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Saudi shakeup sees younger generation, woman elevated

Saudi crown prince to visit Britain on March 7

RIYADH/LONDON: Saudi Arabia has replaced some of its top military officers in a shake-up that elevates a younger generation, brings a woman into a senior government job and tightens Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's grip on power. In a reshuffle announced late on Monday, the military chief of staff, air defense and land forces heads and senior defense and interior ministry officials were removed. Tamadur bint Youssef Al-Ramah became deputy labor minister, a rare high-level job for a woman in the deeply conservative kingdom.

The overhaul was a nod to a younger generation, analysts said, in what has become a hallmark of the crown prince's approach to ruling youthful Saudi Arabia, where patriarchal traditions have long made power the preserve of the old. The appointment of a woman at the labor ministry is part of efforts to modernize and promote a more moderate form of Islam.

The crown prince, who at 32 is also defense

minister and heir apparent, has promised reforms to wean Saudi Arabia off oil exports, create jobs and open up Saudis' cloistered lifestyles. The latest personnel changes were decreed by King Salman and published in state media. No reason was given but the changes appear to have enabled Prince Mohammed to put his personal stamp of authority on key levers of the military.

The new military chief of staff was named as First Lieutenant Fayyad bin Hamed Al-Ruwayli. His predecessor, First Lieutenant Abdelrahman bin Saleh Al-Banyan, was retired and made a royal advisor. The decrees included adopting a new strategy to restructure the defense ministry for improved organization and governance, but provided few details. Prince Mohammed has said it is "unacceptable" that high military spending has not translated into better performance.

Government officials insist the revamp is not

prompted by the short-term problems facing the military in Yemen but is part of a long-term strategy that has been years in the making. "The most significant order issued by King Salman was approval of the Ministry of Defense development plan," tweeted Faisal bin Farhan, a senior adviser at the Saudi embassy in Washington, referring to Monday's royal decrees. "This multiyear effort, which had been under review for months encompasses all elements of the ministry including organization, force structure and long term procurement."

Banyan's retirement comes after he inaugurated a global arms exhibition this week in the Saudi capital Riyadh by the Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI), the state-owned defense company. "A military transformation is underway in Saudi Arabia," Theodore Karasik, a senior advisor at the consultancy Gulf States Analytics, told AFP.

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RIYADH: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman yesterday received senior officers who were appointed and promoted to new military ranks. — SPA

5 lawmakers submit general amnesty law

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Five opposition lawmakers yesterday submitted a draft law calling to pardon all those jailed for storming the National Assembly building over six years ago. MPs Adel Al-Damkhi, Omar Al-Tabtabaei, Ali Al-Deqbasi, Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei and Osama Al-Shaheen demanded that the draft legislation be discussed and approved urgently. The first article of the law calls for granting a pardon to those jailed for the incidents that took place on Nov 16 and 17, 2011, a reference to the storming of the Assembly building by opposition demonstrators following a protest outside the building.

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Courts tackle all crimes with equal zeal: MP

KUWAIT: The murder of a Filipina maid whose body was found in a freezer in Kuwait has triggered outrage and prompted Manila to impose a departure ban for its citizens planning to work in the state. But the head of Kuwait's parliamentary human rights committee, Adel Al-Damkhi, says the judiciary does not discriminate when it comes to crimes in Kuwait. "There have been several horrific incidents on both sides, but crimes committed by Kuwaitis are more prominent in the media than crimes committed by the maids," Damkhi said. He called the murder of Joanne Demafelis "a heinous crime". "The suspects have been arrested and will be tried, just as any Kuwaitis who attack their workers will be punished," he said.

Gulf countries have long drawn harsh

criticism for their treatment of laborers and maids. Attorney Mohammed Al-Humaidi, director of the Kuwait Society for Human Rights, said his group regularly receives calls for help from Filipinas with abusive employers. "While we have a deal with a legal bureau which represents workers and maids in court, the unfortunate reality is that many calls for help do not even reach us," he said.

