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Kuwait pledges \$2bn for Iraq's reconstruction as \$30bn raised

Amir opens KICRI • UN chief urges support for Iraq



KUWAIT: (From left) World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi, HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres and EU High Commissioner Federica Mogherini attend the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated the Iraqi people on the victory achieved that led to the defeat of the so-called Islamic State (IS) and abolishing it from most of its soil. His remarks came during the official inauguration of the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq (KICRI) yesterday. Governments, global funds, organizations and investors pledged billions of dollars in loans and investment at the conference for Iraq, a nation reeling from a three-year war against IS.

The significant level of participation in this conference, whether government, civil or private, comes as a global recognition of the magnitude of sacrifices by

Iraq in its fight against terrorism, HH the Amir noted, pointing out that the international community seeks to reward these sacrifices that turned the lives of Iraqis in IS-controlled areas into a "living hell".

The results of this conference are a continuation of all "our" efforts, the Amir said. "Yet, we should not neglect the suffering of our brothers in Syria and Yemen due to the ongoing conflicts taking place there, but we are confident that we and the international community will support them as soon as security and stability are restored."

Sheikh Sabah added that the magnitude of destruction inflicted on Iraq by terrorist groups cannot be overlooked, which requires Iraq to embark on an inclu-

sive reconstruction process that will cover infrastructure and other public utilities, a task that cannot be borne by Iraq alone, which is a matter that has urged "us" to call on the international community to partake and shoulder its responsibility.

"In light of our realization of such consequences, we considered the vital role of the private sector in reinvigorating the investment environment in Iraq. Last night, more than 2,000 businesses from the private sector came to examine investment opportunities in Iraq. Also, non-governmental organizations contributed in lessening the suffering of the Iraqi people," he said.

HH the Amir, during the speech, extended apprecia-

tion to Iraq, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank, all as co-chairs of KICRI, along with the host country. He concluded by announcing \$1 billion in loans to Iraq through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, as well as another \$1 billion in investments in Iraq.

Donors had pledged \$30 billion by the final day of the international conference, according to Kuwait. "The commitment of the international community at the conference was clear," said Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, adding that 76 countries, numerous international funds and global

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Zuma resigns; Tsvangirai dies

PRETORIA/HARARE: South African President Jacob Zuma announced his immediate resignation yesterday after the ruling ANC party threatened to eject him from office via a parliamentary vote of no confidence. Scandal-tainted Zuma said in a 30-minute national television address that he had "come to the decision to resign as president of the republic with immediate effect". "I have served the people of South Africa to the best of my ability. I am forever grateful that they trusted me with the highest office in the land," he said.

Zuma, whose reputation has been stained by years-long allegations of graft, had been instructed to step down by the African National Congress (ANC) party. He complained about the process, saying: "I don't fear exiting political office however I have only asked my party to articulate my transgressions and the reason for its instructions that I vacate office." Zuma has been at loggerheads with deputy president Cyril Ramaphosa, his expected successor as president and the new head of the ANC. Parliament could elect Ramaphosa as president as early as today or tomorrow.

Separately, Morgan Tsvangirai, the veteran Zimbabwean opposition leader who fought Robert Mugabe's regime for many years, died yesterday after battling against cancer, a party official said. Tsvangirai, who founded the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999, was among the most prominent critics of Mugabe, the long-time authoritarian leader who was ousted from power in November.

"It is sad for me to announce that we have lost our icon and fighter for democracy," Elias Mudzuri, one of the vice-presidents of the MDC, said on Twitter. Tsvangirai's death was confirmed to AFP by another senior party member. He was 65. — AFP



Jacob Zuma



Morgan Tsvangirai

Tillerson upbeat on Mideast peace plan; acknowledges role of Hezbollah in Lebanon

AMMAN: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson yesterday conceded that Iran-backed Hezbollah is part of the "political process" in Lebanon, appearing to soften Washington's tone ahead of a visit to the country. "We support a free, democratic Lebanon free of influence of others, and we know that Lebanese Hezbollah is influenced by Iran. This is influence that we think is unhelpful in Lebanon's long-term future," Tillerson said at a press conference in Jordan. "We also have to acknowledge the reality that they also are part of the political process in Lebanon."

Shiite movement Hezbollah - the only faction to have retained its weapons after Lebanon's civil war - is a member of the Lebanese government of Prime Minister Saad Hariri. Despite being branded a "terrorist" organization by the United States and targeted with economic sanctions, Hezbollah has risen to play a decisive role in regional conflicts including Syria. The US Justice Department in January announced the creation of a special task force to investigate what it called "narcoterrorism" by the powerful movement.

The United States levied sanctions in



AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah (right) meets US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at his residence yesterday. — Petra

early February against six individuals and seven businesses with alleged links to Hezbollah financier Adham Tabaja. The group's influence was last year at the

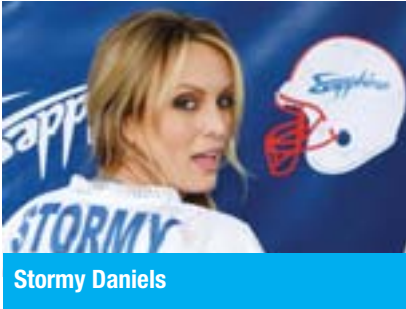
heart of a political crisis in Lebanon that saw Hariri quit - and then later rescind his resignation - amid a tug-of-war between

Continued on Page 11

Lawyer admits paying \$130K to porn star linked to Trump

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's personal lawyer has told US media that he paid \$130,000 out of his own pocket to a porn star who has said she once had an affair with the now US president. Long-time Trump attorney Michael Cohen said he was not reimbursed for the payment to the actress, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford and who goes by the stage name of Stormy Daniels. Cohen told the New York Times, which first reported the story on Tuesday, that the payment was legal. He declined to give details such as why he made it, or if Trump was aware of the payment at the time.

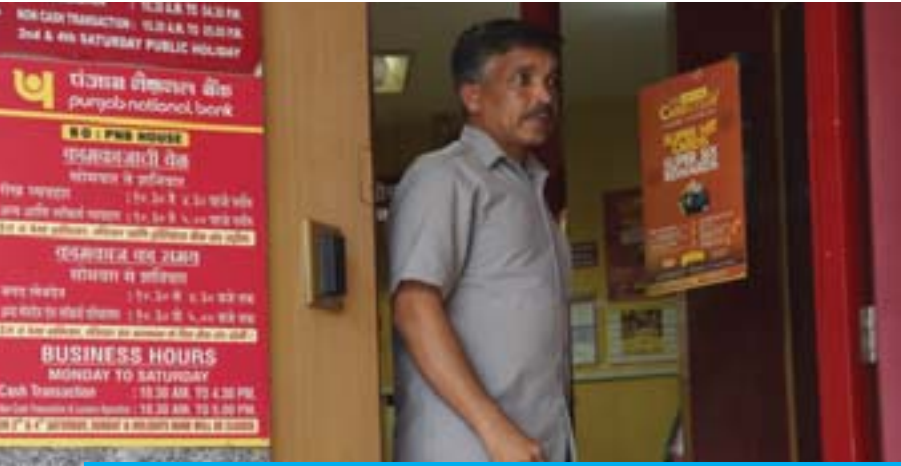
"Neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was a party to the transaction with Ms Clifford, and neither reimbursed me for the payment, either directly or indirectly," Cohen said, according to the Times. "The payment to Ms Clifford was lawful, and was not a campaign contribution or a campaign expenditure by anyone."



Stormy Daniels

US media reports have said the payment was made one month before the Nov 2016 election to keep the liaison quiet. Trump was a private citizen when the 2006 sexual encounter with Clifford allegedly took place. He was married at the time and his wife Melania had given birth to their son less than four months earlier. The payment was first reported last month by the Wall Street Journal. Cohen's statement to the Times marked the first time he acknowledged a role in what he termed a "private transaction".

Continued on Page 11



MUMBAI: A man walks out of a branch of state-owned Punjab National Bank yesterday. — AFP

Local

Amir meets officials participating in Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq

Foreign Minister meets visiting officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi. —KUNA



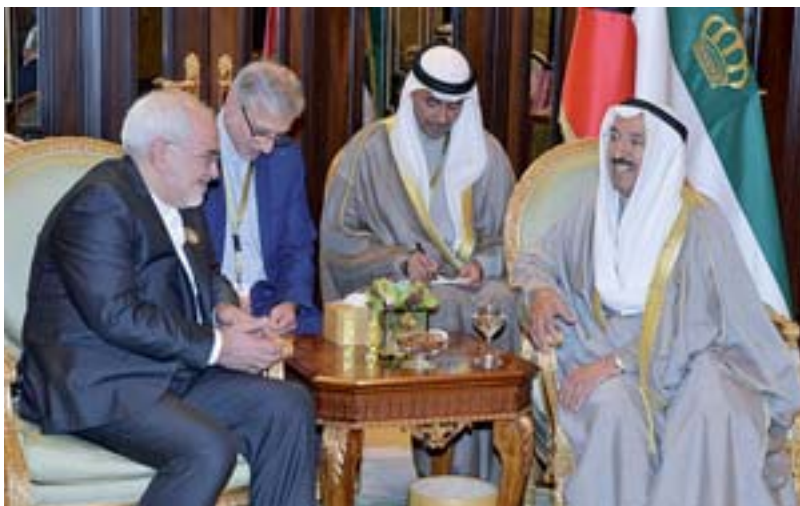
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister of Russia for Industry and Energy Arkady Dvorkovich.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with World Bank Group's President Jim Yong Kim.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi and his accompanying delegation on the sidelines of the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq (KICRI).

His Highness the Amir also received UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia for Industry and Energy Arkady Dvorkovich, World Bank Group's President Jim Yong Kim and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended the meetings.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met yesterday with EU Foreign Policy Chief and Vice President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini on the occasion of her visit and participation in the International Coalition Against IS conference and Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq (KICRI), hosted in Kuwait this week.

During the meeting, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled lauded bilateral relations between Kuwait and the EU, and praising the European Union tremendous contribution to the stability and security of the region and the international arena. Meanwhile, Mogherini praised joint work and the strong relations between Kuwait and the European Union (EU). Mogherini expressed her deep appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for hosting KICRI, co-chaired by Kuwait, the Republic of Iraq, the United Nations, the EU, and the World Bank.

The EU Foreign Policy Chief also praised Kuwait's efforts and support to regional and international stability and security, and the challenges facing the region. The EU will work with the State of Kuwait to strengthen support for Iraq in this critical time, stressing that the Union is keen to work with Kuwait in order to promote stability and prosperity in Iraq, Mogherini added.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Assistant for European Affairs Ambassador Walid Al-Khubaizi, Foreign Minister Assistant for Deputy Prime



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian.



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with EU Foreign Policy Chief and Vice President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini.

Minister and Foreign Minister Office Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs, Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Saleh Al-Logani, Kuwait Ambassador to Belgium and Head of the Mission to the EU and NATO Ambassador Jassim Al-Bedawi, Assistant Foreign Minister Assistant for International Organization Plenipotentiary Minister Nasser Al-Hain, Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Mohammad Hayati, and a number of senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

UN Chief hails Kuwait

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres marking the occasion of his participation in the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq (KICRI), hosted in Kuwait. Guterres praised the State of Kuwait for hosting KICRI along with Iraq, UN, EU, and the World Bank.

The UN Chief also hailed cooperation with Kuwait,

and its solid contribution in supporting UN programs, especially humanitarian and aid programs. The two sides also highlighted cooperation, in addition to Kuwait membership as non-member to the security council for the year 2018-19.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also met with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, Denmark's Foreign Minister Anders Samuelsen, Norway's Foreign Minister Marie Eriksen Soreide, and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The foreign ministers discussed with each official bilateral relations and ways to bolster them in all areas, in addition to the current developments in the region and international arena and issues of mutual concerns. Foreign Ministry officials attended the meetings.

Deputy FM meets officials

In other news, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Sulaiman Al-Jarallah met yesterday with British Secretary of State for Middle East at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Alistair Burt on the occasion of heading his country's delegation in the ministerial meeting for the International Coalition Against so-

called (IS) and Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq (KICRI), hosted in Kuwait. During the meeting, the two sides tackled bilateral relations and current developments in the region and international arena. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Assistant for European Affairs Ambassador Walid Al-Khubaizi, Foreign Minister Assistant Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport.

Meanwhile, Jarallah met with Japanese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Masahisa Sato and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of their visit and participation in KICRI. During the meeting, the two sides highlighted bilateral ties, and current developments in the region and international arena. Ambassador Omar, Japanese Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Takashi Ashiki and his accompanying delegation attended the meeting.

Furthermore, Jarallah held similar discussions with Austrian Deputy Foreign Minister Michael Linhart during their meeting yesterday. Ambassadors Khubaizi and Omar as well as Austrian Ambassador to Kuwait Sigurd Pacher attended the meeting. —KUNA

Australian Foreign Minister lauds Kuwait's humanitarian work

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop wrapped up her visit yesterday and thanked Kuwait for its significant contribution to humanitarian work and its special role in rebuilding Iraq. Bishop met several officials here, including Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. She said they had very positive discussions on various issues and opportunities for greater engagement between Australia and Kuwait, particularly in trade and investment.

"While we are quite far geographically, after arriving here, it takes only a moment to realize that we have amazing synergies between our economies," she said. "There are significant Kuwaiti investments in Australia in two sectors: liquefied natural gas (LNG) and electricity. We see more opportunities for investments in Australia; likewise, opportunities for Australian companies in Kuwait. We have several Australian companies

here. Educational cooperation is another important area with great potentials. Many Kuwaiti students are studying in Australia, and we would love to see more," Bishop said.

"We also discussed tourism, and encourage more Kuwaitis to visit Australia and Australians to come to Kuwait. We discussed agriculture and see the potential for improvement. Overall, there were very positive meetings and opportunities for both countries," she emphasized. Bishop said Kuwait-Australia bilateral relations are excellent and strong, and lauded the country for its successful hosting of the conference of the global coalition to fight IS. "We discussed counterterrorism issues too - Kuwait is an important part of the Gulf, and we see increasing Australian engagements with Kuwait," she noted.

Leadership role

Bishop hailed Kuwait's humanitarian role, saying it has always been a leader in many fields, stressing the importance of Kuwait in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). "I would like to see our relationship deepen," she said. The ministers signed a memorandum of understanding to establish regular meetings between the officials, and Bishop invited her Kuwaiti counterpart to visit Australia soon. "One of our military generals visited Kuwait, and a trade minister from Australia visited Kuwait in 2015," she noted.

With regards to the role of Australia in defeating the Islamic State (IS), Bishop underlined Australia's active

contribution in the efforts to annihilate IS since 2014. Bishop said Australia has been part of training missions for Iraqi troops. "We have made a significant contribution to defeat Daesh. Australia has trained more than 30,000 Iraqi security forces, and our humanitarian contribution is now worth \$180 million. We have taken part in several military operations and airstrikes. Australian airplanes have flown over 2,700 sorties over Iraq and Syria, and we have ongoing military trainings. We have around 300 military personnel and 80 more experts involved in counterterrorism training," she revealed.

Bishop also mentioned that Australia is part of the coalition of nations committed to rebuilding Iraq that has been devastated by war. "We have committed considerable funds to rebuilding Iraq," she said. Australia sees Kuwait as having sizeable potentials for further investment for Australian companies. "We would like to see more Australian investments in Kuwait. We are involved in infrastructure projects in many parts of the world. We have Australian international banks and companies investing globally; we are an energy powerhouse; we have expertise in agriculture and technology; we are very innovative economy. Australia is now in the 27th consecutive year of uninterrupted economic growth, so the best place to invest for Kuwaiti companies is Australia," Bishop pointed out.

She also mentioned the growing number of airlines with direct flights/links to Australia. "Connectivity is of vital importance if we are talking about the tourism



KUWAIT: Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. —Photo by Joseph Shagra

sector. There are more airlines now coming from the Middle East - we have daily flights and more frequencies. Australia has many popular tourism destinations. We have clean cities and plenty of opportunities for people who would like to travel. Australian cities are voted to be the most livable places on earth. We have a very sophisticated economy and a very extravagant lifestyle," she said.

Kim said that the Bank has ratcheted up its financial commitments to Iraq from \$600 million in 2016 to a current \$4.7 billion, pending further increases, in order to rejuvenate the economy and rebuild cities torn apart by war. He pointed out that human capital was of upmost significance to ensure long-term development, saying the Middle East region was in dire need of “quality investment in healthcare and education.” — KUNA

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Phases of the Super Blue Blood Moon that was partially seen in Kuwait on January 31, 2018. — KUNA

Kuwait stresses need to protect critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks

Kuwait condemns acts against Rohingya minority

NEW YORK: The State of Kuwait has stressed the need to protect critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks, as they constitute easy and attractive targets for terrorist groups. "Threats to international peace and security are caused by terrorist acts," Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said, adding that "the importance of vital infrastructure lies in the fact that it is related to our daily lives, including many civilian facilities, telecommunications, emergency services, banking and finance."

"Each State had the responsibility to determine the concept of critical infrastructure and the best means to protect it," he said. "We in Kuwait are among the countries that have suffered the phenomenon of targeting vital infrastructure. Terrorists targeted a religious facility in 2015, which left scores of people dead and injured," he added.

He pointed out that the State of Kuwait has enacted a number of laws to prevent any terrorist activities against the critical infrastructure, which are consistent with relevant Security Council resolutions, including the law, in combating cyber-crimes. He pointed out that the law punishes anyone who has established a website for a terrorist organization or a terrorist person or published any information on the Internet to facilitate contacts with one of its leaders or members, to promote their ideas or to finance them.

He expressed Kuwait's keenness on supporting the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), urging member states to work together to facilitate technical assistance, and raising awareness in protecting vital infrastructure from terrorist attacks. He encouraged States to cooperate with the INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in combating terrorism.

Moreover, Otaibi stressed the importance of implementing Resolution 2322 on international cooperation in combating terrorism and other relevant resolutions of the Council, pointing out that the State of Kuwait hosted Anti-IS Coalition ministerial meeting with the participation of 70 countries and four international organizations to develop strategies and plans to confront terrorism.

He said the meeting is the first since the defeat of (IS) in Iraq, adding that it is part of a series of international conferences that took place in order to build a formal coalition

to destroy the IS, which had taken over large portions of Syria and Iraq. Otaibi reiterated Kuwait's firm stand by rejecting all forms of terrorism and extremism regardless of their causes, motives and sources.

Rohingya minority

Meanwhile, Otaibi delivered a speech during a Security Council session on the situation in Myanmar, in which he said that Kuwait has condemned acts against international conventions and laws that have taken place in Rakhine State in Myanmar since last August, which led to the displacement of some 650,000 people from the Rohingya minority.

Otaibi stressed the need for the Myanmar government to assume its primary responsibility to protect its population and ensure that military force is not used excessively again in Rakhine State, saying that Kuwait appreciates the great efforts exerted by the Government of Bangladesh to host these innocent people on its territory. "Providing humanitarian assistance and hosting refugees and displaced people in difficult times is a conclusive evidence of a sincere and noble desire for all of us to help each other in times of crisis," he added.

Otaibi pointed out that the State of Kuwait in October last year co-chaired a donor conference for the Rohingya refugee crisis and announced a donation of \$15 million. He said that this amount contributed by the official and popular bodies comes within the Kuwaiti efforts to alleviate the tragedy and in response to international efforts to alleviate the suffering of Rohingya refugees.

"I firmly believe that we should continue to provide such assistance, which has the potential to restore hope to the affected people. This catastrophe has put a whole generation of children on the path of loss, without education that sets out their future path or medical services that care for their health, right to their homes, areas and homes," he said.

"Since the Council issued its presidential statement last November and we continue to follow closely the developments in Myanmar. We have taken note of the three agreements signed between Bangladesh and Myanmar aimed at the voluntary repatriation of refugees," he noted.

"This voluntary return can only begin after more clear and confidence-building measures are taken to ensure a



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a Security Council session. — KUNA

safe return and a decent life in Rakhine State," he stressed. He pointed to some measures that should be taken before the voluntary repatriation of refugees, which are contained in the presidential statement of the Council or in the recommendations of Rakhine State Advisory Committee, "which we support, and the statements of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation." Among the measure Otaibi said that the Government of Myanmar must take all necessary measures to end the violence immediately and to prevent the excessive use of force against civilians in Rakhine State. Otaibi said that the measures also include refrain

from establishing new camps for displaced people in northern Rakhine state, surrounded by barbed wire as camps for detainees and taking all measures to combat incitement to violence or hatred and restore peace and harmony among communities under the rule of law. He added that the measures also allow the entry of UN agencies and their partners and allow all those in Rakhine State to move freely and unhindered and to begin work on the rehabilitation of the affected areas in the north of the state, which has been burned, robbed and equip them to ensure the voluntary return of refugees to their homes. —KUNA

GOFSCO hails sponsorship of Maker Faire

KUWAIT: Gas and Oil fields services company (GOFSCO), one of the largest integrated service providers in Kuwait specializing in the upstream oil and gas sector, both onshore and offshore, recently hailed a successful silver sponsorship of the renowned 'Maker Faire Kuwait 2018' which was held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

GOFSCO's sponsorship comes in line with its solid corporate social responsibility strategy that aims at supporting young talents, especially those who have the ability to develop handmade crafts and innovative ideas to benefit the society.

During the exhibition, GOFSCO's booth wel-

comed approximately 43,000 visitors of all ages, whereby they were introduced to the company's field of services and history, in addition to being provided with the chance to experiment the process of oil testing. The activity allowed both youth and adults to understand the process of separating oil in a highly safe environment, thus highlighting the importance of engineering within this field of business.

Commenting on GOFSCO's participation in the exhibition, Hussam Ali Marafie - Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at GOFSCO said: "It gives us great pride to be part of an event that underlines the importance of entrepreneurial capabilities of local and regional participants. Our sponsorship of Maker Faire Kuwait 2018 is driven by our corporate social responsibility strategy that aims at helping youth who have an interest in technology, handmade crafts and arts to take their passion of developing ideas from scratch to new heights. We believe that our field of profession plays an integral role in similar events, and to highlight our responsibility towards the youth and the socie-

ty as a whole, our booth involved several activities that explained how engineers are constantly exposed to situations that drive them to create and develop ideas from scratch."

"On behalf of GOFSCO, I would like to thank Kuwait Investment Company for organizing this event for the second year in a row. GOFSCO encourages youth to utilize their talents to its full potential in a step towards achieving a sustainable future for our society," Marafie added.

Maker Faire is a globally renowned event that gathers tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, and students of all ages to display their creations and share their expertise in unique ways. The event was originated in the United States and has rapidly gained global popularity to the extent that it was adopted by former US President Barack Obama and hosted in the White House. Since then, the Maker Faire event has been held in multiple countries around the world, now including the GCC region with Kuwait as the only exclusive host.



New Sabah Hospital 47 percent complete, project ends next year

Policeman fined for refusing to salute female officer

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Assistant secretary general for planning and development at the Secretariat General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Bader Al-Refai said 47 percent of the new Sabah Hospital project has been completed and the project is expected to be concluded next year with a total cost of KD 179 million.

Speaking to reporters yesterday during a field visit to the project site organized by the programs and plans follow-up department, Refai said the visit covered all strategic projects included in the development plan to check the percentage of achievement and compare it to set schedules. He added that the new Sabah Hospital project is one of these projects and that the visiting team met MoH and the executing company's representatives and watched a presentation on the phases realized.

Refai explained that the project comprises of a main building with a basement, a ground floor and 12 floors with a 512-bed capacity, in addition to 105 ICU beds. He added that the hospital will also include casualty, radiology, general surgery, specialized surgery, nuclear medicine, physiotherapy and respiratory departments, in addition to 72 OPDs, pharmacies, reception, labs, storage areas and a heliport. Refai said that the hospital administration building comprises of eight floors and that the nuclear medicine department would be equipped with state-of-the art waste processing technology. The follow-up department manager Suad Al-Awadh said that the visit aimed at checking how much of the

project - that commenced in 2014 and is expected to be concluded in July 2019 - had been completed .

Emergency surgery

In a humane gesture, Health Minister Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah ordered a surgery to be immediately conducted on a bedoon patient with an expired security ID. The patient was hospitalized at Al-Dabbous Cardiology Center and was admitted inside the intensive care unit (ICU) in an unstable condition. The minister met his treatment team and ordered an exemption to save his life. In a different concern, Sheikh Bassel said relevant ministry sectors had been assigned to discuss developing social media mobile applications to be used by patients in booking appointments, obtaining medicine and saving test results according to their civil ID number, which would help facilitate access to such data whenever needed.

Emergency surgery for bedoon

KD 1 million

The Ministry of Health (MoH) owes a number of local hotels over KD 1 million, said well-informed health sources, noting that the hotels had repeatedly urged MoH to pay the overdue bills. The sources added that MoH formed a special committee to look into the matter within the coming weeks, adding that the sums were the fees of hiring conference halls and booking rooms for guest consultants and participants in various conferences. Notably, MoH's conference budget last year was KD 2 million, spent on 38 conferences and 20 workshops, ie KD 50,000 per conference and KD 10,000 per workshop.

Policeman fined

The court of cassation yesterday fined a



KUWAIT: An artist's rendition for the new Sabah Hospital. — sshic.com

policeman KD 3,000 for refusing to salute a female officer. The court explained that the policeman refused a direct order to salute the female officer, with whom he had some personal disputes. The policeman also insulted the officer when she asked about his disobedience.

Food safety

The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition's Chairman Essa Al-Kandari stressed that the authority's liabilities intervene with those of other government bodies and that the authority is working hard on solving the problem. Speaking to reporters following an inspection tour of butcheries, the fish market, restaurants and stores in Souq Mubarakia and the fish market in Sharq, Kandari called for joining efforts with several state departments to tackle street vendors. Kandari added that yesterday's inspection tour resulted in filing two citations to fishmongers selling foul fish at the Sharq fish market and six to other stores in Mubarakia.

16 kg tumor removed from patient's ovary

KUWAIT: Doctors managed to remove a benign tumor weighing 16 kilograms from a patient's ovary yesterday. The patient, a 38-year-old Kuwaiti woman, complained from severe abdominal swelling and resorted to a public hospital to undergo a gastric toning surgery to lose weight, but she was told that the swelling was the result of a left ovary tumor. Dean of the Obstetrics and Gynecology faculty at Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS), Obstetrics, Gynecology and tumor surgery consultant Dr Waleed Fahad Al-Jassar performed the surgery on the patient. Dr Jassar, who is also a Kuwait University professor, noted that the patient's womb was not removed during the operation, which was performed at Al-Salam Hospital yesterday.



Sponsor held in worker's death

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: The body of a 39-year-old Sudanese man was sent to the coroner after he arrived dead at Wafra polyclinic, with beating marks on his head. The body was examined by forensic experts before being handed to the coroner. Detectives detained the victim's sponsor and his brother for questioning, as the case is considered a homicide.

Smuggling foiled

Nuwaiseeb customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle cigarettes to a GCC country from Kuwait. E-media committee member and assistant supervisor of Nuwaiseeb border post Bilal Al-Khamees said inspectors noticed a man who was nervous while waiting at the car inspection zone, so the vehicle was searched and 70 cardboard boxes of cigarettes were found. The boxes were confiscated.

Subsidized food

A few days after Salmi customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of medicine and food supplies in a truck heading to Egypt, the same officers foiled two more attempts to smuggle subsidized food supplies including milk, rice, oil and tomato paste, along with 90 mobile phones. Salmi

customs officer Mater Al-Saeedi said trucks are being searched thoroughly to prevent smuggling of food supplies, cigarettes etc, and officers were able to discover the goods in two trucks heading to the same Arab country. The supplies were confiscated and sent to concerned authorities.

Suspects released

A judge ordered the release of 11 young men related to a groom on a KD 500 bail following a fight with a reckless youth who expressed his joy by performing stunts with his car and stopping the groom's motorcade in the middle of the street. Relatives and friends did not like this act and attacked him. The young men's lawyer demanded their release as the incident dismayed the groom and his bride, adding that what took place was merely a fight with a person unknown to them.

Drug possession

A citizen obstructed traffic in front of Taima police station, and when policemen showed up, he handed them a white roll containing drugs instead of his ID. Policemen noticed a car in the middle of the street and traffic being obstructed. When they approached the driver, he was coherent with reddened eyes. He handed them the drugs and boarded the police car willingly. The suspect was found wanted on a financial case, and was sent to the Drugs Control General Department for further legal action. Separately two Asian nationals were arrested with 42 bags of heroin in Salmiya.

Divers set barriers to prevent waste at Doha station

KUWAIT: Kuwait Dive Team set new barriers to protect the waters of Western Doha power station from sea waste and plankton which could affect the safety and performance of the station. The previous water barriers were damaged, allowing different sea waste to enter and get trapped at the station's waters, making it very difficult for workers to remove them to resume the waters' performance, team leader Waleed Al-Fadhel said yesterday.



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Fear stalks Kosovo's divided Mitrovica

Under bombs, Syria rescuers forced to save their own

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AFRIN, Syria: Members of seven displaced Syrian families gather in an apartment in the Kurdish Syrian town of Afrin, where they are all taking shelter after fleeing from a three-week assault by Turkey and allied Syrian rebels on towns and villages along the border in northern Syria. —AFP

Seeking safety, Syrians pile up in shared flats

‘Maybe bomb will go off and we’ll all die together’

AFRIN: Day and night, the members of seven displaced families file in and out of the single bathroom and kitchen they share in a cramped apartment in the Syrian town of Afrin. Dozens of families have flooded the town to escape a three-week assault by Turkey and allied Syrian rebels on towns and villages along the border. Among them is Amuna Hassan's family. "We sleep sitting up. What kind of sleep is that? How are we supposed to fit? Can you imagine anything worse than that?" rants the elderly Hassan, a cigarette in hand. "Maybe a bomb will go off and we'll all just die together."

Hassan, her children, and their families fled Jandairis, a border town southwest of Afrin, as Turkish bombardment of the area ramped up. "We fled under fire. It was raining, people were crying and screaming. We fled from death," she says. They settled in a small apartment with a half-dozen other families. Behind her, women and children in bright, patterned clothes sat on a row of cushions. A baby wailed uncontrollably as an elderly man lay played out on a mattress, unfazed by the chaos. "The bathroom doesn't work. We haven't bathed in 20 days, but we just want food to eat—you think we're thinking about showers?" says Hassan, her hair covered in a grey scarf with violet polka dots. "Hungry, thirsty, at least we were at home. Now look where we are—all these people in just three rooms."

'It was tragic'

Turkey and allied Syrian rebels launched their offensive on January 20 to fight the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which Ankara considers a "terror" group. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor says nearly 70 civilians have died in the assault, but Turkey says it is doing everything in its power to prevent civilian casualties. Most of the bombardment has hit border towns and villages, forcing residents to flee inland to the town of Afrin and board up with relatives. The United Nations estimates that between 15,000 and 30,000 have been displaced by the Turkish-led offensive to other parts of Afrin district. Local authorities have sealed off access routes to other parts of Syria, the UN has said.



Turkey pounds border town as death toll mounts

Abdel Haj Ahmad and his 12-member family left everything behind in their native village of Sheikh Mohamed, northwest of Afrin town. "It was tragic. There were no cars on the road, so we walked with our bags until we found a car willing to drive us," the 49-year-old recalls. Once in Afrin, they settled in a relative's modest apartment—already overflowing with other displaced families. "We're nine families. Nearly 40 people sharing one kitchen and one bathroom! Can you imagine?" says Ahmad. "It's the first time we understand what displaced life is," he adds.

Shoes, laundry piling up

Overnight, the number of people in Naziliya Balo's household tripled. "My uncle's family was displaced and they came to stay with us. Three families from Qarnah," a village north of Afrin, says the 28-

year-old. Her 10-member family is now hosting another 20 guests. "We're helping each other out. They can't give us much," admits Balo. "We're happy that they came to us, but it's so sad that they had to leave their houses and come here."

As the Turkish-led offensive heads into its fourth week, Balo says all of Afrin's residents should mobilise to help those displaced. "There are a lot of tragedies and I get really sad about them. We'll open our house to everyone. Whoever's in need, we'll help them." More than six million people have been displaced internally across Syria since its civil war erupted in 2011, many of them more than once. Abdin Kashad, 30, fled the border village of Qura Baba with his five family members.

"There was artillery fire so we went to the town of Rajo, then they hit Rajo with air strikes so we came to Afrin," he explains in an exhausted monotone. Kashad is happy to be safe in Afrin, but he and dozens of other displaced are packed tight into a single apartment. Shoes of all sizes are piled up at the door and lines of washing criss-cross the courtyard. "There's no bathroom here or anything, no place for the kids to play," Kashad tells AFP. "We just want the bombing and air strikes to stop so we can go home." —AFP

More kids become victims of 'brutal' online sex abuse

LONDON: Children are being sexually exploited, trafficked and sold online on an unprecedented scale as technological advances enable abusers to target victims with impunity, a coalition of governments, charities and tech companies said yesterday. The global spread of cheap, high-speed internet and the rise in mobile phone ownership is fuelling the growth of cybersex trafficking, which has become a "brutal form of modern-day slavery", according to a report by Britain-led WeProtect. From Britain and the United States to India and the Philippines, children are being abused over livestreams and sold for sex - often via social media and classified advertising websites - for ever-cheaper prices, anti-trafficking groups say.

"It has never been easier to abuse children online," Baroness Joanna Shields, founder of WeProtect - an alliance to end child exploitation online - told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from the End Violence Solutions Summit in Stockholm. "Technology ... is providing offenders with unprecedented access to victims, new capabilities and increasing confidence to abuse children on a mass scale," added Shields, previously an executive at Facebook and Britain's internet safety minister. While there is no data on the scale of the crime globally, the United Nations children's agency UNICEF estimates 1.8 million children are trafficked into the sex trade every year.

