Kuwait initiative programs helps the formation of interests and involvement in researches and projects, as well as making achievements by presenting a safe environment for learning after school hours, she noted.

Sheikha Fadia emphasized the importance of the courses by providing an atmosphere through which students can work with trainers to discover



their self-ideas, develop their skills and participate in building their society. She said the initiative has developmental dimensions and seek to elevate students' levels in all Arab countries through the opening of constructive communication windows between them.



IWG members visit Defense Ministry Camp



The Defense Ministry Camp invited the International Women's Committee, Kuwait Chapter, to visit the winter camp, to see firsthand the social and entertainment programs during the holiday period. Guests were received by Jihad Al-Tukhaim and committee advisor Narjis Al-Shatti. Guests were informed about the importance of the camp for the Kuwait society, then they were served with Kuwaiti traditional desserts followed by a luncheon to get them acquainted with Kuwaiti dishes. Members of the International Women's Committee, Kuwait Chapter, include spouses of ambassadors and diplomats in Kuwait.

TV



00:10 Code Of Honor
02:05 Flight World War II
03:45 Standoff
05:25 Thor
07:25 Jurassic World
09:35 Captain America: Civil War
12:05 The Phantom
13:55 Thor
15:55 Larceny
17:30 The Net
19:25 Batman v Superman: Dawn Of Justice
22:00 Assassins Tale
23:40 The Asian Connection



00:50 Lone Star Law
01:45 Treehouse Masters
02:40 Preposterous Pets
03:35 Escape To Chimp Eden
04:00 Escape To Chimp Eden
04:25 Tanked
05:15 Treehouse Masters International
06:02 Mutant Planet
06:49 Lone Star Law
07:36 Meet The Orangutans
08:00 Meet The Orangutans
08:25 Escape To Chimp Eden
08:50 Escape To Chimp Eden
09:15 Treehouse Masters
10:10 Preposterous Pets
11:05 Mutant Planet
12:00 Escape To Chimp Eden
12:28 Escape To Chimp Eden
12:55 Tanked
13:50 Treehouse Masters International
14:45 Preposterous Pets
15:40 Mutant Planet
16:35 Lone Star Law
17:30 Treehouse Masters
18:25 Whale Wars
19:20 Whale Wars
20:15 Preposterous Pets
21:10 Escape To Chimp Eden
22:05 Whale Wars
23:00 Whale Wars
23:55 North America



00:00 Stella
00:55 Top Of The Lake
02:00 New Tricks
02:55 Doctors
03:30 Eastenders
04:05 Stella
05:00 New Tricks
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Eastenders
07:00 The Musketeers
07:55 Stella
08:45 Father Brown
09:35 Doctors
10:10 Eastenders
10:40 New Tricks
11:35 The Musketeers
12:30 Stella
13:20 Father Brown
14:10 Doctors
14:40 Eastenders
15:15 New Tricks
16:10 The Musketeers
17:10 Stella
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:05 New Tricks
20:05 Benidorm
21:00 Holly City
21:55 New Tricks
22:50 Doctors
23:20 Eastenders
23:50 Benidorm



00:00 My Haunted House
02:00 My Haunted Vacation
03:00 Psychic Kids: Children Of The Paranormal
04:00 My Haunted House
06:00 My Haunted Vacation
07:00 Homicide Hunter
08:00 The First 48
09:00 Escaping Polygamy
10:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
11:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
12:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
13:00 The First 48
14:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
15:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
16:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
17:00 Homicide Hunter
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
19:00 It Takes A Killer
19:30 It Takes A Killer
20:00 Kidnapped: Elizabeth Smart
21:30 Kidnapped: Elizabeth Smart
23:00 Fritz! By Fred Dinenage



00:05 Michael McIntyre's Showtime
01:00 Another Period
01:23 Another Period
01:45 Tosh.O
02:10 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Tosh.O
03:50 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
04:15 Kroll Show
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 I Live With Models
05:30 Impractical Jokers
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:50 Friendszone
07:15 Friendszone
07:40 The Jim Gaffigan Show
08:05 Impractical Jokers
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Kroll Show
09:45 Key And Peele
10:10 I Live With Models
10:35 The Jim Gaffigan Show
11:00 Impractical Jokers
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:20 Impractical Jokers
12:45 Friendszone
13:10 Friendszone
13:35 I Live With Models
14:00 Friends
14:23 Friends
14:45 Workaholics
15:10 Key And Peele
15:35 Kroll Show
16:00 Friendszone
16:25 Friendszone
16:50 Friends
17:15 Friends
17:40 Disaster Date
18:05 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 Friendszone
19:00 Friendszone
19:25 Impractical Jokers
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends

20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
22:00 Nightcap
22:25 Pete Davidson: Smd
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
00:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things
01:20 Mythbusters
02:10 Invent It Rich
03:00 How The Earth Works
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 Tanked
05:30 How It's Made
05:55 How It's Made
06:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things
06:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
07:00 Ultimate Survival
07:50 How It's Made
08:10 How It's Made
08:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:30 Tanked
10:20 How The Earth Works
11:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
12:00 Freaks Of Nature
12:25 Freaks Of Nature
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
14:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
14:30 Tanked
15:20 Ultimate Survival
16:10 How The Earth Works
17:00 NASA's Unexplained Files
17:50 Freaks Of Nature
18:15 Freaks Of Nature
18:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Tanked
21:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
22:00 Freaks Of Nature
22:25 Freaks Of Nature
22:50 How The Earth Works
23:40 Ultimate Survival



00:50 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
01:45 House Of Horrors: Kidnapped
02:40 Who Killed Angie Dodge: Keith Morrison...
03:35 Who Killed Angie Dodge: Keith Morrison...
04:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
05:25 California Investigator
05:50 California Investigator
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It
07:10 Swap Murders
08:00 California Investigator
08:25 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
09:15 California Investigator
09:40 California Investigator
10:10 Nightmare Next Door
11:05 I'd Kill For You
12:00 The Perfect Murder
12:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 Swap Murders
15:40 I'd Kill For You
16:35 Married With Secrets
17:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
18:25 California Investigator
18:50 California Investigator
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
20:15 Swap Murders
21:10 I'd Kill For You
22:05 Reasonable Doubt
23:00 Killer Confessions
23:55 Murder Book

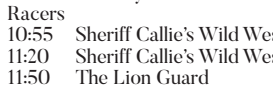


00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:50 Evermore Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:20 Hank Zipzer
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:10 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Jessie
07:25 Tangled: The Series
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
08:20 Elena Of Avalor
08:45 Bunk'd
09:10 Stuck In The Middle
09:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
10:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
10:25 LoloRock
10:50 LoloRock
11:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
11:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
12:05 Hank Zipzer
12:30 Alex & Co.
12:55 Alex & Co.
13:20 LoloRock
13:45 LoloRock
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
15:00 The ZhuZhus
15:15 K.C. Undercover
15:40 Bunk'd
16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
16:10 Elena Of Avalor
16:35 BizarroArk
17:00 Tangled: The Series
17:25 Descendants: Wicked World
17:30 Stuck In The Middle
17:55 K.C. Undercover
18:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
18:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
19:10 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
19:15 Bunk'd
19:40 Girl Meets World
20:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:10 Liv And Maddie
20:35 Jessie
21:00 Tangled: The Series
21:25 K.C. Undercover

21:50 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
22:15 BizarroArk
22:40 Stuck In The Middle
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
23:45 LoloRock



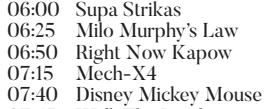
00:15 PJ Masks
00:40 PJ Masks
01:05 PJ Masks
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopdidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopdidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 PJ Masks
08:00 P-King Duckling
08:25 Jungle Junction
08:40 Special Agent Oso
09:00 Handy Manny
09:15 PJ Masks
09:30 Puppy Dog Pals
10:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
10:25 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
10:55 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
11:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
11:50 The Lion Guard
12:15 Sofia The First
12:45 Sofia The First
13:10 Sofia The First
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 PJ Masks
14:30 Doc McStuffins
14:55 P-King Duckling
15:20 Vampirina
15:45 Sofia The First
16:10 Puppy Dog Pals
16:35 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
17:00 Messages From Miles
17:05 Mickey's Monster Musical
17:15 Minnie's Bow-Toons
18:00 Goldie & Bear
18:15 Goldie & Bear
18:30 Puppy Dog Pals
18:55 Sofia The First
19:25 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:55 Doc McStuffins
20:10 The Lion Guard
20:35 P-King Duckling
21:00 Vampirina
21:30 PJ Masks
21:40 PJ Masks
22:25 Sofia The First
22:50 P-King Duckling
23:20 Puppy Dog Pals
23:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers



00:00 Chopped
01:00 Iron Chef Gauntlet
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:25 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:50 Anna Olson: Bake
07:15 The Kitchen
07:45 The Pioneer Woman
08:30 The Pioneer Woman
08:55 Siba's Table
09:25 Siba's Table
09:55 Cooking For Real
10:25 Cooking For Real
10:55 The Kitchen
11:45 Cooking For Real
12:10 The Pioneer Woman
12:35 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Cooking For Real
17:30 Cooking For Real
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
20:00 Tia Mowry At Home
20:30 Tia Mowry At Home
21:00 The Big Eat - Middle East
21:30 The Big Eat - Middle East
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:15 Yukon Men
01:05 Gold Rush
01:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
02:35 Rebel Gold
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
04:50 Deadliest Catch
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Backroad Bounty
06:45 How Do They Do It?
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Alaska: The Last Frontier
08:20 Backroad Bounty
09:10 Deadliest Catch
09:55 Gold Rush
10:45 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
11:30 Rebel Gold
12:20 Backroad Bounty
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13:30 How Do They Do It?
13:55 Deadliest Catch
14:40 Yukon Men
15:30 Gold Rush
16:15 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
17:05 Rebel Gold
17:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
18:40 Deadliest Catch
19:25 Yukon Men
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Blowing Up History
21:50 Tesla's Death Ray: A Murder Declassified
22:40 What On Earth?
23:30 Alaska Monsters