But the estimated 252,000 Filipinos and Filipinas already working in Kuwait must weigh their fear of sharing the fate of Demafelis against the potential loss of vital income for their families. Many have relatives back home who depend on remittances to survive, and some say they are forced to choose between their own wellbeing and that of their children.

Luzviminda has worked in a hair salon in central Kuwait City since 2013 to support her five children, who live with her mother in the Philippines. Despite being rattled by news of her compatriot's murder, the 40-year-old told AFP going home was not an option. "I need the money," she said as she

strolled through a park in the city. "My eldest son started university this year to study business administration. It's expensive, and there's no way I would have been able to afford it if I had stayed in my country."

Demafelis' body was discovered in an abandoned flat in Kuwait, bearing what officials said appeared to be signs of torture. A Lebanese-Syrian couple suspected of the young maid's murder were arrested last week in the Syrian capital Damascus, after an Interpol manhunt. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte responded to the murder by accusing employers of raping and starving their Filipina workers, and announced a ban on the country's citizens heading to Kuwait for work. Duterte also launched a repatriation plan.

Kuwait, whose image was dealt a serious blow, earlier offered an amnesty to illegal workers wanting to fly back home. As of last week, 2,500 Filipinos had taken advantage of the amnesty and left, while another 2,500 were awaiting repatriation.

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Adel Al-Damkhi



Mohammad Al-Humaidi

Rock art mystery: Ancient sculptures in Saudi desert

AL-JOUF, Saudi Arabia: Squinting in the Saudi desert, Hussain Al-Khalifah points at his unprecedented archaeological discovery - camels carved on russet-hued rocky spurs that could shed new light on the evolution of rock art. Around a dozen humped sculptures, some of them damaged from erosion and vandalism, are possibly around 2,000 years old and were recently found in a private property along a desert crossing in the northern province of Al-Jouf.

Chiseled on three rocky spurs, the sculptures, which also depict equids, or hoofed mammals, show a level of artistic skill unseen

in other rock art forms in the Saudi desert. They could help unravel the mysteries of ancient life in the Arabian peninsula. "They are a work of artistry and creativity," Khalifah said, giving AFP a tour of the desolate area in Al-Jouf, now well known in archeological circles as "the camel site".

Khalifah, part of a Franco-Saudi research team that explored the site in 2016 and 2017, said he accidentally discovered the carvings some years ago when a local friend told him about a "camel-shaped mountain". "Instead when I visited the area, I found camels were carved in the mountain outcrops. This is truly unique," he said. Camels - for centuries venerated as the "ship of the desert" - are a familiar motif in artworks from the kingdom.

But the three dimensional engravings in Al-Jouf, some featuring only part of a camel's body such as the hooves, differ from those discovered at other Saudi sites. Many are perched high on the outcrops and would have

required ropes or scaffolding. One engraving in particular stands out - a camel facing what appears to be a donkey, mule or horse, animals that have rarely been represented in the region's rock art.

"The three dimensional carvings show great skill in their level of naturalism and their sheer size," Maria Guagnin, from the Germany-based Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, told AFP. "This may potentially change our understanding of prehistoric population dynamics and cultural traits." But the site is shrouded in mystery, with little information on who created the carvings or the tools they used. Khalifah said the closest may be the Nabateans, a nomadic Arab tribe known for founding the city of Petra in modern-day Jordan that was carved out of sandstone desert cliffs. The discovery has shone a spotlight on Saudi Arabia's rich bedouin heritage.

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SAKAKA, Saudi Arabia: A picture taken on Feb 22, 2018 shows carved sculptures of a donkey facing the partial head of a camel at the site of an archaeological discovery in Saudi Arabia's northwestern Jawf province. — AFP

5G wireless race heats up

BARCELONA: The race to bring super-fast 5G wireless services to market is heating up with the first commercial deployments of the much-anticipated technology expected at the end of the year. Talk about 5G's potential to pave the way to a world of self-driving cars, lightning-fast video downloads and smart cities have dominated the Mobile World Congress for years. But at the event in Barcelona this year, companies were full of concrete announcements of early versions of 5G uses.