In the Philippines alone - considered by campaigners to be the epicentre of the live-stream sex abuse trade - police receive thousands of cybersex trafficking referrals each month, according to the International Justice Mission (IJM), a charity. Online child abuse and trafficking is difficult to tackle because the crimes transcend borders, with limited coordination between countries, while abusers use the latest technologies to stay a step ahead of law enforcement, the WeProtect report said. "Impunity has enabled diversification of their methods of operation, resulting in new and persistent threats," it said.—Reuters

Thailand bets on 'magic pills' to boost declining birth rate

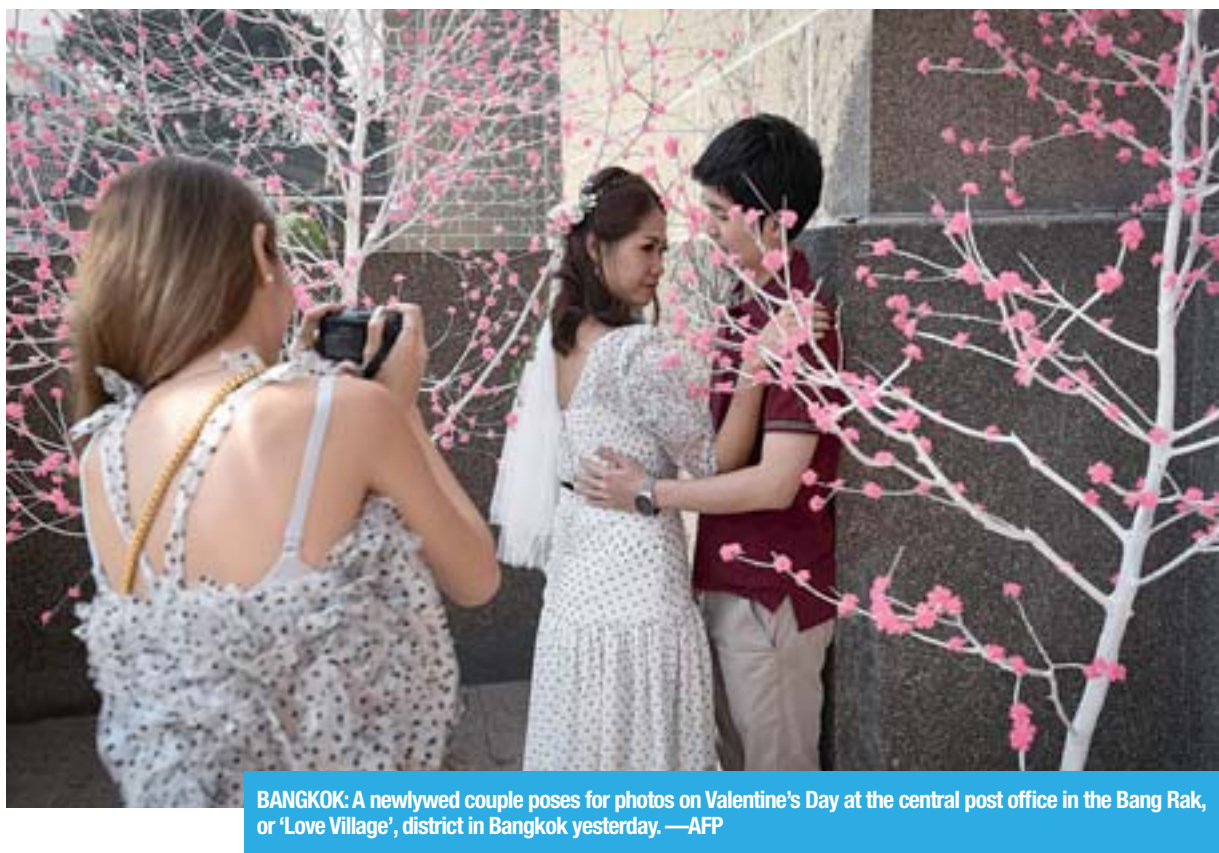
BANGKOK: Thailand has tried cash bonuses and tax incentives to boost the country's birth rate, but on Valentine's Day yesterday it adopted a new approach - handing out vitamin pills. Like several other Asian countries, Thailand is ageing rapidly. Birth rates have dropped sharply from more than 6 children per woman in 1960 to 1.5 in 2015, according to World Bank figures. In Bangkok, health officials handed out folic acid and iron pills in pink boxes at six locations to entice couples to prepare for pregnancy. The pills came with leaflets explaining how to be healthy in order to conceive.

Relationships and sex were previously a taboo subject but attitudes have changed and they are now discussed more publicly. Still, health experts say Thailand will have to talk even more about conception and birth if it wants to boost its population. Together with China, the country has the highest proportion of elderly people of any developing country in East Asia, World Bank figures show. The population has peaked and will begin to decrease in 2030, pointing to potential economic problems, such as labour shortages and a smaller base of income tax payers as the working-age population shrinks.

Successive Thai governments have introduced various schemes to encourage baby-making but, like in neighbouring Singapore, whose birth rate is amongst the lowest in the world, they haven't seen much success. Thailand's cash bonuses and tax incentives for people with children have done little to boost births but analysts said they weren't generous enough to prompt Thais to have more children. They didn't cover the real cost of raising a child, they said. Thailand's 2015 birth rate of 1.5 per woman is below 2.6 births in neighbouring Cambodia and 2.1 in Malaysia. Health experts say the birth rate needs to be 2.1 to keep a population growing.

'Magic pills'

Various reasons have been put forward to explain



BANGKOK: A newlywed couple poses for photos on Valentine's Day at the central post office in the Bang Rak, or 'Love Village', district in Bangkok yesterday. —AFP

the falling birth rate in Thailand, from higher living costs and work commitments to the shift of the population away from farms, where big families are needed, to urban centres. Some blame a hugely successful free-contraception campaign in Thailand in the early 1990s - aimed at combatting HIV/AIDS and which was widely copied around the world - as a factor that has reduced the birth rate.

"From 1970 to 1983 there were an average of 1 million Thais born each year. After that the birth rate began to decline. Now there are just over 700,000 people born each year," Kasem Wetsutthanon, director of the Metropolitan Health and Wellness Institution, told Reuters. "At the moment Thai couples are having an average of 1.5 children. Ideally, it should be 2.1 if we are to maintain the population growth," he said. Kasem

blamed changing attitudes towards the traditional family unit for the declining birth rate. "Now, many are thinking that it is a burden to have children, unlike in the past when children were important for the family."

Nalin Somboonying, 27, who has a four-year-old child, said some people feel they need material possessions first before starting a family. "I think nowadays people want to be ready first. They feel they must have a house, a car, first before having a child," she told Reuters. Satta Wongdara, 31, who with his wife picked up some of the pills at a booth in Bangkok's Lak Si area, blamed long work hours. "People nowadays work more so they have less children," Satta said. Still, Kasem said he hopes the pills, which he called 'magic pills' will get Thais thinking twice about pregnancy. "We want to get people to have more children." —Reuters

International

Netanyahu rejects calls to quit as Israel police seek indictment

PM says police case ‘full of holes, like Swiss cheese’

JERUSALEM: Key coalition partners said yesterday they would stick with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for now, pending a decision by the attorney general whether or not to indict him for bribery as recommended by police. A decision could take months and Netanyahu's government appeared stable for the time being. The right-wing premier has strongly denied the police allegations, calling them "full of holes, like Swiss cheese".

"I want to reassure you, the coalition is stable. No one, not I, not anyone else, has plans to go to an election," Netanyahu told a conference in Tel Aviv yesterday, the day after police made their recommendations public. "We will continue to work with you for the good of Israel's citizens until the end of the term," he said. Police on Tuesday said they had found sufficient evidence for the 68-year-old Netanyahu to be charged with bribery in two separate cases, presenting him with one of the biggest challenges to his long dominance of Israeli politics.

It is now up to Israel's attorney general to decide whether to indict Netanyahu and this could take some months to resolve. Netanyahu has denied wrongdoing in both cases. With political signals that the government remained solid, Israeli markets rose on Wednesday. Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who heads the ultra-nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party, said that as long as Netanyahu was not convicted he should stay in office. "Truly, right now we are operating in a very synchronised way," he said. "There is no place here for maneuvering, for any other considerations," Lieberman told the same conference.

Education Minister Naftali Bennett, who heads the far-right Jewish Home party, told the gathering: "I have decided to wait until the decision of the attorney general ... Regarding the moral aspect, the public will decide on voting day." Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon, who heads the centrist Kulanu party, said he would do the same. Avraham Diskin, a political science professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said none of Netanyahu's coalition partners had any incentive to rock the boat. "We don't see for the time being any sign of defectors from the coalition. Maybe individuals will defect," Diskin told Reuters. "I don't see any kind of collapse in the foreseeable future."

Signalling business as usual, Netanyahu has not changed his plan to attend the annual Munich security

conference that begins on Friday. Netanyahu draws political strength in part from his close ties with US President Donald Trump, who in December reversed decades of US policy by recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, a move hailed by Israelis although Palestinians - who claim East Jerusalem for the capital of a future state - and leaders across the Middle East were dismayed.

'Beginning of the end'

One of the cases against Netanyahu, known as Case 1000, alleged the "committing of crimes of bribery, fraud and breach of trust" by

the prime minister. Police named Arnon Milchan, a Hollywood producer and Israeli citizen, and Australian businessman James Packer, as having given gifts that included champagne, cigars and jewelry to Netanyahu and his family. In all, the merchandise was worth more than one million Israeli shekels (\$280,000), the state-

ment said. Any legal proceedings would probably focus on whether political favours were sought or granted. Netanyahu's lawyers said the presents were simply tokens of friendship.

On Tuesday night, Israel's Channel 10 television quoted a lawyer for Milchan as saying that occasional gift-giving was devoid of any business interests. In an emailed statement a spokesman for Packer said: "There is no allegation of wrongdoing on Mr Packer's behalf. The Israeli and Australian police have confirmed that he was interviewed as a witness, not a suspect." The second investigation, Case 2000, alleged "bribery, fraud and breach of trust by the prime minister" relating to his dealings with Arnon (Noni) Mozes, publisher of the biggest-selling Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth. Netanyahu and Mozes, police said, discussed ways of slowing the growth of a rival daily newspaper, Israel Hayom, "through legislation and other means". Police said they believed there was sufficient evidence to charge Mozes with offering a bribe. Navit Negev and Iris Niv-Sabag, lawyers for Mozes, said in a statement: "Noni Mozes has strong legal arguments in his favour, and we believe that after an additional examination of the evidence by the prosecutor's office the case against him will be closed and it will become clear that he committed no crime." —Reuters



JERUSALEM: This combination of pictures shows Israeli attorney general Avichai Mandelblit (left), Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (center) and the chief of the Israeli police, Commissioner Roni Alsheikh in Jerusalem. Israeli police have recommended that Netanyahu be indicted in two cases of alleged corruption after a long-running probe.—AFP

Under bombs, Syria rescuers forced to save their own

MEDEIRA: For years, Samir Salim and his three brothers rescued neighbours and relatives pinned underground after bombardment on Syria's rebel-held Eastern Ghouta. But last week, they could not save their own mother. Crouched atop the rubble of their home in the town of Medeira, 45-year-old Salim pinches hot tears out of his eyes with dusty, blistered hands. "It was a very difficult position to be in. It hurts to think that she was a mother of four rescue workers, and none of us could save her," he tells AFP. "My mother was so proud of us, and of our work." Every day since 2013, Salim and his siblings have chased air strikes on Eastern Ghouta as

part of the White Helmets rescue force. They spend hours searching for and extracting residents of the rebel enclave near Damascus from under blocks of rubble—dead or alive. But last Thursday was different. Among the dozens of victims of Syrian government strikes that day was Salim's 80-year-old mother. Returning to the pile of cinderblocks and concrete that was once their home, Salim rewatches the shaky video footage he captured that day. In it, his mother appears in a black headscarf, her bloodied and motionless body pressed underneath a collapsed wall. Salim is crying. "I save people, mum, but I can't save you. What do I do, mum? May your soul rest in peace."

Eastern Ghouta, the last rebel bastion on the capital's doorstep, is home to around 400,000 besieged Syrians. Last week, Syrian warplanes and artillery conducted an intense five-day campaign there that left around 250 civilians dead and triple that number wounded. Rescue workers were overwhelmed, rushing from the site of one air strike to another with little equipment and dwindling fuel supplies. Salim and his unit were en route to a collapsed building in Mesraba, a nearby town, when they heard another air strike hit Medeira.—AFP

In central Nigeria, peace eluding farmers, herders

MAKURDI: Madu Maji sits on a bench at the cattle market in Makurdi, central Nigeria, dragging his bare feet through the dust to slave off boredom. In the pens, the few cows that remain are little more than skin and bone. "Our cows can't go grazing in the bush, they are dying now. Herdsmen don't come here anymore," said the elderly Maji, who operates the biggest cattle market in Benue state. Because of violence in recent months, only about a dozen animals are sold every day, compared to hundreds earlier.

Nomadic cattle herders have all but left Benue state, driven away by fighting over access to resources and a new law banning migratory herding, an age-old practice necessary for the survival of the livestock. The fertile lands of Benue, veined with a vast network of rivers, attract thousands of herders migrating with their animals in the dry season from desert zones of West Africa. More are coming as a result of desertification but tension is rising in a country where space is becoming increasingly scarce because of a population explosion.

Nigeria, already home to almost 200 million people, is predicted to become the world's third most populous country by 2050, according to the UN. The



GBAJIMBA, Nigeria: A policeman stands guard as he speaks on the phone at the internally displaced people camp occupied largely by women and children affected by herders and farmer's violent clashes in Benue State. —AFP

central region has become the scene of almost daily clashes between settled farmers such as the ethnic Christian Tiv and herders, who are mainly Fulani and Muslim. More than 100 people have been killed since early January, with 100,000 fleeing their homes to safety, according to the local emergency management agency. After months of inaction, the Nigerian army announced the planned deployment of troops to several states, including Benue, to end the violence.

Food basket

Adams Nicholas lost everything when "Fulani killers" armed with assault rifles, pistols and sticks descended on his village of Ancha on the evening of January 4. "A big number of people came with their cattle and they started

to shoot sporadically." "Two people were killed, our houses were burnt down. They destroyed everything," said the 30-year-old teacher, one of 10,000 displaced people staying at Gbajimba primary school, some 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the state capital. For miles around, dozens of dusty villages with burnt-out homes have been emptied of their inhabitants. Others live under a night-time curfew. "We've always been allowing their cows to graze around our farms. But we can't live together anymore. They're animals," Adams said. In Benue, nicknamed "Food Basket of the Nation", the crisis has morphed into a ethnic and religious crisis, with more and more Tiv openly expressing hatred towards the Fulani, whom they accuse of launching raids from neighbouring states and looting their crops.—AFP

and that Rouhani would be urging India to make good on its commitments. "There are a number of projects for the expansion of ties in the pipeline that not only will be in the interest of both nations but also in the interest of the region," Iran's ambassador to India, Gholamreza Ansari, said in a national day speech last week. Rouhani, who arrives in the southern city of Hyderabad today, where he will address a Muslim congregation, will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday. The two sides are expected to sign an agreement allowing India to run operations in the first phase of the Chabahar port project. The port is about 72 km from the Pakistani port of Gwadar, which China is developing.

The plan is for India to equip and operate two berths in the port with a capital investment of \$85.21 million on a 10-year lease. Modi has said the government could spend up to \$500 million on the port, India's first major overseas port venture, as it tries to offer alternatives to China's One Belt One Road initiative to build trade and transport links across Asia. But the uncertainty over US policies has cast a shadow over the project, officials say. India is struggling to get equipment such as cranes for the port because Western banks were not ready to facilitate transactions. "They don't want to antagonise the US," said an Indian source involved in the port's development but who is not authorised to speak to the media. —Reuters

Iran leader seeks Indian investment amid US pressure

NEW DELHI: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani will be seeking billions of dollars of Indian investment during a visit to New Delhi, diplomats said, a trip that comes amid US pressure to review a 2015 international nuclear deal and re-impose sanctions on Iran. India is trying to develop the port of Chabahar on Iran's east coast as a way to gain access the markets of central Asia as well as Afghanistan by by-passing arch-rival Pakistan.

But progress is slow because of concern that President Donald Trump's administration may eventually scrap the Iran nuclear deal. Soon after the sanctions were lifted, India said its firms could spend as much as \$20 billion on not just the port but also petrochemical plants, railway lines and other industries in the areas. But progress has only been made on the port. Iranian officials say the slow-down is largely because India has become hesitant following Trump's attempts to undermine the Iran nuclear deal

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International

S African police raid Gupta home, ANC to sack Zuma via parliament

Family accused of influencing cabinet appointments

JOHANNESBURG: The ANC yesterday unveiled plans to sack South African President Jacob Zuma via a parliamentary no-confidence vote, hours after armed police raided the luxury home of his friends the Gupta brothers, investigating corruption allegations. The raid marked a dramatic escalation in the pressure on Zuma and the political faction around him accused of milking state resources for their own ends. Zuma, 75, denies any wrongdoing and it remains unclear whether he will throw in the towel or dig in deeper.

However, with the ruling African National Congress (ANC) backing an opposition-led no-confidence motion likely to be heard today, Zuma appears to have run out of road after nine years in office dogged by scandal and economic stagnation. ANC chief whip Jackson Mthembu said Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, whose election as head of the ANC in December marked the beginning of the end of Zuma's tenure, could be sworn in as head of state as early as Friday. "After we have voted for the removal of the President of the Republic tomorrow - and depending on the availability of the Chief Justice - we will also elect a new president," Mthembu told a news conference in Cape Town.



‘This is a crime scene’; Gupta family member arrested

nature to court and not charge the people who have benefited the most," the source, who has knowledge of the police's moves, told Reuters.

Zuma and the Guptas, a family of wealthy Indian-born businessmen, deny any wrongdoing. A lawyer for the Gupta family said he could not comment on the raid because he had yet to see the search warrant. Meanwhile, there was chaos and confusion at Pretoria's Union Buildings, the official seat of government, over reported plans for Zuma to address the country. Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba said Zuma would speak at 0800 GMT and satellite trucks were in position overnight. However, Zuma's office denied there had been any "official communication" of an address and the scheduled time came and went.

Adding to the mystery, a copy of an email, purportedly from deputy presidential communications director Shadi Baloyi, circulated on Twitter telling Pretoria police that plans for a "special media briefing" by Zuma at 0800 GMT had been cancelled. "Kindly ignore my earlier request, as the briefing will not take place tomorrow," Baloyi wrote. Reuters could not confirm the email's authenticity and Baloyi did not answer her phone or respond to text messages. Zuma's spokesman did not answer his phone.

‘Crime scene’

Shortly after dawn, a dozen officers from the elite Hawks police unit sealed off a street leading to the Gupta mansion in Johannesburg's upscale Saxonwold suburb. One officer blocked access to Reuters, saying: "This is a crime scene." Minutes later, an unmarked police van left the compound as residents applauded police officers and hurled abuse at security guards for the Guptas, who have been accused by South Africa's top anti-corruption watchdog of influence-peddling and swaying the appoint-



JOHANNESBURG: An armed South African Police member gestures as he leaves (with colleagues) the compound of the controversial business family Gupta while cars belonging to the Hawks, The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, are stationed outside, in Johannesburg yesterday. —AFP

ment of cabinet ministers.

"Finally something is being done about it. These guys must get out of our country. They must leave us alone. They have done enough damage," said Tessa Turvey, head of the local residents' association, standing outside the compound's iron gates. Police also raided the Guptas' Oakbay holding company in Johannesburg's Sandton financial district, according to a security guard outside the building. On Tuesday, the ANC ordered Zuma to step down as president of the country, giving him no firm deadline but saying the party was sure he would comply and "respond".

Hawks spokesman Hangwani Mulaudzi said the raid was part of an investigation into influence-peddling allegations that are also the focus of a judicial inquiry into wider corruption involving the Guptas, dubbed "state capture" in local media. "We're not playing around in terms of making sure that those who are responsible in the so-called state capture, they take responsibility for it," Mulaudzi said. He declined to give details of what was seized or if the business premises of the Guptas, whose commercial empire stretches from mining to media, would also be raided. Under South African law, suspects cannot be named until they appear in court. —Reuters

News in brief

‘Living saint’ dies

SOFIA: "Grandpa" Dobri, a beggar hailed as a 'living saint' in Bulgaria for donating thousands to Orthodox Christian churches, died Tuesday at the age of 103, church leaders said. For over 25 years, the hunched figure in a threadbare coat and peasant sandals holding a cup for donations was a regular sight at the entrance to Sofia's Seven Saints church or the Alexander Nevski cathedral in the city centre. Dobri Dobrev became the golden-domed cathedral's largest private donor with his gift of 35,700 leva (18,200 euros, \$22,500) in 2009. He went on to help a number of monasteries and smaller churches by donating the alms he collected through the years, which added up to considerable sums in Bulgaria, the European Union's poorest country. —AFP

Paris stabbing spree

PARIS: A man stabbed six bystanders in a series of apparently unprovoked attacks in northern Paris on Tuesday night before being arrested by police in a drunken state, a security source said. The rampage began at around 11:00 pm in an area known for its high levels of street crime and homelessness to the north of the Gare du Nord train station in the 18th district. The injured were admitted to hospital but none suffered life-threatening wounds, the police source told AFP on condition of anonymity, confirming a report in the Parisien newspaper. The attacker was arrested two hours later in the neighbouring 10th district and was "very drunk", according to the police source who said the knife was found nearby. —AFP

5 killed in accident

KINSHASA: Three soldiers and two civilians were killed and 11 other people injured in an accident involving DR Congo President Joseph Kabila's motorcade, his office said yesterday. The accident happened on a road in the southwest of the country, 220 kilometres south of Kinshasa, as Kabila was returning to the capital on Tuesday. "Last night, a vehicle in the presidential motorcade was hit on the Matadi highway at Kimpese by a truck carrying cement," communications official Yvon Ramazani said yesterday. "Three soldiers in the Republican Guard were killed along with two civilians who were nearby," he said. Seven soldiers and four civilians were also injured, Ramazani said, adding that the accident had been caused by heavy rain. —AFP

Zone 9 bloggers

ADDIS ABABA: Prosecutors in Ethiopia yesterday dropped charges against two bloggers critical of the government, and announced they would abandon the prosecution of a third amid a wave of prisoner releases. The move ends the case of the bloggers from the Zone 9 website whose arrest four years ago was condemned as an attack on press freedom. "The judge says they have dropped charges," Zone 9 blogger Atnafu Berhane said. Prosecutors withdrew accusations against bloggers Befekadu Haile and Natnael Feleke of inciting violence, Atnafu said. He added that his own charge, also of inciting violence, wasn't dropped because of a courtroom error, but that he expects it to be withdrawn tomorrow. "For us, it's good news, for our friends, our family," Atnafu said. —AFP

Fear stalks Kosovo's divided Mitrovica

MITROVICA: Ten years after independence, Albanians and Serbs from Kosovo's divided city of Mitrovica have one thing in common-fear, heightened by the recent assassination of a moderate Serb politician. The majority of the city's 70,000 ethnic Albanians live south of the Ibar river. The northern side is home to 12,000 Serbs who follow Belgrade's refusal to recognise Kosovo's independence, which will be celebrated on Saturday. Instead of integrating, the two communities prefer to look down on each other. "You will find young people who have never seen a Serb or an Albanian," said Besim Hoti, an ethnic Albanian deputy police chief. Those who speak the language of a different ethnic group are increasingly rare, Hoti added. Aferdita Sylaj-Shehu, of the NGO Community Building Mitrovica, uses English lessons as a "tool" to help young people from both sides of the divide to meet and try to understand each other. But Sylaj-Shehu herself is reluctant to cross the bridge connecting Mitrovica's north and south.

Supervised by international forces, the bridge remains a symbol of division, and blocks of concrete are being placed on it. Pedestrians who dare take the bridge remain rare, although they are no longer pelted with stones. One side, the red-blue-white flags of Serbia fly in front of a monumental statue of King Lazarus, a symbolic nationalist figure who points an imperious finger to the south. "Kosovo is Serbia," is written on a wall. The Albanian side is adorned with the flags of Europe's youngest state and near the great mosque stands a bronze statue of Shemi Ahmeti, a Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerrilla with a Kalashnikov assault rifle across his back.

Fear of unexpected

Mitrovica has been cut in two since the 1998-1999 war between Serbian forces and KLA independence rebels. The conflict killed more than 13,000 people, including 11,000 ethnic Albanians. Deadly riots such as those in 2004 and 2008 seem to be in the past. Yet, "when arriving



MITROVICA: Soldiers of the NATO led-peacekeeping mission in Kosovo walk near the main bridge in the divided town of Mitrovica. —AFP

here there is always the fear of something bad and unexpected," said Hamdi Pillana, 61, an ethnic Albanian pensioner. Crossing a footbridge spanning the Ibar to visit his daughter, he describes the feeling of anguish as like facing a "pack of stray dogs". His daughter lives in the district of "Three Towers," a rare mixed pocket of Mitrovica. Another local, Natalija, said: "You go to bed with fear in your stomach, you wake up with fear in your stomach. Will the (ethnic) Albanians attack or some of ours?" Mitrovica "lives under the ceasefire regime, not peace," added the 28-year-old Serb, who refused to give her last name.

Four months before his assassination in Mitrovica on January 16, Serb politician Oliver Ivanovic described a climate of "danger and fear."The inhabitants of northern Mitrovica "do not fear the Albanians, but the Serbs, local bullies and criminals driving four-wheelers without license plates," he said. The concentration of police officers in northern Mitrovica is impressive-120 per five square kilometres. But only ten were assigned to investigate Ivanovic's assassination. Ivanovic's assistant, Ksenija Bozovic, is convinced the killers will never be found. "Silence and fear reign over the town," she said. —AFP

In Germany's political chaos, ‘rubble woman’ comes to the rescue

BERLIN: Germany's chaos-wracked Social Democrats have named Andrea Nahles as their designated next leader, meaning women will soon be in the driver's seats of the two biggest parties and shifting a long-skewed gender balance in politics. Alongside Chancellor Angela Merkel, Nahles is set to join a growing band of women heading, or co-leading, German political parties despite the fact that female lawmakers still account for fewer than one third of seats in parliament.

Merkel has also pledged for the first time, following the lead of France and Canada, to place women in half of the cabinet posts in her fourth-term government, which is expected to be launched in late March. When Martin Schulz, the luckless former head of the Social Democrats (SPD), said last week he wanted to hand over the post to Nahles, he declared that it was time, at last, "for a woman to lead the 153-year-old party". The election loser also said he wanted to become foreign minister, sparking an SPD outcry about his perceived opportunism that forced him to back off and has now ended his short career near the top of German politics.

With the SPD in open turmoil, said the Sueddeutsche Zeitung, a major party has once again asked a "rubble woman" to clean up the mess-a reference to the mythologised women who after World War II helped clear Germany's bombed cities. The move evoked the start of Merkel's rise within the Christian

Democrats, it said, when the east German outsider took the helm of the male-dominated conservatives as they were reeling from a campaign finance scandal around former chancellor Helmut Kohl. "When everything is in ruins," the newspaper said, "women are asked to step in."

‘Only real guy’

Nahles, 47, a former labour minister who once headed the SPD youth wing, has earned a reputation as hard-working, pragmatic and combative. She invigorated her demoralised party with a lectern-thumping speech in January, when the tabloid-style Bild daily paid her the questionable compliment of being "the only real guy" in her party.

Nahles herself made headlines with unconventional language when she used a street brawler's phrase akin to "knocking someone's teeth in" after the election loss for what she then saw as the party's future role in opposition. She recently told news weekly Der Spiegel that female politicians tend to be criticised for ambition "while the boys are judged differently". Nahles was Tuesday unanimously approved by the party leadership, but will have to wait to take the top job until an April 22 party congress, with Hamburg mayor Olaf Scholz in charge until then.

Besides Merkel and Nahles, other women increasingly dominate the political scene, from Sahra Wagenknecht of the far-left Die Linke to Alice Weidel of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). Merkel's mooted one-time successors are women, with regional leader Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer having recently bumped Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen as the rumoured favourite. The rise of women in politics comes despite the fact Germany is still a long way from granting gender equality in corporate boardrooms and other sectors of society. —AFP



BERLIN: File photo shows German Chancellor Angela Merkel (right) shakes hands with German Labour and Social Minister Andrea Nahles as they arrive for the weekly cabinet meeting at the Chancellery in Berlin. —AFP

International

Maldives fights off travel alerts; tourists stay away

China, India, US and Britain issue travel warnings

MALE: Tourists have been cancelling hundreds of hotel bookings in Maldives every day since the imposition of a state of emergency last week, tour operators say, despite government assurances things are normal in the resort islands, far from the capital. China, India, the United States and Britain issued travel warnings after President Abdulla Yameen imposed the emergency and arrested judges who had ordered him to free jailed opposition leaders. “We have had about 50-60 room cancellations per day and the number is consistent since it started. This is the same for all of our properties in the country,” said a spokesman for Paradise Island Resort-Villa Group which runs the 282-room hotel, a 20-minute ride by speed-boat from Male where the turmoil is centred.

Tourism accounts for a third of Maldives’ gross domestic product, measured at \$3.5 billion in 2017. Ratings agency Moody’s has said it would lower its 2018 growth forecast of 4.5 percent if tourists are deterred for a prolonged period. Calls from Yameen’s opponents for military intervention by India, the leading power in the region, have added to the uncertainty. The Muslim-majority nation of 400,000 people lies close to international shipping lines and has become another arena of contest between India and China.

China, which has built close ties to the Yameen government in its push for a network of friendly ports in the Indian Ocean under its “Belt and Road” initiative, has cautioned against foreign interference. But that hasn’t stopped it from issuing a travel warning to its citizens, who make up a fifth of the tourist traffic. “We have a higher market for Chinese and Indian travellers and we are seeing most of the cancellations from these markets,” said a tour operator

in Male speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of upsetting the government. Early estimates pointed to a 20 percent to 25 percent rise in cancellations over the normal pattern since the crisis began, he said.

Chinese New Year travel

The Chinese New Year begins on Thursday when millions of Chinese travel at home and overseas during a week-long holiday. The tour operator said the big worry is that travellers will stop bookings going into March. Ctrip.Com International Ltd, China’s biggest online travel agency, said it was coordinating with hotels and airlines and helping guests who wished to postpone or cancel trips to the Maldives before Feb. 28. A spokeswoman declined to say how many cancellations or postponements there had been. Shanghai’s state-run Xinmin Evening News said last week about 3,000 people from Shanghai had been expected to visit the Maldives over the holiday, and that in recent years more than 300,000 Chinese visited the country annually.

Airlines have not yet cancelled flights but carriers including Air India, India’s SpiceJet, China Eastern Airlines and China Southern Airlines have allowed customers to cancel or change their tickets at no cost during specific dates during February. The Chinese airlines also echoed Beijing’s warnings about visiting Maldives. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said yesterday China had sent security reminders regarding the situation in the Maldives. “According to my knowledge, relevant Chinese departments are actively giving guidance to Chinese citizens to pay high attention to the



BODUHITHI ISLAND: Photo shows the wooden entrance leading to the Coco Palm resort on Boduithi Island in the Maldives. —AFP

security risks in travelling to the Maldives and appropriately plan their itineraries.”

If Thailand’s experience is a guide, the disruption could be short-lived. The bombing of a Buddhist temple in Bangkok in August 2015 caused a 17 percent drop in Chinese tourists to Thailand in the weeks afterward. But they began coming back again by October of that year, the government said, and Thailand finished the year with

a record number of Chinese arrivals. Some Chinese tourists have complained travel agents have been slow in refunding money already spent on booking flights and hotels in the Maldives, or even refusing to offer refunds altogether. During a state of emergency in 2015, economic growth slowed to 2.8 percent from 6.0 percent the previous year, dragged down by a sharp slowdown in tourist arrivals growth. —Reuters

On Ash Wednesday, China Catholics mull Vatican-Beijing ties

BEIJING: Li Bing had waited patiently for over 20 minutes at Beijing’s South Cathedral before a purple-robed priest finally smudged a dark cross on her forehead in celebration of Ash Wednesday. She is one of millions of members of China’s official Catholic church who are closely watching negotiations between the Vatican and Beijing, aimed at reestablishing ties after nearly 70 years of diplomatic estrangement.

Chinese Catholics are divided between a government-run association, whose clergy are chosen by the atheist ruling Communist Party, and an unofficial church loyal to the Vatican. While some believe a reconciliation will bridge divisions between the two, others fear concessions to China may backfire on the “underground” devout, many of whom suffered years of persecution for following the Pope.

Most who packed the pews felt far removed from the negotiations. “International relations have nothing to do with what goes on inside our church,” said an attendee surnamed Zeng. “Everyone is simply here to worship God.” But Li, whose name has been changed to protect her privacy, has long prayed for reestablished ties. Still, she remains conflicted. “I’ve kept the faith all my life, but I’m worried that in the end I’ll find that I went down the wrong path,” she said, tears spilling down her face. “Information is very restricted in China so there’s no way to know what’s happening or what to believe.”

‘Wise and foolish’

The Vatican relaunched long-stalled negotiations with Beijing three years ago. The two sides now seem close to resolving a major obstacle to progress, the question of who gets to designate bishops: China or the Holy See? Last month a top Vatican diplomat asked two underground bishops, recognised by the Pope, to resign in favour of state-sanctioned prelates-including one who was excommunicated in 2011. Anthony Clark, an expert on Chinese Catholicism at Whitworth University, deemed the decision “simultaneously wise and foolish.” While it may endear Rome to Beijing and pave the way for a possible papal visit, it could also upset the country’s roughly 12 million underground Catholics. Earlier this month Cardinal Joseph Zen, the bishop emeritus of semi-autonomous Hong Kong,



BEIJING: Catholic worshippers attend an Ash Wednesday mass, which marks the beginning of Lent, at Beijing’s government sanctioned South Cathedral yesterday. —AFP

accused the Vatican of “selling out” to China. An open letter by lay Catholics mostly based in Hong Kong expressed concern that the recognition of Beijing-appointed bishops would lead to “confusion and pain, and schism would be created”. Ka-Lok Chan, one of the letter’s initiators, said signatories hoped for better relations but feared a slippery slope. “We don’t need to trade with China-this isn’t about market share... What we have at the end of the day is our moral values and moral standing,” he said.

But Francesco Sisci, a specialist in Catholic affairs at Renmin University, believes those concerns are irrelevant. “The church is not interested in politics. It’s not for human rights, it’s not against human rights,” he said, noting that Jesus had never challenged the Roman government. “We deal with the Romans, and allow them to crucify if they want to crucify.” In his view, factionalism is the greatest threat to Chinese Catholics. “If they don’t solve this problem, the Catholic church is going to disappear,” he said. “It

would be immoral not to engage, because the church here is in need.”

‘Faith cannot be limited’

During Wednesday’s sermon a priest encouraged people to eat less meat and spend less time on their cell-phones during the Chinese new year starting Friday. As the words echoed off the vaulted ceiling, a young priest said he was already dreaming of a papal visit. But he was saddened that other believers look down on official Catholics like him because of their role in the state-sanctioned system. “This is the country I was born into, and God must have wished it thus, so I accept it,” he said. Li said her family had been Catholics for generations. When she was a girl, they had to pray secretly at home. “Your faith cannot be limited-it depends only on your own heart,” she said. “But of course what I wish for most is religious freedom.” —AFP

Guam stays relaxed amid North Korea nuclear standoff

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE: When North Korea last year bragged of plans to lob a salvo of ballistic missiles toward Guam, residents of this relaxed American island in the western Pacific didn’t seem too worried. Months later, and with tensions still high, they remain sanguine. “We know that if anything was to happen, there would be a lot of efforts to keep us safe and make sure we aren’t hit by anything,” says Blake Bristol, manager of Mosa’s Joint diner in the capital Hagatna.

“We are just going to hang out and enjoy the time that we have. If it happens, it happens—that’s how it is.” Though Guam is US territory and home to more than 160,000 people, few Americans give the island much thought—and even fewer will ever visit. But it briefly came to prominence last year amid a flurry of North Korea weapons tests.

In a moment of red-hot tension after two intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launches by Pyongyang—which prompted President Donald Trump to vow “fire and fury” in response—the North said it was considering sending missiles toward Guam. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hasn’t followed through, but officials insist they could have stopped the threat—and residents are just getting on with their lives. “The general populace feels like they

under the protection of the US government,” says another local, Vincent Terlaje.