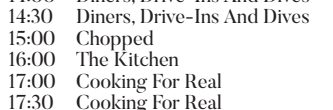
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06:25 Milo Murphy's Law
06:50 Right Now Kapow
07:15 Mech-X4
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Walk The Prank
08:10 Walk The Prank
08:35 Right Now Kapow
09:00 Right Now Kapow
09:25 Mighty Med
09:50 Mighty Med
10:20 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures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



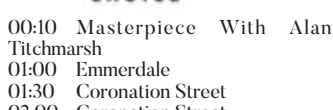
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02:50 WAGS
03:40 WAGS
04:35 WAGS
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Botched
06:55 El News Middle East
07:10 Botched
08:10 El News: Daily Pop
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
10:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
11:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:00 El News Middle East
12:15 WAGS LA
13:10 WAGS LA
14:05 WAGS LA
15:00 El News Middle East
15:15 El News: Daily Pop
16:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
18:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
19:00 El News
20:00 WAGS Atlanta
21:00 WAGS Atlanta
22:00 WAGS Atlanta
23:00 El News Middle East
23:15 The Platinum Life



03:00 A Taste Of South Africa
03:30 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
03:55 The Game Chef
04:25 The Game Chef
04:50 Miguel's Feasts
05:20 Miguel's Feasts
05:45 What's For Sale?
06:15 My Pacific Quest
07:10 Places We Go
07:35 Places We Go
08:05 A Taste Of South Africa
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03:00 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
04:00 Breakthrough
05:00 The Great Food Revolution
06:00 Lawless Island Alaska
07:00 Science Of Stupid
07:30 Science Of Stupid
08:00 Fish Tank Kings
09:00 Engineering Connections
10:00 Nazi Megastructures
11:00 Superarc Megabuild
12:00 To Catch A Smuggler
13:00 Lawless Island Alaska
14:00 Fish Tank Kings
15:00 Science Of Stupid
15:30 Science Of Stupid
16:00 Nazi Megastructures
17:00 Superarc Megabuild
18:00 To Catch A Smuggler
19:00 Science Of Stupid
19:30 Science Of Stupid
20:00 Nazi Megastructures
20:50 Superarc Megabuild
21:40 To Catch A Smuggler
22:30 Science Of Stupid
22:55 Science Of Stupid
23:20 Fish Tank Kings



00:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Cash Trapped
03:25 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
04:25 Tutankhamun
05:15 Don't Tell The Bride
06:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
07:05 Cash Trapped
08:00 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
09:05 Tutankhamun
10:00 Don't Tell The Bride
11:00 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
11:50 Cash Trapped
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
15:10 Cash Trapped
16:00 Inside Windsor Castle
17:00 Martin Clunes: Islands Of Australia
17:50 Don't Tell The Bride
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Cash Trapped
21:00 Inside Windsor Castle
22:00 Martin Clunes: Islands Of Australia
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 How 2 Win
01:00 Cowboys & Outlaws
02:00 The Colour Of War
03:00 Hangar I: The UFO Files
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 Modern Marvels
05:30 How 2 Win
06:20 Cowboys & Outlaws
07:10 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
08:00 The Colour Of War
09:00 Hangar I: The UFO Files
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Modern Marvels
12:00 How 2 Win
13:00 Cowboys & Outlaws
14:00 The Colour Of War
15:00 Hangar I: The UFO Files
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 Modern Marvels
18:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
19:00 Cowboys & Outlaws
20:00 The Colour Of War
21:00 America's Book Of Secrets
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Clash Of The Gods



00:20 Swamp People
01:10 Swamp People
02:00 American Pickers Best Of
02:50 Big Easy Motors
03:15 Car Hunters
03:40 Billion Dollar Wreck
04:30 Swamp People
05:15 Swamp People
06:00 Mountain Men
06:50 Forged In Fire
07:40 American Restoration
08:31 Big Easy Motors
08:56 Car Hunters
09:20 American Pickers
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Forged In Fire

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12:40 Big Easy Motors
13:05 Car Hunters
13:30 Swamp People
14:20 Swamp People
15:10 Mountain Men
16:00 Forged In Fire
16:50 The Tbc
17:15 Tbc
17:40 Big Easy Motors
18:05 Car Hunters
18:30 Mountain Men
19:20 Forged In Fire
20:10 American Pickers Best Of
21:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
21:50 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 Mountain Men



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22:30 Science Of Stupid
22:55 Science Of Stupid
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03:15 Outback Wrangler
03:45 World's Weirdest: Animal Kingdom
04:10 Lion Kingdom
04:40 Hyena Coast
06:30 Monster Croc Wrangler
06:55 Outback Wrangler
07:25 World's Weirdest: Animal Kingdom
08:20 Lion Kingdom
09:15 Animal ER
10:10 Rescue Ink
11:05 Lion Kingdom
12:00 Sharkkatraz
12:55 Searching For The Snow Leopard
13:50 Monster Croc Wrangler
14:15 Outback Wrangler
14:45 World's Weirdest: Animal Kingdom
15:40 Baby Animals In The Wild
16:35 Animal ER
17:30 David Attenborough's Rise Of Animals
18:25 Wild 24
19:20 World's Weirdest: Animal Kingdom
20:10 Baby Animals In The Wild
21:00 Animal ER
21:50 David Attenborough's Rise Of Animals
22:40 Wild 24
23:30 Sharkkatraz

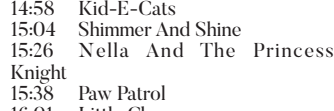


00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 Rabbids Invasion
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig
09:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
09:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
09:48 Henry Danger
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbids Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Massive Monster Mayhem
13:48 Hunter Street
14:12 I Am Frankie
14:36 The Thundermans

15:00 Rabbids Invasion
15:24 School Of Rock
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Massive Monster Mayhem
17:24 I Am Frankie
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
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22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:15 Shimmer And Shine
01:01 Max & Ruby
01:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:47 The Day Henry Met
01:52 The Day Henry Met
01:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:41 Zack & Quack
02:52 Kid-E-Cats
02:58 Kid-E-Cats
03:04 Shimmer And Shine
03:26 Nella And The Princess Knight
03:38 Paw Patrol
04:01 Little Charmers
04:13 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
04:24 Dora The Explorer
04:46 Max & Ruby
05:06 The Day Henry Met
05:11 Nella The Princess Knight
05:35 Shimmer And Shine
05:59 Wallykazam!
06:21 Zack & Quack
06:32 The Day Henry Met
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:00 Rusty Rivets
07:13 Paw Patrol
07:37 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight
08:10 Kid-E-Cats
08:21 Bubble Guppies
08:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:07 Paw Patrol
09:30 Shimmer And Shine
09:53 Nella The Princess Knight
10:15 The Day Henry Met
10:21 Paw Patrol
10:44 Rusty Rivets
11:07 Wallykazam!
11:30 Bubble Guppies
11:54 Team Umizoomi
12:17 Shimmer And Shine
12:39 Shimmer And Shine
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21:50 David Attenborough's Rise Of Animals
22:40 Wild 24
23:30 Sharkkatraz



00:20 A Sunday Horse
02:10 Coat Of Many Colors
03:40 Deck The Halls
05:15 Bonta
06:45 A Sunday Horse
08:35 Coat Of Many Colors
10:05 Capture The Flag
11:45 Deck The Halls
13:20 A Miracle On Christmas Lake
15:20 Pet Pals In Windland
16:45 The Angry Birds Movie
18:25 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
19:55 Chilly Christmas
21:25 Pet Pals In Windland
22:50 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
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00:05 Goodfellas
02:30 Worlds Apart
04:30 All The Wilderness
05:50 Jappeloup
08:00 Days Of Heaven
09:45 All The Wilderness
11:05 Worlds Apart
13:05 The Last King
14:50 Newsies: The Broadway Musical
17:10 Noble
19:00 The Last 100 Days Of Diana
20:40 David Lynch: The Art Life
22:20 Brick