The first commercial 5G roll-outs began this year and next in the United States, Korea and Japan, and the wireless industry is count-

ing on the new technology to trigger a wave of growth in equipment sales and mobile services. China's Huawei unveiled in Barcelona what it said is the world's first commercial chipset that meet the standards of 5G wireless networks, which are better suited for virtual reality and high definition video.

KT Corp, South Korea's largest telecoms firm which exhibited several 5G services at the Pyeongchang Winter Games, displayed at the congress what it said was the world's first 5G tablet. The telecoms industry only agreed to the first common 5G standards in December and analysts cautioned that the development of the network still has a long way to go. Much of what is being billed as 5G in fact "resembles more LTE++", or an improved version of the existing 4G network in use in most developed nations, said Carole Manero, director of studies at IDATE, a French think tank on the digital

economy. "There is a lot of marketing use of 5G," she added.

The next common 5G standards will only be announced later this year so "what is being proposed now is just a first version, many evolutions will follow, as was the case with 4G," said BMI Research analyst Dexter Thillien. Tech firms are spending heavily to develop products that take advantage of the network's possibilities. "We are investing heavily in 5G, nearly 600 million dollars per year in research and development," said Huawei executive director and president of products and solutions Ryan Ding.

Telecoms operators are also investing heavily to develop 5G networks for fear of falling behind their competitors. 5G will account for 14 percent of global wireless connections by 2025, according to GSMA, the global mobile operators association.

Continued on Page 11



BARCELONA: People walk by a 5G stand at the Mobile World Congress (MWC), the world's biggest mobile fair, on Monday. — AFP

Local

Crown Prince thanks citizens, residents on national greetings

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah thanked all Kuwaitis and residents who congratulated His Highness on the National Day and the Liberation Day through cables and phone calls. In this occasion, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad noted the heroism and sacrifice of Kuwait's martyrs, who defended their country with their own lives. He also hoped Kuwait would see more development under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to the King of Morocco Mohammad VI after the success of an operation he underwent in Paris, France, praying to Allah Almighty to bestow him with everlasting health and wellness. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. — KUNA



VIENNA: Chairman of Kuwait's IICO Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq addressing a KAICIID-hosted international conference. — KUNA

Kuwait advocates tolerance, interfaith peace: Official

VIENNA: The Vienna-based King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) is instrumental in promoting interfaith harmony and cross-cultural co-existence, a Kuwaiti official said yesterday. Addressing a KAICIID-hosted international conference on "Interfaith Dialogue for Peace", Chairman of Kuwait's International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq said the meeting was a testament to the center's contributions towards cultural interaction and fellowship between people of different faiths. The Amiri Diwan Advisor cited ongoing turmoil in many parts of the world, which underscores the need of such events that provide a platform for dialogue over efforts to root out violence and espouse the merits of harmony. Maatouq went on to express hope that the conference would yield concrete plans to build peace among religions and reject all forms of intolerance and bigotry. Up to 250 delegates from 50 countries are taking part in the conference that kicked off on Monday. — KUNA

British Ambassador congratulates Kuwait

KUWAIT: British Ambassador Michael Davenport released the following statement, congratulating Kuwait on its 57th National Day and 27th Liberation Day: "I would like to congratulate His Highness the Amir and the people of Kuwait on Kuwait's National Day and Liberation Day. Kuwait and the United Kingdom have enjoyed ties of friendship for over two hundred and fifty years. Next year marks the 120th anniversary of the Treaty of Friendship between our two countries. Since Kuwait's independence, our relations have gone from strength to strength in all fields. And the United Kingdom has been proud to stand by Kuwait as an ally and friend in difficult times. I have been struck in my first few months here by the breadth and depth of our very precious relationship. We have every reason to be confident that it will continue to prosper for future generations."



British Ambassador Michael Davenport

KRCS launches aid campaign in Syria's Eastern Ghouta

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has launched a donation campaign for Syrians trapped in Eastern Ghouta after recent incidents in the area. The campaign comes in solidarity with Syrians in the region who are experiencing hard conditions, KRCS Secretary General Maha Al-Barjas said yesterday. The society's cadres and volunteers have been mobilized to secure success for the aid drive, she added.