Residents have good reason to be calm—dozens of radars dot the tropical island’s cliffs and nearby fields, scanning for signals and potential threats. Guam hosts a sophisticated anti-missile system, known as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), which is designed to fire interceptors into an incoming intermediate-range rocket and pulverize the target. “There is no better defended place to be than Guam,” Navy Lieutenant Ian McConaughy boasts as he shows reporters around Andersen Air Force Base, a sprawling facility carved from the island’s dense tropical brush.

Projecting power

McConaughy is one of more than 7,000 US military personnel stationed on Guam, which juts out of the world’s deepest ocean and is part of the remote Mariana Islands chain. Though it is located some 2,100 miles (3,400 kilometers) southeast of North Korea, Guam in some ways represents a front line in America’s standoff with Pyongyang. It is part of the military’s gigantic Pacific Command (PACOM), a region spanning almost half the globe.

Ever since 2004, Guam has hosted at least one of the US military’s three types of heavy bomber, part of the “continuous bomber presence” mission that enables the Pentagon to stage war games with regional allies—and which one day could be sent into action against North Korea. Officials like to talk about Guam’s importance for “projecting power” deep into the Pacific, where rivals are trying to write a narrative that Trump and his “America First” agenda mean the US no longer



GUAM: The Lucky Lady IV, a Cold War-era B-52 Stratofortress deployed to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, stands on display. — AFP

cares about its Pacific presence. General Joe Dunford—the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who recently visited the island with a group of journalists—and other US officials vehemently disagree with that assertion. The B-2 Spirit stealth bomber, shaped like a jagged boomerang, is deployed here—it can carry nuclear payloads and evade radar. Officials on the base wheeled out a better known plane for Dunford’s inspection—the imposing B-52 Stratofortress, a Cold War behemoth that still forms part of America’s bomber fleet backbone. “We are the third generation to fly this plane, which is incredible,” 28-year-old Captain Joseph Trench Niez says. —AFP

News in brief

Accident at Heathrow

LONDON: A man died after two vehicles collided on the airfield at London’s Heathrow Airport, Europe’s biggest hub, police said yesterday. “One male, is believed to have sustained a broken shoulder; his injuries are not life-threatening or life-changing,” the Metropolitan Police said in a statement. “Another male, aged in his 40s, was taken to a west London hospital with serious injuries. He has since died.” Some passengers had to disembark from a plane due to the incident, a spokeswoman for the airport said. “We will be fully cooperating with the police in the investigation which will follow,” Heathrow said in a statement. The airport was not closed as a result of the accident. —Reuters

19 migrants killed

BENGHAZI: At least 19 illegal migrants were killed yesterday and up to 79 injured in a road accident in the Libyan city of Bani Walid, a military source said. Among the dead were Somalis and Eritreans who had been travelling in a truck packed with migrants, the source said. No more details were immediately available. Bani Walid, located south of Tripoli, is a hub for smugglers to bring migrants from Libya’s southern sub-Saharan neighbours to the coast from where they are shipped by boat to Italy. —Reuters

Politician ‘murdered’

NAIROBI: A local leader of the main Tanzanian opposition party has been found beaten to death after men bundled him into a car, party chairman Freeman Mbowe said yesterday. Daniel John was responsible for the Chadema party in the Hananasif district of the economic capital Dar es Salaam, where a heated local election campaign is under way. “Daniel John was kidnapped on Monday in the street by men in a car,” Freeman Mbowe told AFP, the leader of the opposition in parliament. A friend of John, who was snatched at the same time but who survived the attack after being left for dead, was able to describe what then happened. “They were beaten and tortured, and the torturers were asking why they were campaigning for Chadema’s candidate,” Mbowe said. —AFP

Previously-unknown language

KUALA LUMPUR: A previously-undiscovered indigenous language in Malaysia reflects a way of life where the sexes enjoy great equality and there is little violence, researchers have found, prompting activists yesterday to demand better protection for tribespeople. Linguists discovered Jedek, which is spoken by only 280 people, during a project which saw them visit remote villages to collect data from different groups in the northern state of Kelantan. The team from Sweden’s Lund University were studying the previously-known language of Jahai in a remote village surrounded by forest—where people live in wooden houses on stilts—when they realised a large number of people were speaking something different. Niclas Burenhult, one of the researchers, said that anthropologists had studied the same hunter-gatherer community in the past but the linguists asked different questions, leading them to discover the language. —AFP

Pakistan Taleban kills 4

QUETTA: Pakistani Taleban militants shot dead four paramilitary soldiers in Pakistan’s western city of Quetta, where last month seven security men were killed in a suicide attack, police and the Islamist group said. The Frontier Corps troopers were patrolling the residential neighborhood of Langoabad on motorcycles when they were fired on by gunmen also riding bikes, said Naseebullah Khan, Senior Superintendent of Police for Quetta. “The four men were shot in the head,” Khan told Reuters, adding that handguns were used in the attack. Tehrik-i-Taleban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack. Quetta is the capital of Baluchistan province, rich in resources and at the heart of \$58 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) stretching from the Arabian Sea to China’s Xinjiang region. —Reuters

Analysis

Kuwait Times
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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
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Mi mi mi: Super fans of China's Xiaomi stoke IPO ambitions

Wang Bin, 29, is a serious "mi fan", one of the ardent followers of Xiaomi Technology Co Ltd, the maker of smartphones and other electronic products that looks headed for a big initial public offering, perhaps as early as this year. Wang's house is a Xiaomi temple. He has a Xiaomi television. Wears a Xiaomi watch. Has Xiaomi thermostats, air purifiers and smoke detectors. Xiaomi products help control the windows, doors and lights from an app on his Xiaomi smartphone.

The company, which started with smartphones but has since branched out into a plethora of smart devices, first gained a following in China by releasing limited batches of slick-looking phones to shoppers online at a lower price-tag than the likes of Apple Inc. "Ordinary people can now experience things that were out of reach before, and this value has helped get these products into millions of family homes," said Wang. "Since the first Xiaomi smartphone came out I knew Xiaomi would change the world." Wang needs no winning over. Still, Xiaomi - led by entrepreneur Lei Jun - will need many more loyal fans to live up to sky-high investor expectations. There are concerns over thin margins, a stalling Chinese smartphone market, costs of opening physical stores, and obstacles facing the brand to retain its followers and win new ones overseas, analysts who cover the company told Reuters.

Hit a wall

Reuters reported last month that Xiaomi had tapped CLSA, Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley as sponsors for its proposed IPO, which could value the company at up to \$100 billion and be the world's biggest tech float this year. "Looking from the outside in, that \$100 billion number sounds feasible, you can do the math and say it's possible," said Hans Tung, a managing partner at GGV Capital, who was an early investor in Xiaomi and is a former board member.

A lot will depend on the major strategy shift Xiaomi is driving with its "internet of things" smart products and services as well as its opening of physical stores. It's also pushing hard in key markets like India and Southeast Asia. Xiaomi, founded in 2010, started with an online-only strategy that helped it become, if briefly, the world's most valuable start-up. CEO Lei Jun developed a cult status akin to the late Apple founder Steve Jobs.

But its online model eventually hit a wall. Xiaomi's phones dropped out of the top five in China in 2016 because of rising competition from local rivals Huawei, Oppo and Vivo. The slump forced the company to pull back from several overseas markets in 2016, and to shift towards physical stores and developing artificial intelligence and internet services as new areas of growth. Last year Lei said the "worst was over" and the firm blew past its 100 billion yuan sales target for 2017 with a couple of months to spare.

Xiaomi snatched fifth spot in the global smartphone market in 2017 and - in an important step overtook Samsung Electronics as the largest vendor in India. "People started to go to Xiaomi stores because there are so many different products to buy and browse and look at," added Tung.

Internet services

Xiaomi's biggest immediate challenge could be an expected decline this year in the Chinese smartphone market after it suffered its first ever drop in shipments last year, said Mo Jia, Shanghai-based analyst at technology research firm Canalys. Analysts estimate the domestic smart phone market provides about 80 percent of Xiaomi's revenue. Still, Xiaomi is projected to have made a net profit of at least \$1 billion last year, according to bankers who have analysed the company's revenue estimates. Profits are estimated to roughly double to around \$2 billion this year.

Wang Xiang, Beijing-based senior vice president at Xiaomi and the executive who heads up the firm's international business, told Reuters the company is aiming to make its profits mainly on services. "We have a lot of Internet services in China, so we are very, very healthy financially. The model is we sell the hardware at almost cost," he said. The company is now "adding resources and hiring more people to get into new markets", he added.

Xiaomi runs online "communities" in its various markets and has a "MIUI forum" for its super fans - referring to its open-source operating system - with whom the firm shares test versions of its new software once a week on Friday. The firm also looks at its fan base when deciding which new markets to target. "We created the first inner circle of hard core fans through MIUI," said Wang, adding the firm holds an annual banquet for several hundred core fans, where Lei cooks. "The key is the sense of engagement."

It works with tech start-ups as an "incubator" to develop their gadgets, which might then be sold as Xiaomi-branded products. But Wang said the company does still face "challenges" in winning over consumers unfamiliar with the brand, and building the fan culture will help to break down barriers. Sometimes though, even the most loyal sometimes wonder if things have gone too far. —Reuters



Saakashvili forced out, but for how long?

By deporting him to Poland, President Petro Poroshenko may have managed to get rid of his arch-enemy Mikheil Saakashvili for now. But the speed and brutality of the former Georgian president and current opposition leader's arrest and exile may damage the Ukrainian government's reformist image in the West. Putting an end to the latest chapter of a high-profile, months-long saga, Saakashvili was arrested Monday by masked men at a restaurant in Kiev and put on a plane to Poland so quickly that his supporters did not have time to do anything about it.

On Tuesday, Saakashvili gave a press conference in Warsaw and said he had been blindfolded and rushed first by van, then by helicopter to Kiev international airport. Saakashvili, a former governor of Ukraine's Odessa region, was once an ally of Poroshenko, but became one of his greatest foes. Kiev accuses Saakashvili, 50, of trying to stage a coup sponsored by allies of former Kremlin-backed Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich - a charge he strongly denies.

Ukraine stripped Saakashvili of his passport, but he nonetheless continued to challenge the government, organizing frequent protests demanding Poroshenko's ouster. With the help of his supporters, he broke through the Polish-Ukrainian border in September last year, and was briefly detained in December in Kiev.

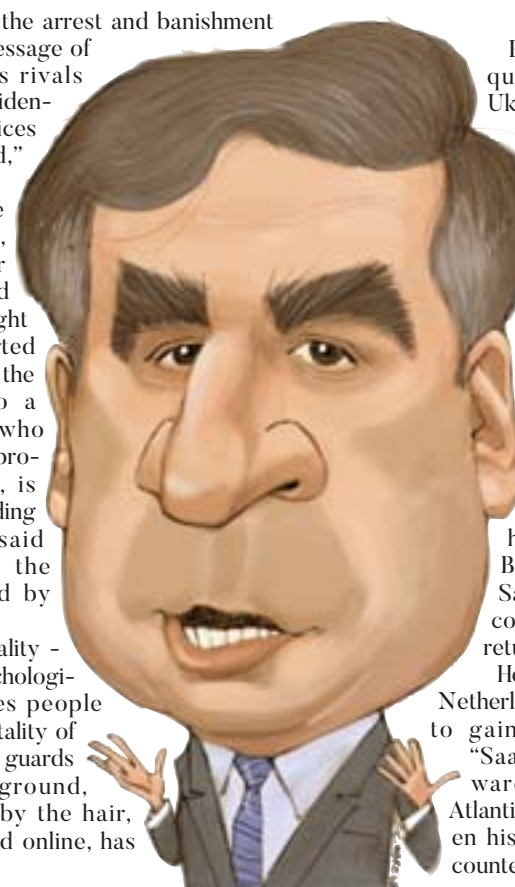
Warning to dissidents

The Ukrainian authorities "have shown the state's strength after Saakashvili constantly showed its weakness", sociologist Iryna Bekeshkina, head of the Kiev-based Democratic Initiatives foundation, told AFP. For Maxim Eristavi, a research fellow at the US-based

Atlantic Council think-tank, the arrest and banishment of Saakashvili serve as a "message of warning" to Poroshenko's rivals ahead of the May 2019 presidential poll. "Any dissenting voices will be ruthlessly squashed," he said.

Saakashvili's party, the Movement of New Forces, has held rallies calling for Poroshenko's ousting and accused him of failing to fight corruption. But it is supported by less than two percent of the population, according to a recent poll. Poroshenko, who came to power following a pro-European revolt in 2014, is widely criticized for backsliding on reforms. Bekeshkina said "many Ukrainians share the demands" of protests led by Saakashvili's party.

"But Saakashvili's personality - a flighty, unpredictable, psychologically unstable man - scares people away," she said. Still, the brutality of the arrest which saw border guards push Saakashvili to the ground, insulting and pulling him by the hair, according to footage posted online, has triggered strong criticism.



'Selective justice'?

Kiev's Western allies may also "raise questions about selective justice" in Ukraine, and the arrest could have a "negative impact" on Poroshenko's image abroad, said Sergiy Solodkyi, deputy director of the Kiev-based New Europe think-tank. On Tuesday, the European Commission said it continues "to follow developments regarding Saakashvili." "We expect the rule of law as well as the rights of Saakashvili to be upheld," Commission spokeswoman Maja Kocijancic said.

The deportation of the former Georgian president, who officials said was residing in Ukraine illegally, "is likely being perceived as revenge" by Poroshenko, but it does not solve all his problems with Saakashvili, Bekeshkina stressed. On Tuesday, Saakashvili said in Warsaw that he was counting on help from his supporters to return to Ukraine "to fight corruption".

He said he planned to visit his sons in the Netherlands, and then "go on a tour of Europe" to gain political support for his cause. "Saakashvili's career is on a steep downward spiral," said senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, Adrian Karatnycky. "Still, given his energy and charisma, he cannot be counted out in the long haul." —AFP

Girl power: Latin American journos take on machismo

Travelling around Latin America to show journalists how to hone their digital skills, Mariana Santos quickly realized more women were filling column inches and producing content, but the region's newsrooms were still overwhelmingly led by men. In a push to give women a better chance to set the agenda, her Chicas Poderosas (Powerful Girls) group is now helping Latin American women develop their own independent media companies.

"We really need more women who are able to be leaders and are not afraid," said Santos, formerly a digital designer for Britain's Guardian newspaper. "Women do not get given good stories. They are told they got that good story because they went to sleep with a guy," she said by telephone from S. Paulo in Brazil. The non-profit Chicas Poderosas has trained about 5,000 women from Mexico to Argentina in interactive storytelling, investigative reporting and leadership skills, to help bolster their positions in the media where females are starkly absent from senior roles.

Now 30 journalists, designers, photographers and developers on the group's four-month accelerator scheme, New Ventures Lab, are working out how to develop, run and eventually monetise their own media businesses, most with a strong social slant. One project runs a media website for Ecuador's LGBT community, while another is developing an arts and entertainment site in Brazil's Belo Horizonte. A group in Manaus is fact-checking news and information in the Amazon region of Brazil.

"This is very innovative - what we're trying to do is create a disruptive process to improve the media in Latin America," said Lia Valero, who took part in the lab run at Google's offices in S. Paulo. The

Bogota-based El Poder de Elegir (Power to Choose) group she is part of has worked with media technology firm Meedan to develop ways to fact-check political messages being exchanged via WhatsApp ahead of Colombia's May election. The project wants WhatsApp users to forward messages they get with political content, which Valero's team will try to verify using a pool of journalists around the country. They plan to respond with an image indicating whether the information is accurate or not, and post the results online.

Valero hopes the service will help voters make informed decisions and flag trends other journalists could pick up. It could also be deployed in upcoming elections in Brazil and Mexico, she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Faced with a male-dominated media culture, Colombian women often struggle to climb the career ladder, said Valero, noting a prominent journalist's recent decision to tell how she was raped by a high-profile man she did not identify for fear of reprisal.

Change the conversation

Bolstering women in Latin America's media could help push under-reported stories to the front page, including the high levels of femicide and poverty plaguing women across the region, said Chicas Poderosas' co-director Vicki Hammarstedt. "We believe women having leadership positions will actually change the conversation, but also provide women with the opportunity to have a direct impact on that conversation," said Hammarstedt, who is also director of the University of California Berkeley Advanced Media Institute.

According to the Global Media Monitoring Project run by the World Association for Christian Communication, 43 percent of reporters and presenters in Latin America in 2015 were women, up from just 28 percent in 2000. But men hold most senior posts while their female colleagues are often marginalised and paid less, and this affects how women are portrayed in the media, said Aimée Vega



Mariana Santos, founder of Chicas Poderosas (center), works with Ana Addobbati (left) and Janaina Lima (right) from #VamosConversar at the New Ventures Lab in Sao Paulo. —Reuters

Montiel, a researcher at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. In Mexico, "the world of the media in terms of structure is a male world", said Vega, who is also chair of UNESCO's Global Alliance on Media and Gender, noting a lack of gender parity from ownership through to journalists.

'Safe space'

The "Chicas" behind Peru's Malquerida Dice (The Unbeloved Says) website aim to bust the notion that gender-focused writing only tackles issues like violence, to bring an eclectic mix of features, reviews and advice to its 1,000 monthly readers. "Our main idea was to create a safe space for women to write and publish because we feel we are super under-represented," said Ana MuOoz PadrŮs, one of Malquerida's founders. "Fifty percent of the creativity and imagination in the world is lost when women are not writing and if we're kept out of newsrooms," she added. Co-founder Lucia

Chuquillanqui, who grew up in a sprawling, working-class Lima neighborhood, said Malquerida wants to get more women with a similar background writing for the site. "Where you're from and what you are adds something to the story," she said.

"Most of the world has the same experience as I had in San Juan de Lurigancho... the same sense of violence, poverty, lack of good education - so I think that's a different perspective to tell."

Finding ways to help the "Chicas" make their ideas financially sustainable is one of the biggest challenges for the New Ventures Lab, which introduces them to media professionals and sets them up with local mentors. "Most times, women in Latin America... are afraid to step forward," said Santos, who is from Portugal. "They are always asking for permission, always saying they are sorry for being successful. The goal here is to spread the feeling of yes, we can do things - so let's plan, let's strategize, let's articulate and get there," she added. —Reuters

Continued from Page 1

The alleged violation of federal campaign finance law “undermines the integrity of democracy in the United States,” a letter signed by Paul S Ryan of Common Cause reads. Cohen told the Times that Common Cause’s claims “are factually unsupported and without legal merit”, and he has filed a response with the Federal Election Commission.

Continued from Page 1

Last week, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said it was looking into allegations about Modi, one of the country's richest men. "Earlier this month, a first

Continued from Page 1

The World Bank yesterday said the private sector should play a leading role for a "successful" reconstruction of Iraq. "Many businesses from around the world have gathered here to discuss how they can invest in Iraq's future and create the jobs that will help bring stability to the country. Their presence in such numbers shows that Iraq is open for business," World

Clifford has been taking advantage of her new-found notoriety. She appeared at the Trophy Club strip club in South Carolina last month as part of a "Make America Horny Again" tour that will also reportedly take her to several other states over the next few months. In a recent appearance on the late night TV talk show "Jimmy Kimmel Live" - right after Trump delivered his State of the Union address - Clifford deflected questions about the alleged affair and whether she had signed a non-disclosure agreement. — AFP

Firestar Diamond, one of his diamond retail companies, has previously said the earlier case was not connected to the company. Shares in PNB plummeted 9.22 percent on the Bombay Stock Exchange's benchmark Sensex index in early afternoon trade following the bank's announcement. Bloomberg News reported that the value of the illegal transactions amounted to eight times the bank's net income last year. India's government is trying to reduce the crippling debts of the country's troubled lenders. It recently announced a \$32-billion recapitalization plan for state-owned banks to help them clean up their books. — AFP

UN chief Antonio Guterres yesterday sought to motivate donors, saying it was incumbent on the international community to back Iraq after its sacrifices against the extremists of the Islamic State group. "The whole world owes you a debt for your struggle against the deadly global threat posed by Daesh (IS)," Guterres said, in comments directed at the Iraqi delegation. "It is time to demonstrate our lasting gratitude and solidarity with the Iraqi people," he said. Guterres highlighted UN-backed initiatives for which he was seeking support. A two-year recovery program is aimed at making "immediate and tangible improvements to people's daily lives" while more cumbersome infrastructure projects get underway. — Agencies

Outside Analienborg, the royals' main residence in Copenhagen, Danes laid down flowers, children's drawings, and candles. One of them, Nina Langebaek, told AFP she would remember the prince as interested "in art, poetry, and making food." He was a great ambassador for Denmark." With a jovial face, the prince had a

Teased for his French accent and unable to understand why protocol required him to remain in his wife's shadow, Henrik never really found his place in Denmark. It wasn't until 1997 that he stood in for his wife at a public engagement for the first time. "People are just used to considering Prince Henrik as ... a little dog that follows behind and gets a sugar cube once in a while," he said. In 2002, he made headlines when he fled to his chateau in southern France to "reflect on life", complaining he didn't receive enough respect in Denmark after his son, Crown Prince Frederik, was chosen to represent the queen at a New Year's ceremony instead of him. He said he felt "pushed aside, degraded and humiliated." — AFP

Continued from Page 1

Palestinians have grown increasingly concerned that any plan Trump unveils will shortchange them, a fear exacerbated by his move on Jerusalem, which upended decades of US policy that the status of the ancient city must be decided in negotiations. Jerusalem is home to

Tillerson said Iran should withdraw its forces and militias from Syria, where Tehran backs President Bashar Al-Assad. Responding to the comments, a senior Iranian official, Ali Akbar Velayati, said Iran's military presence in Syria was legitimate and based on an invitation from Damascus. He called on US forces to leave Syria.—Agencies

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Sports



South Korean moguls team falls short, but future bright: Dawson

Proud of skiers who finished 11th, 27th and 28th in men's event

PYEONGCHANG: South Korean skiers fell well short of winning a medal in the men's moguls at the Pyeongchang Olympics, sees a promising future. The 38-year-old Korean American, who helped bring the games to South Korea, was proud of his skiers who finished 11th, 27th and 28th in the men's moguls event.

"The point for me coming over here was not only to produce a medal or to get these athletes to a really World Cup status, but also start a grassroots programme," Dawson told Reuters Television. "That's the legacy I would like to leave."

The Winter Games also marked an important chapter in Dawson's remarkable personal story. He was born in South Korea's Busan where, at the age of three, he was separated from his mother in a busy marketplace. Unable to find his parents, the police sent him to an orphanage where he was adopted by two American ski instructors from Vail, Colorado. His first taste of skiing was whizzing down a mountain slope tucked inside his adoptive father's backpack.

Soon he was given a pair of skis and was hooked. He eventually took up freestyle skiing, finished fifth on his World Cup debut at 20 and won his first world

championship medal four years later. But it was his bronze in moguls at the 2006 Turin Winter Olympics that made him a hero in South Korea.

Despite his American passport, Dawson was treated as one the country's own. He also had the opportunity to find his biological parents, something his adoptive mother had hoped for. "She was always secretly rooting for me to make it to the Olympics

blood samples, they found his biological father Kim Jae-soo.

PUBLIC REUNION

What followed in February, 2007 was a very public reunion - a news conference attended by dozens of reporters and TV crews. "It was hard. It was very surreal," Dawson said of that initial meeting and the intense public scrutiny.

After spending time with Kim he could see they shared similar facial features. "I was like wow, this is like looking into a mirror for when I am much, much older," Dawson said. He would meet his biological mother a few years later and maintains a good relationship with his parents and biological brother.

"I have just added to my family really, no hard feelings or anything like that. I don't hold anything against them," he said. Dawson was part of the bid team for the 2018 Games and later agreed to coach the moguls team.

Three men and two women qualified for the finals at Pyeongchang, but did not make the podium. "We probably won't see a good surge for another two or three Olympic cycles and at that point we are hopefully going to be putting together a strong Korean contingency that will go on



SEOUL: File photo shows Toby Dawson and his biological father Kim Jae-Su are reunited in Seoul on Feb. 28, 2007.

for a long time," he said. Dawson's coaching contract is up in April. He has not made a decision about the future, but he is grateful for how his life has unfolded.

"Man I am so lucky," he said. "I have had so many cool opportunities. I have had so many cool situations in my life because of being adopted." — Reuters

North Korean cheerleaders giggle at fake Kim Jong Un

GANGNEUNG: A group of North Korean cheerleaders were briefly wowed by the apparent, sudden arrival of their leader, Kim Jong Un, at a Winter Olympics ice hockey game yesterday.

Some cheerleaders giggled then immediately averted their gaze as the impersonator, who later only identified himself as Howard, smiled and waved to crowds who came to watch a unified Korean team play Japan at the Pyeongchang Games.

"They are playing a good game, they scored one goal. As a president, it's all I can ask for," Howard told Reuters, shortly after plain-clothed officials from South Korea's National Counter-terrorism Centre moved him away from the cheerleaders, who he said had been doing a very good job.

"I mean I trained them by myself

so, of course, they're the best in the world," Howard said. Howard had caused a commotion during last Friday's opening ceremony when he and a person dressed as US President Donald Trump were swiftly shown out of the stadium by security staff.

He said he was briefly detained inside a police office during yesterday's match then "politely asked" to leave. "My face is too political", the dejected impersonator said as he walked slowly out of the ice hockey stadium.

"I was born with this face, I've got to live with it." In North Korea, anyone impersonating of a member of the ruling Kim family would be considered blasphemous. Images of the North Korean leadership are tightly choreographed and controlled by the reclusive nation's state propagandists.

Still, Howard's entrance was so spectacular that the North Korean cheerleaders struggled to stifle a quick laugh in between chants of "We are one!" and "Unify the motherland!" "It shows you we're human after all," Howard said of the cheerleaders. "Doesn't matter if they're South or North Koreans, a sense of humour and a bit of political satire is always needed." — Reuters

Chinese duo, North Korea skaters seduce in pairs

GANGNEUNG: Chinese duo Sui Wenjing and Han Cong seduced the judges and fans on St Valentine's Day in the Olympic pairs yesterday. World champions Sui and Han produced a personal best to lead the short programme ahead of today's free skate.

Their routine to Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah earned 82.39 points to give them a slender cushion. Sui disclosed that nerves had almost got the better of her. "I was very emotional today. Even when I was putting on my make-up, I was already crying. I just felt very nervous. But after we got on the ice and finished our routine I realised there's all there is to it." Less than a point adrift after delivering their own career best came Evgenia Tarasova and Vladimir Morozov.

The double European champions are riding a crest of a wave after helping Olympic Athletes from Russia claim their first silver of the Games in the team event. Team gold went to Canada, in large part thanks to the efforts of Meagan Duhamel and Eric Radford, who sit third.

Radford, the first openly gay Olympic gold medallist, and Duhamel, are almost

five points back after their dance to the U2 anthem With Or Without You. Duhamel had a mini-mobile drama before skating, dropping her phone into a toilet bowl on her way to the rink.

"That's right. No better way to humble me before the biggest skate of my life," she tweeted. She later marvelled at how the standard in pairs had sky rocketed.

'RIDICULOUS MISTAKE'

"The fact that you need to score over 63 to make the long programme just shows that. Not too long ago, we scored 63 points and it got us fifth in the world in the short programme." In fourth came Germany's Aljona Savchenko, hoping to finally hit the pairs jackpot at her fifth Winter Games, with her French-born partner Bruno Massot. They hold the world record in free skate but will need a huge performance on Thursday to trouble the top three after Massot downgraded a triple salchow to a double. "It was not hard, physically at least. I don't know what happened," Massot said. "We came for the gold, not for another medal. These are the Olympic Games, that happen only every four years and I cannot accept that I have made this ridiculous mistake."

North Korean skaters Ryom Tae-Ok and Kim Ju-Sik were celebrating the best performance of their lives, finishing 11th and joining the top 16 in going through to the free skate. Supported by the 200-plus strong band of North Korean cheerleaders, Ryom and Kim wowed the crowd with an excellent execution of their short programme to the Beatles classic A Day In The Life. — AFP

Korea scores first goal of Olympics

GANGNEUNG: Japan carried the day yesterday when the long-time national rivalry with North Asian neighbours North and South Korea spilled on to Olympic ice, beating Korea's unified women's ice hockey team 4-1 in a game of firsts for both teams.

For the Japanese, it marked their first Olympic win in women's ice hockey. The Koreans, meanwhile, found the back of the net for the first time to send the arena wild. Randi Heesoo Griffin took a pass from Park Yoonjung and fought her way up the right wing before sending the puck towards Japan goaltender Akane Konishi and watching it dribble between her pads.

"I'm definitely not a hero," said Griffin, one of half a dozen North American players with Korean heritage in the team. "It was a pretty crappy goal that took a couple bounces and went into the net."

When Korea finally scored almost exactly halfway through the game, the crowd erupted with a roar and waved thousands of white and blue unification flags. "It was so loud after Randi scored, we couldn't even hear each other talk on the bench," Korea coach Sarah Murray said.

"We kind of gave each other a hug and then got refocused, ready for the next shift." It was easily the most evenly matched game the two teams have played, especially Korea who had been outscored by 8-0 margins in both previous games.

Japan opened the scoring a little over a minute into the game when Hanae Kubo one-timed a pass in front of the net past Korean goalie Shin So Jung. ASHoko Ono scored on the powerplay, knocking home a rebound on a shot from Shiori Koike, Japan's Koike provided an insurance goal late in the third period and Rui Ukita put away an empty netter



GANGNEUNG: Japan's Miho Shishiuchi (L) tries to shoot against Unified Korea's Shin So Jung (R) in the women's preliminary round ice hockey match between Japan and the Unified Korean team during the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games at the Kwandong Hockey Centre in Gangneung yesterday. — AFP

with about a minute left.

"It is very special to win against Korea, and I feel really great, especially considering the fact that we came here as an away team and we still won," Japanese captain Chiho Osawa said.

MORE POLITICS

The event was rife with political and cultural overtones, with fans waving flags depicting a unified Korea, some showing the disputed Japanese islands of Dokdo. Tensions have long simmered between the two countries following Japan's colonization of the Korean peninsula between 1910 and 1945.

Japanese fans started chants of "Let's go Japan", only to be met with Korean chants of "You are doing great Korea" and "Let's win Korea". "There's a lot of history between our nations, but this is sports. People have all been very friendly towards me. Let's all just

enjoy the game," said Japanese spectator Osamu Funatsu, 46.

The Korean women's team have become a showcase at the Olympics since it was decided to include 12 players from the North on the roster. "It's too bad that the joint team didn't have much time to practice together, but the idea itself I thought was good," said Ra Jong-tae, a South Korean public sector official from Sejong City.

North Korea's cheerleading squad was on hand for a third straight game, scattered in groups of several dozen around the arena and clad in red tracksuits. At the end, fans showered the ice with soft toys as the Korean players bowed to their coaches.

The game marked the end of the road for both teams' quests for an Olympic gold medal. The two now proceed to the classification round, playing against losers of the quarter-final games. — Reuters

Shiffrin raring to go, FIS confident for races

PYEONGCHANG: American Mikaela Shiffrin admitted that despite raring to get her Olympic quest for a multiple medal haul under way the decision to postpone yesterday's wind-lashed slalom was the correct one.

Gusting winds forced the International Ski Federation (FIS) into postponing a third race of the alpine programme after the men's downhill and women's giant slalom were also rescheduled. "It is unfortunate that we weren't able to race today, but it is important we have a fair race for all of the athletes," said Shiffrin, who could realistically target at least four medals in Pyeongchang.

"Today's conditions would definitely not have been fair," Shiffrin, who won Olympic slalom gold in Sochi at the age of 18 — a year after bagging the first of her world titles, was accepting of the strong winds that have been buffeting the Jeongseon and Yongpyong ski sites for the Pyeongchang

Games. "Weather delays and postponements are just the nature of an outdoor sport," said the American, who has racked up 55 victories on the World Cup circuit. "We'll continue to take it day by day and I look forward to getting in the start gate!"

Atle Skaardal, chief race director for women's FIS races, said he was optimistic of staging both the giant slalom and slalom today and Friday respectively. "It was a long and difficult day today," said the former Norwegian racer, twice a super-G world champion.

"We felt that the only right thing to do in the end was to go for rescheduling," Skaardal added that FIS had "a very good opportunity" of hosting the two women's races on "favourable days for the forecast".

"We hope we can have races under decent, acceptable conditions. "Everyone's very eager to get some racing done. "We hope for calm winds tomorrow," he added, warning that it was "too much to hope for windstill".

'ROLL WITH PUNCHES'

Paul Kristofic, head coach of the US women's team, said it was just a question of rolling with the punches. "Everyone is a little bummed out when a day like this happens, but they do happen, so we're quite used to it,"

said Kristofic, who with Shiffrin and speed queen Lindsey Vonn on his team will be hoping for a major medal haul. "When you have gusty winds like that, it is difficult to have a fair race, and the weather forecast called for winds to increase throughout the afternoon, right around our proposed start time for both runs, so that was a red flag for officials as well. "We've been through days like this before, in the World Cup, quite often and the number one thing is safety and the second thing is to have a good, fair race."

"Neither of those were achievable today. "We roll with the punches and make the best of the situation and try to prepare the best we can for the next day." The official forecast FIS is using predicts a downturn in temperatures on Thursday, dipping to -14 degrees Celsius (6.8 Fahrenheit) with windchill at the 10:00 am (0100 GMT) start of Thursday's first leg of the giant slalom, with a much decreased wind speed of 14.7km/h.

Friday is predicted to be even colder (-16C), with the start of the slalom due to kick off with winds of 25km/h, according to the Korea Metrological Administration. "I wish you all good luck tomorrow and us as well, I hope we can have a great race day on the hill," Skaardal signed off to the captains of the women's teams in Yongpyong. — AFP

Sports



‘Flying Tomato’ peels back years to win landmark snowboard gold

100th Winter Games gold for the United States

PYEONGCHANG: Snowboarding legend Shaun White savoured the feeling of “redemption” yesterday after he produced a jaw-dropping final run to win his third Olympic halfpipe title yesterday, bringing up a 100th Winter Games gold for the United States in the process.

The 31-year-old, who won at the 2006 Turin Games and in Vancouver four years later, delivered his brilliant best when it really mattered after Japan’s Ayumu Hirano had asked serious questions about the American’s stomach for a fight in Pyeongchang.

Going for broke in the day’s final descent, White held his nerve as he nailed back-to-back 1440 spins to score 97.75 points, pipping Hirano’s second run by just 2.50. Two-time world champion Scotty James of Australia took bronze after an opening score of 92.00.

“I watched Ayumu beat my previous run’s score and I was pretty frustrated,” said White, known as the “Flying Tomato” because of his red hair. “The pressure was on,” he added. “I just told myself, ‘you know you got this-it’s what you’ve done your whole life, so savour this moment because you might just win the Olympics’. “I knew I had it in me to do it.”