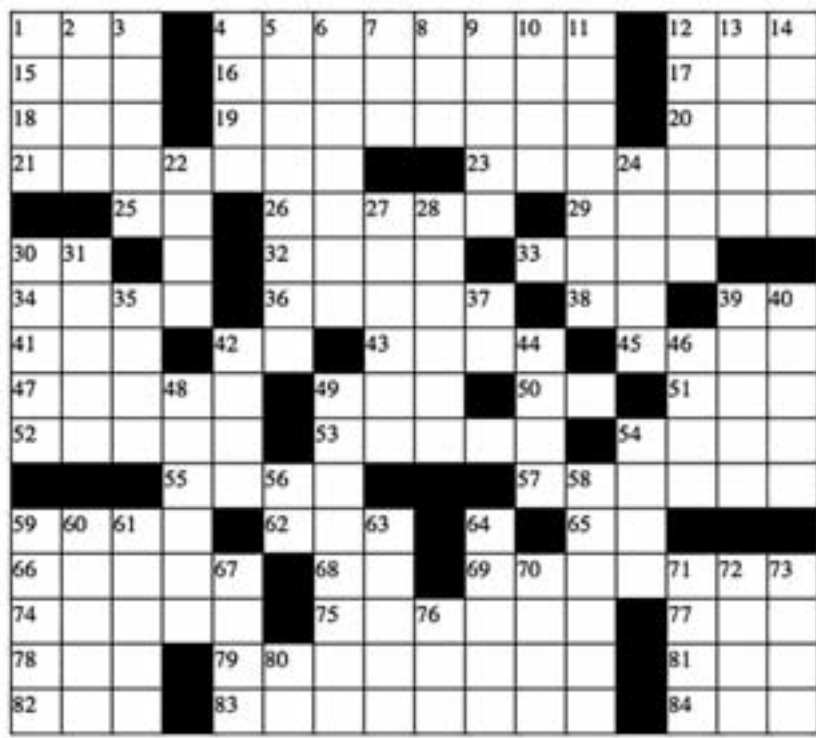
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01:35 Amila's Secret
02:50 Legend Of The Sea
04:15 Catcher: Cat City 2
06:00 A Town Called Panic
07:25 Last Wizard
08:50 Rock Dog
10:30 Free Birds
12:00 Moomins And The Comet Chase
13:25 Amila's Secret
14:40 Monkey King: The Hero
16:20 Rock Dog
18:00 Hocus Pocus: Allie Atkins
19:25 Ploddy Police Car
20:50 Monkey King: The Hero
22:30 Last Wizard
23:55 Free Birds



00:00 Boys Don't Cry
02:00 The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
04:05 I'll See You In My Dreams
05:45 Die Hard
08:00 The Big Year
09:45 My All American
11:45 Ride Along 2
13:30 Beverly Hills Cop 3
15:15 The Big Year
17:00 Dan In Real Life
18:40 Hail, Caesar!
20:30

Stars

CROSSWORD 1824



ACROSS

- Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
- The condition of being unable to perform as a consequence of physical or mental unfitness.
- A lipoprotein that transports cholesterol in the blood.
- The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
- An organism (especially a bacterium) that does not require air or free oxygen to live.
- A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
- (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- Marked by extreme anger.
- A beverage made by steeping tea leaves in water.
- A small dynamo with a secondary winding that produces a high voltage enabling a spark to jump between the poles of a spark plug in a gasoline engine.
- Elinvar is a trademark for a kind of nickel-chromium steel used for watch springs because its elasticity is constant over a wide range of temperatures.
- A soft yellow malleable ductile (trivalent and univalent) metallic element.
- An informal word (abstracted from words with this ending) for some unidentified branch of knowledge.
- A mound of stones piled up as a memorial or to mark a boundary or path.
- Being ten more than one hundred forty.
- A globular water bottle used in Asia.
- (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
- Capital and largest city and economic center of Peru.
- Tropical American tree grown in southern United States having a whitish pink-tinged fruit.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- A characteristic sound.
- The capital and chief port of Qatar.
- Food mixtures either arranged on a plate or tossed and served with a moist dressing.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- Cooking utensil consisting of a wide metal vessel.
- A burn caused by hot liquid or steam.
- Any of various large keen-sighted diurnal birds of prey noted for their broad wings and strong soaring flight.
- A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
- Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus *Acacia*.
- A wound made by cutting.
- A vehicle carrying many passengers.
- A Russian river.
- Elk or moose.
- A unit of weight equivalent to 1000 kilograms.
- The spirit of evil in Zoroastrianism.
- English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- A man who serves as a sailor.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

- (Hawaiian) A small guitar having four strings.
- The state capital of South Australia.
- Having leadership guidance.
- The seat within a bishop's diocese where his cathedral is located.
- A great raja.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.

DOWN

- (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- Type genus of the Ranidae.
- God of wealth and love.
- Stable gear consisting of either of two curved supports that are attached to the collar of a draft horse and that hold the traces.
- A peninsula in southwestern Asia that forms the Asian part of Turkey.
- A beta-adrenergic blocking agent (trade name Corgard) that is used to treat hypertension and angina.
- A doctor's degree in education.
- A strong emotion.
- Black-spotted usually dusky-colored fish with reddish fins.
- Norwegian mathematician (1802-1829).
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedaling).
- A republic in northeastern Europe on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea.
- Depressing in character or appearance.
- Acquire or gain knowledge or skills.
- Ctenophores lacking tentacles.
- Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
- Type genus of the Otariidae.
- The act of playing for stakes in the hope of winning (including the payment of a price for a chance to win a prize).
- Of a pale purple color.
- The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- An African river that flows northwest into Lake Chad.
- The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Any of various plants of the genus *Althaea*.
- A famous chief of the Shawnee who tried to unite Indian tribes against the increasing white settlement (1768-1813).
- A sock with a separation for the big toe.
- 16 ounces.
- Transparent anterior portion of the outer covering of the eye.
- Having the same or similar characteristics.
- A sloping mass of rocks at the base of a cliff.
- An ancient upright stone slab bearing markings.
- A member of a North American Indian people of southeastern California and northwestern Mexico.
- A fraudulent business scheme.
- A pilgrimage to Mecca.
- A landlocked republic in northwestern Africa.
- In bed.
- A quantity of no importance.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, now is the time to go in new directions regarding love and friendship if you find you are unhappy; if you ignore this the situation will only worsen. Impetuous action regarding finances is not suggested at this time; watch and learn. Even so, you will come across opportunities to increase your finances; be careful. A situation will conclude or enter a sensitive phase of expansion. You will have the desire to work with electronic or some type of innovative theories combined with facts. Your energies run effectively toward making yourself felt in the material, perceptible outer world. You are not in the most patient of moods and you could cut someone off that perhaps you shouldn't. Let your mind rest tonight, Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, you notice changes taking place everywhere you look; this could cause you to take another direction in achieving your objectives; the actual objectives could even change! Now is the time to let go, not accumulate. Research and wisdom from a trusted mentor will ease anxiety and create confidence. Listen carefully for without appropriate advice you could step into a very negative situation; something you may have created. You may face opposition on the home front until you explain what is happening. You could feel unbalanced and trapped with the arrival of some new developments. Use your common sense, think carefully and proceed accordingly. Rest and relax this evening with a good movie or book; you always land on your feet, Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, your social life is prominent now and you may have to reconsider changing your some of the people you call friends. Many of your co-workers look up to you and try to find the secret to your positive frame of mind. Hearing new methods and approaches are at the top of your list. Using research to get the correct details and reaching people clearly with your findings will be prominent; mistakes could cause serious setbacks. In many cases it could also mean the way you present yourself will help represent the company in a positive way; higher-ups are watching. You will feel better about yourself and your efforts; this is rare but much needed! You are high-minded and technologically superior. Accept compliments and smile, Gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, you could be disappointed with someone you thought to be reliable; take time to figure out what happened and make plans to go another direction. You could think things will work themselves out if you're patient and let them be; this is a dangerous chance to take! Things will flow smoothly today toward finishing an important project. Intuition will lead you to look into new medical care; this could possibly mean new exercise regimen or changes in the food you eat. You could find yourself on center stage as superiors or the boss realize the quality of work you do. Unpleasant disagreements could come about when someone tries to control what you do or think. Enjoy your evening doing exactly what you feel drawn to do, Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, this new cycle brings with it the opportunity to let go of denial on you have clung to for a long time. Looking at the truth will enable you to make sensible decisions that will clear the way for growth. If a method is not working discard it and find another way. You could feel like freeing yourself of the conventional thought that you need more things to be happy and fulfilled; you could unload many old items that are holding you back. Shedding old ways eliminates old, cumbersome energy that interferes with evolving of the mind and spirit. Open up for clear thinking. Keep your feet planted firmly upon the ground even if you feel like running away; you will see just how much you are needed by someone you care for tonight, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, it seems that today will bring with it an energy of making impressive changes to your home by using simple, yet inventive methods. People will compliment you on your clever designs and the perfect application of them. You could be rewarded for very good business activity. You could come to the side of a friend to help defend something they believe in; this could involve children with chronic diseases or perhaps the homeless, but this will be a most helpful effort on your part. Many others will come forward with approval and assistance. Someone who drops by to show you the results of their new diet could amaze you. Good friends often give us silent encouragement just by being next to us in a quiet moment, Virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, you may receive some information you have sought for a long time; savor the moment. It could seem that the facts of your life change in the twinkling of an eye; hold on for a rocky ride. It is better to halt in the middle of the stream than drown trying to reach the other side, be patient no matter how hard it seems. You find great enjoyment in your new studies and habits that bring positive outcomes. Hearing from a brother or sister will bring warmth and merriment to your day or this could indicate someone similar to a sibling. You will let someone know your true feelings and this could be a beautiful moment. Your outer beauty will be obvious today and someone will say so. A lazy evening with thoughts of fantasy induced possibilities for your tonight, Libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, a new, exciting tool could appear that will support stronger communications. Decisions regarding work are clear-cut and everyone could agree; enjoy strong team unity throughout the day. A new idea could be polished and delivered to an appreciative client or customer. You could feel some resistance on a personal level that might puzzle you; be open to listening and learning. You may uncover an unfortunate mistake someone made and did not realize until now. You may need to ask for help later with an issue regarding a vehicle; could be flat tire or dead battery but nothing serious. Think of something restful to do later with someone you care for. Tonight, focus on the present and let go of all other concerns for now, Scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, your vision is completely opposed to those you are involved with on certain levels; you may feel your way is the best way for you and not anyone else. Studying new concepts and methods is very important but remember that just because you read something doesn't mean you buy into it for it is merely something to learn about. Education is what separates many cultures and people because our experiences are so varied; have faith in making your way to a good, sound finish. You will be able to help lots of people and the sharing of answers will be available soon. The desire to travel will continue through the new year and you will have these opportunities crop up often. Tonight your home is your sanctuary from the masses, Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, trading email addresses and phone numbers will mark the beginning of an important time in your life. Seeing more of family and friends could provide support you need now. Interesting, cutting edge ideas and products hold your attention; you are completely bored with the mundane routines in life. You want answers to the social state of the world and the causes for it! Take care with your search for you will hear many different approaches from across the globe. Keep your wits about you and take your time with important thoughts; you could be in a position to let yourself believe something just to have an answer; beware of this! Enjoy your evening with art, reading, writing, movies, dance or theater, Capricorn!