The KRCS has offered food aid to the Ghouta people over the past two days, in cooperation with the Turkish relief foundation, Barjas said. She added that humanitarian efforts would continue to support the afflicted people. According to Barjas, the KRCS is one of the "most capable" agencies to deliver humanitarian aid to the people in Ghouta thanks to the long and deep experience the society's cadres and staff enjoy. She

urged citizens and expats, and public and private institutions to take part in the four-day campaign at the KRCS's headquarters, to help alleviate sufferings of the Syrian people.

EU thanks Kuwait

Separately, the European Union expressed its thanks to Kuwait for exerting all efforts to get a consensus on an UNSC resolution for a ceasefire in Syria on Saturday. "I would like to thank Kuwait the role that it played as a chair of the (UNSC) Council," EU High Representative Federica Mogherini told a press conference after a meeting of EU foreign ministers on Monday in Brussels. She also thanked all EU members which are currently members of the Security Council "for working night and day literally for achieving consensus on resolution that

for us is very important, in particular Sweden. "We expect a full and immediate implementation of the UNSC," said the EU foreign policy chief.

Mogherini said she will send a letter to the three foreign ministers of the guarantors of the Astana process - Russia, Iran and Turkey - to work for the implementation of UNSC resolution 2401. She noted that the implementation of the de-escalation zones was decided in Astana, Kazakhstan, and for which they have a role to play. UNSC approved resolution 2401 - co-sponsored by Kuwait and Sweden - to establish a 30-day truce in Syria to allow delivery of humanitarian aid for the needy. The humanitarian situation in Syria, especially in Eastern Ghouta, has been deteriorating and the international community has been appealing for a cessation of hostilities to help the civilians. — KUNA

Tanzania hails commitment to human welfare by Kuwait

DODOMA: Tanzanian Vice President Samia Hassan yesterday heaped praise on Kuwait for its profound contributions towards humanitarian causes, saying she was grateful for Kuwait as a benefactor to her country. Hassan's remarks came during a donation drive organized by Kuwait's embassy in the African nation to raise funds for medical aid, read a statement by the Kuwaiti mission. The Tanzanian official pointed out that the aid has been allocated for disabled people and others who desperately need it, the statement noted. Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ambassador to Tanzania Jassim Najem revealed that his country is financing a \$500,000 aid program for the disabled, particularly, people suffering from Albinism. He went on to say that Kuwaiti aid will continue to pour into Tanzania, in yet another altruistic endeavor that gives much credence to the country's UN-bestowed moniker of "humanitarian center." — KUNA



DODOMA: Tanzanian Vice President Samia Hassan (center) inspects a wheelchair donated by Kuwait's embassy, as Kuwait's Ambassador to Tanzania Jassim Najem (right) looks on. — KUNA

Kuwait to help address water crisis in Aden

RIYADH: Officials from Kuwait and Aden signed an agreement to transport water from Abyan to Aden to permanently address the water supply problem in the Yemeni port city. The agreement, signed by the 'Kuwait By Your Side Campaign' and Public Authority for Water and Local Rule in Aden, aimed at fixing the water pipeline which transports water from Al-Ro'a well, in Abyan governorate, to Aden via the province of Lahj. The campaign said in a statement the 58-kilometer-long pipeline is designed to transport 13,000-15,000 cubic meters of water every day.

The campaign "is designed to improve infrastructure and services through many projects, including the water project which link Abyan with Aden," Ghassan Al-Zamki, representative from Aden Governorate, said in a statement. He said the project, part of many Kuwait-funded ventures nationwide, would end water crisis which was caused by the hostilities, that destroyed pipelines and water wells. Tawfiq Hussein, who represent the campaign, said the project "will end the water crisis in Aden, and it is one of the urgent interventions by the campaign." Hussein said the cam-



RIYADH: Officials from Kuwait and Yemen sign an agreement to transport water to Aden. — KUNA

campaign renovated over 35 water wells in Abyan governorate, and installed pumps to provide fresh water for people and irrigation. Kuwait By Your Side Campaign

has been carrying out many water projects in Abyan, in addition to providing food, education and health services, and shelters for the homeless. — KUNA