But White’s mood soured later when quizzed over sexual harassment allegations dating back to an out-of-court settlement reportedly reached last year with Lena Zawaideh, former drummer in his band Bad Things.

Asked whether the claims, which resurfaced online after his victory in Pyeongchang, tarnished his legacy, White snapped: “Honestly, I’m here to talk about the Olympics, not gossip. But I don’t think so.

“I’m proud of who I am and my friends love me and vouch for me. I think that stands on its own,” he added. White was trending online after his spectacular triumph. As he exited the pipe on his final run, White punched the air in delight but he admitted that what followed was both “awful and amazing” as he waited agonisingly for his score. When it finally flashed up, he hurled away his board in excitement and sank to his knees.

“It was an eternity,” he told reporters. “I guess I’m almost expected to do these flawless runs and I can’t help but wonder if they’re kind of going to nit-pick my run because of that. “I knew I put down an amazing ride and I could walk away with my head held high. But I had to dig deep for this one and getting that score at the end was overwhelming-I was crippled with joy.” Victory was all the more sweet for White after he flopped in Sochi four years ago.

“ I watched Ayumu beat my previous run’s score ”

I’M STILL SHAKING
“My third gold medal at my fourth Olympics,” he sighed. “I’m feeling blessed. It means the world to me to come back from Sochi.

“It was a deja-vu situation, standing there needing to land a run to win the Olympics and I just couldn’t do it (in Sochi). I was defeated in my mind before I dropped in. “But it’s a rarity you get these opportunities to redeem yourself. I’ve been through so much to get here. I had this crazy injury in New Zealand (in October) where I busted my face open.

“I actually did the same trick that injured me here in the halfpipe today. So there were a lot of obstacles to overcome and now it’s all worth it. I don’t know what’s happening. I’m still shaking.”

Hirano had to settle for a second silver in a row but paid rich tribute to the victor. “Shaun is cool like that,” shrugged the 19-year-old Japanese. “To be able to deliver like that with so much pressure is incredible.”



PYEONGCHANG: (L-R) Japan’s silver medallist Ayumu Hirano, USA’s gold medallist Shaun White and Australia’s bronze medallist Scotty James pose on the podium during the medal ceremony for the men’s snowboard halfpipe at the Pyeongchang Medals Plaza during the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang yesterday. — AFP

James saw his hopes dashed when he fell on his final effort but was still on an emotional high. “I’ve had a crazy couple of seasons and stood on a lot of podiums but this one’s definitely sentimental,” said the Australian. “It caught my off guard. I was trying to fight back the tears but I couldn’t do it.”

Team USA have now won all four snowboarding golds on offer so far. The 17-year-olds Chloe Kim and Red Gerard, along with fellow American Jamie Anderson, have all won in Pyeongchang, where competitors have struggled with blustery winds.

However, poor visibility caused by light snow made conditions tricky for riders yesterday and several fell, including Japan’s Yuto Totsuka.

The 16-year-old suffered a horrific crash as he landed on the lip of the pipe and was rushed to hospital after being stretchered away by medics. Japanese officials said the injury was “not that serious” and that the athlete was undergoing further tests. — AFP

Late spurt secures victory for Frenzel

PYEONGCHANG: Eric Frenzel of Germany survived a thrilling last lap to take the gold medal in the Olympic men’s Nordic combined individual event yesterday and successfully defend the title he won in Sochi four years ago.

Sochi silver medallist Akito Watabe of Japan finished 4.8 seconds behind to claim second place once again and Lukas Klapfer of Austria secured the bronze. When the ski jumping got underway after a half-hour delay due to high winds, Franz-Josef Rehr of Austria recorded a superb leap of 130.6 metres to take a shock lead ahead of the cross-country skiing.

World Cup leader Watabe, third after the ski jumping, started the skiing slightly behind the leader but by the middle of the third lap he had closed the gap and moved into medal contention. Frenzel moved clear of the group of five who had broken away, but the lead changed hands several times before the German tried to go alone on the last lap.

But he could not shake off the pursuing trio of Watabe, Klapfer and Jarl Magnus Riibe until a powerful surge on the final hill enabled him to cross the line on his own. “It’s amazing. I feel really great. It was quite a hard race because the wind on the track was not so easy and on the last round my goal was to push really hard the last round, the last metres and the last uphill,” Frenzel told reporters.

“At the end, the only way was to go in front and make my own race. At the end I’m



PYEONGCHANG: Gold medallist Germany’s Eric Frenzel reacts on the podium following the nordic combined men’s individual normal hill NH/10km final at the Alpensia cross country centre during the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games yesterday. — AFP

really, really happy about this victory today,” he added. The delay at the start of the ski jumping had no effect on Frenzel’s performance.

“I think after the jump I was in a really great position. I knew it was a good jump. I was a little bit lucky with the wind - that was one of the big reasons why you today needed

quite a little bit of luck so at the end I’m really happy,” he said.

It was the fourth Olympic medal for the 29-year-old German, who also won silver in Sochi and bronze at the Vancouver Games in 2010. Norway’s Jan Schmid, who is second in the World Cup standings, dropped out of contention after a poor ski jump. — Reuters

We’re innovators, not cheaters, says British racer

PYEONGCHANG: British skeleton racer Jerry Rice has dismissed speculation that the team’s high-tech skin suits could be illegal and said people were welcome to point the finger all they liked. British newspaper The Guardian reported this week that the “aerodynamic” suits used the same technology that had helped Team GB’s cyclists dominate at the summer Olympics since 2008.

Team USA said they expected the suits to be discussed during the team captains’ meeting yesterday and their women’s racer Katie Uhlaender said “a lot” of athletes and coaches had “questions”.

Rice, who will make his Olympic debut in the men’s event starting today, said the team’s equipment had been “checked and signed off” by tournament organisers. “It doesn’t bother me, people can speculate as much as they’d like,” the 27-year-old Rice told Reuters after training at the Olympic Sliding Centre yesterday.

“The fact of the matter is that the British guys are fast because we’re good at sliding, no other reason. We’re innovators, we do everything we can to be as fast as we can be. “They can point all they like but for us we just want to concentrate on ourselves.” Rice is part of a strong British team of four, including women’s Olympic champion Lizzy

Yarnold and men’s racer Dom Parsons, who made the top 10 at Sochi. The British sledgers’ results in training have been impressive, with Parsons, Yarnold and women’s team mate Laura Deas all topping the timesheets in different heats.

A tweet on Uhlaender’s twitter feed queried the legality of the suits earlier yesterday but the American said her account was being managed by somebody else. “I was notified there was a little bit of an article posted and a lot of coaches and athletes had questions on whether the suit was legal,” four-time Olympian Uhlaender, who finished fourth at Sochi, told reporters.

“I think the rules state that everyone is supposed to have access to the same equipment as far as helmets and speed suits go and not have any aerodynamic attachments. “It’s part of the game, I think if you see something that is questionably legal, it’s OK to ask.”

Team USA questioned the timing of the Guardian article, apparently suggesting mind games were at play. “The timing of the article was perfect and a smart strategic move by the British team,” USA Bobsled and Skeleton Chief Executive Darrin Steele said in a statement. “The rules are clear that there can’t be any aerodynamic elements attached to the suit, and we don’t expect to see any on the British speedsuits in the race. — AFP

Double delight for Germany’s Bayern Express

PYEONGCHANG: Germany’s “Bayern Express”, Tobias Wendl and Tobias Arlt, thundered down the ice track to claim a second successive Olympic gold in the doubles luge yesterday, underlining their class on the sliding sport’s biggest stage.

Four years after denying Austrian brothers Andreas and Wolfgang Linger a hat-trick of titles in Sochi, Wendl and Arlt put in two flawless runs at Pyeongchang’s Olympic Sliding Centre to edge out silver-winning Austrian duo Peter Penz and Georg Fischler.

The favoured German pair of Toni Eggert and Sascha Benecken, who had won virtually every major trophy over the past two seasons, had to be content with bronze. Germany have now won two out of three of the luge titles at the Pyeongchang Games, following

Natalie Geisenberger’s second successive triumph in the women’s singles on Tuesday.

“We were a lot more relaxed because we already knew we had the gold medal from Sochi on our shelf,” 30-year-old police officer Arlt told reporters after winning with a combined time of one minute 31.697 seconds, less than a tenth of a second quicker than the Austrians.

“We were very relaxed but we’re also very happy, it’s indescribable.” For Wendl, it was the result of thousands of hours of “training, blood and sweat”. “And now we’re Olympic champions again ... It’s quite scary when you come into your first run but we were quite confident and everything worked out in the end,” he said.

Wendl and Arlt had been decidedly second best to Eggert and Benecken throughout the season but stunned the world champions with a sizzling track record of 45.820 seconds in their opening run.

The Austrian duo of Peter Penz and Georg Fischler also threw down the gauntlet with a blazing first effort to leave Eggert and Benecken third at the interval. That was how the podium positions remained as

Wendl and Arlt summoned all their Olympic experience to continue Germany’s dominance of the event.

German athletes have now won 11 out of 15 of the doubles golds in luge dating back to the 1964 Innsbruck Games. Penz and Georg Fischler continued Austria’s fine tournament, grabbing the nation’s second luge medal of the Games after David Gleirscher’s shock gold in the men’s singles on Sunday.

Benecken won his bronze on his 28th birthday but hoped for better in four years at Beijing. “Maybe we started as the favourite but often the favourites don’t come to the finish with the medal or with the good run,” he said ruefully.

A number of pairs struggled with the tricky ice track, including the Ukraine team of Olesandr Obolonchyk and Roman Zakharkiv, who careered down the course like a pin-ball on their first run, leaving their coach yanking at his long beard in frustration.

Despite allowing mixed gender teams since 1994, the doubles event remains male-dominated due to height, weight and strength compatibility issues between athletes of the opposite sex. — Reuters

Medals Table					
Olympic Games complete medals table on day five in PyeongChang.					
Rank	Country	G	S	B	Total
	Germany	7	2	3	12
	Netherlands	5	4	2	11
	U.S.	4	1	2	7
	Norway	3	5	3	11
	Canada	3	4	3	10
	France	2	1	2	5
	Austria	2	1	1	4
	Sweden	2	1	0	3
	Italy	1	1	1	3
	South Korea	1	0	1	2
	Japan	0	4	3	7
	Olympic Athlete from Russia	0	1	4	5
	Czech Republic	0	1	1	2
	Australia	0	1	1	2
	China	0	1	0	1
	Switzerland	0	1	0	1
	Slovakia	0	1	0	1
	Finland	0	0	2	2
	Kazakhstan	0	0	1	1
	Total	30	30	30	90
G = Gold, S = Silver, B = Bronze					

Sports

Forsberg’s OT penalty shot leads Predators over Blues

Philadelphia’s Michal Neuvirth stopped 32 shots

NASHVILLE: Austin Watson scored twice in the final six minutes of regulation time to cap a furious three-goal, third-period comeback, and then Filip Forsberg scored on an overtime penalty shot as the Nashville Predators beat the visiting St Louis Blues 4-3 Tuesday. Forsberg was the hero 1:19 into OT. He was tripped by Jaden Schwartz while on a breakaway and awarded a penalty shot, which he converted by ripping a glove-side shot past Blues goalie Carter Hutton for his 17th goal of the season. Pekka Rinne made 28 saves for the Predators, who have reached extra time in five consecutive games. Calle Jankrok also scored for Nashville, while St. Louis got goals from Jay Bouwmeester, Alexander Steen and Jaden Schwartz.



SABRES 5, LIGHTNING 3
Sam Reinhart scored two goals and Ryan O'Reilly added a goal and two assists to lead host Buffalo to a victory over Tampa Bay. Chad Johnson had 26 saves for the Sabres, who won for third time in four games and spoiled the 400th head-coaching game for Tampa Bay's Jon Cooper. Nicholas Baptiste and Scott Wilson also scored for Buffalo. Ryan Callahan, Yanni Gourde and Vladislav Namestnikov scored goals and Louis Domingue had 28 saves the Eastern Conference-leading Lightning.

HURRICANES 7, KINGS 3
Justin Faulk registered his first career hat trick with-in the first 22 minutes as Carolina thumped visiting Los Angeles. Faulk scored three goals in a row as the Hurricanes went up 4-0 by early in the second period. He had gone the previous 14 games without a goal, though he now has seven goals this season. Jeff Skinner posted two goals and Jaccob Slavin and Sebastian Aho also scored for the Hurricanes, who have won three games in a row. Anze Kopitar, Tyler Toffoli and Torrey Mitchell scored for the Kings.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 5, BLACKHAWKS 2
Brad Hunt, Reilly Smith and David Perron scored on consecutive shots early in the third period to rally Vegas to a victory over visiting Chicago. Ryan Carpenter and Tomas Nosek also scored for the Western Conference-leading Golden Knights, who snapped a two-game home losing streak and won for

the 20th time in 26 games at T-Mobile Arena. Vegas' Marc-Andre Fleury made 29 saves. Alex DeBrincat had a goal and an assist and Tommy Wingels also scored for Chicago, which saw lost for the seventh straight game (0-6-1). The Blackhawks are riding their longest losing streak since 2012, when they dropped nine in a row.

JETS 4, CAPITALS 3 (OT)
Tyler Myers scored with 2:25 left in overtime, and Winnipeg ended its first two-game home losing streak of the season with a victory over Washington. The Jets' Mark Scheifele scored twice, including a game-tying, short-handed goal with 14.4 seconds left. Nicklas Backstrom, Andre Burakovsky and John Carlson had goals for the Capitals, who have lost four consecutive overtime decisions.

COYOTES 2, SHARKS 1
Kevin Connauton and Alex Goligoski scored goals, and both Arizona goal-tenders had a hand in a victory at San Jose. While the Coyotes received all of their offense from defensemen, Arizona goalies Scott Wedgewood and Antti Raanta combined for 40 saves. Wedgewood, who stopped 28 of 29 shots and officially recorded the win, was pulled from the game by the concussion spotter early in the third period after a collision with Sharks forward Timo Meier. Raanta stopped all 12 saves he faced in an excellent relief appearance while the Sharks pressed for the equalizer.

WILD 3, RANGERS 2
Marcus Foligno capped a three-goal first period for Minnesota, which held on for a victory over visiting New York. Eric Staal and Zach Parise scored unassisted goals in the opening period, helping the Wild win for the fourth time in six games. Devan Dubnyk made the early goals stand up by recording 32 saves. John Gilmour and Kevin Hayes netted power-play goals for the Rangers. Henrik Lundqvist made 26 saves as New York lost for the fifth time in seven games.

DEVILS 5, FLYERS 4 (SO)
Drew Stafford's shootout goal was the difference, propelling visiting New Jersey past Philadelphia. Devils goaltender Keith Kinkaid made 31 saves on 35 shots through regulation and overtime. Taylor Hall scored two



LAS VEGAS: Reilly Smith #19 of the Vegas Golden Knights battles Brent Seabrook (L) #7 and Erik Gustafsson #56 of the Chicago Blackhawks for the puck in the second period of their game at T-Mobile Arena on Tuesday. — AFP

goals while John Moore and Nico Hischier each scored once for the Devils. Claude Giroux, Scott Laughton, Radko Gudas and Konecny each scored for the Flyers, who had their four-game winning streak snapped. Philadelphia's Michal Neuvirth stopped 32 shots.

RED WINGS 2, DUCKS 1
Dylan Larkin and Frans Nielsen scored goals, and Jimmy Howard made 32 saves to lead the Detroit to a victory over visiting Anaheim. Anaheim peppered Howard with 33 shots compared to 16 for Detroit. However, the Ducks only could get one across the goal line, and that came with 3:54 remaining when Adam Henrique scored to cut Detroit's lead to 2-1. Ducks goalie John Gibson made 14 saves.

PENGUINS 6, SENATORS 3
Jake Guentzel scored twice, Zach Aston-Reese added his first two career goals, and Pittsburgh defeated visiting Ottawa. Penguins goalie Matt Murray finished with 30 saves. Evgeni Malkin and Kris Letang each added one goal and one assist, and Sidney Crosby had three assists for Pittsburgh, which has won

a season-best nine straight games at home. Derick Brassard, Colin White and Matt Duchene scored for Ottawa.

BRUINS 5, FLAMES 2
Patrice Bergeron netted the winner early in the third period and padded the lead with another goal as Boston topped visiting Calgary. Riley Nash scored twice, Zdeno Chara added another, and Tuukka Rask made 28 saves as the Bruins were victorious for the fifth time in six tries. Johnny Gaudreau and Sam Bennett collected goals for the Flames. Calgary goalie David Rittich recorded 35 stops.

BLUE JACKETS 4, ISLANDERS 1
Columbus posted the final four goals en route to a victory over host New York. Oliver Bjorkstrand, Pierre-Luc Dubois, Brandon Dubinsky and Cam Atkinson scored for the Blue Jackets, who outshot the Islanders 51-30. Columbus goalie Sergei Bobrovsky made 29 saves. John Tavares scored for the Islanders, and New York goalie Jaroslav Halak recorded 47 saves. — Reuters

Kohli eyes World Cup glory after conquering S Africa

PORT ELIZABETH: India's first ever one-day international series victory in South Africa has laid a strong platform for the country's hopes of a successful 2019 World Cup campaign, captain Virat Kohli said. "We are a team that always wants to think of ways we can improve and after this tour we will look be to even stronger with the 2019 World Cup in mind," he said after India took a 4-1 lead in the six-match series on Tuesday. "It's a wonderful feeling to have created some history. The guys really got stuck in, with the bat and the ball and in the field as well," he added after the Port Elizabeth triumph. Success in the series has lifted India above South Africa in the International Cricket Council's one-day rankings and they retained their number one status in tests as well despite losing 2-1 to the South Africans last month.

"For now, 4-1 feels amazing. Obviously the players put up some really good cricket to be in this position," Kohli added. The last match of the ODI series is in Pretoria on Friday. "We want to win 5-1 but there might be a scenario to give a few (other) guys a chance." Kohli said with the series won using only 12 of India's 17-man squad. The 2019 World Cup is being hosted by England and Wales, where India won their first global title in 1983 before adding a second on home soil in 2011. — Reuters

Rabada earns fine, another demerit point

CAPE TOWN: South African pace bowler Kagiso Rabada has been fined after a demonstrative send off for one of his victims in Tuesday's one-day international loss to India in Port Elizabeth, the International Cricket Council said yesterday. The fast bowler was fined 15 percent of his match fee and received one demerit point for his behaviour, when he waved at departing batsman Shikhar Darwan, pointing his way back to the change room and seeming to swear after the Indian opener was caught in the deep off Rabada's bowling. He was charged by the match officials for using language and gestures that could have provoked an aggressive reaction from the batsman. Rabada now has five demerit points on his disciplinary record. He was suspended last year when he reached four points and was barred from playing in the second test on the tour of England.

If he reaches the next threshold of eight points within the next two years, he will be suspended again but this time for two tests, or one test and two ODIs, or four ODIs and T20s, depending on which comes first.— Reuters



ooredoo organizes fourth annual football tournament

KUWAIT: ooredoo Kuwait, announced the kick-off of the fourth edition of its annual football tournament "The ooredoo Cup", which officially started last week at Hasan Abul Youth Center in Dasma.

This is the fourth year in a row where ooreodo holds this event which aims to further engage with employees from different departments and divisions. The event aims to gather employees in a casual friendly atmosphere, outside of the office premises and working hours.

ooredoo's Senior Director of Corporate Communications, Mijbil Alayoub said: "At ooredoo we seek those opportunities to better engage with our employees in fun-filled activities which they like and take part. The previous years football tournaments

Bayliss won’t rush Stokes back into England ODI team

LONDON: England coach Trevor Bayliss has welcomed the return of Ben Stokes but said the all-rounder is unlikely to play the first one-day international of the New Zealand series. Stokes pleaded not guilty to a charge of affray at Bristol magistrates' court on Tuesday and will join his England team mates this week



were a success and we look forward to another great one this year. We look forward to even more participation this year."

At the end of the tournament, the first place winners

will be presented with the ooredoo cup while other top-performing teams and players will be presented with medals, as well as many other valuable prizes as recognition for their accomplishment.

in Hamilton ahead of their five-match series starting Feb. 25.

Byliss said Stokes, who will miss the Twenty20 game against the Kiwis on Sunday, needs to get back up to speed before he can feature in the starting 11. "He hasn't played for a while," Bayliss told reporters. "It is not as if we can maybe bring him straight back for these T20s, for example."

"We have got to get him up to speed and hopefully during this one-day series we can get him back into the team. "At this stage I'd have to say it was unlikely (he'll play the first ODI). We'll have to wait and see how he is with travel, with practice."

Stokes, one of world cricket's most destructive batsmen, last played a competitive match for Canterbury in

New Zealand's domestic T20 competition last December. His absence was not necessarily felt during England's 4-1 ODI series win against Australia. However, that success has been followed by three consecutive T20 failures, with two losses against Australia and on Tuesday against New Zealand.

"Right throughout the summer we've been down to five bowlers, especially in the one-dayers and T20s," Bayliss added. "We've been able to have six bowlers before, which gives the captain plenty of different options. I think that's what we've missed the most apart from his individual performances."

Stokes is expected to feature in England's two tests against New Zealand at Auckland and Christchurch next month. —Reuters

Sports

James scores 37 as Cavaliers roll over Thunder 120-112

Denver past slumping San Antonio

LOS ANGELES: LeBron James scored 37 points as the visiting Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 120-112 on Tuesday. James shot 14 of 23 from the field and added eight assists and eight rebounds. It was his 417th career 30-point game and fifth with at least 35 points this season. JR Smith hit six 3-pointers and added 18 points for the Cavaliers, who won their fourth straight. Cleveland received productive showings from its new acquisitions who were making their second appearance with the team: Rodney Hood (14 points), Jordan Clarkson (14 points), Larry Nance Jr. (13 points, nine rebounds) and George Hill (seven points). Paul George led the Thunder with 25 points. Carmelo Anthony, back after missing two games with a sprained right ankle, added 24. Steven Adams contributed 22 points and 17 rebounds, and Russell Westbrook returned from missing two games with a sprained left ankle to total 21 points and 12 assists.



Timberwolves lose at Target Center for the first time

ROCKETS 126, TIMBERWOLVES 108
Ryan Anderson buried four 3-pointers in the fourth quarter, and Houston continued the barrage from behind the arc in a victory at Minnesota. Anderson scored 12 of his 21 points in the final frame and was the ignition for a Rockets offense that hit 10 3-pointers in the fourth en route to a 42-point period. James Harden paced the Rockets with 34 points and 12 assists, drilling 6 of 10 treys, as did Anderson. The Timberwolves lost at Target Center for the first time since Dec. 16, ending their 13-game home winning streak. Karl-Anthony Towns led Minnesota with 35 points and 12 rebounds, while Jeff Teague added 25 points and eight assists.

RAPTORS 115, HEAT 112
DeMar DeRozan scored 27 points and Kyle Lowry added 22 points and eight assists as Toronto defeated visiting Miami for its sixth consecutive victory. A Wayne Ellington 3-pointer with 6.6 seconds left cut Toronto's lead to 114-112. CJ Miles made one free throw, and Miami's Josh Richardson raced upcourt,

missing a 3-pointer off the back iron that would have sent the game to overtime. Goran Dragic led the Heat with 28 points. Dwyane Wade, in his second game back with Miami, produced 10 points, 11 rebounds and six assists.

NUGGETS 117, SPURS 109
Nikola Jokic amassed 23 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists to record his fourth triple-double of the season while leading host Denver past slumping San Antonio. Barton had 20 points for the Nuggets while Wilson Chandler and Jamal Murray scored 17 each. San Antonio, with leading scorer and rebounder LaMarcus Aldridge missing the game due to a sore knee, lost its third consecutive contest and fifth in the past six outings. The Spurs got a career-high 26 points and 11 rebounds from Joffrey Lauvergne plus 17 points from Tony Parker.

BUCKS 97, HAWKS 92
Khris Middleton scored 13 of his 21 points in the second half as Milwaukee overcame a slow start to beat visiting Atlanta. Middleton hit 7 of 15 shots, grabbed seven rebounds and finished with three steals. Teammate Giannis Antetokounmpo also shook off a cold start, making 4 of 6 shots in the second half and finishing with 15 points, 15 rebounds, three steals and two blocks. Dennis Schroder led the Hawks with 18 points, and Kent Bazemore made four 3-pointers to finish with 17 points. Atlanta's Dewayne Dedmon contributed 13 points and 10 rebounds.

KINGS 114, MAVERICKS 109
Zach Randolph scored 11 of his game-high 22 points while Sacramento was running up a 14-point lead in the first quarter, paving the way to a win at Dallas. The victory was the Kings' second in three meetings with the Mavericks this season. J.J. Barea had a 19-point, 13-assist double-double for Dallas, which joined Atlanta and Phoenix as the NBA's first three 40-game losers. Barea's assist total was a season high. — Reuters



OKLAHOMA CITY: Jerami Grant #9 of the Oklahoma City Thunder goes for the jump ball against the Cleveland Cavaliers on Tuesday at Chesapeake Energy Arena in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. — AFP

NBA results/standings									
Denver 117, San Antonio 109; Dallas 109, Sacramento 114; Milwaukee 97, Atlanta 92; Minnesota 108, Houston 126; Oklahoma City 112, Cleveland 120; Toronto 115, Miami 112.									
Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Toronto	40	16	71.4	-	Golden State	44	13	77.2	-
Boston	40	18	69.0	1	Houston	43	13	76.8	0.5
Cleveland	34	22	60.7	6	San Antonio	35	24	59.3	10
Milwaukee	32	24	57.1	8	Minnesota	35	25	58.3	10.5
Washington	32	24	57.1	8	Oklahoma City	32	26	55.2	12.5
Indiana	32	25	56.1	8.5	Denver	31	26	54.4	13
Philadelphia	29	25	53.7	10	Portland	31	26	54.4	13
Miami	30	27	52.6	10.5	New Orleans	30	26	53.6	13.5
Detroit	27	29	48.2	13	LA Clippers	29	26	52.7	14
Charlotte	23	33	41.1	17	Utah	29	28	50.9	15
New York	23	35	39.7	18	LA Lakers	23	32	41.8	20
Chicago	20	36	35.7	20	Memphis	18	37	32.7	25
Brooklyn	19	39	32.8	22	Sacramento	18	38	32.1	25.5
Orlando	18	38	32.1	22	Phoenix	18	40	31.0	26.5
Atlanta	18	40	31.0	23	Dallas	18	40	31.0	26.5

Froome blasts ‘misinformation’ in doping case on return to racing

MIJAS: Chris Froome insisted that “misinformation” has led to rival riders calling for him to be suspended after an abnormal doping test, as he started his season at the Ruta del Sol yesterday.
“There is a lot misinformation out there. There are also a lot of opinions of people who don’t quite fully understand the process,” Froome said in response to those who have called for him to be suspended pending a resolution to the case.
“But I do believe that when all the facts are out there people will see it from my point of view.” Froome was speaking ahead of the start of the five-day race in Andalusia, his first appearance in the peloton since the revelations in December of the test result.
Despite the controversy, he was afforded a warm welcome by fans in Mijas, while the local mayor even posed for photographs with him. Froome, who won the race on his last appearance in 2015, finished in the peloton in the 197.6km first stage from the Mediterranean coast to Granada. The stage was won by Frenchman Thomas Boudat, a former omnium world champion on the track.
Cycling’s international governing body the UCI is yet to make a ruling on Froome’s test, which was given at last

year’s Vuelta a Espana, a race he won. However, UCI chief David Lappartient said last month that Froome should be suspended over the adverse test and some of the rider’s main rivals have hit out at cycling authorities for failing to ban him.
The four-time Tour de France winner has the right to ride because salbutamol, the substance that showed up in the test, is an anti-asthma drug which can be taken legally and so does not lead to an automatic ban. The UCI have asked Froome to explain why twice the allowed limit showed up in his sample.
“We are working as hard as we can to try to get this resolved. No one wants this resolved more fast than I do,” added the 32-year-old Briton. “It’s been a difficult period now. These are not normal circumstances. “Obviously this was meant to have been a confidential process, which has been made public, but we are doing our best to get this resolved now and I’m keeping my head down, I’ve been staying focused on my training and getting ready for the season ahead.”
The reaction of other riders suggested that the presence of Froome on the Ruta del Sol could provoke some resentment in the peloton. But Froome said: “The support has been amazing and that goes for other riders as well, the support I’ve received from the peloton has just been incredible.” Despite the criticism, Froome, who has not raced since September, starts his 2018 season in the same country where he returned the controversial test on September 7.
If he succeeds in clearing his name, this race could prove an important stepping stone for success on the road later in the season. “Chris Froome is our leader,” said his Dutch teammate Dylan van Baarle on Tuesday. “He did a lot of good training in South Africa. We’ll see how he gets on during the race but I think he’ll be fine.”



MIJAS: Team Sky's British cyclist Christopher Froome waves to supporters prior to the first stage of the “Ruta del Sol” tour, a 197,6 km ride from Mijas to Granada yesterday. — AFP

Froome needs miles in his legs to prepare for his bigger objectives: the Giro d'Italia, which starts on May 4, and the Tour de France, starting July 7, where he would be chasing a record-equaling fifth victory. On the other hand, if he is later banned then he would be retrospectively disqualified, meaning he could be distorting the competitive balance of the Ruta by riding. — AFP

Halep wins on return in Qatar

DOHA: World number two Simona Halep won on her return to competitive action since losing the Australian Open final, beating Ekaterina Makarova in straight sets in the Qatar Open yesterday.
Halep eased through 6-3, 6-0 against the Russian, in a second round match she received a first round bye-but admitted afterwards she was still anxious about an ankle injury which has stopped her from playing since Melbourne. Also winning convincingly was the woman who defeated Halep in Melbourne, Caroline Wozniacki who blitzed Germany’s Carina Witthoeft, 6-2, 6-0 in just 57 minutes.
But it was Halep’s ankle which was receiving most attention afterwards. The Romanian said she would assess that injury match-by-match and admitted she would take the “best decision” for her health if the ankle worsened.
“Ankle is okay. The foot is still painful,” she said afterwards. Halep faces Latvian Anastasija Sevastova today and asked if she will definitely play, she responded: “For sure, yeah. And I will try to finish the match.
“I started already to talk too much about this injury, it’s just a problem with my foot. “The doctor said that nothing can happen like worse to break something.” But still when I will feel stronger pain, I think I will just think-I will double think

about it and I will take the best decision.”
The injury also forced her out of Romania’s Fed Cup tie with Canada last weekend. Halep raced to a 5-1 lead in her first set before Makarova, the world number 36, showed some defiance by breaking the Romanian’s serve and threatening a comeback.
Halep, who hit 13 winners, then rallied and stormed through the second set without losing a game. The Romanian has the possibility of reclaiming the world’s top ranking from Wozniacki this week if she reaches at least the quarter-finals and goes one round further than the Dane.
But Wozniacki carried on the great form which saw her lift her first Grand Slam title last month, not giving Witthoeft a chance, and hitting 18 winners. Wozniacki also has her own reasons for doing well in Doha.
If she gets to the semi-final, she will become just the fourth player in history to pass £30 million in prize money. The high-quality field in the Gulf features nine of the top ten players in the world and several just outside those rankings.
With few shocks so far, the remaining few days in Doha could witness some heavyweight contests.
Also through to the third round are world number 11, Britain’s Johanna Konta and a resurgent Petra Kvitova. Konta won 6-2, 6-2 against a former Qatar Open winner, Carla Suarez Navarro.
And Kvitova battled back from a set down to beat Poland’s Agnieszka Radwanska 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 6-4. “I have no idea, first of all, how I turned it around. I felt pretty exhausted,” said the double Wimbledon champion. — AFP



DOHA: Romanian tennis player Simona Halep returns the ball to Russian player Ekaterina Makarova as they compete in their singles match during the second round of the Qatar Open tennis competition in Doha yesterday. — AFP

Mirza confident of winning Asian Games medal

NEW DELHI: Indian tennis star Sania Mirza is confident of continuing her Asian Games record with another medal in this year's event-if she recovers from injury in time. Mirza, regarded as India's best ever women's tennis player, has achieved at least one medal at every Asiad meet since 2006 and hopes this year's games in Indonesia will be no different.
But the 31-year-old has been sidelined since October with a knee injury, and her former number one doubles ranking-the first ever for an Indian in the women's event-has slipped to 14. Mirza said she has every intention of competing in the Games starting August, if her knee had recovered.
“I am hoping to be back within a couple of months,” she told AFP in an interview in New Delhi on Tuesday. “I have always come back with a medal so if I go, then hopefully I will come back with one again.” Her last Asiad appearance in South Korea in 2014 resulted in a gold in the mixed doubles and bronze in the doubles event. Mirza made waves in 2005 as the first Indian to win a WTA singles title. She reached the fourth round of the US Open in the same year, and by 2007 was among the best 30 women's players in the world.—AFP

Live			Matches on TV
			(Local Timings)
UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE			
Astana v Sporting	beIN SPORTS HD 7		19:00
Borussia Dortmund v Atalanta	beIN SPORTS HD 5		21:00
OGC Nice v Lokomotiv Moscow	beIN SPORTS HD 7		21:00
Spartak Moscow v Athletic de Bilbao	beIN SPORTS HD 3		21:00
Real Sociedad v Red Bull Salzburg	beIN SPORTS		21:00
Ludogorets Razgrad v AC Milan	beIN SPORTS HD 4		21:00
Ostersunds v Arsenal	beIN SPORTS HD 2		21:00
Olympique Marseille v Sporting Braga	beIN SPORTS HD 6		21:00
Kobenhavn v Atletico de Madrid	beIN SPORTS HD 3		23:05
AEK Athens v Dynamo Kyiv	beIN SPORTS HD 9		23:05
Celtic v Zenit St. Petersburg	beIN SPORTS HD 5		23:05
SSC Napoli v RB Leipzig	beIN SPORTS HD 2		23:05
Olympique Lyonnais v Villarreal CF	beIN SPORTS HD 6		23:05
Partizan v Viktoria Plzen	beIN SPORTS HD 13 EN		23:05
Steaua Bucurest v SS Lazio	beIN SPORTS HD 4		23:05

12 Unified Korean team scores first goal of the Olympics



13 'Flying Tomato' peels back years to win landmark snowboard gold



15 Froome blasts 'misinformation' in doping case on return to racing



Ronaldo double as Real defeat PSG

Mane hits hat-trick as Liverpool crush Porto



MADRID: Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (L) kicks the ball during the UEFA Champions League round of sixteen first leg football match Real Madrid CF against Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid yesterday. — AFP

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice as Real Madrid came from behind to stun Paris Saint-Germain 3-1 in the first leg of their heavyweight Champions League last-16 tie yesterday. Ronaldo scored his 100th Champions League goal for title-holders Real from the penalty spot late in the first half to cancel out Adrien Rabiot's opener for the French side at the Santiago Bernabeu, set up by Neymar. The Portuguese star then turned the ball home from close range with seven minutes left before Marcelo secured what could turn out to be a decisive first-leg lead ahead of the return in Paris on March 6 and sent nearly 80,000 home fans into raptures.