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Aquarius, someone seeks you out for your wisdom and guidance in a difficult situation that could involve someone you love. You eagerly continue your spiritual search; remember not all leaders matters of religion, politics or theories can be trusted as they are human and imperfect. There are no simple answers; be patient, pray, meditate and listen to your own heart. In business and personal realms be certain you have documentation before you present your case. You may cancel plans for a small trip that could be problematic. You may not want to be around anyone tonight and this may offend someone. You may want to put shopping for furnishing, clothes or vehicles on hold for now. Surround yourself with beauty this evening, Aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, you notice the tiny steps you have taken toward a certain goal will make a big showing this year. As a result, home, work and intimate relationships are front and center at this time; one small step at a time is perfect for you! You feel prepared and eager to clear away and solve blockages; your decisions could have to be remade tomorrow. You may feel upset over the way you have handled something but remember love conquers all. Social issues could be your focus. If you feel people are siding against you or talking behind your back, relax because everyone who knows you loves you! Plenty of good times ahead as you continue your path toward learning and exploring ways to make life better for you and those you love, Pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

More 1950's Songs

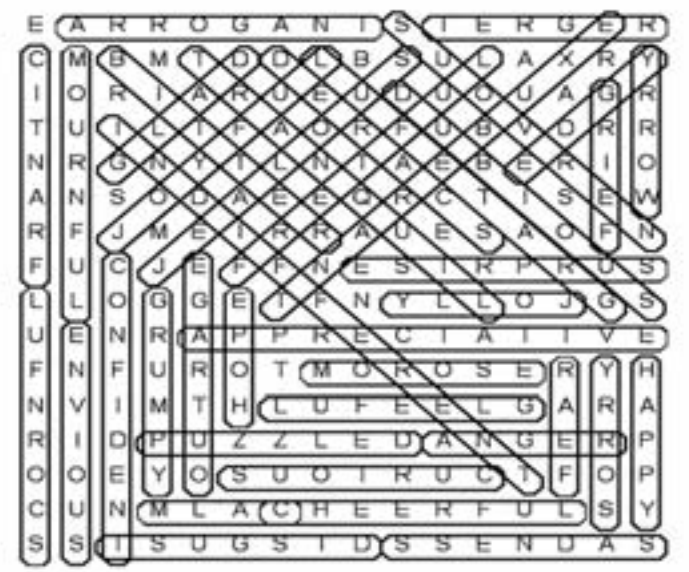
Find and circle all of the 1950's song titles that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an additional 1950's song.



- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| ALL SHOOK UP | FLAMINGO | LUCILLE | SOUL ON FIRE |
| ALMOST GROWN AT THE HOP | GET A JOB | MAYBE | STAGGER LEE |
| BIRD DOG | GOODNIGHT IRENE | MONEY HONEY | THE BELLS |
| BLUE MONDAY | I'M A MAN | MR SANDMAN | THE WIND |
| CHANCES ARE | I'M WALKIN' | PERSONALITY | TIPITINA |
| CHANTILLY LACE | JIM DANDY | REBEL ROUSER | TOM DOOLEY |
| CRY | LITTLE DARLIN' | ROLLIN' STONE | TRY ME |
| DON'T BE CRUEL | LOVELY AVENUE | SEA CRUISE | WHITE LIGHTNING |
| EL PASO | LOUIE LOUIE | SINCERELY | YOUNG BLOOD |
| | | SO WHAT | |

Yesterday's Solution

Moods & Emotions 3



- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| ANGER | EDGY | GRUMPY | OUTRAGE |
| APPRECIATIVE | ENVIIOUS | HAPPY | PUZZLED |
| ARROGANT | EXUBERANT | HOPE | REGRET |
| BITTER | FEAR | INDIFFERENT | SCARED |
| CALM | FRANTIC | JEALOUS | SCORNFUL |
| CHEERFUL | FRETFUL | JOLLY | SORRY |
| CONFIDENT | GLAD | JOYFUL | SCARED |
| CURIOUS | GLEEFUL | MOROSE | SURPRISE |
| DISGUST | GRATEFUL | MOURNFUL | TRANQUIL |
| DUBIOUS | GRIEF | NERVOUS | WORRY |

The hidden word is: EMBARRASSMENT

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Classifieds

Thursday, February 1, 2018

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

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

BY DAY: Fair with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 31/01/2018 1200 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	20 °C	10 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	19 °C	04 °C		
ABDALY	19 °C	05 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	20 °C	07 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	18 °C	07 °C		
SALMIYAH	18 °C	12 °C		
AHMADI	17 °C	11 °C		
NUWAISIB	21 °C	06 °C		
WAFRA	20 °C	03 °C		
SALMY	18 °C	06 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	02/01	Fair	21 °C	04 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 28 km/h
Friday	02/02	Fair	22 °C	05 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Saturday	02/03	Fair	21 °C	06 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Sunday	02/04	Fair	22 °C	07 °C	NW	10 - 30 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:17
Sunrise	06:38
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:04
Sunset	17:25
Isha	18:44

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	20 °C
MIN. Temp.	03 °C
MAX. RH	55 %
MIN. RH	24 %
MAX. Wind	NW 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	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
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation available for executive bachelor in old Reggae. Neat and clean 3 BHK apartment. Interested may contact: 99990278. (C 5377) 29-1-2018

URGENTLY REQUIRED

- Pastry Chef
- Barista
- Café Worker
- Accountant

Preferred Filipinos and Indians

Send CV: m.rabim@jamal-factory.com

EMERGENCY 112

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For labor-related inquiries and complaints: **Call MSAL hotline 128**

Kuwait Times

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Flight Schedule

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 1/2/2018				Departure Flights on Thursday 1/2/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
KAC	102	London	00:50	PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	JZR	502	Luxor	01:30
WAN	416	Beirut	01:05	KAC	142	Doha	01:45
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
ETH	620	AddisAbaba	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KAC	351	Kochi	03:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	ETH	621	AddisAbaba	03:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
ETD	305	AbuDhabi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	ETD	306	AbuDhabi	04:05
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:05
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	DHX	172	Bahrain	06:50
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	JZR	902	Baku	07:50
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	KAC	413	Bangkok	08:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:30	KAC	791	Madinah	08:35
WAN	342	Sohag	06:35	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	BAW	156	London	08:55
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	WAN	133	Doha	09:00
QTR	8511	Doha	07:35	KAC	117	NewYork	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	QTR	8512	Doha	09:05
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
WAN	332	Alexandria	08:00	KAC	741	Dammam	09:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	101	London	09:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
ETD	301	AbuDhabi	09:05	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	ETD	302	AbuDhabi	10:10
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	RSB	7867	IQA	11:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
NIA	161	Cairo	11:35	FDK	804	Damascus	11:00
WAN	134	Doha	11:45	IRA	672	Ahwaz	11:10
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	JZR	786	Riyadh	12:00
FEQ	933	Sohag	12:40	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
JZ	R561	Sohag	12:45	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
FD	B075	Dubai	12:45	MSC	404	Asyut	12:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	VIZ	202	IQA	12:30
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	QTR	1075	Doha	12:30
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	NIA	362	Alexandria	12:35
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15				
KAC	792	Madinah	13:20				

Lifestyle | Gossip

ZAYN APPEARS TO GUSH ABOUT GIGI HADID ON NEW BALLAD

Zayn Malik has shared a preview of a new song which is seemingly about his girlfriend Gigi Hadid being the only woman he needs. The former One Direction star - who has been dating the stunning model for over two years - shared the snippet of the track on his Instagram profile on Tuesday. On the track, which could appear on the singer's next record, Zayn belts: "She's all the woman I need." He's also shared a video of him playing the acoustic guitar on the photo-sharing app, with the caption: "jammin (sic)" Over the top of the instrument, he sings: "I see you every night, always on my mind. Always on my mind/I know you are mine." It comes after the 'Still Got Time' hitmaker registered a new song called 'Hurt'. Zayn appears as

the owner of the track on a BMI listing, whilst a host of major songwriters and producer BURNS have been credited for their involvement. Among the names are Andrew Watt and Ali Tamposi - who co-wrote Camila Cabello's huge hit 'Havana' - Chloe Angelides, known for working with Selena Gomez and Demi Lovato, and Britney Spears collaborator The DJ Burns. The track, when released, will follow two mega collaborations from the 24-year-old musician in the form of 'Dusk Till Dawn' with Sia and 'I Don't Wanna Live Forever' with Taylor Swift. Zayn has been keeping his cards close to his chest when it comes to his second record, but admitted he's "kind of finalized it". He said: "This record, I've kind of finalized it. But there's always ideas. Every day I find

another song that I'm swapping out with another one. That's why the album date hasn't really come yet. Even though the album is pretty much there, and I have the material, I'm still changing things here and there. It's not necessary in my head when I work on a song whether it's for a new project or whether it's for this." Zayn promised fans that a tour is "definitely on the cards" for his second album. The 'Pillowtalk' hitmaker didn't head out on the road in promotion of his debut solo record 'Mind of Mine' in 2016, but now he has more material under his belt with the new LP on the way, he's "excited to start rehearsing" his live show.