'Arab states should coordinate to clamp down on terrorists'

CAIRO: Fighting terrorism and terrorist organizations is a task that should be undertaken by all Arab states, the Arab League affirmed yesterday. Ambassador Fadhel Jawad, Assistant Secretary General for Legal Affairs, made that statement during the 23rd meeting of Arab terrorism experts. Ambassador Jawad indicated the necessity to dry up terrorism resources by implementing relevant Arab treaties "which constitute the main foundation for common efforts at this level in addition to cooperation with regional and international organizations." Confronting terrorism and its various forms and means has become the international community main preoccupation, Ambassador Jawad said.

Terrorism does not only target a specific state or region and its destructive outcome cross borders of states and continents, added the assistant secretary general in his statement at the meeting. The session's agenda tackles combating and annihilating terrorism, phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and examining its impact on Arab states as well as means of confronting it, he added. He also indicated that the Arab states could coordinate within framework of the Arab Treaty on Combating Cybercrime to combat these violent groups.

Health summit

Separately, Kuwait's Health Minister Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah arrived in Cairo yesterday to head his country's delegation to the 49th session of the Arab Health Ministers Council, which begins today. The Kuwaiti minister, along with a delegation accompanying him, were received upon arrival by Kuwait's Permanent

Representative to the Arab League Ambassador Ahmad Al-Baker. The Arab Health Ministers are expected to discuss a number of pressing issues facing the health-care industry in the region, in a meeting that will also shed light on Arab physicians' most notable accomplishments.

Peace process

In other news, a number of Arab foreign ministers expressed their satisfaction over the outcome of a min-

on this," he said.

"We must send a strong signal from this meeting to the US administration that it must take into consideration a number of issues before presenting any possible plans. Like the recognition of East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestine state, 1967 borders, stop to settlements," said Maliki. He warned that if the US does not take these issues into consideration, nobody will accept any US initiatives.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir also said that the position of the EU and the Arab League were similar regarding the peace and process and added that the two sides will continue their efforts to revive the peace process.

Health Minister attends Arab session

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, who chairs the Arab League Committee on Jerusalem, said the Arab position on Jerusalem is clear that East Jerusalem is the capital of a Palestinian state, and added that the final status of Jerusalem should be decided through direct negotiations based on international legality. "We are worried about the situation in Jerusalem," he said referring to the decision by the heads of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, considered the holiest site in Christianity, to shut its doors Sunday to protest against a new tax and a Israeli legislation that will allow the government to confiscate lands sold by the church. The Israeli step threatens the existence of Christianity in Jerusalem, the Arab existence in Jerusalem and the Arab-Muslim-Christian identity, he warned. "Our meeting with the EU is a proof that we all agree on the Arab strategic choice for peace but to achieve this the Palestinians must have their own state with East Jerusalem as its capital," he added. — KUNA



Local

Govt ready to present vision to unify public sector salaries: MP

Housing projects form a large segment of Kuwait's development plan: Official

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Government representatives informed the parliament's 'replacement and employment' committee that a vision is ready to unify salaries of public sector staff, while job descriptions of 4,000 positions have been set to be submitted to the parliament as part of the strategic payroll bill, MP Saleh Ashour said. Whether the government is serious or not on passing the bill will be clear during its next meeting with the parliamentary financial affairs committee, Ashour noted.

The new job descriptions will only apply to those recruited in the public sector after the law is passed and published in the official gazette, Ashour said. In addition, a law on regulating senior positions will be finalized in parallel with the strategic payroll bill in order to set the maximum wage for senior state officials in the positions of assistant undersecretaries and higher at KD 6,000, in addition to cancelling all other allowances and incentives for them, the lawmaker pointed out.

Residential areas

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) plans new residential areas for citizens with both service and investment elements, as housing projects form a large segment of the state's development plan, PAHW's official spokesperson Ibrahim Al-Nashi said.

A new system was used to update the list of housing application, Nashi said, adding that the number of housing welfare applications had dropped from 110,000 to 96,000 thanks to the housing units distributed in recent years. Applicants have to be present in Kuwait to have units allocated to them, with a few exceptions for diplomats and scholars abroad, Nashi said.