The late collapse for PSG brings back echoes of the way they fell apart to lose 6-1 in Barcelona on their way to a humiliating exit at the same stage of the competition last season. Neymar, in Barcelona's ranks then, could not make the difference for PSG, who now have a huge job on their

hands to turn the tie around. Having looked set to come away with a precious draw, the defeat piles the pressure on coach Unai Emery, but for Real the outcome is an enormous boost for their boss Zinedine Zidane.

Real supporters chose an image of a famous fan in Rafael Nadal to adorn a display unfurled at the south end of the ground as the sides came out, hoping their team could draw inspiration from someone who has conquered Paris 10 times as French Open champion.

The hosts started well too, while Neymar struggled, slipping when one pass was aimed towards him, complaining as a Luka Modric challenge sent him to the floor and picking up a yellow card for a foul on Nacho. Ronaldo, meanwhile, saw Alphonse Areola make a fine save from his net-bound shot after he had been released by Marcelo, and not long after that, in the 33rd minute, PSG scored.

Neymar could claim an assist, although it didn't look like the Brazilian meant to help Kylian Mbappe's low ball across the box

from the right into the path of Rabiot, who swept home unmarked. PSG had a precious away goal, but they could not hold their lead until the break as Giovanni Lo Celso gave away a penalty for a foul on Toni



Ronaldo scores his 100th Champions League goal

Kroos. Areola, having just made a superb save from Karim Benzema, could do nothing to keep out Ronaldo's spot-kick.

Meanwhile, Sadio Mane scored a brilliant treble as Liverpool romped to a 5-0 thrashing of Porto at the Estadio do Dragao

yesterday to march towards the Champions League quarter-finals. Mane fired the away side ahead in the first leg of the last-16 clash, before Mohamed Salah's audacious finish quickly made it two.

The Senegalese forward slotted in his second as Liverpool completely outclassed their opponents, with Roberto Firmino adding his name to the scoresheet with 20 minutes to play, before Mane's searing strike completed his first European hat-trick.

Playing in the last 16 of the competition for the first time in nine years, Liverpool are now all but certain to reach the quarter-finals ahead of the second leg at Anfield on March 6. Jurgen Klopp's men had scored 23 goals in the group stage and continued that scintillating form in Portugal, while the defensive frailties that have plagued them at times this season never resurfaced as Dejan Lovren and Virgil van Dijk put in accomplished displays at the back.

Roared on by the home fans, Porto start-

ed brightly and Brazilian midfielder Otavio was denied an early goal by a last-ditch tackle from Lovren. But it didn't take Liverpool long to grow into the game, as left-back Andrew Robertson fired over on his Champions League debut and Ivan Marcano's brave block prevented Firmino from heading in.

Liverpool took total control of the tie just four minutes later as Salah scored his 30th goal of the season in style. James Milner's strike crashed into the post, but the Egyptian star was on hand to flick the ball over the onrushing Sa with a magnificent piece of skill and slot into the net.

The visitors were utterly dominant, but Tiquinho Soares, playing in place of the injured Vincent Aboubakar, fired narrowly wide for Porto on the stroke of half-time. Porto had plenty of the ball but were always vulnerable to Liverpool's waves of rapid counter-attacks, and Mane made it three shortly after the restart. — AFP

Cannavaro expects Guangzhou to bounce back after Buriram draw

HONG KONG: Fabio Cannavaro has told his Guangzhou Evergrande team to bounce back when they take on Japan's Cerezo Osaka in the Asian Champions League next week after seeing his side held to a 1-1 draw yesterday by Thailand's Buriram United.

Guangzhou, who won the tournament in 2013 and 2015, took the lead in the Group G opener after 16 eventful minutes through Ricardo Goulart, having had two penalty claims turned down and a goal ruled out for offside.

However, a goalkeeping error by Liu Dianzuo allowed Buriram to equalise just before the hour mark when Edgar Silva netted from close range. "I'm very happy with our first half performance, but very disappointed with the second half," said Cannavaro, who was leading the team in the first game of his second stint in charge of Guangzhou.

"The away match against Cerezo Osaka (next week) will be very difficult. They are a strong team with discipline and good individuals. We will prepare carefully. I just told my players that today we lost two points and we are going to take them back."

Cerezo top the group after Kota Mizunuma scored a stoppage time winner against South Korea's Jeju United. A mistake by Lee Chang-guen in the home side's goal allowed midfielder Mizunuma to slide the ball home.

Shanghai Shenhua, meanwhile, were pegged back to a 1-1 draw after taking an early lead against Kashima Antlers just three minutes into their Group H encounter in Japan. Giovanni Moreno claimed the opener before Yasushi Endo scored six minutes into the second half to earn Go Oiwa's side a share of the points.

Both teams trail Suwon Bluewings from South Korea after a brace from veteran striker Dejan Damjanovic, who joined from FC Seoul in the close season, saw off Australian champions Sydney FC.

Damjanovic gave goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne no chance with a fine strike from 25 yards in the 62nd minute before the 36-year-old put the result beyond doubt from the penalty spot 14 minutes later.

"I'm really feeling good when I'm here in Sydney," said Damjanovic. "We opened well, there's big pressure because there is big expectation on us this season and I have two goals and we've opened the season really well."

Meanwhile, in the west of the continent Persepolis, semi-finalists last year, made an impressive start to their campaign in Group C by beating Nasaf Qarshi from Uzbekistan 3-0. The Iranian side top the group ahead of Qatar's Al Sadd, who defeated Al Wasl from the United Arab Emirates.

Last year's finalists, Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia, played out a scoreless draw with 2003 champions Al Ain of the UAE in Group D while Iran's Esteghlal and Al Rayyan from Qatar shared a 2-2 draw. — Reuters



GUANGZHOU: Ricardo Goulart (R) of Guangzhou Evergrande competes for the ball with Pansa Hemviboon of Buriram United during their AFC Champions League group stage football match in Guangzhou, in China's southern Guangdong province yesterday. — AFP

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SHANDONG: A vendor packaging nuts at a market in Liaocheng in China's eastern Shandong province. China's factory inflation eased to a 14-month low in January while consumer price inflation dropped to a six-month low, official data showed. — AFP

US mulls tariffs on steel, aluminum imports

China warns Trump trade sanctions threaten global economy

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday he was considering a range of options to address steel and aluminum imports that he said were unfairly hurting US producers, including tariffs and quotas. Trump's comments - his strongest signal in months that he will take at least some action to restrict imports of the two metals - came in a meeting with a bipartisan group of US senators and representatives at the White House. Reporters were present for part of the meeting.

Some of the lawmakers urged him to act decisively to save steel and aluminum plants in their states, but others urged caution because higher prices would hurt downstream manufacturers that consume steel and aluminum. Trump is weighing options presented last month by the US Commerce Department in parallel "Section 232" investigations into whether import restrictions on steel and aluminum are needed to protect national security. The probes were authorized under a 1962 trade law that has not been invoked since 2001.

"What we're talking about is tariffs and/or quotas," Trump said to the group. "Part of the options would be tariffs coming in. As they

dump steel, they pay tariffs, substantial tariffs, which means the United States would actually make a lot of money."

Trump said that the steel and aluminum industries were being "decimated by dumping" and talked about the empty steel mills he saw on the campaign trail in 2016. "I look at it two ways: I want to keep prices down, but I also want to make sure that we have a steel industry and an aluminum industry, and we do need that for national defense," Trump said. US steel stocks rose broadly after the comments, with the S&P 1500 steel index closing up 1.1 percent and outperforming the broader market. Alcoa Inc shares ended 1.4 percent higher, with Century Aluminum up 0.5 percent. Trump now has until around April 11 to decide whether to impose steel import curbs and April 20 to decide on aluminum restrictions. The Commerce Department has not revealed its recommendations in the probes launched last spring.

But Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross told the lawmakers that Section 232 powers "can be applied in a much more surgical way" that

could lead to tariffs on imports from certain countries and quotas from other nations suspected of transshipping products.

Some lawmakers came away from the meeting with the impression that Trump would impose some restrictions but understood the need for a balanced approach. "My belief is



Imports unfairly hurting US producers

he'll take some action, but he was truly open to seeking input at the meeting today," Senator Roy Blunt, a Missouri Republican, told reporters at the Capitol. Blunt, who said Missouri industries both make and consume steel and aluminum, told Trump in the meeting: "I think we do need to be careful here that we

don't start a reciprocal battle on tariffs." Several lawmakers cited the need to maintain US energy independence and the electrical grid. They urged steps to protect US producers of oil drilling and transport pipe and noted AK Steel is the last American producer of electrical steel for electric transformers. Senator Rob Portman, a Republican from steel-intensive Ohio, told Trump that without relief from imports, AK Steel is "going to pull out of this business, so we won't have the steel that goes into our transformers and our grid."

China warning

US trade sanctions will hit the world economy, Beijing warned yesterday, after President Donald Trump threatened to impose fresh tariffs on imports from China. Trump said he was "considering all options," including tariffs and quotas, after he accused China of decimating the American steel and aluminium industries.

Washington has already imposed a range of tariffs on Chinese-made goods, sparking fears of a tit-for-tat trade war between the world's top two economies as China also threatens to take

action. Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters that "any sign of unilateralism or protectionism will ... worsen global trade issues and will hurt the recovering momentum of the world economy". He added that with the sheer volume of trade and integration between the US and Chinese economies, some friction was natural.

However, "China always regards the US as an important cooperation partner in trade and economy, and we hope we will continue to open our respective markets wider", Geng said. The Trump administration has two months to decide whether to take action on Chinese aluminium, steel and intellectual property practices. China produces around half of the world's steel but stands accused of "dumping" cheap steel on global markets to gain market share. The two countries have already begun trading sanctions in what China's commerce ministry warned could become a "vicious circle". On Monday Beijing announced it had taken aim at imports from the US of styrene, a key chemical in the manufacture of styrofoam. Last week it launched an anti-dumping investigation into sorghum imports from the US, worth almost \$1 billion last year. — Agencies

Market sends OPEC warning: Rout might not be over

LONDON: As OPEC watches a near 15 percent drop in the oil price in three weeks, important indicators in the physical crude market are flashing worrying signals that the decline might be far from over. The concerns come not from the heavily traded futures market, but from less transparent trading activity in crude oil and other products markets, where key U.S., European and Russian crude prices have fallen of late, suggesting less robust demand.

Benchmark oil futures have plunged in recent days together with global stock markets due to concerns over inflation as well as renewed fears that rapid output increases out of United States

will flood the market with more crude this year. OPEC, including its Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo, argue the decline is just a blip because demand is exceeding supply and will guarantee prices won't plunge again to \$30 per barrel as they did in 2015 and 2016.

Traditionally, when oil futures decline, prices in the physical markets tend to rise because crude is becoming cheaper and hence more attractive to refiners. But in the past weeks, differentials in key European and US markets such as North Sea Forties, Russia's Urals, West Texas Intermediate in Midland, Texas, or the Atlantic diesel market have all fallen to multi-month lows. The reasons tend to be different for most physical grades but overall the trend paints a bearish picture. "Physical markets do not lie. If regional areas of oversupply cannot find pockets of demand, prices will decline," said Michael Tran from RBC Capital Markets. "Atlantic Basin crudes are the barometer for the health of the global oil market since the region is the first to reflect looser fundamentals. Struggling North Sea physical crudes like Brent, Forties, and Ekofisk suggest that barrels are having difficulty finding buyers,"

he added. This follows the run-up in US production to daily output of 10.04 million bpd as of November, highest since 1970, pushing it into second place among crude producers, ahead of Saudi Arabia and trailing only Russia, according to the US Department of Energy.

On Tuesday, the Paris-based International Energy Agency said increased US supply could cause output to exceed demand globally in 2018. Forties crude differentials to dated Brent have fallen to minus 70 cents, down from a premium of 75 cents at the start of the year as the Forties pipeline returned to normal operation.

The Forties differentials are now not far off their lowest since the middle of 2017, when the benchmark Brent crude price was trading at around \$45 per barrel compared to \$62 per barrel now and \$71 per barrel just a few weeks ago. In the United States, key grades traded in Texas and Louisiana have fallen to their lowest in several months.

Urals, diesel struggle

A similar pattern is observed in the Russian Urals market, one of the biggest by volumes in

Europe. At a discount of \$2.15 to dated Brent, Urals' differentials in the Mediterranean are now at their lowest since Sept 2016, when Brent futures were hovering near \$40-\$45 per barrel. "Sour grades are not in a good shape worldwide, so is Urals," said a European crude oil trader, who asked not to be named because he is not allowed to speak publicly. That sharply contrasts with a situation from the start of 2017 when OPEC cuts of predominantly sour grades made them attractive to buyers.

"Supply is more than ample in Europe, Urals faces strong competition from the Middle Eastern grades," said another trader on the Russian crude oil market adding that supplies of Urals to Asia were uneconomic due to a wide Brent-Dubai spread. Adding pressure on Urals, traders expect loadings of the grade to rise in the coming months due to seasonal maintenance at Russian refineries.

A decline in physical crude values generally means better margins for refiners. But it is also not happening this time.

The profit margin refiners make on processing crude into diesel collapsed in Europe and the

United States by over 18 percent over the past week, according to Reuters data.

Europe, where nearly half of the vehicles are fuelled by diesel, is the home to the global benchmark for diesel prices and the biggest storage hub for the road fuel as regional refineries are unable to meet local demand. "Oil demand isn't that bad in general, but heating oil demand has been horrible, particularly in the United States and Germany," Robert Campbell, head of global oil product markets at consultancy Energy Aspects, said. "European refineries are running at very high rates since December so there is plenty of supply in the region while the weather has been warmer than usual, which led to weaker demand."

The refined product markets were expected to significantly tighten in March and April due to a high seasonal refinery maintenance schedule. But in a further indication of wavering confidence, the spread between the April Low Sulphur Gasoil futures to the May contract also crashed in recent weeks from an all-time high premium of \$5 on Jan. 26 to a discount of 50 cents on Tuesday. — Reuters

Business

Global supports Yargici in franchising its lifestyle retail brand into Saudi, Kuwait

After years of robust growth within Turkish market

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, announced yesterday that Yargici Konfeksiyon Ithracat ve Ticaret A S (Yargici), one of the leading women fashion retail brands in Turkey since 1978 which is owned and managed by the alternative asset management arm, Global Capital Management Ltd (“GCM”), has recently signed master franchise agreements with two key retailers in the GCC to expand in the Saudi and Kuwaiti markets.

The master franchise agreement signed with the Saudi retailer, Mosa Ibrahim Al-Kaltham & Sons Group, states opening three stores in the Kingdom in Jeddah and Dammam with the first two stores planned to open in March. The stores will feature women fashion including clothing, shoes, bags and accessories. Al-Kaltham Group, is one of the leading wholesalers and retailers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and GCC. Formed over 50 years ago, Al-Kaltham sells goods primarily for the bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, tableware, cloths and other textiles products.

The leading Kuwaiti real estate developer, Tamdeen

Group, will open the first Yargici store in a new prestigious development during the first week of April, with plans for several more locations. Tamdeen Group, through its subsidiary 360 Style Co. operates brands such as Gucci, Bottega Veneta, and Saint Laurent through joint ventures and franchise agreements, in Kuwait. The newly established subsidiary, Tamdeen General Trading, of which Yargici will be a part of, will be representing and operating a number of affordable luxury and fast fashion and accessory brands.

Ihsan Sancay, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Yargici and Head of Private Equity Asset Management at Global commented, “The two franchise agreements represent key milestones in the expansion strategy of Yargici in the

GCC which represents the largest international market for our products based on our online shopping and duty-free purchase history. We look forward to work closely with our partners in these markets to serve this very loyal clientele at their hometowns”.

He added, “With an increasing share in Yargici’s foreign customer portfolio, the GCC will always be a key driver in our strategic growth plans. As one of the most popular brands among Gulf customers, we plan to further transform this demand into a potential growth opportunity by expanding into other GCC markets”.

Since acquiring 75 percent of Yargici in 2011, Global Capital Management Ltd has worked closely with the company to consolidate its brand position and offerings

in Turkey and expand its business geographically and by product lines. During the past six years, Yargici successfully opened 32 new stores in Turkey and expanded in the European Union with 4 new stores opened in Germany in the cities of Hamburg, Berlin and Oberhausen. Yargici has increased its total number of stores from 20 stores with 2,817 sqm of retail space in 2011 to 56 stores with total retail space of 11,864 sqm at the end of 2017.

In addition to geographic expansion, Yargici successfully implemented new business verticals to its proven operating model. Besides shoes and bag, and accessories verticals, home works business line is brought into life to interconnect fashion and home accessories for enhanced customer experience. Home works collection brings light furniture, specially accessories like handmade ceramics, wicker baskets, home textile, lighting and decorative objects together.

It is worth noting that Global’s value add was not only strengthening Yargici’s capital but also establishing corporate governance, perfecting retail mathematics of Yargici and improving the overall operational excellence.



Global signs franchise agreements with two key retailers in GCC

NBK Economic Report

Kuwait inflation averages to 1.5%

KUWAIT: Inflation slowed noticeably in 2017 to average 1.5 percent during the year, a 13-year-low. Inflation had spiked at the end of 2016 as transport costs rose following fuel price hikes that year and pushing average inflation to 3.5 percent. Since then, weaker food and housing prices have pushed inflation lower. Inflationary momentum remained soft at the end of the year, with inflation slipping to 1.1 percent year on year (y/y) in December.

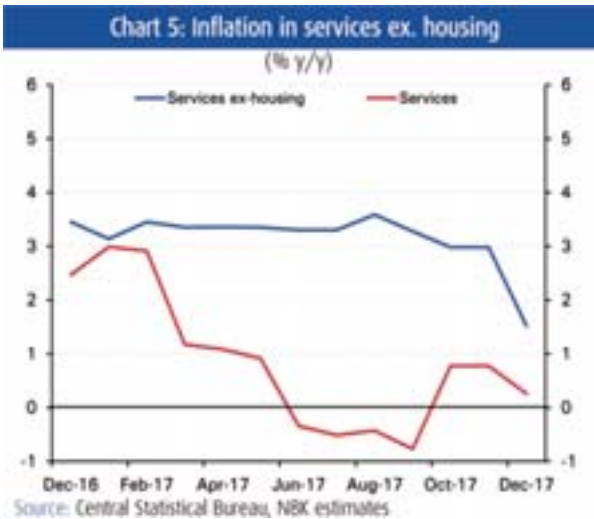
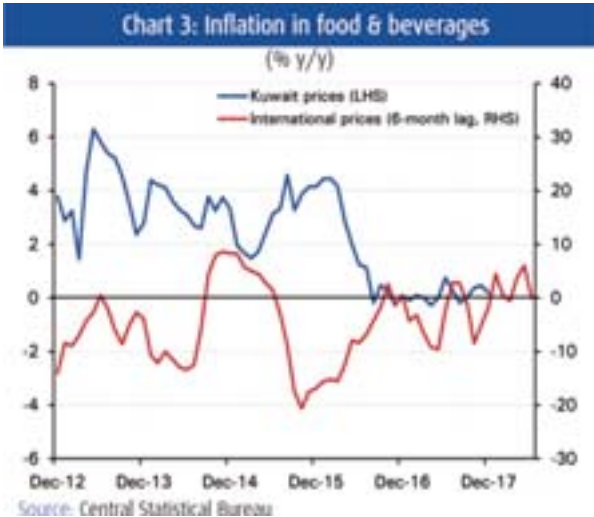
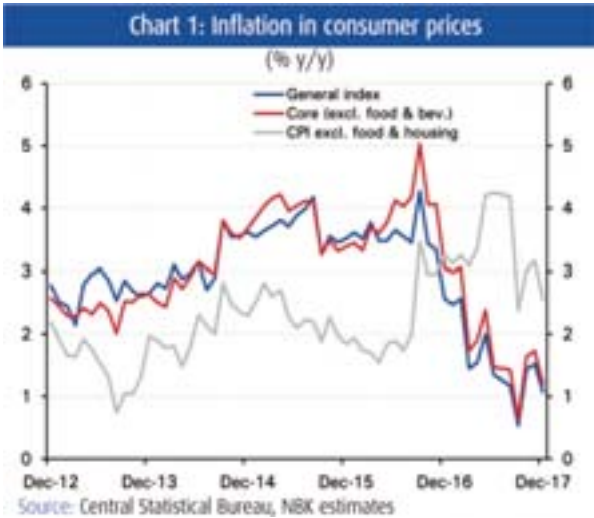
Slower inflation in December was driven down by a decline in the cost of housing services and flat food prices. Housing rents continued to decline while food and beverage prices remained flat, resulting in a 1.1 percent year on year (y/y). Core prices dipped as well, down to 2.8 percent y/y, as consumer goods related to the housing sector, such as furnishings, slowed down.

Housing services prices retreated further in December, though the decline was moderate compared to that seen in the past two years. The real estate market had slowed considerably in 2015 and 2016, and apartment vacancies increased, putting downward pressure on rent. In December 2017, the sub-index declined by 0.6 percent y/y. This was a relatively smaller decline than that seen over the last year, thanks to a recovery in the residential real estate activity, which could translate to eventual improvement in the rental market.

Food price inflation is expected to recover with the pickup in global food prices. Domestic food and beverage prices in December 2017 rose by 0.2 percent y/y, continuing the trend for most of 2017 and part of 2016. The increase in global food prices would entail higher domestic prices this year.

Prices of retail goods related to the housing sector fell, partially contributing to easing in general prices in December. The cost of furniture and household maintenance services dipped below 2 percent y/y in December for the first time since November 2016. Other prices picked up strongly in December, mainly on the back of an 8.6 percent y/y pickup in personal care items.

There was a noticeable easing in growth in the cost of non-housing services in December. Inflation in services excluding housing eased to 1.5 percent y/y, half the 3.0 percent pace seen in November. Most of this slowing inflation came from services related to healthcare, transport, and food.



Potholes appear in Romania’s stellar economic growth path

BUCHAREST: Coming top of the class doesn’t always mean escaping a telling off: Romania may have posted Europe’s strongest growth figures yesterday, but analysts are worried the star pupil is heading for a fall.

The 7 percent surge in growth last year should, on the face of it, be good news for Romania, which had among the lowest average income figures when it joined the European Union in 2007.

But the jump in household consumption that drove the growth was due primarily to tax cuts and wage hikes, rather than investment into infrastructure needed for long-term expansion. “Economic growth is not always synonymous with development”, said Cristian Paun, associate professor of international finance at the Bucharest University of Economic Sciences.

“The Romanian economy has grown by getting itself into debt, without building a single kilometer of new motorways,” he noted. The European Commission has also sounded the alarm bell.

Its latest report says that in 2017 “the main driver of growth was private consumption, supported by indirect tax cuts and wage hikes”. Public investment however, “fell sharply for the second consecutive year”. The nation of 20 million is in dire need of putting long-term money into transport to support greater trade with its EU partners. The country has barely 550 km (340 miles) of motorway and the rail network is deteriorating, with trains running at an average speed of just 44 km/h, as opposed to 78 km/h in 1990.

“Not a penny was spent in 2017 to buy rolling stock while only a short distance of rails were modernized,” said Viorel Istratie, a leader of a railway workers’ union.

“The situation is even more dramatic in 2018, with the budgets cut further,” he said. As for the road network, Social Democrat Prime Minister Viorica Dancila has pledged to build 350 kilometers of new motorways by 2020. But Doina and her husband Matei, both keen hikers frustrated by the huge traffic jams they encounter on the road linking Bucharest with the holiday resorts of the Carpathian Mountains, don’t believe the latest promises.

“It’s been ten years since they promised 50 kilometers between (the central towns of) Comarnic and Brasov and it’s never got off the ground,” said Doina, a 39-year-old doctor.



KUWAIT: A woman looking at flowers is pictured inside a household appliance store in Bucharest, Romania, yesterday. Romania has record economic growth, the highest in the EU, but this boom has been driven by consumption, at the expense of investment, in a country penalized by old infrastructure, say economists. —AFP

Reconstruction and Development puts it, “a risk of overheating, with inflation picking up in 2017 and even more expected in 2018”. Inflation hit 4.3 percent in January, its highest level in four years. Retired engineer Amalia Ionescu said prices have shot up at the market: eggs by 43 percent, butter by 22 percent and fruit by 11 percent.

Meanwhile employers complain that the wage hikes that have stimulated the boom have not been matched by an increase in productivity, with a consequent fall in their competitiveness.

“The government was wrong to think that local production would keep pace with demand,” said Paun.

Instead Romanians have consumed more imports, leading to the trade deficit jumping by a third in 2017 to more than 13 billion euros (\$16 billion). Economist Liam Carson at London-based Capital Economics said most of central and eastern Europe is expected to see a gradual slowing of growth.

“However, the Romanian economy is likely to experience a much sharper slowdown,” he said in a note to clients. Capital Economics expects Romania’s growth rate to fall to around 3.5 percent in 2018.

“That’s weaker than most analysts currently anticipate,” he noted. Romanians haven’t forgotten how the 2007-08 boom ended: a deep recession where many had their wages cut by a quarter, with the country forced to go to the IMF and the EU for help. Paun said Romania’s repeated cycles of boom and bust show that its integration into the EU has failed to bring durable benefits for its citizens.

“If we look at economic growth over the past 25 years we see a lot of volatility: periods of sustained expansion followed by equally spectacular slumps,” he said. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.			
ASIAN COUNTRIES			
Japanese Yen	2.752		
Indian Rupees	4.695		
Pakistani Rupees	2.720		
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.946		
Nepali Rupees	2.957		
Singapore Dollar	228.630		
Hongkong Dollar	38.448		
Bangladesh Taka	3.604		
Philippine Peso	5.842		
Thai Baht	9.524		
GCC COUNTRIES			
Saudi Riyal	80.227		
Qatari Riyal	82.630		
Omani Riyal	781.315		
Bahraini Dinar	798.860		
UAE Dirham	81.932		
ARAB COUNTRIES			
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.700		
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.985		
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.207		
Tunisian Dinar	126.860		
Jordanian Dinar	424.050		
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.004		
Syrian Lira	0.000		
Morocco Dirham	33.406		
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES			
US Dollar Transfer	300.650		
Euro	374.910		
Sterling Pound	421.960		
Canadian dollar	241.290		
Turkish lira	80.500		
Swiss Franc	324.500		
Australian Dollar	239.620		
US Dollar Buying	299.450		
GOLD			
20 Gram	260.52		
10 Gram	133.18		
5 Gram	67.43		
Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd			
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate		
US Dollar	300.150		
Canadian Dollar	239.415		
Sterling Pound	418.605		
Euro	372.960		
Swiss Franc	281.770		
Bahrain Dinar	798.210		
UAE Dirhams	82.120		
Qatari Riyals	83.350		
Saudi Riyals	80.935		
Jordanian Dinar	424.615		
Egyptian Pound	17.046		
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.933		
Indian Rupees	4.683		
Pakistani Rupees	2.715		
Bangladesh Taka	3.641		
Philippines Peso	5.778		
Cyprus pound	17.870		
Japanese Yen	3.800		
Syrian Pound	1.585		
Nepalese Rupees	2.925		
Malaysian Ringgit	77.275		
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	47.855		
Thai Bhat	10.555		
Turkish Lira	79.175		
BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL			
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL	
Europe			
British Pound	0.411662	0.419162	
Czech Korune	0.006656	0.015956	
Danish Krone	0.045873	0.050873	
Euro	0.366122	0.373622	
Georgian Lari	0.133839	0.133839	
Hungarian 0.001131	0.001321		
Norwegian Krone	0.034258	0.039458	
Romanian Leu	0.064177	0.081027	
Russian ruble	0.005214	0.005214	
Slovakia	0.008918	0.018918	
Swedish Krona	0.033481	0.038481	
Swiss Franc	0.315363	0.326363	
Australasia			
Australian Dollar	0.228182	0.240182	
New Zealand Dollar	0.213424	0.222924	
America			
Canadian Dollar	0.23476	0.242476	
US Dollars	0.296400	0.300820	
US Dollars Mint	0.296900	0.300820	
Asia			
Bangladesh Taka	0.003225	0.003809	
Chinese Yuan	0.046087	0.049587	
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036535	0.039285	
Indian Rupee	0.004201	0.004842	
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024	
Japanese Yen	0.002727	0.002907	
Korean Won	0.000268	0.000283	
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073268	0.079268	
Nepalese Rupee	0.002998	0.003168	
Pakistan Rupee	0.002521	0.002811	
Philippine Peso	0.005759	0.006059	
Singapore Dollar	0.222569	0.232569	
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001641	0.002221	
Taiwan	0.010310	0.010490	
Thai Baht	0.009224	0.009774	
Arab			
Bahraini Dinar	0.790515	0.799015	
Egyptian Pound	0.014070	0.019788	
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000084	
Iraqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260	
Jordanian Dinar	0.419217	0.428217	
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000	
Lebanese Pound	0.000154	0.000254	
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021876	0.045876	
Omani Riyal	0.774201	0.779881	
Qatar Riyal	0.078250	0.083190	
Saudi Riyal	0.079047	0.080347	
Syrian Pound	0.001273	0.001493	
Tunisian Dinar	0.122304	0.130304	
Turkish Lira	0.073723	0.084023	
UAE Dirhams	0.080389	0.082089	
Yemeni Riyal	0.000978	0.001058	

Business

Burgan Bank Group announces net income of KD 65.2 million for 2017

Board of Directors recommends 7% in cash dividends and 5% in bonus shares

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank Group announced yesterday its full year 2017 earnings. The set of results for the period ending in 31st December 2017 reflected Burgan Bank's continuous focus on maximizing returns for shareholders, delivering high quality earnings, operating efficiencies, and to further improve asset quality and risk profile. Reported net income for the year 2017 reached KD65.2 million (\$214.9 million). Earnings per share reached 25.4 fils.

On underlying bases, Burgan Bank net income (excluding precautionary provisions & after AT1 cost) reached KD76.2 million (\$251.4 million) and return on tangible equity (ROTE) reached 12.5 percent for full year 2017. The Board of Directors recommends a pay-out of 7 percent in cash dividends and 5 percent in bonus shares.

In 2017, Operating income grew by 2 percent year-on-

year to reach KD239.4 million (\$789.8 million). Operating efficiency continued to improve with operating expense declining by 4 percent to reach KD109.2 million (\$360.2 million). The high quality earnings clubbed with across the board efficiencies, enabled the bank to grow its operating profit by 8 percent year-on-year to reach KD130.2 million (\$429.5 million). Asset quality registered significant improvement with Non-performing loans (NPL) ratio declined to reach 2.7 percent with Coverage ratio of 155 percent and a lower cost of credit that reached 0.9 percent.

During the same period, loans and advances grew by 4.3 percent year on year to reach KD4.4 billion (\$14.6 billion) and customers deposits grew by 11 percent to reach KD4.2 billion (\$13.8 billion).

Majed Essa Al-Ajeel, Chairman of Burgan Bank



Majed Essa Al-Ajeel

Group said: "the executive management team has made significant progress on key initiatives to improve the bank capital utilization, risk profile and operating efficiencies amid challenging operating environment. The bank managed to grow loans year-on-year by 4.3 percent while reducing risk weighted assets (RWAs) - after excluding real estate collateral phase out impact. Asset quality improved significantly as NPL ratio reached 2.7 percent for the group and 1.8 percent for Kuwait operations stand alone. Group Capital Adequacy ratio stands at 16.2 percent as of December 31, 2017. Also, the bank has invested heavily in its control areas to further strengthened its risk management capabilities"

"The strength of our operating capabilities is yielding good performance reflected in the high quality

earnings in 2017 with less dependency on one-offs," continued Al-Ajeel.

"All our subsidiaries are growing, profitable and well capitalized. International Operations continued to grow and now contributing 45 percent of the Group's operating income. Burgan Bank Group's key financial indicators continue to point in the right direction," added Al-Ajeel.

"On behalf of the board, I take this opportunity to thank our customers and shareholders for their confidence in our capabilities and our regulators; the Central Bank of Kuwait, for their support. I would also like to thank our executive management team for their leadership and the excellent execution of the corporate strategy, and to our staff for their continued support and commitment," concluded Al-Ajeel.

The consolidated financials encompass the results of the Group's operations in Kuwait, and its share from its regional subsidiaries, namely Burgan Bank - Turkey, Gulf Bank Algeria, Bank of Baghdad, Tunis International Bank. Burgan Bank Group has one of the largest regional branch networks with more than 170 branches across Kuwait, Turkey, Algeria, Iraq, Tunis, Lebanon and representative office in Dubai-United Arab Emirates.

Boursa Kuwait holds second workshop on corporate actions

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait has conducted the second workshop on 'Corporate Actions', the session was held at the company's premises and has witnessed the participation of listed companies'.

The awareness session included a brief on the settlement cycle T+3 and equity benefits considering Capital Market Authority's Law No. 63 of 2017, which obliges listed companies to fulfill new requirements including the announcement of the board meeting to discuss annual financial results and dividends distribution to shareholders. A Q&A session was allowed for attendance to propose any questions or queries they have or clarifications they entail.

The workshop comes in line with Boursa Kuwait's main objective to maintain the maximum level of transparency and offer financial services and products that meet international standards, and holding on going workshops and sessions to achieve the maximum level of awareness and benefit for stakeholders.



Cuba prepares to end dual currency system

HAVANA: For more than two decades, Cubans have used a unique dual currency system to protect a fragile economy, but with just weeks of his mandate remaining, President Raul Castro has signaled much-delayed change is finally coming. Plans to scrap the divisive system were first mooted in 2003 as part of a series of market-oriented reforms introduced by Castro, who is due to step down in April.

Now, after years of delays, authorities on the Caribbean island are finally expected to bite the bullet and begin consolidating the two currencies, despite fears of a shock to the economy. "This issue has taken us too long and it cannot be delayed any longer," Castro said in a speech in December. The government has resisted any commitment to a timetable, but many observers believe a meeting of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) next month will finally set the process in motion.

The country has had two currencies since 1994 when it introduced the Cuban Convertible Peso, or CUC, alongside the Cuban Peso, the CUP, as part of measures to protect the economy in the wake of the collapse of its biggest sponsor, the Soviet Union.

The CUC, originally used exclusively for foreign trade and in the tourism industry before gradually seeping into the normal economy, is worth about 25 times the CUP and pegged to the dollar. The dual currencies created a two-tier class system in Cuba, which favored those with access to the lucrative tourist sector through hotels, restaurants and foreign trade.

Two currencies, two labels

Prices are labeled in both currencies: a small can of cola costs 1 CUC or 25 CUP. Whether you pay with one or the other "it's the same thing, a bottle of oil costs the same either way," said 68-



HAVANA: A Cuban worker shows 1 CUP (Cuban pesos - top) and 1 CUC (Cuban convertible pesos - bottom) in Havana yesterday. —AFP

year-old retiree Marlen Leyva. With the CUC, the state allows its companies to import at a preferential exchange rate-a dollar for a Cuban peso. The distortion allows state entities to ensure their margins while offering the public affordable prices in a country where the average monthly salary is around \$30.