Justin Bieber to release new Spanish tune with J Balvin

Justin Bieber has recorded a new Spanish tune with J Balvin and regular collaborator Skrillex. The 'Sorry' hitmaker has been on a break since axing the rest of his 'Purpose World Tour' in July due to exhaustion, but while he's been taking some much needed time off, he's also been preparing for his comeback. 'Bonita' hitmaker Balvin, who is known for his reggaeton style, told The Sun newspaper: "I know he is working right now. We have a song together which is not out yet. I think it will come soon. We recorded that last year. "It's a real dope song, produced by Skrillex, and hopefully it's going to be on my album." The track follows Bieber's remix of smash hit 'Despacito', which the 23-year-old heartthrob - who is back dating his on/off girlfriend Selena Gomez - wanted to sing in the language. The track by Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee was the first song that was primarily in Spanish to top the Billboard Hot 100 since a 1996 remix of 'Macarena', and Luis - who sings on the track alongside the 'As Long As You Love Me' hitmaker - previously revealed it was Justin's decision to use the Spanish version rather than an English one they had recorded. He said: "The funny thing is we actually have a version of the song fully recorded in English, and he knew that. Instead of using that, he decided to use the Spanish version, even though he doesn't speak Spanish himself and made sure he was phonetically pronouncing the words correctly." Meanwhile, Justin skipped the Grammy Awards in New York City last weekend, to spend time with his friends. The 'What Do You Mean?' singer was instead spotted hanging out with his pals and a few fans in Santa Monica, California. An eyewitness told 'Entertainment Tonight' that Justin was "in a low key, good mood and was very sweet". In his absence, Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee still took the stage with vocalist and Miss Universe 2006 Zuleyka Rivera to perform a rendition 'Despacito'. According to Luis, Justin - whose single received three Grammy nominations - declined his invitation to perform.



Naughty Boy to finish Cheryl Tweedy track today

Naughty Boy is heading into the studio today to put the finishing touches to his song for Cheryl Tweedy. The 'Runnin' hitmaker previously revealed he teamed up with the former Girls Aloud star on a track for her new record, which will be her first since the arrival of her little boy Bear - whom she has with boyfriend Liam Payne - in March. The 33-year-old record producer - whose real name is Shahid Khan - can't wait for fans of the 'Call My Name' hitmaker to hear the "great" track they've produced together. Appearing on 'Lorraine' yesterday he said: "She is a lovely girl. We have recently met and we have written a song for her new album and we are really happy. "She is her own entity and she is in a good place. "People are wanting her to come back and hear what she can do next." Shahid - who has helped launch the careers of Sam Smith and Emeli Sande, to name a few - has also revealed he's on the lookout for the next big star to work with. Referring to TV talent shows like 'The X Factor', he said: "I feel there's still someone out there who's not ready to apply for a TV show. That's what I'm ready to hear. "From meeting Emeli

Sande and Sam Smith you understand what real talent is, and it's not chasing anything, it's an innate desire for your music to live." It comes after Rak-Su were spotted with Cheryl and Naughty Boy at the same recording space. The X Factor champions - made up of childhood friends Mustafa Rahimtulla, Ashley Fongho, Jamaal Shurland and Myles Stephenson - already collaborated with the producer and Wyclef Jean on 'Dimelo', and were an instant hit with Cheryl when they were on the talent show. Cheryl last released music in 2014 in the form of her 'Only Human' album, and to make sure she comes back with a bang, Cheryl recruited Naughty Boy. It was previously revealed the brunette beauty had kickstarted her return to the music industry when she registered a new song entitled 'That's My Song'. Her Girls Aloud bandmate Nicola Roberts was listed as a songwriter, alongside Triple 8 band member Iain James. And Cheryl has also been in the studio with Afro-beat producers Team Salut.

Catfish and the Bottlemen and George Ezra for Boardmasters

Catfish and the Bottlemen and George Ezra have been announced as headliners for Boardmasters Festival. Van McCann and co will close the Main Stage at Watergate Bay in Newquay, Cornwall on Friday August 10, whilst the 'Budapest' hitmaker will bring the festivities to an end on Sunday August 12. The 'Cocoon' rockers and the 24-year-old singer/songwriter join previously confirmed Saturday headliners The Chemical Brothers. Also joining the bill is grime legend Kano - who headlined the music and surfing extravaganza's Unleashed Stage in 2016 - who will make his UK festival exclusive at Watergate Bay. Also on the bill are Years & Years - who haven't released new music since 2016 - who look set to make a comeback this summer. And Rag'n'Bone Man, Rae Morris, Friendly Fires, MK and Raye have also been announced, with many more acts to be unveiled in the coming months. 'Galvanize' hitmakers Chemical Brothers - electronic pioneers Ed Simons and Tom Rowlands - will perform on the main stage on August 11. The NME Award-nominated festival is held between August 8 and August 12, 2018 across Fistral Beach and Watergate Bay in Newquay, South West England. Also on the bill are Craig David, Annie Mac, Fat Freddy's Drop, Declan McKenna, Tom Walker, Craig David, Sam Fender, The Horrors, The Amazons and Bicep Andrew Topham, Boardmasters Festival Director, said: "We are delighted to announce The Chemical Brothers as our first headline act for Boardmasters 2018. Following another sell-out year which saw the biggest Boardmasters ever this summer, we are excited to bring more of the most exciting names in music to Cornwall next August. Boardmasters' unique fusion of the very best in international surfing and music helps to keep Cornwall firmly on the map as the festival sees unprecedented growth year on year. We can't wait to welcome our incredible community for another summer of thrilling surf and music action across two stunning sites - Fistral Beach and Watergate Bay."



Sigrid has a fan in Helen Mirren

Sigrid can count Dame Helen Mirren as a fan. The rising Norwegian star has revealed the 72-year-old screen legend told her she loves her music when they met on TV's 'The Graham Norton Show' recently. Sigrid - whose full name is Sigrid Solbakk Raabe revealed: "I talked to her backstage and she is very, very cool. She liked my music, apparently she had listened to me before. "It was really nice to meet her and hang out." Sigrid - this year's BBC Music Sound of 2017 poll winner - has also revealed that after topping the charts with her latest single 'Strangers', she has set her sights on recording a song for the next 'Eurovision Song Contest' hopeful from her country. She told The Sun newspaper: "I don't think I would participate in 'Eurovision', but I would love to write a song for it. "I don't think I would do well in 'Eurovision' because I don't think jeans and a T-shirt is a thing, you have to wear sequins and a costume. "But it would have to be for Norway, obviously. Do it for my country. "It would be so fun - I want to go to the final. I'm going to make it happen." Sigrid became prominent after the release of the single 'Don't Kill My Vibe' last year, and was "honored" to follow in the footsteps of the likes of Jessie J, Ellie Goulding and Adele who previously won the prestigious BBC poll. Sigrid said previously: "It's a lot to take in to have won something as prestigious as BBC Music Sound Of. I feel honored as there are so many other artists I look up to who have won this before me, and honestly, I'm just really happy and proud of what my team and I have achieved together. I'm from a small town called ?lesund in Norway. "I'm still 21 and it's quite crazy to get this recognition. I'm very excited about the year ahead and sharing new music with everyone. I want to thank the panel for voting and the team involved in BBC Music Sound Of 2018."



Jared Leto hints next 30 Seconds to Mars LP 'could be the last'

A Jared Leto has hinted 30 Seconds to Mars' next record could be "their last album" for a while. The 'Suicide Squad' actor admits the band leave big gaps between records, and says fans might have to wait a long time before they put out a follow-up to their forthcoming fifth studio album. According to the Daily Star newspaper, Leto said: "We're really slow at putting albums out. "I don't mean we're never putting music out again but this may be the last album at least for a while, until I feel I need a collection of songs to say something." The 46-year-old hunk recently teased the new album - their first since 2013's 'Love, Lust, Faith and Dreams' - is on the way, and they have a new single dropping "soon". Leto shared a photograph of his bandmates in their spacious studio on his Instagram Story recently, with the caption:

"The longer you work on a song the longer it takes to finish "New album coming sooooooon! (sic) He also posted two black and white photos of himself, and wrote: "Swipe to the see the frontal having a good Saturday? Almost done with the next single (sic)" The US band's last release was the single 'Walk On Water'. Leto previously revealed the record will be "surprising" as it is very futuristic. He said: "The album is, I think, going to be very surprising to people. There's quite a lot of different musical styles on the album, it's a very modern album and a break from the past we are incredibly excited about it. It has a lot of energy and we've spent years working on it, exploring new ideas." And the model admitted that they have "shattered expectations" by breaking a few rules. — Bang Showbiz



Lifestyle | Gossip



SIR RIDLEY SCOTT TO RECEIVE BAFTA FELLOWSHIP

Sir Ridley Scott will be given the BAFTA Fellowship at this year's awards. The 80-year-old filmmaker has had a career spanning more than 40 years and has helmed 25 feature films including iconic cinema classics 'Alien', 'Gladiator', 'Thelma and Louise' and 'Blade Runner'. He said: "It is a privilege to have been able to make a career for myself in this industry and to be honored for my body of work is indeed very gratifying." Although never winning an Academy Award, Scott has been nominated for three of the prestigious awards and won two BAFTA gongs. Back in 1992, Scott won BAFTA's Special Award and three years later, he was awarded the Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema Award alongside his brother

Tony. Now, the iconic filmmaker joins the likes of Charlie Chaplin, Alfred Hitchcock, Steven Spielberg, Sean Connery, Elizabeth Taylor, Stanley Kubrick, Anthony Hopkins, Laurence Olivier and Judi Dench. Last year, Mel Brooks received the prestigious award. Amanda Berry, chief executive of BAFTA, said: "Ridley Scott is a visionary director, one of the great British filmmakers whose work has made an indelible mark on the history of cinema. "His passion and unrelenting pursuit of excellence have provided cinema goers with a tantalising range of films, including 'Alien', 'Gladiator', 'Thelma and Louise' and 'Blade Runner', 40 years since his directorial debut, his films continue to cross the boundaries of style and genre, engaging audiences and inspiring the next genera-

tion of film talent." Most recently, Scott directed and produced the John Paul Getty biopic 'All the Money in the World' which received a BAFTA nomination for Supporting Actor for Christopher Plummer. He also was the executive producer on 'Blade Runner 2049' - the sequel to his cult classic - which received eight BAFTA nods and five Oscar nominations. The BAFTA awards will take place on February 18.