Credit Bank

Kuwait Credit Bank's Deputy Chairman and General Manager Salah Al-Mudhaf stressed that construction of the bank's new headquarters in South Surra is proceeding according to schedule, adding that the building is expected to be officially completed and handed over during the first half of 2020. Speaking to reporters following a tour of the site, Mudhaf said construction is progressing well and that the damage caused by a fire last Ramadan has been restored. He noted that an international firm specialized in studying fires was hired to examine the affected parts of the site and determine the best ways to undo its effects. He added that remarkable efforts had been exerted to overcome the fire incident and make up for the time lost.

Mudhaf said studies showed that the



MP Saleh Ashour

parking building had not been affected by the fire and that work was in progress in the basement. Moreover, he stressed that touring the site during the national anniversaries was a message of appreciation to those who work around the clock - even on holidays and vacations - to meet the project's schedule. Representative of the project manager Ali Dashti said around 35 percent of the project has been completed. He added that changing orders had to be made to repair the damage caused by the fire, noting that the entire cost was covered by insurance.

KD 14,820
A court issued a ruling in favor of a citizen working for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), entitling him to judicial

powers, and incentive allowances retroactively since April 1, 2012 - a total sum of KD 14,820, Al-Rowwad Legal Consultancy's lawyer Nasser Al-Ajmi said yesterday.

PAAET offers library services to 'special needs' students



Dr Latifa Al-Kandari

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) has launched the 'Light and Hope Corner' at the library of Basic Education College, to help students with special needs. The initiative aims to assist students obtain and enhance their academic, research, educational and social capabilities, PAAET Assistant Dean for Students Affairs Dr Latifa Al-Kandari said in a press statement. It includes a multitude of general and spe-

cialized books, and encyclopedias, covering science, religion and education and other fields, she added. It also offers many audio and Braille books, she added. This is an ambitious program in Arabic and English to support the students with special needs at the College, as well as library visitors, giving them access to various sources of knowledge, Kandari said. — KUNA

Officer hurt in reckless driver's chase

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: A policeman suffered a broken foot when a driverless car struck him in Um Al-Haijan. The car owner was later arrested after he escaped from traffic police, leaving the car's transmission in neutral. A security source explained that while a squad car was passing through the area, a car whose driver committed several traffic violations was noticed. But the driver did not heed orders to stop and drove off instead. He then stopped in front of his house and disappeared, leaving his car running. While the policeman was checking the car, it started rolling and broke his foot. Detectives later arrested the suspect and sent him to concerned authorities. Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dousary visited the injured officer at Adan Hospital yesterday to check on his condition.

Building fire

Firemen evacuated a residential complex yesterday as fire raged in a fifth floor apartment. Farwaniya and Subhan fire stations responded to a call and dealt with the blaze. No injuries were reported.

Thieves at large

Police are looking for three thieves

who stabbed and robbed an Indian man in Sulaibiya. The victim, who suffered several injuries, was taken to Farwaniya Hospital and admitted inside the intensive care unit in a stable condition. The victim said KD 436 and 500 Indian rupees were stolen from him.

Revelers arrested

Three young men were involved in a fight as they were celebrating the national days. A security source said one of the men was angry with another for throwing a water balloon on him and a third intervened, leading to a fight that police broke up. Policemen discovered that the three, all citizens, were under the influence of drugs. The three were arrested and sent to concerned authorities.

Smugglings foiled

Customs officers foiled three separate attempts to smuggle out various food supplies by three persons, two Egyptians and one Jordanian, and all were arrested for attempting to smuggle subsidized goods. The items included milk powder, oil, rice, tomato paste and others.

Fake cop caught

A Syrian man impersonating a detective was arrested by Jahra police in Kabd. Patrol police found the suspect in his car, and when he was questioned, they discovered that he was under the influence of drugs. The suspect had shabu (meth) and a police flasher, which he used to impersonate detectives and rob expats. He was sent to concerned authorities.



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dousary visits an injured officer at Adan Hospital yesterday.