But the current system masks inefficiencies in the state sector, economists say. "The monetary duality is causing difficulties to evaluate the economy and competitiveness," said economist Omar Everleny Perez, citing a complicated relationship with international markets, already hampered by a US trade embargo in place since 1962. Cuba has said that the original national peso would remain and the CUC would be consigned to history. The head of Cuba's reform commission, Marino Murillo, said in December a group of 200 specialists were working on the issue and the that "the convertible peso would be phased out," without giving further details.

The European Union, which oversaw the conversion of a number of European currencies to the euro, has offered to assist the Havana government with the delicate move. In preparation for the change, 200, 500 and 1000 CUP bills were issued in 2015 to facilitate less cumbersome payments. Even so, a refrigerator which costs anything from 700 CUC in Cuba officially has to be paid in local currency, or 17,500 CUP.

Consolidation will complicate life for state firms, which account for 85 percent of the economy. Economists predict importers will see their costs

rise and transfer them to the final consumer, generating a hike in inflation. It will benefit state exporters, who will see a surge in their earnings.

'Gradual reform'

Theoretically, state-owned enterprises will have to import at a "normal" exchange rate, but many economists believe that Havana will not have enough foreign reserves to sustain it. On the other hand, in the new system the few Cuban businesses exporting abroad would receive more Cuban pesos, and could partly offset the impact on the economy.

"The sectors that benefit could be in a position to pay better wages, but companies that are penalized should close or merge," said leading economist Pavel Vidal. And the fear of higher prices could cause excess demand, difficult to accommodate on an island that imports 80 percent of what it consumes, said Perez, who anticipates imbalances in the short term.

For Perez and other economists, that is a worrying prospect when the "libreta"-the ration book-no longer covers a family's monthly needs.

Perez said it is essential the government supports the reform by increasing openness to foreign investment and the public sector, in order to stimulate foreign exchange inflows and increase purchasing power.

Foreign companies had already positioned themselves to take advantage of the shift, "because they do not really care about the American embargo," he said. —AFP

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah daily draws

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its Al-Danah daily draws on 11 February 2018 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 4 February - 8 February 2018. The Al-Danah daily draws include draws every working day for two prizes of KD 1,000 per winner.

The winners are:

(Sunday 4/02): Rama Atchuta Nanda Babu Velichetti Sri Venkata, Nouf Esam Neseef Al-Neseef (Monday 5/02): Bibi Nader Serdar Ali, Hussain Hamad Asse Ali (Tuesday 6/02): Khalefa Adel Khalaf Al-Enizi, Latifa Hussain Ali Al-Senafi (Wednesday 7/02): Ali Mohammad Ali Salmeen, Mohammed Ali Mahboub Alem (Thursday 8/02): Khaled Jamal Ali Al-Hajajy, Oyoon Mohammed Mahmoud Jaber

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2018 draw lineup includes daily draws (two winners per working day each receive KD 1000. Al-Danah's first quarterly draw for the prize of KD 200,000 will be held on 28 March, the second quarterly draw for the prize of KD 250,000 will be held on 27 June and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 will be held on 26 September. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1 million will be held on 10 January 2019 whereby 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.

Five reasons why the Al-Danah account is the best:

- 1) Kuwait's single biggest yearly cash prize of KD 1 million and the largest international bank prize according to Guinness World Records
- 2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD 500,000
- 3) Two winners of KD 1,000 every working day
- 4) The most chances to win
- 5) Only Bank that transfers your chances to win from the previous year to the current year



In high-priced Manhattan, more and more empty stores

NEW YORK: The New York borough of Manhattan is richer and more populated than ever, but a growing number of businesses are closing their doors under the pressure of exorbitant rents and online commerce. Yesterday—which happens to be Valentine's Day—Steven Telvi will close down his Upper East Side drugstore, The Source, after nearly 37 years.

It fell victim to slower business and high rent, he says. "The whole island is going down the tube," said Brian Klimas, REBNY's vice president in charge of research. Prices have finally started to fall over the past few months in numerous parts of Manhattan. But the proportion of vacant businesses is still rising, to nearly a quarter of spaces in Soho at the end of 2017, according to property firm Cushman & Wakefield. "Landlords have been slow to change the price point of their retail offering," said Kenneth Hochhauser, executive vice president of Winick Realty Group.

For the shopkeepers who remain, sometimes in tenuous financial circumstances, "it's not helping" to see neighbors disappear, says Clara, a salesperson at ready-to-wear clothes retailer Variazoni on the Upper West Side. "Business is not very good. There's no (foot) traffic" because there aren't enough businesses, said Jennifer Sun, who opened the Magical Kids store for children's clothing on the Upper East Side in May 2016. After an "OK" first year, Sun says many surrounding stores have closed "over the last five or six months"—and activity slowed.

Market fundamentals

"This is a classic example of pricing outstripping demand and fundamentals in a market," said Brian Klimas, REBNY's vice president in charge of research. Prices have finally started to fall over the past few months in numerous parts of Manhattan. But the proportion of vacant businesses is still rising, to nearly a quarter of spaces in Soho at the end of 2017, according to property firm Cushman & Wakefield. "Landlords have been slow to change the price point of their retail offering," said Kenneth Hochhauser, executive vice president of Winick Realty Group.

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Online commerce

Steven Soutendijk, executive director of retail sales at Cushman & Wakefield, said, "it's going to take some time" before the market adjusts. He talks of "two or three years before it really swings back," but isn't worried. "In the financial crisis, you had all activity dry up entirely for a period of four or five months," he said, referring to the global economic collapse that struck in 2008 and peaked the following year.

"It does not feel as negative as 2009. Not even close." But at that time, online commerce represented only 3.6 percent of retail sales, against 9.1 percent today, according to the latest government figures. Telvi remembers it perfectly. That was when he changed locations—from one side of Third Avenue to the other.

"That's when the internet kicked in" for commerce, he said. Since then, his activity has dropped five percent annually. The opening of new subway stations on Second Avenue at the end of 2016 reduced the foot traffic past his store a little more, cutting by a quarter his turnover and pushing him towards the exit.

Some New York City Council members say authorities have to act. In a report released in mid-December, they warn that otherwise, the economic downturn could "undermine the neighborhood character and provision of goods and services that are essential to livability."

At the end of November, Mayor Bill de Blasio made an initial move, doubling the threshold for which retailers are exempt from municipal tax. The shopkeepers are fighting with their own weapons.

"I do special things that nobody has," says Sun, pointing to an embroidered pillow. "We always struggle to stay relevant to our customers and what they need," says Matt Sartwell, of Kitchen Arts & Letters, which specializes in books about gastronomy, on the Upper East Side. —AFP

Business

Motul partners with Kuwaiti drift champion Ali Maksheed

Agreement for impressive run in Drift series



KUWAIT: Al-Sayer Engineering, a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding sponsored the Kuwaiti drift Champion Ali Maksheed as part of the partnership agreement for Motul oil their franchise brand of lubricants from France, which was signed recently. The partnership comes as a title sponsor featuring Motul logos on Ali Maksheed's customized and fine-tuned drift racing car Toyota FT 86 along with supply of high performance Motul racing oil for the competitions.

Motul is a world-class French company specialized in the formulation, production and distribution of high-tech engine lubricants. It is the first lubricant manufacturer to use the ester technology for the formulation of its 100 percent synthetic car oils by capitalizing on an innovation first invented for the aeronautical industry.

Ali Maksheed was one of the top performers in Red Bull Car Park Drift Series Final which was held at SIRBB Circuit Kuwait recently. Ali had topped the leaderboard among the three drifters from Kuwait who participated in the local qualifier. The local Kuwaiti competitor impressed the judges to win the

King of Smoke title.

On this occasion Al-Sayer members including Bader Faisal Al-Sayer Deputy Manager Advertising & Promotion, Krishna Kumar Raghuveeran General Manager Al-Sayer Commercial Engineering, Vivek Kohli Senior Manager Oil, Paint and Garage Equipment, Mohammad Nasimi Senior Manager After Sales Marketing and Motul representatives Pankaju Sharma General Manager and Raja Slieman abou Reslan Business Development manager invited Ali Maksheed to Motul Center at Canada Dry Street Shuwaikh to congratulate and hand-over specialist racing products from Motul.

According to Krishna Kumar General Manager Al-Sayer Engineering "Al-Sayer Group and Motul are pleased to partner with ambitious Kuwaiti youth and in this regard we wish Ali the best for future competitions. Being an official supplier to many of the racing teams, which includes the "Toyota Racing Division" and other leading European automobile manufacturers, Motul is collaborating with them to further technological



development."

Motul is present in many international competitions as official team supplier: MotoGP, Road racing, Trial, Enduro, Endurance, Superbike, Supercross, Rallycross, World Rally Championship, FIA GT, Le Mans 24 Hours, Spa 24 Hours, Le Mans Series, rally

raid, Paris-Dakar, F3, etc.

For customers in Kuwait Motul lubricants are available through ALSAYER Engineering's wide network of five centers for tires, oils and paints as well as in authorized dealers, co-ops, garages and Auto-repair shops across the State of Kuwait.

Gulf Bank launches 10% cashback on all dining campaign for its credit card customers



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced the launch of a new campaign during national celebration month of February, which rewards its Credit Card Customers with 10 percent Cashback on all dining spends made in Kuwait. This Dining Cashback campaign is valid for entire month of February and the Dining Cashback offer is valid across all restaurants, fast food and coffee shops in Kuwait including online food delivery portals such as Talabat, Carriage etc.

All Gulf Bank Credit Card Customers are automatically enrolled in this Dining Cashback campaign and to earn 10 percent Dining Cashback, customers must pay at restaurants or online food delivery portal using their Gulf Bank Credit Card and make a minimum Dining spends of KD 100 in Kuwait during the campaign period. Customers will receive Dining Cashback directly in their Credit Card by 31st March, 2018.

Gulf Bank Credit Card Customers can enjoy instant discounts of up to 20 percent at over 300 reputed and renowned restaurants and coffee shops in Kuwait. Over and above the instant discount, Gulf bank Credit Card customers will get an additional 10 percent Cashback as well.

Gulf Bank is committed to providing customers with exceptional value and exciting offers that meet their needs, in addition to presenting them with one of the widest selections of financial products and banking services currently available in Kuwait.

To find out more about Gulf Bank's promotions and offers, please visit the bank's bilingual website at www.e-gulfbank.com or check out its social media channels.

Transfer your salary to NBK and choose your instant gift or interest-free loan

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait announced the winners of the 2017 Salary Transfer campaign live on air on radio FM 88.8. The draw was conducted, under the supervision of senior NBK staff and in the presence of an official from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

"NBK rewards its most loyal customers and clients with exceptional gifts and promotions," explained Amal Al-Duwaisan, Senior Manager Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. "For 2017, we awarded customers who transferred their salaries to NBK with two brand new Mercedes cars. Zainab Hussain Redha won a Mercedes GLC, while Hemoud Falah Al-Azemi won a Mercedes GLC Coupe."

NBK launches 2018 with a new campaign

aimed at inviting new employees and non-NBK customers to transfer their salary and receive an instant free gift with no draw or an interest free loan. New employees who are looking to set up a salary transfer account and non-NBK customers who want to transfer their salary, can visit any NBK branch with the required documents to open an account and receive an instant free gift.

The gift value ranges from KD 100 to KD 10,000. New customers can instead opt for an interest-free loan of up to KD 10,000. This offer is valid only until 31 December 2018.

NBK offers a full range of banking products and services to suit every salary package and different lifestyles including mobile and digital bank-

ing, innovative payment solutions like Tap & Pay wearables and home delivery banking.

NBK salary transfer customers are also eligible for NBK credit cards - with 10 different cards to choose from and a variety of benefits depending on the card including air and travel miles, online shopping fraud protection, travel insurance, concierge service, NBK Rewards loyalty program points, worldwide airport lounge access, discounts and promotions for Visa and Mastercard and more.

Customers can learn more about NBK credit cards by visiting the award-winning newly redesigned NBK.com website.



Amal Al-Duwaisan

Joyalukkas offers repatriation tickets to Kuwait amnesty recipients



KUWAIT: Joyalukkas, the world's favorite jeweler, in cooperation with Jazeera Airways and the Kuwait Kerala Muslim Association (KKMA) supports the Kuwait government's efforts to repatriate an estimated 130,000 illegal residents. The full amnesty period, announced early this year runs from January 29 till February 22, and those who wish to leave the country may do so and benefit from a waiver of permission and penalties. For those who would like to take advantage of this generous offer by the Kuwait Interior Ministry, Joyalukkas is giving away free one-way travel tickets back to their country of origin.

"We applaud and fully support this initiative by the government of Kuwait," says Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD Joyalukkas Group, "and would like to extend our assistance to those who seek to take this opportunity to resolve their legal status in the country. We would also like to thank Jazeera Airways and the KKMA for partnering with us in this great cause."

A limited number of free amnesty repatriation ticket vouchers will be available till February 22, 2018. Amnesty seekers are advised to proceed to their nearest Joyalukkas showroom for assistance.

VIVA's 'Scratch & Win' offer continues this Friday at Avenues branches

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, will receive customers on Friday (tomorrow) at its Avenues Mall branch 'exclusively' for the second week in a row during February, with a 'Scratch & Win' offer amid amazing February's offers launched recently.

VIVA's branches in the Avenues witnessed enormous turnout from customers who enjoyed 'Scratch & Win' offer that grants them vouchers on a 'first come first serve' basis once they subscribe to any of VIVA's voice or data postpaid plans. The vouchers allow them to instantly win one of plenty valuable instant prizes including ATVs, LED screens and smart devices.

Every Friday during February, VIVA's customers will benefit from special offers at its Avenues Mall's branches.

Technology

Brexit an unlikely boon for Lithuania's 'fintech' drive

Blockchain technology allows peer-to-peer payment systems

VILNIUS: Britain's divorce with the European Union is paying off for Lithuania as it strives to become a northern European hub for financial technology, or "fintech" firms, and blockchain-based start-ups. Jostling with Denmark and Sweden as well as fellow Baltic eurozone states Estonia and Latvia for the favor of digital economy investors, Lithuania has issued 51 fintech licenses since 2016, including 32 last year, and another 19 applications are currently under review, according to the country's central bank.

Fintech refers to IT companies developing new software, applications or business models for the financial sector, including blockchain-based digital and crypto currencies.

Blockchain technology allows peer-to-peer payment systems and debuted in 2009 as a public, encrypted ledger for the leading cryptocurrency bitcoin. Companies knocking on Lithuania's door include big names like UK fintech banking startup Revolut, which applied for a European banking licence through the Lithuanian central bank three months ago.

"Nobody knows how Brexit will end but a banking license in continental Europe allows to mitigate risks," Andrius Biceika, Revolut's head for Baltic states, told AFP. The UK-based Contis Group alternative payment firm, deVere financial consultants and the Singapore-headquartered InstaRem specializing in cross-border money transfers are also among the companies having won, or bidding for, Lithuanian fintech licenses. The Baltic state's central bank said it was in talks with more than 100 other companies, including 24 from the UK.

'Precautionary measures'

Lithuania's central bank first rolled out the red carpet for fintech firms in 2016 hoping to improve competition in its banking sector, dominated by Nordic bank-

ing groups like Swedbank or SEB. That year, Britain's vote to leave the EU presented Vilnius with a fresh opportunity to woo foreign firms eager to find ways to stay in the EU market after Brexit. "We saw an opportunity, and we took it," said Bank of Lithuania board member Marius Jurgilas.

He said the central bank offers speedy processing and an amenable regulatory environment, now promising e-money and payment licenses within three months, much faster than in most other EU states. While admitting that London is likely to retain its status as the main European hub for fintech firms, Jurgilas

said many companies are eager to take "precautionary measures" with Brexit on the horizon.

Attracting young talent to well-paid jobs is crucial for the nation of 2.8 million, which is struggling to stem the brain drain to richer western European countries. Mantas Katinas, who heads Lithuania's foreign investment promotion agency,

said authorities must now focus on education and more direct flights to London to win British fintech investors eyeing other EU cities as Brexit looms.

Katinas also points to the need for Lithuania to develop e-residency, a kind of global digital identity program first launched by Estonia in 2014, as another tool for investors. "Nobody's asleep. Everyone's watching what Lithuania is doing and copies it. Swedes, Danes see that we are doing quite well and also want to hop on this train," he said.

Blockchain hub

Lithuania's central bank has also joined the drive to attract fintech firms using blockchain technology by announcing plans to launch a platform on which companies may test new code and services. According to Jurgilas the project "may surpass the financial sector

in a blockbuster lawsuit over allegedly stolen trade secrets from the former Google self-driving car project. The surprise agreement ended an image-bruising trial between the two Silicon Valley rivals competing in a race to develop autonomous cars, after four days of testimony before a federal judge in San Francisco. A source familiar with the confidential deal said Uber agreed to a financial settlement giving the Alphabet unit 0.34 percent of Uber shares—which would be some \$244 million based on Uber's valuation of \$72 billion.

Uber also agreed not to use any of Waymo's technology for autonomous driving as part of the settlement, which was approved by Judge William Alsup as he dismissed the case. SoftBank recently took a 15 percent stake in Uber by acquiring shares from early investors at a discounted price, according to a source familiar with the terms of the deal. The investment was part of an effort by Uber to move past a series of scandals and missteps and reform its board structure as it gears up for a 2019 public share offering. Khosrowshahi has vowed to fix the company's work culture and business practices. Even as Uber has seen unprecedented growth by expanding to dozens of countries, it has been hurt by missteps including allegations of executive misconduct, a toxic work atmosphere and potentially unethical competitive practices. — AFP



PRAGUE: Prague's taxi drivers are seen in front of their cabs during a protest against unfair competition of the rival transport platform Uber. — AFP

Israeli firm undercuts facial recognition to bolster privacy

TEL AVIV: Big brother is watching. But in the future he may no longer be so all-knowing. Riding the wave of a global push to comply with new privacy standards, a small Israeli company believes it can help you, and your face, stay anonymous in a hyper-connected world. The startup, called D-ID, says it has developed a "firewall" to block facial recognition, the ubiquitous technology that can now unlock smartphones, tag friends on Facebook, or help police pick out an individual hiding in a crowd.

The problem is that with facial recognition on the rise, hackers have a new target: huge reservoirs of profile pic-

tures linked to personal information. Companies around the world are spending big money to protect such databases before a stricter European law takes effect in May. Called the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), it gives people more control over their online information and applies to all groups that do business in Europe.

The idea for D-ID took shape a decade ago, when two of its founders took a trip to South America after serving in Israel's special forces. Friends would post pictures online, but because of their previous jobs, they were forbidden from sharing pictures publicly in case they were recognized. They began looking for a way for people to share pictures while protecting their identities and a year ago formed the company. The challenge was to foil facial recognition algorithms, which analyse a person's face and match it to a stored digital image in the same way that crime scene fingerprints are run against a database.

"More and more organizations are using our faces as identifiers, if it's to access our phones, to withdraw money



VILNIUS: People attend a presentation at the blockchain centre, which aims at boosting start-ups, on February 7, 2018 in Lithuania's capital. — AFP

and develop into a technological platform for the whole public sector".

In a separate initiative, European Parliament member and entrepreneur Antanas Guoga launched a blockchain centre in Lithuania's capital Vilnius last month to boost start-ups and establish connections with Asia and Australia. Lon Wong, president of the Singapore-based NEM.io Foundation and a board member at the Vilnius centre, said the Lithuanian hub could facilitate international talks on industry regulation.

"We are in a very nascent industry where everyone is learning as we progress," he said in an interview. "Industry experts and regulators around the world should sit down together and understand where the

problems are and share this knowledge and therefore improve the industry accordingly," he added. Regulators will also have to mitigate identity theft risks, and Lithuania's blockchain industry has already become a target.

Two weeks ago, a group of local blockchain experts said they became victims of identity theft after being listed as team members of blockchain startup Prodeum which disappeared with investors' money. The EU is working on stricter rules to combat money laundering and terrorism financing on exchange platforms for virtual currencies. Pierre Marro, an EU Commission official, said last month the EU executive will seek talks with European Central Bank and European Parliament this year to get more "legal certainty" in the area. — AFP

Toshiba tips return to black after chip sales

TOKYO: Troubled Japanese conglomerate Toshiba said on Wednesday it would swing into the black for the full fiscal year as it completes the multi-billion-dollar sale of its chip business to restore its balance sheet. The Tokyo-based firm said it now expects a net profit of 520 billion yen (\$4.9 billion) for the year to March, reversing a net loss of 966 billion yen a year earlier.

Toshiba, which had earlier expected a full-year loss, upgraded its bottom line estimate as it factored in a drop in tax expenses associated with the sale of the prized chip business to a consortium led by Bain Capital. The upward revision was also helped by the sale of US nuclear energy firm Westinghouse, which had long pressured Toshiba's earnings because of its massive losses. The firm made its forecast as it announced that in the nine months to December it saw a net profit of 27 billion yen, reversing a 532.5 billion yen loss for the same period last year.

Toshiba has been on the ropes after the disastrous acquisition of Westinghouse, which racked up billions of dollars in losses before being placed under bankruptcy protection. Those losses came to light as the group was still reeling from revelations that top executives had pressured underlings to cover up weak results for years after the 2008 global financial meltdown. In order to survive and avoid delisting, the cash-strapped group has decided to sell the chip business—the crown jewel in a vast range of businesses ranging from home appliances to nuclear reactors. — AFP



TOKYO: Newly named chairman of Toshiba Corp., Nobuaki Kurumatani, listens to questions during a press briefing at the company's headquarters. — AFP

The data protection officer: The hottest tech ticket in town

SAN FRANCISCO: They may not have the cachet of entrepreneurs, or geek chic of developers, but data protection officers are suddenly the hottest properties in technology. When Jen Brown got her first certification for information privacy in 2006, few companies were looking for people qualified to manage the legal and ethical issues related to handling customer data.

But now it's 2018, companies across the globe are scrambling to comply with a European law that represents the biggest shake-up of personal data privacy rules since the birth of the internet - and Brown's inbox is being besieged by recruiters. "I got into security before anyone cared about it, and I had a hard time finding a job," said the 46-year-old, who is the data protection officer (DPO) of analytics start-up Sumo Logic in Redwood City near San Francisco. "Suddenly, people are sitting up and taking notice."

Personal data

Brown is among a hitherto rare breed of workers who are becoming sought-after commodities in the global tech industry ahead of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which goes into effect in May. The law is intended to give European citizens more control over their online information and applies to all firms that do business with Europeans. It requires that all companies whose core activities include substantial monitoring or processing of personal data hire a DPO. And finding DPOs is not easy.

More than 28,000 will be needed in Europe and US and as many as 75,000 around the globe as a result of GDPR, the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP) estimates. The organization said it did not previously track DPO figures because, prior to GDPR, Germany and the Philippines were the only countries it was aware of with mandatory DPO laws. DPO job listings in Britain on the Indeed job search site have increased by more than 700 percent over the past 18 months, from 12.7 listings per every 1 million in April 2016 to 102.7 listings per 1 million in December. — Reuters

Digital alchemy

D-ID's solution is a system of digital alchemy that subtly alters stored pictures, enough to escape detection by facial recognition algorithms. Side by side the changes are noticeable, but on its own the altered picture appears normal. D-ID is planning a pilot with Cloudinary, a firm that manages 15 billion cloud-based images and videos for web and mobile developers. It has also signed preliminary agreements with a number of leading government organisations - Perry would not disclose which ones, nor how much the product will sell for. The product launch is planned for the end of May, around the time the new European law takes

effect. Yuval Elovici, who heads the cyber security research center at Israel's Ben Gurion University, said there is now an "arms race" between groups developing facial recognition algorithms and those looking to confound them. He said D-ID's technology was an achievement and important for privacy, but that it did have its limitations. "You cannot oblige everybody to use this technology and to publish pictures only after a transformation," he said.

Tech startups are often located in high-rises of Tel Aviv's financial district. D-ID's second-floor office is secluded in an inconspicuous residential block, opposite a playground. It has raised \$4 million, including from Israel's Pitango Venture Capital and Silicon Valley's Y Combinator, to support a team of 14 computer engineers. There are drawbacks. For law enforcement agencies using the system it will be harder to locate a suspect. So D-ID is working on a solution that will allow such agencies to authenticate identities without storing biometric information, Perry said. How? He declined to elaborate. — Reuters

Coal-loving Poland struggles with killer industrial smog

33 of Europe’s 50 most polluted cities are in Poland

WARSAW: Smog kills tens of thousands of Poles each year, yet environmental activists say the right-wing government of the coal-loving nation has been dragging its feet on combating air pollution. On some winter days, a grey haze obscures the lights of the Polish capital's skyscrapers and the air smells like burning plastic. "It's starting again. Warsaw is second on Air Visual, just after Kathmandu, and ahead of Calcutta and New Delhi," says Maria, a Polish mother of three young children, as she checks an air quality monitor on her smartphone while sipping her morning coffee.

A 2016 World Health Organization report revealed that an eye-popping 33 of Europe's 50 most polluted cities were in Poland. The European Environmental Agency meanwhile blames air pollution for an estimated 50,000 premature deaths per year in the country of 38 million. Pollution is especially severe in the south, cradle of Poland's coal industry-whose hub, the city of Katowice, is set to host the COP24 conference on global warming in December.

Feeding the smog dragon

Many Poles have lost faith in the ability of institutions to address the scourge, instead taking matters into their own hands. "In our town of Pszczyna, Poland's second most polluted city, we have to do something," said Jan Franek, a 16-year-old member of a student group against smog. "Many of our older residents don't believe in smog. According to them, you can't see it so it doesn't exist," he added while on a visit to Warsaw to back an anti-pollution petition.

The student activists, whose group name plays on the similarity of the words smog and smok (dragon in Polish) and translates as "Don't feed the smog", were on hand when the petition was delivered to the energy ministry. Signed by 36,000 people, the petition launched by Greenpeace Poland and local politicians calls on the government to impose strict standards for coal quality.

Millions of Poles heat their homes with often low-quality coal, which is the main source of air pollution ahead of cars and industry. The government pledged to introduce coal standards in March 2017 but has yet to do so. The only measure taken by the state has been to ban the sale of old, low-quality boilers. But according to Marek Jozefiak, coordinator of Greenpeace Poland's climate and energy campaigns, "Modern boilers aren't enough if we continue to burn low-quality, polluting coal." The same applies for garbage, which gives off hazardous fumes when burned in coal stoves, still a common practice.

Powerful coal lobby

According to pollution watchdog Polish Smog Alert, part of the problem is that the official pollution norm hides the severity of the issue. "If we applied the pollution threshold adopted in France here in Poland, many cities would be in a state of alert for dozens of days, some even for two months out of the year," says PAS activist Piotr Siergiej. While PM10 particle pollution is considered dangerous in Poland from 300 micrograms per cubic metre, the threshold is 80 micrograms in France.

The government has promised no changes in the short term, and green activists accuse it of being influenced by the powerful coal lobby. Technology Minister Jadviga Emilewicz has voiced concern over the high death toll from pollution-related illnesses, promising that "an improvement" will be felt within five years. She cites measures including higher coal quality standards, subsidies to help the poor insulate their homes, replace old polluting stoves or afford clean heating. For Maria, the Warsaw mother-of-three, five years is too long to wait.

"By that point my children will have breathed in all these microparticles that will remain in their lungs or even their blood," she said. — AFP



A handout photo provided by the Royal Society on February 12, 2018 shows Megaponera ants investigating the injuries of another ant. — AFP

Ants nurse wounded warriors back to health

PARIS: African Matabele ants dress the wounds of comrades injured during hunting raids and nurse them back to health, according to an "astonishing" discovery reported Wednesday. After collecting their wounded from the battlefield and carrying them back home, nestmates become medics, massaging around patients for "intense licking" of open wounds, according to a study in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B.

This behavior reduces the fatality rate from about 80 percent of injured soldiers to a mere 10 percent, researchers observed. The study claimed to be the first to show such nursing behavior in any non-human animal. "This

is not conducted through self-medication, as is known in many animals, but rather through treatment by nestmates which, through intense licking of the wound, are likely able to prevent an infection," said study co-author Erik Frank.

He contributed to the research when he was at the Julius Maximilian University of Wuerzburg in Germany, and continues his work at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. Frank had also taken part in a previous study, published last year, describing the ants' battleground rescue behavior. The new research focused on what happens to the injured back in the nest. Matabeles, one of the world's largest ant species, are fierce warriors and attack even humans with their ferocious bite. Named after Southern Africa's feared Matabele warrior tribe, the insects hunt termites bigger than themselves, attacking their feeding sites in column formations of 200-600 individuals. This hunting method causes many ants to get hurt, often having their legs bitten off by termite soldiers.—AFP

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What's On

GBK expands kid's workshops program with Al Sadu Society



Building on the success achieved last year, Gulf Bank is pleased to be expanding its partnership with Al Sadu Society to run a variety of textile and art workshops for children between 6 and 12 years of age, with a key objective of helping kids to learn and develop their creative skills and expose them to our country's traditions of Sadu. The season kicked off with its first workshop, held on Saturday, 10 February at Sadu House, and with 12 children participating in the small group workshops.

This year's program will include 12 workshops,

conducted twice a month, led by two instructors and with space for 12 participants, plus a three-month long School of Textiles, where a total of 12 children will be able to further explore the art of textiles and be introduced to more complex weaving, stitching and printing techniques. At the end of the school the students will have their works showcased in an exhibition.

Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager for Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, said: "With an objective of shedding the light on the importance

of handwork and an aim to preserve the heritage of our beloved country, Gulf Bank is very happy to be expanding its partnerships with Al Sadu Society. Together we will be conducting a series of workshops entitled 'Fun with Textiles', an initiative which witnessed huge success last year, and a longer more in-depth program called 'School of Textiles'. We encourage parents to sign their children up early, the workshops fill up fast."

In 2017, the program witnessed more 140 children participating in 12 workshops, held between March

and December. Workshops were led by experienced instructors who volunteered to teach children how to make their dreamcatchers, wallets, printed bags, pom-poms, broches, head bands, coasters and yarn kites. During these workshops, children will undertake different projects, learned new skills and used new tools, children will be given a guided choice of colors, designs and techniques, through which they will be able to develop their creative skills while having fun. Instructors will be present in each session to encourage children and guide them in their creations.

KIB sponsors student projects from College of Engineering and Petroleum

In a continuation of its efforts to support student and youth-based activities, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored a number of graduation projects for students at the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University (KU). This sponsorship stems from the Bank's strong belief in the important role the youth segment plays in the nation's future development.

Among the projects sponsored by KIB was one spearheaded by students Nora Al-Shamri, Duaa Al-Rifai, and Sara Al-Mutairi. The project focused on developing a new method of determining a balance ratio based on reservoir fluid behavior and oil samples properties. By analyzing data of oil phase behavior from different oil fields around the world, the project aims at establishing a new method of calculating a bal-



ance ratio with minimal margin of error compared to other variables and its constant value. Additionally, a program was developed to quickly and easily calculate the constant value simply by entering required values.

The second project entitled 'Increase in ACICO Profits' was developed by students Mariam Jafaar, Ghadeer Alenezi, Fatma Rashed, Reem Al-Mutairi, and Asma Alenezi. The project aims at increasing the profits of all companies and businesses. As profit is equal to a company's revenue minus its total cost, the project will focus on either increasing the revenue or reducing the cost, which will in turn increase profit.

On this occasion, Corporate Communications Manager at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "As part of

our leading social responsibility program, we remain committed to supporting and sponsoring students' graduation projects and a number of youth-related initiatives. We are heavily invested in supporting their ideas, as we believe students to be a key element that will ensure a bigger and bright future for our country. For this reason, KIB continues to place great importance on this segment in the community." Najia added that KIB always seeks to support projects that contribute to the development of the local community. The Bank is also adamant on sponsoring the forward-looking vision and innovative ideas of ambitious youth, believing them to be key players in the nation's development across various areas.



Cofounder of Cofe App Ali Alebrahim receiving partnership agreement from Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaiah.

the success stories of the Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, while paves the way for establishing relationships with suppliers and industry pioneers and specialists.

KFH in cooperation with Cofe App are hosting Mr. Joost Leopold (co-owner of the Coffee School in The Netherlands) with a Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Diploma. He is the authorized trainer of the SCA modules Barista Skills & Brewing Skills. This will give Kuwaiti youth who are interested in

developing their coffee skills the chance to sign up for workshops and earn an official certification from SCA for a minimum fee. KFH will also be organizing special activities in the festival such as carnival games & traditional band in occasion of the national days. The festival is held in AlHamra Tower; a prime location easily accessible and attracts staff working around the business area as well as families and students who visit in the afternoon/evening.

Free coffee to all KFH customers at Cofe District Festival

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced its strategic partnership with Cofe District Festival organized by Cofe App held at AlHamra tower. KFH will be announcing a surprise for all customers during the festival. All KFH customers will be entitled to 1 free coffee drink of their choice and they get to choose from over 13 coffee shops participating in the festival from the period 17-19 February.

This comes as part of the bank endeavors to reward its customers while supporting the Kuwaiti youth activities and encouraging the entrepreneurship that plays a key role in boosting the national economy and revitalizing the private sector market, especially that most of the coffee shops are owned by Kuwaiti youth entrepreneurs. This festival, that brings together all the coffee specialists and lovers under one umbrella, contributes in opening new horizons for visitors to get acquainted to

YMCA Kuwait conducts musical evening - Extravaganza 2018

YMCA Kuwait conducted Musical Evening - Extravaganza 2018 at Indian Community Senior School Auditorium, Salmiya. The program was inaugurated by Rev Fr Giju George (Asst Vicar - Indian Orthodox Maha Edavaka) with his inspiring message followed by lighting the traditional Lamp. Mathew Eapen (YMCA President) presided over the inaugural function.

For the Musical evening, YMCA had invited two most popular singers from Kerala, Jobi John who was the winner (Finalist) of Idea Star Singer (Asianet reality show) Season 4 and Ms. Merin Gregory who was the winner (Finalist) of Idea Star Singer (Asianet reality show) Season 6. The

main event started with few devotional songs by Jobi John followed by Merin Gregory and also by Anna Elizabeth Raju, who is the rising star of Kuwait. After which the performers did a number of Films songs which was treat for all those who attended the program. Mathew Varkey (YMCA Kuwait - Vice President) also rendered a song during the event. At the end, the singers did some fast numbers. The program was attended by a large gathering and it was a memorable day and a great opportunity for all the members and well-wishers to mingle with each other and renew their friendship. Also, many priests from different churches witnessed the occasion.



AUK Tutoring Center receives CRLA certification

The Tutoring Center at the American University of Kuwait's Learning Support Services (LSS) unit, has been awarded the International Tutor Training Program Certification (ITTPC) - Level 1 by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA).

ITTPC certifies tutor training programs in postsecondary educational institutions. Once granted CRLA certification, the tutor training programs each have the authority to recognize their tutors as having met the approved ITTPC tutor training program requirements. The purpose of the ITTPC program is twofold-first, it provides recognition and positive reinforcement for tutors' successful work from an international organization; second, CRLA's tutor training program certification

process sets an internationally accepted standard of skills and training for tutors.