Michael B. Jordan excited to work with Steven Caple Jr in Creed 2

Michael B. Jordan is "really excited" to work with Steven Caple Jr on 'Creed 2'. The 30-year-old actor is set to reprise his role as boxer Adonis "Donnie" Johnson Creed in the upcoming sequel to the 2015 hit movie, and admitted he doesn't know when shooting will start. Speaking to Deadline, Jordan said: "Well, Steven Caple Jr. is going to direct it, and I'm really excited about working with him. Right now, we're in the process of getting the script tight and making sure that it's perfect. Not exactly sure when we're starting, but in the next few months we'll get back to it and try to deliver a solid project in 'Creed 2.'" Caple is said to have been hand-picked by Sylvester Stallone and Jordan to helm the motion picture and took over from Ryan Coogler who helmed the first movie. Coogler is expected to join the movie in an executive producer capacity but a deal has not yet been completed. Last July, Stallone teased 'Creed 2' would be inspired by 'Rocky IV' and shared a photoshopped movie poster in which Adonis stands toe-to-toe with Russian boxer Ivan Drago (Dolph Lundgren) who was responsible for killing his father Apollo Creed (Carl Weathers) in the ring in the 1985 classic. 'Creed' was a spin-off and sequel to the hit 'Rocky' film franchise, in which Stallone portrayed heroic boxer Rocky Balboa six times. Stallone appeared as the Italian Stallion in 'Creed' and was responsible for training Adonis, the son of heavyweight champion Apollo - Rocky's most famous opponent - who was portrayed by Weathers in the first four 'Rocky' movies. Just a few weeks ago, Stallone revealed that the 27-year-old Russian boxer Florian 'Big Nasty' Munteanu will be playing Ivan Drago's son in the upcoming movie.

Bill Nighy joins Pokemon movie

Bill Nighy and Chris Geere are the latest stars to join the cast of 'Detective Pikachu'. Ryan Reynolds is already on board to star in the first live-action Pokemon franchise movie, along with 'Inception's Ken Watanabe, 'The Get Down's Justice Smith and 'Big Little Lies' star Kathryn Newton. Now Deadline has reported that 'Love Actually' star Bill and 'You're The Worst' actor Chris have also joined the cast. 'Detective Pikachu' is set to follow Smith's teenage character Tim Goodman, who has to team up with the mouse-like Pikachu in order to find his father who has been kidnapped. Newton is set to star as a journalist. In the movie based on the gaming franchise, Pikachu isn't as agile as the normal fan favourite Pokemon, so has to rely on his intelligence to beat his enemies, and he gets help from Tim - who is the only boy who can under-

stand what he says - to solve Pokemon-related crimes. 'Goosebumps' director Rob Letterman is set to helm the new movie and has teamed up with Legendary Entertainment to oversee the upcoming movie which has been written by 'Guardians of the Galaxy's Nicole Perlman and Alex Hirsch who has worked on 'Gravity Falls', according to Variety. Rather than a standalone film it is expected that 'Detective Pikachu' will act as a launch pad for a new franchise. The Pokemon Company's long-standing movie collaborator, Toho, will handle distribution of the film franchise in Japan, as it recently worked in partnership with Legendary on the reboot for the 'Godzilla' franchise.



Sylvester Stallone back with Jason Statham on Expendables 4



Sylvester Stallone has given fans a sneak peak of the 'Expendables 4' set. The 71-year-old actor is reprising his role as Barney Ross in the fourth film in the franchise and took to Instagram to reveal a picture of himself "blocking" his co-star Jason Statham - who is returning as Lee Christman. He wrote on Instagram: "Blocking and Rehearsing a scene with. @jasonstatham from EXPENDABLES... (sic)" Last April, Nu Image/Millennium chief Avi Lerner hinted Stallone had quit the franchise due to creative "disagreements" with him, but admitted there was still a chance he could be involved in the fourth film. He said: "We've got disagreements with Sly, but we've had them for over a year and a half. Right now, each one has opinion. We agreed on 95 per cent of things, but there are certain things in production we don't agree on. "I don't think it's over, but what write whatever you want. In my opinion, it's not dead." Shortly afterwards, Arnold Schwarzenegger admitted he wouldn't reprise his role as Trench in the franchise without Stallone. He said: "There is no 'Expendables' without Sly. I would never do the movie without him, no." But, earlier this month Stallone confirmed he was coming back as Barney. He posted on Instagram: "BARNEY WILL BE BACK! PLUS THE CREW AND A COUPLE NEW MEMBERS ... (sic)".

Chuck Berry's life to be documented

Chuck Berry's life is to be made into a documentary. The music legend passed away at his home in Missouri in March last year at the age of 90, and now filmmaker Jon Brewer is set to direct and produce a documentary based around one of the most influential guitarists in history and rock 'n' roll pioneer. In a statement, Brewer said: "I am very privileged to be able to produce and direct this fully authorized and official story of the legendary Chuck Berry." Berry became an icon for his hits including 'Johnny B. Goode', 'Roll Over Beethoven' and 'Maybellene' as well as his duck-walking stage struts and his guitar solos. Cardinal Releasing Ltd signed a deal with Berry's estate and his widow Thelma Berry and plan to produce a feature documentary with the current title 'Chuck! The Documentary'. Following the documentary, a biopic will be produced. Principal photography has already started, Deadline reports, and the biopic is set to start pre-production this summer after the documentary has been completed. The production company has had a history of music biopics including B.B King, Nat King Cole, Jimi Hendrix and Mick Ronson. Berry has been immortalized in previous films already including 'Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll' back in 1987 which brought together a number of musicians such as Eric Clapton, Linda Ronstadt, Julian Lennon, Etta James and Robert Cray. Last year, Berry's final album was released in June and was his first record since 1979's 'Rock It', and featured a total of 10 tracks, with eight being written by the 'Sweet Little Sixteen' hitmaker. During his lengthy career, Chuck changed the face of the music scene when he released 'Maybellene', which swiftly became a huge hit. Many hits followed including 'Promised Land', 'Johnny B Goode' and 'Roll Over Beethoven' and in January 1986, Berry became one of the first artists to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.



Prince's estate block release of new music

Prince's estate have successfully won a lawsuit to block the release of unheard music by the singer. Producer George Boxill claimed to have a collection of unreleased songs he worked on with the late musician - who died in 2016 - between 2006 and 2008 and planned to release them himself, even making one track available to buy on iTunes briefly last year. But the 'Kiss' singer's estate filed legal documents threatening to sue Boxill back in April last year and demanded he return the music to them. It was claimed Boxill signed a confidentiality agreement when he worked with the star which stated all recordings, "would remain Prince's sole and exclusive property". The producer is also said to have agreed he, "would not use any recordings or property in any way whatsoever." TMZ.com has now obtained legal documents which reveal Boxill never responded to the newly filed lawsuit, and the deadline of January 23 has now passed. The estate have now requested the courts sign off on an injunction, blocking the release of any of the tracks. This comes just days after Prince's estate promised new music would be released soon. Estate adviser Troy Carter told Variety: "I heard some music the other night that was pretty mind-blowing and we're getting some stuff mixed right now ... There will be unreleased Prince music coming soon." Last year, Universal Music Group's \$31 million distribution deal for Prince's back catalogue was voided over a lack of clarity regarding the terms of the late singer's contract with Warner Bros. Records, the label to which he was signed for nearly the first 20 years of his career. The contents of Prince's music vaults were moved from his former home in Paisley Park, Minneapolis, to a climate-

controlled storage facility in Los Angeles last year, after some of the tapes were found to have deteriorated. Prince, who was just 57 when he died, had previously revealed the existence of the unreleased music in an interview published after his death. He said at the time: "I've never said this before, but I didn't always give the record companies the best song. There are songs in the vault that no one's ever heard. There are several vaults; it's not just one vault." The 'Little Red Corvette' singer is to be honored with a concert event called 'Prince: Live on the Big Screen' that will take place on April 21 2018 at the Target Centre, Minneapolis. The concert will be part of Celebration 2018, a four-day event in April to honor Prince's life and legacy and will take place at Paisley Park between April 19 and 22.