Firemen tackle a blaze reported in a fifth floor apartment yesterday.

Kuwait Times

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Local

Kuwaiti national fervor sweeps over missions abroad

Embassies celebrate 57th National Day and 27th Liberation Day



KUALA LUMPUR: Revelers gather for a group photo during Kuwait's embassy in Kuala Lumpur's celebration of the 57th National Day and 27th Liberation Day. —KUNA

KUWAIT: The gaieties of Kuwait's national celebrations continue to pervade its overseas missions, as the Gulf country marks its 57th National Day and 27th Liberation Day, in addition to the 12th anniversary of His Highness the Amir's ascendancy.

Kuwait's embassy in the Indonesian capital Jakarta held a gala yesterday, where a number of senior government officials joined a bevy of Kuwaiti diplomats to get the festivities underway, read a statement by the mission.

Abdulwahab Al-Saqer, Kuwait's ambassador to the world's largest island nation, said bilateral ties are outstanding and date back five decades, expressing hope for more progress in relations between the two countries.

Vietnam

In Vietnam, Kuwait's Consulate General celebrated the joyous occasion with much fanfare, as consul Khaled Al-Mutairi took the opportunity to deliver a speech on his country's ties with the Southeast Asian nation, conveying his heartfelt congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the Kuwaiti people.

Brunei

Kuwait's embassy in the Sultanate of Brunei joined in the celebrations as well, as ambassador Fahad Al-Thefeeri wished his country continued prosperity, security and peace. The Kuwaiti envoy described bilateral ties as "exceptional," saying His Highness the Amir's historic visit to the sultanate back in 2016 was the catalyst that helped transform relations.

Mumbai

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Consul General in India's financial capital Mumbai, Mansour Al-Alaimi, presided over a cultural festival in the sprawling city, which included a triviriate of photographic exhibitions that brought together notable personalities and a number of international diplomats. In neighboring Bangladesh, Kuwaiti ambassador Adel Hayat used the occasion to hold a reception for a number of top government officials as well as chief lawmakers in the country.

Malaysia

In Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait's Ambassador Saad Al-Asousi led a reception marking the occasions, grouping diplomats, dignitaries and Kuwaiti students. He extended congratulations to the top leaders, namely His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as the Kuwaiti people on the national days. During the ceremony, Malaysian Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan

Kassim praised the distinguished bilateral relations between the countries.

Slovakia

In Slovakia, the Kuwaiti mission in the capital Bratislava held a similar reception, comprising senior Slovakian officials. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Slovakia Essa Al-Shimali conveyed sincere congratulation to the people of Kuwait on the joyous occasion. He pointed out that ties between Kuwait and Slovakia have made palpable headway in recent times, citing an agreements for economic and health cooperation signed by both nations.

Sudan

On Monday, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Sudan Bassam Al-Qabandi held a reception, which was attended by ministers, diplomats, businesspersons and officials of civil society organizations. In a speech, the ambassador extended congratulations to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and the Kuwaiti people.

Qabandi prayed to Allah to maintain security, progress and prosperity of Kuwait, greeting martyrs who offered their souls for the liberation of Kuwait. He noted that Kuwait has represented a platform for development across the world through carrying out many projects, which are highly appreciated by the international community. Such projects prompted the United Nations to honor His Highness the Amir as a "Humanitarian Leader," he stated.

The Kuwaiti envoy pointed out that the Arab region is facing many challenges that necessitate cooperation, affirming Kuwait's supportive role aiming to counter threats surrounding the region and work to settle disputes peacefully as well as discard violence and terrorism.

He touched upon the bilateral relations between Sudan and Kuwait, referring that they have witnessed continued development, thanks to the support and attention by His Highness the Amir and Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

Sudanese Finance Minister Mohammad Al-Rekabi meanwhile congratulated His Highness the Amir, the State of Kuwait, the Kuwaiti government and all Kuwaitis on this great occasion, praying to Allah to maintain stability and prosperity of Kuwait. He hoped for further development in the bilateral ties, voicing his appreciation of Kuwait's continued support to Sudan to set up several strategic projects and successful investments in the fields of communication, oil and real estate. On the sidelines of the festival, the embassy held an exhibition on humanitarian activities of charities in Sudan.