AUK Tutoring Center sought ITTPC certification to further advance peer tutors' professional skills, and in turn increase the quality of services offered to students. Learning Support Services Director, Hanouf Aljuhail explains, "The Tutoring Center was in a transitional phase a few years ago and its team was searching for ways to improve and diversify the services it offered to AUK students and faculty. Obtaining the CRLA certification was the first step in the right direction. As a certified center, we'll have access to various resources, trainings, and guidelines to take the Tutoring Center and its team of Peer Tutors to the next level."



TV



00:20 Code Of Honor
02:10 Bad Company
04:10 Project Almanac
06:00 Captain America: Civil War
08:25 Bad Company
10:20 Star Wars: Episode 1 - The Phantom Menace
12:35 Jason Bourne
14:40 Captain America: Civil War
17:05 S.W.A.T.: Under Siege
18:40 Star Wars: Episode II - Attack Of The Clones
21:05 Thor
23:05 Tiger House



00:50 Lone Star Law
01:45 Treehouse Masters
02:40 Cats 101
03:35 Going Ape
04:00 Going Ape
04:25 Tanked
05:15 Canopy Kings
06:02 Wild Iberia
06:49 Lone Star Law
07:36 Meet The Sloths
08:00 Meet The Sloths
08:25 Going Ape
08:50 Going Ape
09:15 Treehouse Masters
10:10 Cats 101
11:05 Wild Iberia
12:00 Going Ape
12:28 Going Ape
12:55 Tanked
13:50 Canopy Kings
14:45 Cats 101
15:40 Wild Iberia
16:35 Lone Star Law
17:30 Treehouse Masters
18:25 Whale Wars
19:20 Whale Wars
20:15 Cats 101
21:10 Going Ape
21:38 Going Ape
22:05 Whale Wars
23:00 Whale Wars
23:55 Wild Iberia



00:15 The Durrells
01:05 The Corner
01:55 Doctors
02:25 Doctors
02:55 Eastenders
03:30 Stella
04:20 The Durrells
05:10 The Corner
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Eastenders
07:00 The Musketeers
08:00 Stella
08:50 Father Brown
09:40 Doctors
10:10 Eastenders
10:40 The Corner
11:35 The Musketeers
12:30 Stella
13:20 Father Brown
14:15 Doctors
14:45 Eastenders
15:15 The Corner
16:10 The Musketeers
17:10 Stella
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:45 The Corner
20:05 Benidorm
21:00 Holly City
21:55 The Corner
22:40 Doctors
23:10 Eastenders
23:45 Benidorm



00:00 My Crazy Ex
01:00 Crazy Love
02:00 Crazy Love
03:00 My Crazy Ex
04:00 My Crazy Ex
05:00 Crazy Love
06:00 Crazy Love
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:30 It Takes A Killer
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 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
21:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
22:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
23:00 Fred Dineage: Murder Casebook



00:05 Natasha Leggero: Live From Bimbo
00:55 Sean Lock - Purple Van Man
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 1 Live With Models
05:30 Impractical Jokers
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:50 The Dude Perfect Show
07:13 The Dude Perfect Show
07:35 The Jim Gaffigan Show
08:00 Impractical Jokers
08:25 Disaster Date
08:50 Workaholics
09:15 Kroll Show
09:40 Key And Peele
10:05 1 Live With Models
10:30 The Jim Gaffigan Show
10:55 Impractical Jokers
11:20 Disaster Date
11:45 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Impractical Jokers
12:40 Lip Sync Battle UK
13:05 Lip Sync Battle UK
13:30 1 Live With Models
13:55 Friends
14:18 Friends
14:40 Workaholics
15:05 Key And Peele
15:30 Kroll Show
15:55 Comedy Central Presents
16:30 Comedy Central Presents
16:30 Ridiculousness Arabia
17:00 Friends

17:23 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:40 The Dude Perfect Show
19:03 The Dude Perfect Show
19:25 Impractical Jokers
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends
20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
22:00 Nightcap
22:25 Workaholics
22:50 Another Period
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
01:20 The Know It All Guide To...
01:45 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
02:10 Invent It Rich
03:00 How We Invented The World
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 Tanked
05:30 How It's Made
05:55 How It's Made
06:20 Destroyed In Seconds
06:40 Destroyed In Seconds
07:00 Ultimate Survival
07:50 How It's Made
08:15 How It's Made
08:40 Destroyed In Seconds
09:05 Destroyed In Seconds
09:30 Tanked
10:20 How We Invented The World
11:10 Strip The Cosmos
12:00 Freaks Of Nature
12:25 Freaks Of Nature
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Destroyed In Seconds
14:05 Destroyed In Seconds
14:30 Tanked
15:20 Ultimate Survival
16:10 How We Invented The World
17:00 Strip The Cosmos
17:50 Freaks Of Nature
18:15 Freaks Of Nature
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
19:05 Destroyed In Seconds
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Tanked
21:10 Strip The Cosmos
22:00 Freaks Of Nature
22:25 Freaks Of Nature
22:50 How We Invented The World
23:40 Ultimate Survival



00:50 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
01:45 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion
02:40 Kiss Of Death
03:35 Love Kills
04:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
05:25 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
05:50 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It
07:10 Heartbreakers
08:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
08:25 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
09:15 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
09:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
10:10 Evil-In-Law
11:05 Florida's Craziest Crimes
12:00 The Perfect Murder
12:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 Heartbreakers
15:40 Suspicion
16:35 Married With Secrets
17:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
18:25 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
18:50 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
20:15 Heartbreakers
21:10 Suspicion
22:05 Reasonable Doubt
23:00 The Perfect Suspect
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 Jessie
15:40 Bunk'd
16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
16:10 Elena Of Avalor
16:35 Bizaardvark
17:00 Tangled: The Series
17:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
17:50 Stuck In The Middle
18:15 K.C. Undercover
18:40 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
19:05 Bunk'd
19:30 Austin & Ally
19:55 Descendants Wicked World
20:00 Liv And Maddie

20:25 Jessie
20:50 Tangled: The Series
21:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:20 K.C. Undercover
21:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
22:10 Bizaardvark
22:35 Girl Meets World
23:00 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
23:45 LoloRock



00:00 PJ Masks
00:30 PJ Masks
01:00 PJ Masks
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopdidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopdidoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopdidoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopdidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 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 The Lion Guard
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
16:40 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
17:05 Mission Force One: Connect And Protect Shorts
17:10 PJ Masks
17:35 Miles From Tomorrow
18:00 The Lion Guard
18:30 Puppy Dog Pals
19:00 Sofia The First
19:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
20:00 The Lion Guard
20:30 P-King Duckling
21:00 Vampirina
21:30 PJ Masks
21:50 PJ Masks
22:30 Sofia The First
23:00 P-King Duckling
23:30 Puppy Dog Pals



00:15 Yukon Men
01:05 Gold Rush
01:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
02:35 Junkyard Empire
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Alaska: Battle On The Bay
04:50 Dirty Jobs
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Backroad Bounty
06:45 Alaska: Battle On The Bay
07:35 Alaska: Battle On The Bay
08:20 Backroad Bounty
09:10 Dirty Jobs
09:55 Gold Rush
10:45 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
11:30 Junkyard Empire
12:20 Backroad Bounty
13:05 Backroad Bounty
13:55 Dirty Jobs
14:40 Yukon Men
15:30 Gold Rush
16:15 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
17:05 Junkyard Empire
17:50 Alaska: Battle On The Bay
18:40 Dirty Jobs
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: Battle On The Bay



06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
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
08:35 Right Now Kapow
09:25 Mighty Med
10:20 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
11:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
12:00 Kid vs. Kat
12:25 Two More Eggs
12:50 Kid vs. Kat
13:15 Kirby Buckets Warped
13:45 Supa Strikas
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Supa Strikas
14:40 Right Now Kapow
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law
15:55 Two More Eggs
16:00 The Suite Life Of Zack & Cody
16:25 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 Elite Force
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am



00:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:00 Botched
01:50 E! News
02:50 Botched

03:40 Botched
04:35 Botched
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Botched
06:55 E! News Middle East
07:10 Botched
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
10:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
11:05 Botched
12:00 E! News Middle East
12:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
13:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
14:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
15:00 E! News Middle East
15:15 E! 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 E! News
20:00 My Fabulous Me
20:30 My Fabulous Me
21:00 My Fabulous Me
21:30 Celebrity Style Story
22:00 WAGS Atlanta
23:00 E! News Middle East
23:15 WAGS LA



00:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Couples Come Dine With Me
03:25 Prince Harry And Meghan: Truly, Madly, Deeply
04:20 Broadchurch
05:15 Don't Tell The Bride
06:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
07:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
08:05 Prince Harry And Meghan: Truly, Madly, Deeply
09:00 Broadchurch
09:55 Don't Tell The Bride
11:00 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
11:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Royal Stories
14:45 Couples Come Dine With Me
15:45 The Royal Variety Performance 2017
18:00 Royal Stories
18:25 Royal Stories
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
21:00 The Royal Variety Performance 2017
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Smartest Guy In The Room
00:30 Smartest Guy In The Room
01:00 Ancient Aliens
02:00 Ancient Aliens
03:00 Ancient Aliens
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 Modern Marvels
05:30 Smartest Guy In The Room
05:55 Smartest Guy In The Room
06:20 Ancient Aliens
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Ancient Aliens
08:40 Ancient Aliens
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Modern Marvels
12:00 Smartest Guy In The Room
12:30 Smartest Guy In The Room
13:00 Smartest Guy In The Room
14:45 World's Weirdest Animal
15:40 Extreme Animal Babies
16:35 Unlikely Animal Friends
17:30 Savage Kingdom: Uprising
18:25 Ultimate Animal Countdown
19:20 World's Weirdest Animal
20:10 Extreme Animal Babies
21:00 Unlikely Animal Friends
21:50 Savage Kingdom: Uprising
22:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown
23:30 Sharks In The City



00:20 Swamp People
01:10 Swamp People
02:00 American Pickers Best Of
02:50 Counting Cars
03:15 Car Hunters
03:40 Ultimate Wheels
04:30 Swamp People
05:15 Swamp People
06:00 Mountain Men
06:50 Forged In Fire
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
09:20 American Pickers
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Forged In Fire
11:50 Counting Cars
12:15 Counting Cars
12:40 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
13:30 Duck Dynasty
13:55 Duck Dynasty
14:20 American Pickers
14:50 Mountain Men
16:00 Forged In Fire
16:50 Counting Cars
17:15 Car Hunters
17:40 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
18:30 Mountain Men
19:20 Forged In Fire
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
21:50 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 Mountain Men



00:15 Places We Go
00:45 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
01:10 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
01:40 Places We Go
02:05 Places We Go
02:35 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
03:00 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
03:30 World's Greatest Food Markets
04:25 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
04:50 Miguel's Feasts
05:20 The Game Chef
05:45 The Game Chef
06:15 My Pacific Quest
07:10 Places We Go
07:35 Places We Go
08:05 Andy And Ben Eat Australia

08:30 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
09:00 World's Greatest Food Markets
09:55 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
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12:40 Places We Go
13:05 Places We Go
13:35 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
14:00 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
14:30 World's Greatest Food Markets
15:25 Fearless Chef
16:20 The Game Chef
16:45 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
17:15 My Pacific Quest
18:10 Places We Go
18:35 Places We Go
19:05 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
19:30 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
20:00 World's Greatest Food Markets
21:00 Fearless Chef
22:00 The Game Chef
22:25 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
22:55 My Pacific Quest
23:50 Places We Go



00:10 Breakthrough
01:00 Explorer XL
02:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
03:00 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
04:00 Breakthrough
05:00 Engineering Connections
06:00 Lawless Island Alaska
07:00 The Long Road Home
08:00 Fish Tank Kings
09:00 Engineering Connections
10:00 Nazi Megastructures
Compilations
11:00 Supercar Megabuild
12:00 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
13:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
14:00 Fish Tank Kings
15:00 Science Of Stupid
15:30 Science Of Stupid
16:00 Nazi Megastructures
Compilations
17:00 Supercar Megabuild
18:00 Chain Of Command
19:00 Science Of Stupid
19:30 Science Of Stupid
20:00 Nazi Megastructures
Compilations
20:50 Supercar Megabuild
21:40 Chain Of Command
22:30 Science Of Stupid
22:55 Science Of Stupid
23:20 Fish Tank Kings



00:20 Grizzly Cauldron
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Incredible Fangs
02:50 Monster Croc Wrangler
03:15 Monster Croc Wrangler
03:45 World's Weirdest Animal Faces
04:40 Little Monkey House
05:35 Incredible Fangs
06:30 Monster Croc Wrangler
06:55 Monster Croc Wrangler
07:25 World's Weirdest Animal Faces
08:20 Little Monkey House
09:15 Unlikely Animal Friends
10:10 Savage Kingdom: Uprising
11:05 David Attenborough's Rise Of Animals
12:00 Sharks In The City
12:55 Dino Death Trap
13:50 Monster Croc Wrangler
14:15 Monster Croc Wrangler
14:45 World's Weirdest Animal
15:40 Extreme Animal Babies
16:35 Unlikely Animal Friends
17:30 Savage Kingdom: Uprising
18:25 Ultimate Animal Countdown
19:20 World's Weirdest Animal
20:10 Extreme Animal Babies
21:00 Unlikely Animal Friends
21:50 Savage Kingdom: Uprising
22:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown
23:30 Sharks In The City



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 Wix Club
02:36 Wix Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
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 Wix 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
18:36 Rabbids Invasion
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 Regal Academy
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbids Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:20 The Drew Carey Show
00:45 The Drew Carey Show
01:10 The Middle
01:35 The Middle
02:00 Gary Unmarried
02:25 Malcolm In The Middle
02:50 Making History
03:15 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
05:40 Malcolm In The Middle
06:05 Gary Unmarried
06:30 Making History
06:55 Baby Daddy
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 Modern Family
10:15 Will And Grace 2017
10:40 Malcolm In The Middle
11:05 Gary Unmarried
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 Making History
12:45 Baby Daddy
13:10 The Drew Carey Show
13:35 The Drew Carey Show
14:00 The Middle
14:25 The Middle
14:50 Malcolm In The Middle
15:15 Modern Family
15:40 Will And Grace 2017
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 Making History
17:30 Baby Daddy
18:00 The Drew Carey Show
18:30 The Drew Carey Show
19:00 The Middle
19:30 The Middle
20:00 The Simpsons
20:30 The Last Man On Earth
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
22:00 One Mississippi
22:30 One Mississippi
23:00 Ballers
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



01:00 The Adventures Of Pepper And Paula
02:35 Shelby: The Dog Who Saved Christmas
04:10 Pirates Code: The Adventures Of Mickey Matson
05:45 Molly Moon And The Incredible Book Of Hypnotism
07:25 The Adventures Of Pepper And Paula
09:00 Lego DC Comics: Justice League Cosmic Clash
10:30 Shelby: The Dog Who Saved Christmas
12:05 Get Santa
13:50 Scooby-Doo! And WWE: Curse Of Speed Demon
15:20 Minions
16:55 The Flintstones
18:30 Operation: Neighborhood Watch
20:05 Get Santa
21:50 Scooby-Doo! And WWE: Curse Of Speed Demon
23:20 The Flintstones



01:00 Hit By Lightning
02:35 Stakeout
04:35 Life Or Something Like It
06:25 Improptu
08:15 My Bakery In Brooklyn
10:00 The Bucket List
11:40 Life Or Something Like It
13:30 Improptu
15:20 Aquamarine
17:05 The Tiger Hunter
18:40 Made In America
20:35 Guess Who
22:25 Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo
23:50 Get A Job



00:45 Requiem For A Dream
02:30 Das Tagebuch Der Anne Frank
04:45 The Benefactor
06:25 Match
08:05 The Keeping Room
09:50 The Benefactor
11:30 Das Tagebuch Der Anne Frank
13:45 Wuthering Heights
15:40 All The Wilderness
17:05 Yosemite
18:35 James White
20:10 Suffragette
22:05 Child Of God
23:55 Masquerade



01:15 Papeulcho & The Martian
02:40 A Town Called Panic
04:05 Felix All Around The World
05:35 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter
07:05 The Wheelers
08:30 Victor And The Secret Of Crocodile Mansion
10:15 Dwegons And Leprechauns
11:55 Mia And The Migoo
13:30 The Apple & The Worm
14:55 Felix All Around The World
16:25 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter
17:55 Bark Ranger
19:25 Mia And The Migoo
21:00 Shopkins - Chef Club
22:00 Help And Freedom
23:30 Bark Ranger



00:30 Love And Other Drugs
02:25 This Means War
04:10 Man In The Moon
06:00 My All American
08:05 Planes, Trains And Automobiles
09:45 The Lovely Bones
12:10 This Means War
13:55 Fast & Furious 7
16:20 Zoolander 2
18:10 Nacho Libre
19:50 Prometheus
22:00 Tropic Thunder



00:40 Mythbusters
01:30 How Do They Do It?
01:55 Food Factory
02:20 Secrets Of The Underground
03:10 Alien Encounters
04:40 Nextworld
05:36 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Food Factory
06:24 Secrets Of The Underground
07:12 Alien Encounters
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 Nextworld
09:14 Mythbusters

10:02 Alien Encounters
10:50 How Do They Do It?
11:14 Food Factory
11:38 Secrets Of The Underground
12:26 Nextworld
13:14 Mythbusters
14:02 How Do They Do It?
14:26 Food Factory
14:50 Alien Encounters
15:38 Nextworld
16:26 Secrets Of The Underground
17:14 Mythbusters
18:02 Alien Encounters
18:50 Nextworld
19:40 Mythbusters
20:30 Mysteries Of The Missing
21:20 How Do They Do It?
21:45 Food Factory
22:10 Alien Encounters
23:00 Mysteries Of The Missing
23:50 Nextworld



01:10 Housefull 3
03:00 Housefull 3
03:35 The Front ROW
04:05 Koffee With Karan
05:00 The Front ROW
05:25 Koffee With Karan
06:30 Fakira
09:05 Raja Babu
11:45 Dil Tera Aashiq
14:35 Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein
17:30 Afsana Pyar Ka
20:00 John Day
22:15 Humshakals



01:15 Jerry Maguire
03:30 O
05:00 Bounce
06:50 Dorfman In Love
08:15 About Adam
09:45 The Quiet American
11:25 Titanic
14:40 O
16:10 Step Up
17:50 Jerry Maguire
20:00 Feast Of Love
21:45 Heartbreakers
23:45 The Human Stain

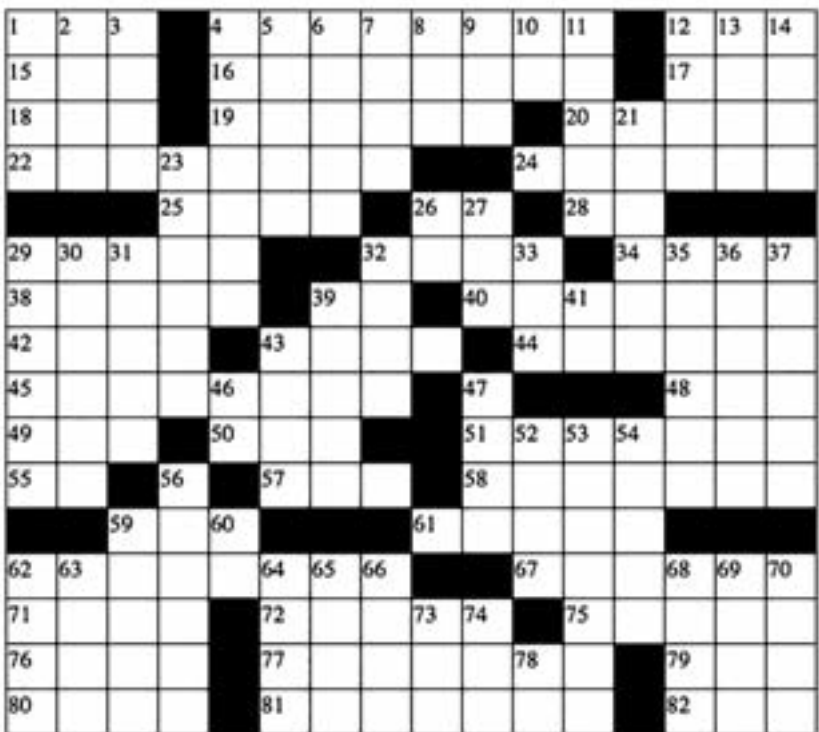


00:00 Cedar Cove
01:00 Cedar Cove
02:00 Mistresses
03:00 House Of DVF
04:00 Three
05:00 Project Runway
06:00 Cedar Cove
07:00 Cedar Cove
08:00 Mistresses
09:00 House Of DVF
10:00 Three
11:00 Project Runway
12:00 Cedar Cove
13:00 Cedar Cove
14:00 Mistresses
15:00 House Of DVF
16:00 Three
17:00 Style By Jury
17:30 Style By Jury
18:00 Married At First Sight
19:00 Married At First Sight
20:00 Mistresses
21:00 House Of DVF
22:00 Three
23:00 Style By Jury
23:30 Style By Jury



00:20 Ambulance
01:05 An Hour To Save Your Life
01:50 Body Bizarre
02:35 Iyanka: Fix My Life
03:20

CROSSWORD 1836



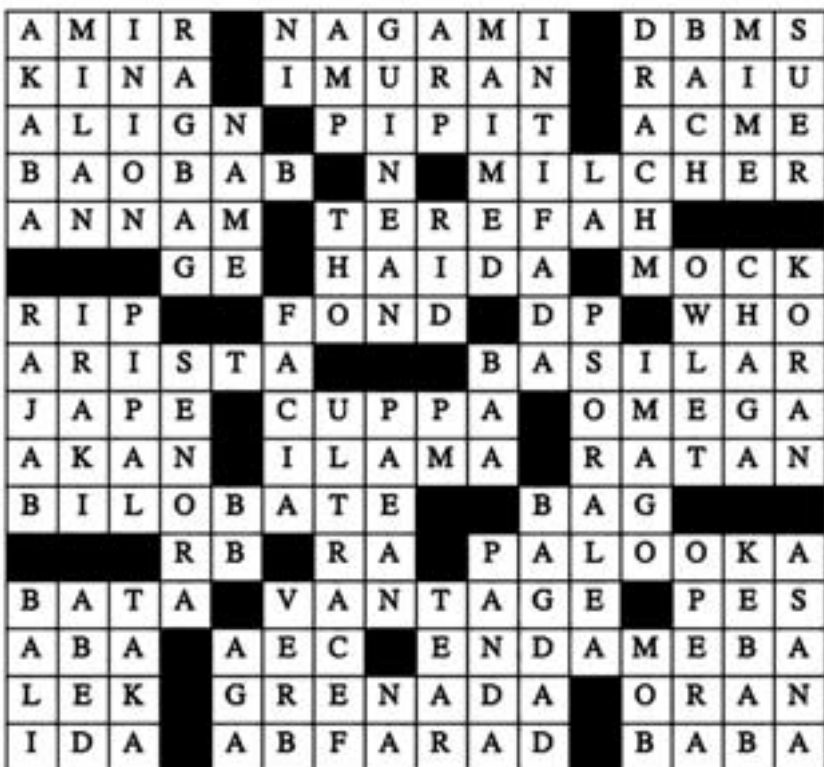
ACROSS

- 1. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
- 4. A wave that is blown by the wind so its crest is broken and appears white.
- 12. A light touch or stroke.
- 15. The fatty flesh of eel.
- 16. A device that provides reactive force when in motion relative to the surrounding air.
- 17. A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
- 18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 19. A small cave (usually with attractive features).
- 20. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
- 22. Well in the past.
- 24. Infusion of e.g. dried or fresh flowers or leaves.
- 25. Sudden and unexpected death of an apparently healthy infant during sleep.
- 28. A Mid-Atlantic state.
- 29. A large number or amount.
- 34. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
- 38. Muslim name for God.
- 40. The conversion of waste land into land suitable for use of habitation or cultivation.
- 42. A cut of meat taken from the side and back of an animal between the ribs and the rump.
- 44. The first month of the civil year.
- 45. Consider as ideal.
- 48. A graphical record of electrical activity of the brain.
- 49. The habitation of wild animals.
- 50. The cry made by sheep.
- 51. King of Scotland (died in 1057).
- 55. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- 57. A trivial lie.
- 58. Aggregated bulb of the multiplier onion.
- 61. Sports equipment that is worn on the feet to enable the wearer to glide along on wheels and to be propelled by the alternate actions of the legs.
- 62. A senior clergyman.
- 67. The sixth month of the Hindu calendar.
- 71. Weapons considered collectively.
- 72. Any property detected by the olfactory system.
- 75. Jordan's port.
- 76. Acute ulceration of the mucous membranes of the mouth or genitals.
- 77. In an exposed manner.
- 79. (folklore) A small grotesque supernatural creature that makes trouble for human beings.
- 80. Bite or chew on with the teeth.
- 81. A festival featuring African-American culture.
- 82. The basic unit of money in Romania.

DOWN

- 1. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
- 2. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- 3. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
- 4. Witty or joking.
- 5. King of Judea who (according to the New Testament) tried to kill Jesus by ordering the death of all children under age two in Bethlehem (73-4 BC).
- 6. Metal shackles.
- 7. A capacious bag or basket.
- 8. A newt in its terrestrial stage of development.
- 9. The sound made by a pigeon v l.
- 10. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
- 11. A cloth having a crisscross design.
- 12. Amino acid that is formed in the liver and converted into dopamine in the brain.
- 13. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
- 14. A large bundle bound for storage or transport.
- 21. A genus of Stromateidae.
- 23. A parliamentary monarchy in southwestern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula.
- 26. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- 27. To make a mistake or be incorrect.
- 30. Submerged freshwater perennials.
- 31. Not contained in or deriving from the essential nature of something.
- 32. Soft creamy white cheese.
- 33. The money risked on a gamble.
- 35. Traveling by wheeled vehicle such as bicycle or automobile e.g..
- 36. Italian sociologist and economist whose theories influenced the development of fascism in Italy (1848-1923).
- 37. Lighted up by or as by fire or flame.
- 39. A river of southwestern Africa that rises in central Angola and flows east and then north (forming part of the border between Angola and Congo) and continuing northwest through Congo to empty into the Congo River on the border between Congo and Republic of the Congo.
- 41. A hard malleable ductile silvery metallic element that is resistant to corrosion.
- 43. French cabaret singer (1915-1963).
- 46. 16 ounces.
- 47. A city in the Asian part of Russia.
- 52. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- 53. Chinese evergreen conifer discovered in 1955.
- 54. Offering little or no hope.
- 56. The capital and largest city of Poland.
- 59. A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
- 60. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- 63. Extremely robust.
- 64. Very fertile.
- 65. A pouch in many birds and some lower animals that resembles a stomach for storage and preliminary maceration of food.
- 66. A member of a North American Indian people speaking one of the Hokan language.
- 68. Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
- 69. A slender double-reed instrument.
- 70. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- 73. The force of workers available.
- 74. An edge tool used to cut and shape wood.
- 78. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you have reached a certain point where you want to demand respect from someone who has respect for no one: remember that respect has to be earned. Also, there are some people who aren't capable of respecting others. Your focus is your work and success, nothing else compares at this time. It seems important to be thought well of by everyone; remember your worth when you feel down. It's in your nature to want to help people and you feel this especially now. Your logic kicks in when you have to take the initiative for an unexpected event. You find that honesty is not welcome when you answer a question asked by a coworker or friend; this could be a sticky situation. Make plans for the weekend with someone special and like minded, Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, you could feel emotionally blocked and unable to complete something important. Your logic is respected as you flow from one part of a project to another. You're thankful for your home and its warmth and welcoming energy; someone compliments your tastes. You desire to call the shots; this could include sex, home and work situations. You pull knowledge to you regarding investments and making extra money. A person you are close to agrees with your opinion on something intimate; finding support strengthens you. Listen to your intuition as it speaks very loudly to you this evening; a secret could be revealed if you let your spirit be your guide. You could discover that you can actually relax if you choose to do so tonight, Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you answer the call for help from family members or close friends. The group follows your lead when you figure out a way to reach a certain goal. Organic oils and foods are important new additions to your life that create health and positive energy. An event causes you to take close look at yourself and you could actually like what you see. There could be aches and pains from exerting yourself when you shouldn't; try to let this teach you how to listen to your body. Your heartstrings are pulled by someone younger that loves you; vibrations strongly indicate close family or friends sharing good times. You receive a compliment on your talents and looks. Home is where your heart is as you share the evening with someone dear, Gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, your morals and the way you look at life differs a great deal than those you find yourself spending time with; this could indicate younger people. You could be approached about leading a group in an effort to raise funds or create awareness. Your ideas may be just what's needed to reach the right people with the right message. Friends call on you to hand over a secret family recipe you don't want to share. You take the time to check on someone you haven't seen in a while; this person appreciates this more than you know. If someone questions your methods remember, sometimes we're the only book a person reads; you should be flattered. You could spend most of the evening dissecting your past, present and maybe even your future, Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, you power forward even when you feel ill or fragile in some way; working through periods of low energy proves you can do it! Later, you're invited out where you'll seek the limelight, your favorite place. When pride stands in the way of helping someone you love, you could overcome and overlook or you may decide to hold a grudge. You may deal with the sensation of your heart being in your throat as your emotions swing from high to low. Good food is high on your list of priorities just now as you discover new, tempting recipes. You spend fun time with a like-minded person who likes your quirks and silly jokes. Try not to hold the different view of someone against them at a meeting later this evening after dinner; remember to love, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, your eyes are open to new interests, hobbies and activities. Information about controversial situations and questions seems to come to you effortlessly; you could be learning about manifesting what you want! Your sense of life is exciting, as though fully living and leaning, relishing the best part of life. Your work goals are within reach; remain on your path and continue working your plan. Your entire opinion and understanding of how life on the planet actually works and how eternity is involved has taken a major turn. If someone is disturbed by your new beliefs, remember that new concepts and practices sometime frighten those who can't seem to grasp adjustments. Someone pulls at your heartstrings with a sweet, sincere note, Virgo.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Musical Instruments 2

Find and circle all of the musical instruments that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a G. K. Chesterton quotation.



- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| BASSOON | FIFE | MARIMBAS | SHOFAR |
| BONGOS | FLUGELHORN | MELODEON | SLIDE WHISTLE |
| BOUZOUKI | GONG | MOCENO | STRUMSTICK |
| BUGLE | HARMONICA | NEFER | TAMBOURINE |
| CASNETS | HARMONIUM | OCARINA | TAMBURA |
| CONCERTINA | HUNTING HORN | PIANO | TIN WHISTLE |
| CONCH HORN | JEW'S HARP | REBEC | TRUMPET |
| CUMBUS | KEYBOARD | RECORDER | TUBA |
| CYMBAL | LUTE | SAROD | VIOLA |
| DULCIMER | MANDOLIN | SAXOPHONE | XYLOPHONE |



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, tensions are high and you have to keep your temper and tongue in check, especially with authority figures; disagreement is indicated strongly but you can overcome and let it pass. You may feel trapped and long to be set free of your responsibilities; you could be chosen as a winner of some type of contest at work perhaps with a prize of travel to a tropical place. You could consider taking a class to learn more about another language or country; new interests of many kinds are indicated! You witness a heated discussion of political views; this turns ugly so keep your distance. Private business comes to light that startles and shocks you. To soothe rattled nerves, you could accept an invitation to dinner with friends at a new, exciting restaurant, Libra!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, someone could criticize your out there theories and beliefs. Your environment doesn't support going in new ways; be patient, this changes soon. For now, you're more than able to perform at your best using familiar, proven methods. You seem to be picking up on the issues of those around you without them speaking of them; you're careful about offering advice. You have your finger on the pulse of trends or trending topics; you discover you were right about something now receiving a lot of news. You avoid a disaster at home and realize how blessed and lucky you are to live where and how you do. Ideas and thoughts hold greater meaning than ever. You feel humbled later when someone compliments your taste in furnishings, clothes or vehicles, Scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, you could either be offered a new dream job position in a new company or you have figured out how to make your current employment more to your liking. Your workload is completely caught up and the sense of accomplishment is strong. Your hopes and dreams appear to be fulfilled in this cycle; it seems easier to make plans for future prosperity. An energy of being grateful surrounds you as you take an honest look at your belongings. Financial security is likely now and further into the year; this could involve the stock market or real estate. Taking time to reward yourself is important and this evening could be one of those times. Allow yourself to just do nothing; someone is very willing to join you doing absolutely nothing, Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, your emotions are in a state of disruption. Nothing seems right or fixable; you dislike the way you feel as it's completely opposite of what you seek. You could experience deep moments of prayer and meditation. Prepare for an unpleasant time by focusing on the positive aspects of your life and those you share it with. You could find solace in a book or favorite film! If you can't even enjoy your usual spirit-lifters, you're driven to discover something new. Your eager mind is fully engaged in historical information having to do with the mysteries of life and death. The universe, or creator, whichever you choose, is on your side and freely offers comfort. Some could criticize your dreamy, disconnected attitude, but you easily dismiss them, Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Aquarius, you may feel out of sorts or somehow off balance. This could indicate boredom or restlessness due to wanting something different. You may be able to see things you couldn't before that set you on the right path; this helps your relationship with a supervisor or an elder. You could hear some very interesting gossip regarding someone you have wondered about for some time. You may find a piece of furniture or another item you want to buy the moment you see it; be mindful of your pocket book at this time. You may desire to take a gamble on someone you believe in. Someone who admires you could invite you to share a meal. The evening comes with a surprise visit from a person who brings interesting news of a new investment, Aquarius.

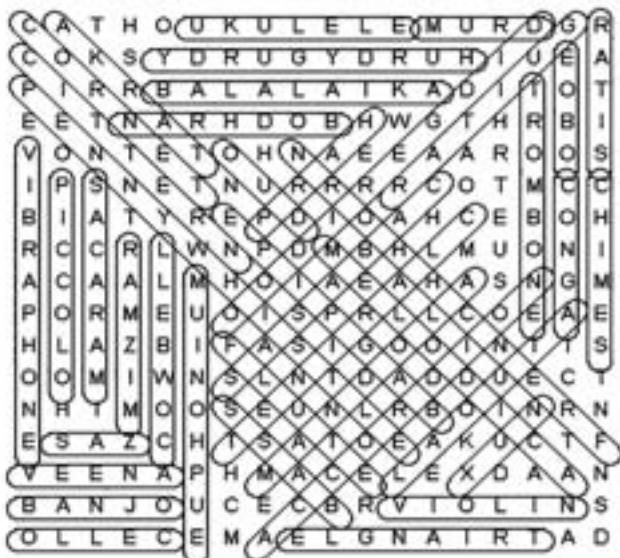


Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, you're fun while sharing your humor and laughter; your verbal skills excel as you present thoughts and plans at work or home. While your thoughts are clear you make phone calls and write emails or notes to those you have a need to reach out to: old friends could reunite. Your focus is again drawn to food and exercise; a disappointment in one area leads to success in another! You're determined to feel better about yourself and all that you do; make sure these efforts are sincere and not just to boost the ego. Your kindness is well known by many, even some who don't know you at all. You're not interested in opinions, only facts; tonight you receive information that could clear up some troubling misunderstandings in the family, Pisces.