Judge dismisses lawsuit over U2 track The Fly

A judge has dismissed a lawsuit which claimed U2 stole elements of a song for their single 'The Fly'. Paul Rose claimed that U2 copied the 13-second guitar riff in his 1989 instrumental track 'Nae Slappin' and used it to create a 12-second part of a guitar solo in 'The Fly'. And now US District Judge Denise Cote in Manhattan has dismissed the case, saying that it was not enough of a "sufficiently substantial" portion of the track, which is three and a half minutes in length, to be a protectable "fragment" of the work. Rose had been asking for at least \$5 million in damages from Bono, The Edge, Adam Clayton, and Larry Mullen Jr as well as UMG Recordings Inc, who releases U2's records under their label, Island Records. In the papers filed, Rose claimed U2 had copied the track "virtually note-for-note", having got hold of it through Island Records after he sent the demo for 'Nae Slappin' to them previously. It comes after guitarist

The Edge recently shared how he thinks the most "unique" aspect of 'Songs of Experience' - their 67th studio album - and the band in general, is that not many groups have made so much music with the original line-up intact. He said: "I hope you don't need to know anything about U2, or anything about the context, to enjoy [Songs of Experience]. I think it's an album of just classic songs, great melodies, great hooks, great lyrics. I think there's very few bands in the history of rock and roll that have been around and made as many albums as we have with the same line-up ... that perspective is unique, you know? On the last record [Songs of Innocence] we wrote about where we came from. "How this band came together, Dublin of the late 70s early 80s, and this new record is the companion album. But it's from this current perspective now ... So many years later, what have we learned?" - Bang Showbiz

Chadwick Boseman: Why 'Black Panther' needed African accent

'Black Panther' star Chadwick Boseman revealed Tuesday doubters had tried to convince him not to give the superhero an African accent—and how proud he was to prove them wrong. The 41-year-old American stars in the titular role in the 18th movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe—the first black superhero to get his own standalone movie. "There was a time period where people would ask me questions about whether or not an audience could sit through a movie with a lead character that spoke with that accent," Boseman said of the east African inflection he gives the superhero—alias King T'Challa.

"I became adamant about the fact that it's not true," he added, stressing that none of the naysayers had come from Marvel itself. "The intonations and melodies inside an African accent are just as classical as a British one or a European one." Boseman was speaking at a Beverly Hills news conference along with director Ryan Coogler, co-stars Michael B Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o and Danai Gurira and the rest of the cast the morning after Monday's glittering Hollywood premiere.



Actor Chadwick Boseman attends the world premiere of Marvel Studios' 'Black Panther.'

The actor got his break after a decade as an obscure television and indie film actor when Marvel came calling in 2014 with a lucrative five-picture deal to play Black Panther. His appearance in "Captain America: Civil War" (2016) brought Boseman his first taste of real fame and his celebrity looks set to skyrocket when "Black Panther" opens on February 16, followed in May by "Avengers: Infinity War."

King of Wakanda

T'Challa, king and protector of the technologically advanced fictional African nation of Wakanda, has been characterized as the first black superhero, which is partly true. Around 30 black characters have donned the lycra for the big screen since the early 1990s, including Marvel's Falcon (Anthony Mackie since 2014), Wesley Snipes's titular vampire hunter in "Blade" (1998) and Halle Berry's Kenyan princess Storm in four "X-men" movies. The Wakandan royal can claim to be the first black superhero to land a standalone movie in the MCU and the first in mainstream American comics, having been featured in "The Fantastic Four" in 1966.



Comic book writer Stan Lee (left) and actor Chadwick Boseman attend the world premiere of Marvel Studios' 'Black Panther,' in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos

Critical and celebrity reactions to "Black Panther" after Monday's premiere were about as good as could be expected, with reviewers hailing the movie as "iconic" and "astounding." Donald Glover, who is due to star as Lando

Calrissian in the upcoming "Solo: A Star Wars Story," called it "beautiful" while "Ant-Man" director Peyton Reed said it was "soulful, thoughtful and of the moment." Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige, who produces every

MCU movie, agreed that the messages of the movie—which posits Wakanda taking in refugees and extending its culture and technology to poorer nations—were particularly topical, but added that most of the script was written 18 months ago.

'Badass Women of Wakanda'

Coogler and the producers came in for particular praise at the news conference for their decision to feature a clique of powerful female characters dubbed "the badass women of Wakanda" front and center. "I was so pleased that this story... that it supported that. In African culture, they feel as if there is no king without a queen and this story, it highlights the queen, the warrior, the general, the young sister," said Angela Bassett, who plays T'Challa's mother Ramonda. "I was so proud to have my daughter and my son there last night, because in their faces, in their spirit, they were feeling themselves. They stood taller after last night."

Gurira ("The Walking Dead") spoke of her trepidation over having her head shaved to play Okoye, the head of Wakanda's Dora Milaje special forces, but how she saw it as "subversive in the right way." "In theory, it sounded amazing, and then the day came... It happened. Then you walk into the restroom to wash your hands, look up like, 'What the?' "It took a few days... Then the pride started to grow, there's pride around it, and the embracing of this symbol of power and these women." — AP

Hundreds of thousands mark Hindu festival in Malaysia



Hundreds of thousands of Hindus across Malaysia celebrated the annual Thaipusam festival yesterday, with many piercing their skin with hooks and skewers to show devotion to the deity Murugan. Thaipusam marks the day when the goddess Parvathi gave her son Lord Murugan a powerful lance to fight demons. It is observed mainly in countries with a significant ethnic Tamil population, including Malaysia and neighboring Singapore. Most of Malaysia's roughly 31 million people are Muslim but it also has ethnic Chinese and around two million ethnic Indians, mostly descendants of laborers brought from India by former colonial ruler Britain.

Thousands of devotees thronged the Batu Caves on the outskirts of the capital Kuala Lumpur in the early hours yesterday, walking



barefoot up the 272 steps towards the site's limestone hilltop shrine.

Many carried prayer offerings known as "kavadi" and balanced milk pots on their heads with their hands as they ascended. Some carried large platforms attached to a harness and decorated with images and idols of Hindu deities. Others pierced their faces with tridents and rods or hung multiple hooks and chains

from their skin in an act of penance. The steps also take devotees past a statue of Lord Murugan standing 42.7 meters (141 feet) high—the tallest figure of the deity in the world. "I just recently got married so I just went up to say thanks to him (Lord Murugan)," Vijayaletchmy Vimalan, a Thaipusam participant for 25 years, told AFP. — AFP



Ethnic-Malaysian Hindu devotees dance in a state of trance as they walk towards the Batu caves temple during the Thaipusam festival celebrations in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP photos



Malabar Gold & Diamonds unveils 'Heart to Heart' jewelry collection to celebrate the season of love



Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the BIG 5 jewelry retailers globally launched a special collection of diamond and 18K gold jewelry named 'Heart to Heart' to celebrate the season of love. 'Heart to Heart' jewelry collection showcases the exclusive heart shaped jewelry which symbolizes the best way to express your love.

As the demand for heart shaped jewelry increases during this season of love, the jewelry retailer launched the exclusive collection to cater to the customer demand. This unique jewelry collection is a perfect gift to express true emotions to your loved ones. With prices starting from KWD 55 to KWD 275, there is something to fit everyone's budget.

Apart from the diamond pendants customers can also choose the heart shaped beautifully crafted diamond bangles and rings to gift your loved ones. The company

has also launched a special 3 in 1 diamond ring which can be worn in 3 different ways. To add more delight to this occasion, the customers can also avail a branded Daniel Hechter watch absolutely free with this limited edition jewelry. These promotional sets will be available at their outlets in Kuwait until 17th February 2018.

Apart from these, Malabar Gold & Diamonds also showcase an incredible collection of unique designs in gold and diamond jewelry from Italy, Singapore, Turkey, Bahrain, India, etc to suit the tastes and budget of its different customers. Customers can also choose gifts to their loved ones from their branded jewelry segment that includes Era - Uncut Diamond Jewelry, Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewelry, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Precia- Gem Jewelry and Divine - Indian Heritage Jewelry.

New wave of Iranian globetrotters hits the road

A travel frenzy is gripping young Iranians, who are inspiring each other through social media to overcome traditional constraints and expand their horizons. The exploits of young Iranian travellers, hitchhiking and backpacking their way around the globe, have become immensely popular on Instagram and Telegram, the most widely used apps in Iran, with some gathering more than 200,000 followers. Iran has long had a globetrotting elite thanks to the large diaspora that fled to the United States and Europe after the 1979 revolution, but now it is the turn of the emerging middle class to stretch their wings, overcoming cultural barriers and parental worries in the process. Sara Louee, 31, grew up thinking that holidays were a family trip to the northern coasts of Iran.

But two years ago, she met a group of foreigners through the website couchsurfing.com and joined them as they hitchhiked to the ancient city of Yazd. She was unprepared: "I had absolutely no equipment. I was wearing flimsy girly shoes and had borrowed a backpack from a friend," she told AFP. But her mind was opened to a world of possibility and she was soon saving for a 40-day trip around Europe, even if it meant battling with her conservative-minded parents. "My family didn't accept it easily or overnight. I went through a lot of pain. But I gradually proved I could do it with shorter trips and gained their trust," said Louee, who now blogs regularly about her travels. "These days, if I stay home at the weekend, my dad comes over and asks if something is wrong," she added, laughing.

'Strangers in your room?'