Yesterday's Solution

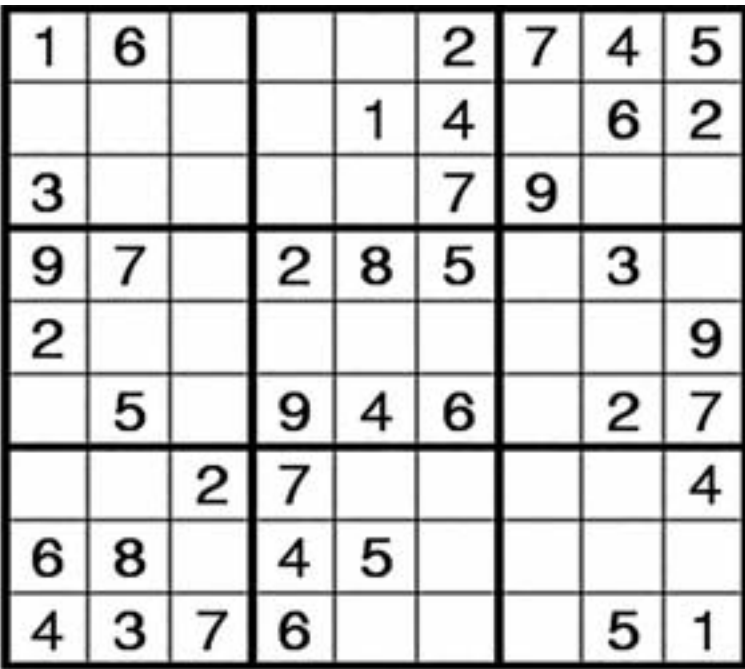
Musical Instruments 1



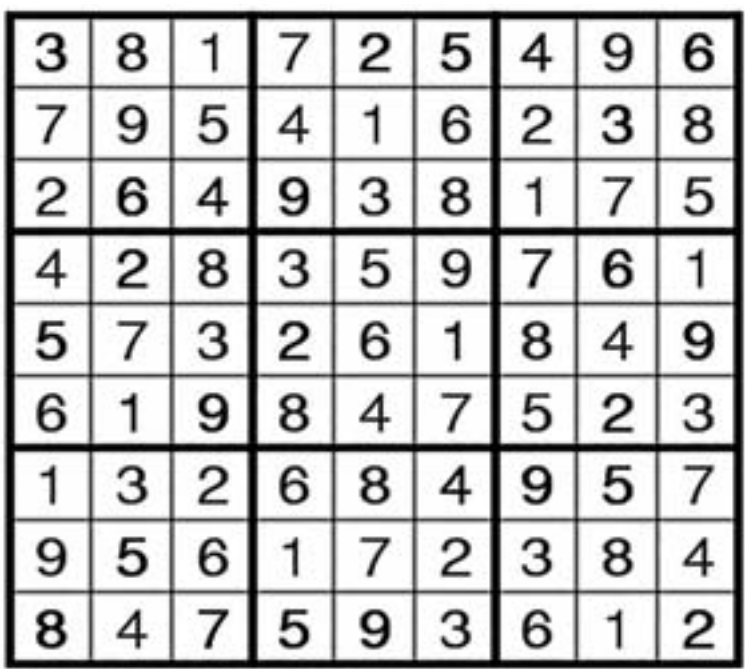
- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| ACCORDION | CONGA | HURDY-GURDY | SAZ |
| BAGPIPE | CORNET | LADUTA | STAR |
| BALALAICA | COW BELL | MANDOLA | TARKA |
| BANJO | DIDGERIDOO | MARACAS | TRIANGLE |
| BASS | DRUM | MELODICA | TROMBONE |
| BOHRAN | EUPHONIUM | MIZMAR | UKULELE |
| CABASAS | FLUTE | OBOE | VEENA |
| CELLO | FRENCH HORN | QUD | VIBRAPHONE |
| CHIMES | GUITAR | PENNYWHISTLE | VIOLIN |
| CITTERN | HARP | PECCOLO | XUN |
| CLARINET | | | |

Hidden sentence: THOSE WHO HEAR NOT THE MUSIC THINK THE DANCERS MAD

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Classifieds

Thursday, February 15, 2018



Now you can browse

www.kuwaittimes.net

e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



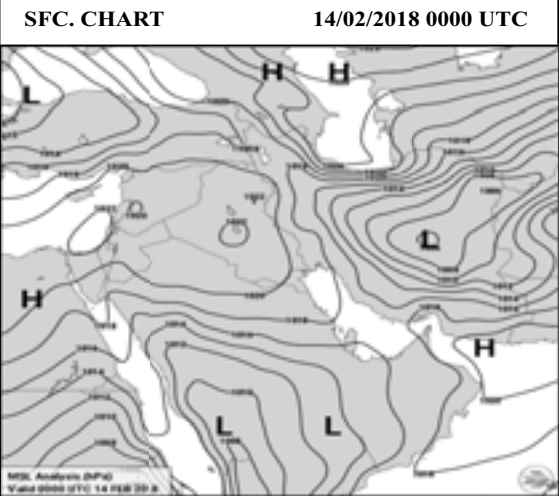
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Fair with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<div>SFC. CHART14/02/2018 0000 UTC</div>	
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	17 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24 °C	15 °C		
ABDALY	23 °C	14 °C		
BUBYAN	19 °C	00 °C		
JAHRA	24 °C	16 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	19 °C	16 °C		
SALMIYAH	20 °C	17 °C		
AHMADI	20 °C	19 °C		
NUWAISIB	22 °C	18 °C		
WAFRA	25 °C	17 °C		
SALMY	23 °C	13 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	02/15	Clouds will increase gradually with a chance for scattered light rain	24 °C	10 °C	N-NE	10 - 30 km/h
Friday	02/16	Partly cloudy to cloudy	26 °C	12 °C	SE	15 - 38 km/h
Saturday	02/17	Cloudy with a chance for rising dust over open areas	30 °C	16 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h
Sunday	02/18	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rising dust over open areas with a chance for scattered	25 °C	09 °C	SE-NW	20 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:08
Sunrise	06:28
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:12
Sunset	17:36
Isha	18:54

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	33 °C
MIN. Temp.	17 °C
MAX. RH	73 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	SE 64 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

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Airline

American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787

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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION



Arrival Flights on Thursday 15/2/2018				Departure Flights on Thursday 15/2/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
SAI	441	Lahore	00:15	JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
KAC	102	London	00:50	PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	JZR	502	Luxor	01:30
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	JZR	142	Doha	01:45
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
TRQ	230	KRT	02:00	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
211	Bahrain	02:30	ETD	303	Kochi	03:05	
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	JZR	351	Riyadh	03:05
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	621	AddisAbaba	03:05
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
UAE	873	Dubai	04:25	ETD	306	AbuDhabi	04:05
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	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
DXH	170	Bahrain	05:20	DXH	172	Bahrain	06:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	JZR	902	Baku	07:50
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	KAC	413	Bangkok	08:10
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	KAC	791	Madinah	08:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	BAW	156	London	08:55
QTR	8511	Doha	07:35	KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	WAN	133	Doha	09:00
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	117	NewYork	09:00
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	QTR	8512	Doha	09:05
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	741	Dammam	09:45
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	101	London	09:45
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:00	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:00
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ETD	302	AbuDhabi	10:10
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
WAN	342	Sohag	10:15	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	11:55	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
FEG	933	Sohag	12:40	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	MSC	404	Asyut	12:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	VIZ	202	IQA	12:30
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	QTR	1075	Doha	12:30
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	NIA	362	Alexandria	12:35
KAC	792	Madinah	13:20				
		</					

‘Black Panther’: More than just another superhero movie

“Black Panther” is expected to be a major box office smash, but it has also taken on the mantle of cultural talisman, a touchstone on which moviegoers of color worldwide are pinning their hopes. The 18th entry in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, opening Friday in the United States, features an almost entirely black cast led by Chadwick Boseman as the first non-white superhero to get his own standalone movie in the lucrative franchise.

The film from Disney-owned Marvel Studios is expected to break opening weekend box office records and has spawned headlines and social media buzz worldwide about its significance as a game changer for racial representation in cinema. “We put our heart and soul into it because we knew it was a great opportunity,” Boseman, 41, said during a Twitter Q&A on Monday.

“But to see how people have responded to it when they haven’t even seen the movie yet, it’s unlike anything I’ve ever seen. It’s crazy,” Boseman (“Message from the King,” “Marshall”) plays the titular superhero in “Black Panther,” also known as T’Challa, king and protector of the technologically advanced fictional African nation of Wakanda. His star-studded support cast is made up of African Americans Michael B Jordan, Danai Gurira, Angela Bassett and Forest Whitaker, English actors Daniel Kaluuya and Letitia Wright-Kaluuya is of Ugandan heritage while Wright grew up in Guyana-and Kenyan-Mexican Lupita Nyong’o.

With two Oscar winners (Nyong’o and Whitaker) and two nominees (Kaluuya and Bassett), as well as a hatful of Golden Globes

nods, the super-cast features some of the most accomplished black actors working in cinema today. Wakanda, almost a character in itself, subverts the stereotype of Africa as victim by positing an affluent, resource-rich, never-colonized utopia doing its own soul-searching over taking in refugees from poorer nations.

‘Breaking down barriers’

“What this movie represents... is a story and point of view that is universal in its appeal yet very grounded in African American culture,” Paul Dergarabedian, a senior media analyst for comScore, told AFP. “Its universal themes will allow it to become a worldwide phenomenon while at the same time representing a really important moment in film, breaking down barriers and outmoded ideas about what is commercially viable.” With five million posts, “Black Panther” is the most tweeted-about movie of 2018 — ahead even of “Star Wars: The Last Jedi”—and is outperforming “The Hunger Games” and “Beauty and the Beast” in pre-sales.

Experts are predicting a \$150-165 million opening which would challenge the \$152 million Presidents Day weekend record set by another Marvel Comics creation, Fox’s “Deadpool” (2016). Fred Joseph, a marketing consultant from New York, set up a GoFundMe campaign in January that aimed to raise \$10,000 for the Boys and Girls Club of Harlem to watch the movie. “Help Children See Black Panther” ended up making five times that amount and Joseph has since encouraged hundreds of campaigns around the world to raise a total of \$400,000 under the

hashtag #BlackPantherChallenge.

Joseph describes the film as a “rare opportunity for young students—primarily of color—to see a black major cinematic and comic book character” on the big screen. Jeff Bock, a senior box office analyst for Exhibitor Relations, describes the film as a “stake in the heart of what works and what doesn’t in Hollywood.”

‘Cultural zeitgeist’

“This is a new ballgame now, one that shouldn’t discriminate in any way shape or form—with talent leading the charge, no matter what color flag they’re flying,” Bock told AFP. “Black Panther” isn’t the first movie featuring non-white superheroes—around 30 ethnic characters have donned lycra for big screen appearances since the early 1990s—but the Wakandan royal is the first black protagonist to land his own movie in the MCU.

“When Ryan and Hannah Beachler, our production designer, came on, they really made it their mission to go to real African sources for inspiration for the costumes and designs of the structures, and even how the city is laid out,” said African American executive producer Nate Moore. “All that care helped make it real for all of us.” Various analysts interviewed by AFP said they expect the film to do for ethnic diversity what last summer’s Warner Bros. smash hit “Wonder Woman” did for women—which was to persuade executives that blockbusters don’t need white male leads to sell tickets.

“As an art form, film has the ability to capture the cultural zeitgeist in profound and influential



American actor Chadwick Boseman poses on arrival for the European Premiere of “Black Panther” in central London.

ways—whether that’s via a small indie film or a big-budget blockbuster,” Shawn Robbins, chief analyst at Boxoffice.com, told AFP. “The impact of Black Panther’s seemingly inevitable success could be far-reaching in ways that we can’t fully predict yet, other than to say Marvel’s universe—and the movie world at large—are becoming more and more inclusive for all genders and all colors of skin.”— AFP



Models pose during the MARVEL Black Panther fashion week celebration “Welcome to Wakanda” at Industria in New York. — AFP photos



Black Panther fever hits NY Fashion Week

Marvel Studios brought “Black Panther” fever to New York Fashion Week, inviting designers to showcase clothes inspired by the iconic movie, already winning rave reviews ahead of its Friday release in the United States. More than a thousand people packed the Welcome to Wakanda presentation in the West Village that featured the work of 10 labels, including Chromat, Cushnie et Ochs and LaQuan Smith. “The inspiration for me was

female empowerment,” Smith told AFP. “I wanted to create something that really just connected to the characters and the film... embodying power, and femininity, and strength and sensuality.”

Reviews following Monday’s premiere of the movie that stars Hollywood’s first black superhero to get his own stand-alone film were electric, calling the picture “iconic” and “astounding.” “I think what made Black Panther more

fashionable than other superhero films was really about the cast, the attitude that the cast really embodies,” said Smith. “I hope it inspires young boys and young girls.” Otherwise here is a quick roundup of the best of Fashion Week day five, before the global 2018 fall/winter season shifts to Europe. — AFP

Calls to strip French rapper of awards for ‘sexist’ lyrics

A French rapper is facing calls to be stripped of the country’s top musical awards for the sexist and “degrading” lyrics of his old songs. Orelsan won three Victories of Music prizes Friday, confirming him as France’s rapper of the moment. But a petition is demanding that French Culture Minister Françoise Nyssen strip him of the awards because of his 2006 song, “Saint Valentine”, which saw him convicted of inciting violence against women.

Orelsan, 35, was acquitted on appeal of the charge in 2016 despite the hit containing the line “Shut your mouth or I will make a Marie Trintignant of you,” a reference to a French actress who was killed by her pop star boyfriend, Bertrand Cantat of Noir Desir, in 2003. A number of feminist groups have brought charges against Orelsan for the lyrics of several of his early songs even though the singer claims to be a feminist himself.

He has been cleared on appeal in all of the cases, with judges saying it was clear that the singer did not endorse the feelings of the “hopeless” characters in his songs. But a new petition against the singer had gathered more than 25,000 signatures by yesterday. “We call on all those who defend women’s rights to protest against the prizes received by this individual, whose work should be cen-



This file photo taken shows French rap singer Orelsan performing on stage during the Urban Peace 3 hip-hop concert at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, near Paris.—AFP

sored,” the petition on Change.org added. “What kind of example does that set for young people,” the petition said. “How in a period like this (with the #MeToo movement) could this be possible?” Orelsan, 35, aka Aurelien Cotentin from the Normandy town of Caen, had managed to shake off much of his early sexist image in recent years with biting and often humorous songs chronicling some rarely seen sides of French country towns. — AFP

Afghan institute, Metallica win music’s ‘Nobel Prize’

An Afghan music institute that has empowered girls in the war-torn country and metal pioneers Metallica yesterday shared the Polar Music Prize, often called music’s Nobel. The laureates will each receive one million Swedish kronor (101,000 euros, \$125,000) at a televised gala in Stockholm on June 14 in the presence of King Carl XVI Gustaf. The Afghan National Institute of Music was honored along with its founder, Ahmad Sarmast, who started the school in 2010 in a rare co-educational initiative in the war-torn country.

The institute, which teaches both Afghan and Western music, helped generate the country’s first all-female orchestra which performed last year at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Sarmast, who has faced substantial risk in a country where both music and girls’ education was banned under the repressive 1996-2001 Taliban regime, said he was “very excited, honored

and privileged” to win the prize.

“We believe that our two recipients, although from very contrasting worlds, exemplify the mission of the Polar Music Prize, and that is to honour musicians and music organizations whose work has made a difference to people’s lives,” Marie Ledin, managing director of the award, said in a statement. “Metallica is loved and admired by millions of hard rock fans across the globe,” she said. Sarmast and the music institute, meanwhile, have worked “to restore the joy and power of music to children’s lives,” she said.

Metallica is one of the most influential bands in heavy metal, helping bring the angry and aggressive music to the mainstream and preserving an avid fan base for decades. Lars Ulrich, the California band’s Danish-born drummer, called the Polar Music Prize “a great validation of everything that Metallica has done over the last 35 years.”

“At the same time, we feel like we’re in our prime with a lot of good years ahead of us,” Ulrich said of the band, which released its 10th album, “Hardwired... to Self-Destruct” in late 2016. The Polar Music Prize was established in 1989 by the late Stig Anderson, best known as the manager of Swedish pop superstars ABBA, and selects two laureates each year. The prize’s stated goal is to “break down musical boundaries by bringing together people from all the different worlds of music.” Past laureates have included Sting, Bob Dylan, Bjork, Sonny Rollins and Ravi Shankar. — AFP



Metallica perform onstage as part of Citi Sound Vault, a new live music platform curated exclusively for Citi card members, at Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

American Tourister celebrates Kuwait National Day

American Tourister, the world’s leading luggage Brand has recently launched its Limited Edition collection to celebrate Kuwait’s National and Liberation Day. Known for its stylish and youthful bags, this Limited Edition range, a first of its kind has been inspired by the colors of the Kuwait National Flag.

This ‘Kuwait Edition’ luggage comes in a set of 2 pieces - 79cm and 50cm. All efforts have gone in ensuring that these bags continue to cater to the discerning Kuwaiti customer’s travel needs, while bringing out his sense of celebration and pride on this joyous occasion. With only 300 sets of this Limited edition range having been produced world-wide, it becomes a must have accessory for those who want to carry a piece of Kuwait with them as they globe trot.

Commenting on the launch of this Limited Edition luggage, Abdul Mohsen Behbehani, Director of Behbehani Group, said, “It is a great honour that the world’s leading luggage brand has decided to celebrate Kuwait’s National and Liberation Day with us by releas-

ing this limited-edition luggage set. We are certain that it will appeal to our loyal customers.”

Syed Shaheen Jamil, Business Head for Middle East, Africa, CIS and SAARC countries for American Tourister said, “The launch of this Limited Edition range is our humble attempt to Salute the Spirit and Pride of this Great Nation”. Adding to Jamil’s comment, Shahzad Gidwani, General Manager of Behbehani Group, Trading Division, said “Throughout the years, I have seen many collections that have attracted the attention of our customers; however, this limited-edition luggage set is truly one-of-a-kind, and I think will be the most appealing by far.”

This collection is available exclusively at American Tourister showrooms located at Marina Mall, 89 Mall, Souk Al Kabir, Al Salam Mall, Muthanna Complex, City Centre Salmiya and Xcite-Avenues Branch. It can also be ordered online at www.americanatourister.com.kw or at the roadshows, located at the Avenues, Marina Mall, 89 Mall.

Vienna museum’s ‘Stairway to Klimt’ takes visitors to new heights



Visitors stand on a suspended bridge, twelve meters above ground, to take a closer look at paintings by Austrian painter Gustav Klimt which adorn the arches of the main staircase during the exhibition titled “Stairway to Klimt” at the Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM) in Vienna. — AFP

Visitors to Vienna’s art history museum on Monday enjoyed a closer look at 13 of Gustav Klimt’s unsung masterpieces thanks to a walkway erected over a monumental central stairway. The sprawling Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM), opened in 1891 under Emperor Franz-Joseph, houses one of Europe’s most important art collections while also showcasing interior design by the cream of Vienna’s artists and sculptors.

Among those commissioned to decorate the building was Klimt, then 28 and considered a rising star of the Austrian neo-classical school. But until now the museum’s 1.4 million annual visitors could only admire the paintings from afar. The eye-level experience is well worth the climb up the “Stairway to Klimt”, as the museum has dubbed the new installation, in a nod to the song by heavy-metal band Led Zeppelin. Paying homage to the Venetian, Roman and Florentine traditions of the Quattrocento, as well as to Egyptian art, the superbly preserved works are testament to the young Klimt’s artistic maturity and hint at the future course of the Vienna Secession.—AFP



Models walk the runway for Calvin Klein 205W39NYC during New York Fashion Week at the American Stock Exchange Building in New York City. — AFP photos

A-list gets in the popcorn at Calvin Klein

A-list stars Nicole Kidman, Lupita Nyong'o and Margot Robbie flocked to Calvin Klein on Tuesday, wading through popcorn to watch Raf Simons's latest meditation on Americana, where firefighter meets prairie. The Belgian's stewardship of the iconic US label, now into a second year, is one of the few bright spots in a New York Fashion Week suffering from an identity crisis, thinning schedule and a glut between the passing of one generation and the search for another. Ruby Sterling again designed the set. Barns evoked the pioneer spirit of the prairies, adorned with work by Andy Warhol-also to be seen on Calvin Klein underwear-and a room ankle deep in popcorn.

Model of the moment Kaia Gerber, 16, walked the runway, dressed in waders, watched by proud parents Cindy Crawford and Rande Gerber. Simons said the collection evolved his window-onto-America theme for his Calvin Klein, this time referencing the discovery of America, the 1960s space race and the 21st century information age. He said it was about freedom, democracy and no cultural hierarchy, listing 50 words in place of 50 states that included pioneer, firefighter, prairie, industrial and, of course, popcorn.

Clothes ticked the modesty trend for 2018 fall/winter, full skirts practically to the ground and boxy outerwear, with models kitted out in knitted balaclavas or hijab-inspired hats

shielding hair and neck. There was an emergency responder vibe in orange outerwear and pants, fluorescent strips on jackets, giant wader-style boots over the knee in both shiny black and white and baggy sweaters.

Giant silver gloves tapped the oven mitten look, a space-age version of the Ralph Lauren's tasselled beige numbers that divided opinion for the US Winter Olympics team in Pyeongchang. There was a utilitarian, workman-like feel, and clear odes to America-patchwork quilts and red checked fannel. Yet however striking and original, it did not shriek wearable. Simons's tenure at Calvin Klein has been applauded by critics and the label's recent underwear ad featuring the Kardashian sisters was YouTube's most-watched commercial last month with 15.4 million hits.



Considered one of the finest designers of his generation, the 50-year-old previously breathed new life into Dior after John Galliano was fired in 2012 for anti-Semitic insults in a Paris bar. Fashion Week closes Wednesday with shows by Michael Kors and Marc Jacobs, before the season flits to London, Milan and Paris. Here are the other standouts of the penultimate day in the Big Apple.

Twisted romance

Selena Gomez, the current face of Coach, was guest of honor in the front row, wearing a black leather jacket and long floral dress, capturing something of the gothic, city meets nature, romance of the collection. But if "twisted, dark romance" was one of the themes, there was no sign of off-again-on-again squeeze Justin Bieber, with whom she has reportedly recently reunited to the chagrin of her family.



Actors Margot Robbie, Nicole Kidman, and Laura Dern attend the Calvin Klein Collection front row during New York Fashion Week at New York Stock Exchange in New York City. — AFP photos





A deliveryman sets off to deliver a food order at a restaurant in Shanghai.



Su Xiaosu cooking at kitchen of her home in Shanghai.

App delivery boom shakes up China food sector



Shous Su Xiaosu's daughter checking a food delivery box at her home in Shanghai.



A food deliveryman prepares to set off with orders from a restaurant in Shanghai.



Food deliverymen wait to take orders at a restaurant in Shanghai.

Guo Bonan has opened several new branches of his "8Peppers" spicy Sichuan-style restaurants across Shanghai since last year, and not one has a dining room. He doesn't need them—stationed outside each outlet are packs of food deliverymen on motorbikes waiting to whisk dishes from Guo's steaming kitchens to homes, office buildings and factories across the city of 24 million. China's app-based meal-delivery boom of the past two years has introduced several now-familiar phenomena: families and office workers huddling around mobile phones to place orders, delivery scooters scattering pedestrians on crowded sidewalks, and mountains of empty plastic meal containers.

But it's also fuelling wider change by shrinking restaurants and reducing how often families cook at home while allowing millions to fry up meals in their own home kitchens and ship them to hungry buyers. "In a rapidly developing city like Shanghai, time is money. So people don't want to spend it cooking for themselves anymore," said Guo, 29, adding that many younger people like him are no longer learning how to cook. "8Peppers" focuses purely on delivery through leading platforms like Ele.me and Meituan, avoiding the expense of paying waiters and maintaining a dining space.

Business is good. "8Peppers" now has 10 branches and Guo is a partner in a separate kitchen-only project with eight outlets and hundreds more planned nationally. Passionate about food, Chinese are also eager adopters of

e-commerce, a potent combination for delivery start-ups. More than 200 billion yuan (\$32 billion) worth of meals were delivered in 2017, equaling Bolivia's gross domestic product, a figure expected to grow another 20 percent this year, consultancy iiMedia Research said. Users of meal-ordering platforms tripled in two years to 343 million in 2017, the China Internet Network Information Center said, the vast majority using mobile apps.

'Convenience and efficiency'

The delivery cost of a few yuan is no deterrent as Chinese incomes rise, said Zhang Xuhao, Ele.me's founder and CEO. "Price is not so important anymore. Convenience and efficiency get the most attention, especially among Chinese born in the 90s or 2000s," Zhang told AFP. Ele.me is now working on user-data systems that can help restaurateurs determine where to open for maximum sales, and testing delivery drones. With its massive and growing cities, "China's potential is extremely large", Zhang said.

The industry is another proxy battle between e-commerce heavyweight Alibaba and gaming and social media rival Tencent in their struggle for tech dominance in everything from online games to content and mobile payments. Alibaba is an Ele.me backer while Tencent is heavily invested in Meituan. Delivery platforms have raised billions in venture capital and are said to be burning cash via discounts to grab market share, with growth rates expected to



This photo shows vegetables and meat prepared for cooking at Su Xiaosu's home in Shanghai. — AFP photos

slow. But the industry impact will deepen, say analysts.

"It will change restaurant design. Kitchen space only used to be one-fourth of a restaurant. But restaurants are now becoming something like processing centers for delivery," said Wang Yuke of real estate consultancy RET. Su Xiaosu struggled after migrating several years

ago from rural Jiangsu province to Shanghai, where she married. But in 2016, she joined fast-growing platform Hui Jia Chi Fan ("Go home to eat"), which plugs home kitchens into delivery networks and is now in six cities.

Su, 34, now grosses up to 3,000 yuan (\$475) per day, an eye-popping take for most Chinese, by frying up Jiangsu specialties in her

tiny home kitchen and handing them to blue-clad Ele.me deliverymen in her apartment stairwell. She can now afford a foreign tutor for her young daughter and has plans to buy an apartment, once only a dream. "My biggest concern is upsetting my neighbors. There are crowds of deliverymen during peak hours and some elderly neighbors sleep early," Su said.

Food fight

Not everyone is happy. Besides delivery waste that has taxed municipal authorities, tens of thousands of accidents were blamed on notoriously risk-taking deliverymen in 2017, including scores of deaths, prompting new government safety guidelines. And supermarket sales are "depressed" as meal deliveries reduce grocery demand, said Bruno Lannes, a partner with consultancy Bain & Company. "It's now so easy to get food delivered at home, in the office or anywhere within 30 minutes, and in a variety that you can't get at home," Lannes said.

"People just aren't cooking at home anymore." Even perennially strong sales of instant noodles dropped three straight years from 2013 to 2016 as food delivery took off, according to state media. Supermarkets have rushed to offer delivery, and Alibaba in 2015 launched a new grocery chain with online ordering and delivery. Alibaba and others also have launched initiatives to connect suddenly vulnerable mom-and-pop stores to delivery networks. "That's the future. Some of these new apps will help mom-and-pop stores survive," said Lannes. — AFP

Giant London glasshouse to reopen with world's rarest plants



Work progresses inside the Temperate House, the largest surviving Victorian glasshouse in the world, during the final months of a five-year restoration at the Royal Botanic Gardens. — AFP

A gleaming monument to the ambition and creativity of its age, the world's largest Victorian glasshouse will once again welcome visitors to see some of the world's rarest plants following a lengthy facelift. "Temperate House" in London's Kew Gardens is large enough to house three jumbo jets, and was home to around 1,000 species of plants from around the world before it was shut in 2013 after falling into a state of disrepair. "There was rust everywhere, all the paint was falling off, and look now, it's all brand spanking new," project manager Andrew Williams told AFP, as a fleet of diggers and teams of workers put the finishing touches to the £41 million (\$57 million, 46 million euros) renovation project.

The wrought iron and glass structure was designed by esteemed Victorian architect Decimus Burton in 1860 and opened in 1863.

The facelift required the removal of 69,000 individual elements to be cleaned, repaired or replaced and the restoration of 15,000 panes of glass. Enough paint to cover four football pitches was used to spruce up the huge iron columns, and Kew expects hundreds of thousands of visitors to pass through its doors annually after its May reopening. "A building like this deserves it," said Williams. "I don't think you'd build a building like this now," he added.

"I had a love-hate relationship. You end up loving it at the beginning (of the project), then hating it in the middle and loving it at the end. It's hard work. "Everybody who has worked in here is really proud and now you see the plants going in, it's a fantastic space." With weeks to go before the grand reopening, horticulturalists are hard at work rehousing the plants, many of

which were transferred to on-site nurseries during the renovation work.

'Bit of an ordeal'

"It's been a really huge operation," Temperate House supervisor Scott Taylor said. "In 2012 we started lifting and propagating plants to be moved out of the house, that took us until 2014 when the construction work began. "It's going to take us about nine months to get all the plants back in." Around 1,300 m3 of soil was brought in from off site, which will support around 1,500 species when the replant is complete. The house will be split into geographical areas, showcasing plants from Africa, the Americas, Australia, the Himalayas and Asia.

"Our main drive for the reopening is rare and threatened flora," explained Taylor, shortly before heading off to plant an Australian palm.

"You don't go pick them up from the shop, it's a bit of an ordeal. "We're really lucky we've got the Millennium Seed Bank 20 miles down the road. I've been on the phone to them, emailing them and getting all these plants. "We've got about 50 species that are rare and threatened," he explained, including plants that no longer occur in the natural world.

One of the rarest plants on display will be the South African Encephalartos woodii, a palm-like cycad with leathery, green leaves. Only one such specimen was ever found growing in the wild, and it has long-since disappeared from the natural world. Signs will inform visitors about the threats to flora, including changing land use, invasive plants brought in from different ecosystems and deforestation. New ventilation and an upgraded heating system, largely fired by nearby bio-mass boilers, have both been installed to

help the plants flourish, although some treasured specimens were unable to make the move.

"We had a big Jubaea (palm) that was 160 years old," said Taylor. "We discussed for a long, long time about what we could do, but it was going to burst through the glass," he explained. "There's no way a plant that had been growing inside for 160 years would have been able to be moved outside. So sadly we lost a real big individual specimen." With a new maintenance plan in place, Kew expects to go 25 years before having to carry out any more major work. The Grade I listed structure still benefits from its robust Victorian engineering. "The key columns, the key structure is all original and we haven't had to do a lot of work to it," said Williams. "They'll last for another 100 years. It's a big solid building, it's not going anywhere!" — AFP

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2018



People celebrate as the Zulu Parade runs through New Orleans on Mardi Gras, February 13, 2018. — AFP

Feng shui masters predict claws out in Year of Dog

As the Chinese zodiac switches into the Year of the Dog later this week, Hong Kong feng shui experts predict anything but a walk in the park for global leaders. Born in another dog year, 1946, United States President Donald Trump faces a run of bad luck, according to sooth-sayers, as his zodiac animal clashes with 2018's canine theme. Feng shui—literally meaning “wind-water”—is influential in many parts of Asia, where people adjust their lives and carefully position items such as a cup of wine or pieces of crystal in offices and homes to maximize their luck and wealth.

The philosophy says that all events are dictated by the varying balances in the five elements that make up the universe: metal, wood, water, fire and earth. Trump's birth date makes him a “fire dog”, but 2018 is an “earth dog” year, a mismatch of ele-

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The star affects communication, it causes gossip and misunderstanding

ments. The fire in Trump's own birth chart will foment and affect his health, says feng shui master Thierry Chow, while his words—the fire element also represents speech—may bring about “real problems” and tangible consequences. “The elements are too much fire and too much earth, so that's going to be causing him imbalance in his fortune,” Chow told AFP.

Chow uses the “flying star” system to make her predictions based on constellation positions, foreseeing more tensions between the US and North Korea, which is afflicted by the most malevolent number five star. She also warned of the risk of crossed wires between Trump and China on the thorny issues of trade and the economy. “The seventh star is falling onto the east side—the star affects communication, it causes gossip and misunderstanding,” says Chow.



Feng shui master Thierry Chow, working in her office in Hong Kong ahead of the Lunar New Year.

'Duty and loyalty'

Feng shui runs through life in Hong Kong, with many people seeking advice from masters before making important life decisions, from picking a wedding date to choosing a new home. Major companies also employ their own feng shui consultants to dictate interior designs and give



investment advice. Each year, brokerage firm CLSA comes out with its own Feng Shui Index, predicting what the next 12 months holds for the business world. In 2018, it divined that the internet, utilities and technology sectors would perform with flying colors. All are categorized as “fire-related” industries, and will do particularly well between May and July, feng shui experts said.

However, with the city's bourse going through a rollercoaster of highs and lows, the brokerage masters advised a cool head to navigate the earth dog market. “The dog represents duty and loyalty and is a sign of defence and protection,” it said in its public predictions. “Entrepreneurs should stick with their most loyal clients, and investors are advised not to bite off more than they can chew.” Away from politics and finance, Chow predicted a happy wedding for Britain's Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, who will tie the knot in May. The earth element represents royalty in the Chinese calendar and combined with the image of a candle associated with May in the traditional almanac the elements are aligned for a day of celebration. “I think it will be very smooth—it will bring very good things to the country and good energy to the world,” Chow said of the marriage. — AFP

GOODBYE TO ROMANCE: INDONESIAN CITIES BAN VALENTINE'S DAY



Indonesian police officers detain unmarried couples (left, wearing helmets) after a raid in Surabaya yesterday. — AFP

Valentine's Day was banned in some Indonesian cities yesterday as police rounded up amorous couples, giving the official kiss-off to a tradition which critics say doesn't deserve any love in the Muslim-majority nation. The prohibitions come amid concerns that traditionally tolerant Indonesia is taking a sharp fundamentalist turn, by pushing to make premarital sex—including gay sex—illegal and punishable with jail time. Yesterday authorities in the country's second-biggest city Surabaya briefly detained about two dozen couples during a raid to sniff out any sign of Valentine's Day celebrations. They were expected to be released with a reprimand.

Mataram city on the tourist island of Lombok issued its own Valentine's Day ban and ordered police to raid schools in the hunt for passionate students unable to keep their hands off each other. Romantic parties at hotels and cafes were left alone, according to authorities. Syamsu Rizal, the deputy mayor of Makassar on the island of Sulawesi, said his city prohibited Valentine's celebrations, while Depok on the outskirts of Jakarta followed suit. “It has never been declared by the government to be a celebration in the country” and the ban would prevent hanky-panky among students, Rizal said.

Makassar has imposed bans on Valentine's Day for the past several years. In 2017 city authorities raided convenience stores to seize condoms in a bid to stop teenagers from having sex on February 14. At least 10 cities across the world's biggest Muslim-majority nation issued full or partial bans on Valentine's Day celebrations. Aceh province, the only place in Indonesia that imposes Islamic law, issued a fresh Valentine's prohibition yesterday, citing religious norms. It has ordered bans in previous years. — AFP



Feng shui master Thierry Chow, with a luopan, or Chinese compass, at her office in Hong Kong ahead of the Lunar New Year. — AFP photos