Other young Iranians, particularly women, say they had been taught that travelling alone was dangerous. "When I told people I stayed in a hostel in Europe, Iranians would be shocked and say 'You mean there were strangers in your room?! Didn't they do anything to you?'" said Mahzad Elyassi, another travel blogger. She only heard about hitchhiking for the first time in 2015 but has since travelled to all 32 of Iran's provinces and 20 countries. "We've proven that Iran is really safe for such trips. It's become a trend. "One woman said she used my Instagram page to convince her husband, saying: 'If she can do it alone, so can we.'" Last year, Iran recorded 9.2 million departures, a 38.5-percent increase on the previous year and almost double the numbers a decade ago. The trend has been helped by President Hassan Rouhani, who came to power in 2013 promising to improve Iran's relations with



Young Iranians are inspiring each other through social media to overcome traditional constraints and go travelling. — AFP

the world. Iranians are not welcome everywhere: the United States this year banned them from entry unless they have close family, and European countries have strict and laborious procedures for tourists designed to weed out poor people. But much of the rest of the world is welcoming Iran's tourist boom, with 38 countries now waiving visas for Iranians. They include Georgia, Russia, Turkey and Malaysia, and talks are reportedly under way with India.

Tech support

That has helped encourage travel among those outside of the rich elite by putting the focus on cheaper countries. "Maybe Iranians don't have enough dollars or euros to travel to Europe but they can explore places like southeast Asia," said Elyassi. Technology has also been crucial. "When I started, Google Maps didn't exist. People couldn't just easily travel and share their experiences," said Reza Pakravan, 43, one of Iran's best-known travellers after he broke the world record for crossing the Sahara on a bike. Alireza Zafari, 38, has spent two years on the "Herculean task" of documenting the whole of Iran for travellers, a project he expects will take another eight years to complete. — AFP

Lifestyle | Feature



This file photo shows clothes of late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena inside the dressing room at their former residence, Palatul Primaverii (the Palace of Spring) in Bucharest. — AFP photos



This file photo shows a bathroom of late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena at their former residence, Palatul Primaverii (the Palace of Spring) in Bucharest.

Ceausescu auction points to lingering nostalgia among Romanians

A trove of objects from the household of the former Romanian Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu will go under the hammer on Wednesday in an auction drawing on the enduring fascination his memory holds amid the country's current political turmoil. Rugs adorned with the face of the "nation's beloved son", gifts from other world leaders, as well as clothes and photos are some of the artefacts on offer. "There is a clear interest in such objects," said Mihai Ipate from the auction house Artmark. "Some buyers are motivated by nostalgia, others want to enrich their collection." That nostalgia for the past and for the certainties of the past have been in evidence elsewhere in recent days.

The auction comes days after the 100th anniversary of Ceausescu's birth, a date which some Romanians felt moved to mark by gathering at his tomb. "I came to do my patriotic duty and light a candle for him, because he is worthy of this," said 79-year-old retired driver Valerian, one of dozens who came to the site with flowers and candles. "They shouldn't have killed him," he told AFP, glossing over the hardships of the Ceausescu era: "Everyone had work, an apartment, the freezers were full." Rising to the leadership of Romania's Communist Party in 1965, Ceausescu went on to create what historians judge to be one of eastern Europe's harshest dictatorships. He was overthrown after an uprising in December 1989 and executed three days later along with his wife Elena after a summary trial. An elderly woman laying flowers at the tomb in

Bucharest's Ghencea cemetery asks: "What dictator?! Are today's politicians able to do as much as him? Not at all, all they do is steal."

'Icon of a glorious past'

Large crowds have taken to the streets in recent weeks to protest against proposed judicial reforms that critics say would make prosecuting graft more difficult in Romania, considered one of the EU's most corrupt states. For many Romanians, "Ceausescu is the icon of a glorious past, of a Romania where the memory of cold and the hunger have been erased," sociologist Vasile Dancu told AFP. This nostalgia had only increased in the face of rising disen-



A picture showing late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu (right) and Cuban leader Fidel Castro (left) during his visit to Romania is displayed at an auction house in Bucharest.



A cover of communist 'FLACARA' magazine (The Flame) with late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu (right) and French President Charles de Gaulle (left) at an auction house in Bucharest.

chantment with the political class, he added. "Ceausescu still haunts the minds of those who grew up before 1989. The nationalist-communist discourse is still very present in political debate, while the former leader seems to have become acceptable, worthy of respect, a great patriot," says historian Armand Gosu. But in other ways his legacy still blights the lives of many. Mr Gosu points to towns "disfigured" by the old regime's economic policies and Ceausescu's "illogical decisions".

'Disgusting' spectacle
Those targeted by the regime's apparatus of repression are even more unforgiving.

"Ceausescu established a personal dictatorship and his regime was based on terror," 62-year-old Radu Filipescu said bitterly. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison in 1983 for distributing leaflets calling on Romanians to take to the streets against the regime. Filipescu remembers the cult of personality around Ceausescu, which transformed his birthday into what he calls a "disgusting" spectacle. Nevertheless curiosity continues to surround the Ceausescu era.

The enormous palace constructed on his orders in central Bucharest is home to the country's parliament and one of its most popular tourist attractions, with 210,000 tickets sold last year. His former residence, the Palatul Primaverii (Spring Palace), has been open to the public for almost two years and saw 36,000 visitors in 2017. — AFP



The Winter Garden of late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena at their former residence, Palatul Primaverii (the Palace of Spring) in Budapest.



Manequins wear clothes of late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena at their former residence, Palatul Primaverii (the Palace of Spring) in Budapest.



Pictures showing late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu are displayed at an auction house in Bucharest.



A tapestry with late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu (left), his parents (center) and his wife Elena (Right), displayed at an auction house in Bucharest.



A car received as a gift from Iran's Shah is exhibited at the former residence of late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena, Palatul Primaverii (the Palace of Spring).



A picture of the three children Nicu (L), Zoe (center) and Valentin (R) is seen on the bedroom of late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena at their former residence, Palatul Primaverii (the Palace of Spring) in Budapest.



Physiotherapy room of late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena at their former residence, Palatul Primaverii (the Palace of Spring) in Budapest.



Indoor pool of late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena at their former residence, Palatul Primaverii (the Palace of Spring) in Budapest.



This file photo shows the bedroom of Elena, the wife of late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu at their former residence, Palatul Primaverii (the Palace of Spring) in Bucharest.

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2018



A person poses for a photo as the moon rises over Griffith Park in Los Angeles, California, on January 30, 2018. Many parts of the globe may catch a glimpse on January 31 of a giant crimson moon, thanks to a rare lunar trifecta that combines a blue moon, a super moon and a total eclipse. The spectacle, which NASA has coined as 'super blue blood moon.' — AFP

There's a 'super blue blood Moon' on the rise



People set up telescopes near Victoria Harbor in the hope of seeing a 'supermoon' on a cloudy evening in Hong Kong yesterday.



The moon sets behind the city of Jerusalem early yesterday.



The moon rises over a pagoda in Kumal, some 105 kms away from Mandalay City yesterday.

Stargazers in North America, Hawaii, the Middle East, Russia, India, and Australia had the chance to witness a rare "super blue blood Moon" yesterday, when Earth's shadow bathed our satellite in a coppery hue. The celestial show is the result of the sun, Earth, and Moon lining up perfectly for a lunar eclipse just as the Moon is near its closest orbit point to Earth, making it appear "super" large. It is the second full Moon within the same month, a phenomenon called a "blue" Moon which has nothing to do with its color.

The "blood" in the name comes from the reddish brown color the Moon takes on when Earth enters between it and the sun, cutting off the light rays that usually brighten the lunar surface. Thousands gathered at Los Angeles' Griffith Observatory, which opened its doors at 3:30 am (11:30 GMT) to a crowd expected to reach 2,000. Some had waited in line since 10:00 pm the night before, hoping for a choice viewing spot. Coffee was on sale, and many

science buffs brought their own telescopes to set up on the lawn. The eclipse began around 3:45 am, as a black shadow began to devour one corner of the gray-white Moon.

An hour later, the lunar surface was plunged into darkness, known as totality. Then, rusty tones began to sheath the Moon, reflecting the light of all the sunrises and sunsets on Earth at the same moment. The extreme east of Africa, the Middle East and Asia, Russia, Australia and New Zealand could enjoy the spectacle last night, as the Moon rises there. People in Hawaii, Australia and eastern Asia should be able to follow the full eclipse from beginning to end, said NASA. But most of South America, Africa and Europe, where the alignment occurs in the middle of the day, will miss out on the show.

How to watch

The last "super blue blood moon" occurred on December 30, 1982, when it was seen in Europe, Africa and western Asia. For North



This combo image (from top left clockwise) shows the moon during a lunar eclipse referred to as the "super blue blood moon" in Jakarta yesterday.

America, the last time was in 1866. This time around, viewing will be a challenge for those on the US East Coast. The eclipse begins just as the Moon is setting in the west and the sun is rising in the east. Moon-watching parties for the one-hour-16-minute eclipse were advertised up and down the US West Coast. But people outside the path of totality, or whose view was obstructed by cloudy weather, could follow the event live via NASA.gov. If you miss this one, the next blue moon total lunar eclipse will happen on December 31, 2028, though it won't be quite as large since it will not be as close to Earth. Another will occur on January 31, 2037. "The red color during a lunar eclipse is very distinctive and it's a rare treat to be able to see a blood red moon," said Brian Rachford, associate professor of physics at the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. "One of the great things about a lunar eclipse is you also don't need any special equipment to see it. Anyone can go outside and look at the moon." — AFP



Indonesian gather to view the moon during a lunar eclipse taking place during the "super blue blood moon" phenomenon in Jakarta yesterday.



The moon is seen during a lunar eclipse referred to as the "super blue blood moon", in Jakarta.



An Indonesian woman uses a telescope to view the moon during a lunar eclipse taking place during the "super blue blood moon" phenomenon.