Jordan

In Amman, Kuwait's Ambassador to Jordan Dr Hamad Al-Duaij hosted a function to celebrate Kuwait's national days in the presence of a large number of Jordanian officials, Jordan-based diplomats from the GCC states and



A group photo taken during Kuwait's embassy in Slovakia's celebration.

other friendly countries, and representatives of the civil society institutions.

Ambassador Al-Duaij congratulated His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister on the national days. This occasion materializes the achievements made by the Kuwaiti people under the wise leadership of the country, he said in statements.



Kuwait Charge d'Affaires to Cambodia Meteb Al-Osaimi delivers a speech during a reception held to celebrate Kuwait's national days.

He lauded the exemplary relations between Kuwait and the Kingdom of Jordan on all levels. In the meantime, Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Jamal Al-Sarayra congratulated the Kuwaiti leaders and people on the national occasion. He said that both countries enjoy deep-rooted historical relations that kept growing in the course of time.

Cyprus

Kuwait Embassy in Cyprus' reception was attended by Acting President Demetris Syllouris, Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulidis, Arab ambassadors, as well as politicians, religious figures, ranking officers and economists.

Kasoulidis, addressing the event, commended His Highness the Amir for his role at regional and international levels, as well as mediations to solve conflicts. He praised Kuwait for hosting a recent conference on reconstruction of Iraq. "His Highness the Amir's humanitarian endeavors

were crowned with his Humanitarian Leader title bestowed by the UN," he noted. Kasoulidis said he visited Kuwait last year to celebrate 50th anniversary of launch of diplomatic between Kuwait and Cyprus, during which he met with His Highness the Amir. Kuwait Ambassador to Cyprus Waleed Al-Kanderi said Kuwait and Cyprus enjoyed strong relationship. He expressed appreciation to Cyprus support of Kuwait and its people during the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990-91. Kanderi also thanked the European country for supporting candidacy of Kuwait for UN Security Council's membership. He said Kuwait supported all efforts to reach a settlement for the Cyprus issue based on relevant UN resolutions.

Azerbaijan

Kuwait embassy in Azerbaijan held a reception attended by Minister of Sport and Youth Azad Rahimov as a representative of the President. Rahimov conveyed greetings of President Ilham Aliyev to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and the Kuwaiti people on their national days.

Rahimov said Azerbaijan was keen on further cementing relations with Kuwait in different spheres, including political, economic, cultural and tourism. Kuwait Ambassador in Baku Saud Al-Roumi addressed the reception and talked about development and prosperity in his country under leadership of His Highness the Amir.

Cambodia

Kuwait Charge d'Affaires to Cambodia Meteb Al-Osaimi also held a reception to celebrate his country's national days. He said Kuwait and Cambodia enjoyed excellent relations, which were initiated 24 years ago. Osaimi said Kuwait was keen on supporting the needy in the Kingdom of Cambodia through philanthropic and development projects. A photo gallery was held to show Kuwait charitable projects in Cambodia.

Switzerland

Kuwait Ambassador to Switzerland Bader Al-Tunaib said Kuwait and Bern have many things in common which contributed to successful relations that spanned over half a century. Tunaib, in a reception marking Kuwait's national days, said Kuwait was proud of his constitutional and parliamentary foundations, which were unique in the region. He said the fact many state officials, judges and economists were attending the reception reflected "the deep friendship between Kuwait and Switzerland at the government and parliamentary level." Swiss Assistant Undersecretary and Director of Middle East Affairs Ambassador Wolfgang Amadeus commended the important role Kuwait was playing in the UN Security Council, as well as its generous humanitarian contributions to the people in need around the world. —KUNA



Officials cut the cake during a reception held at the Kuwaiti embassy in Amman, Jordan to mark Kuwait's national days.



Officials cut the cake during a reception held at the Kuwaiti embassy in Khartoum, Sudan to mark Kuwait's national days.



Diplomats attend a reception hosted by Kuwait's embassy in Cyprus to celebrate the national days.

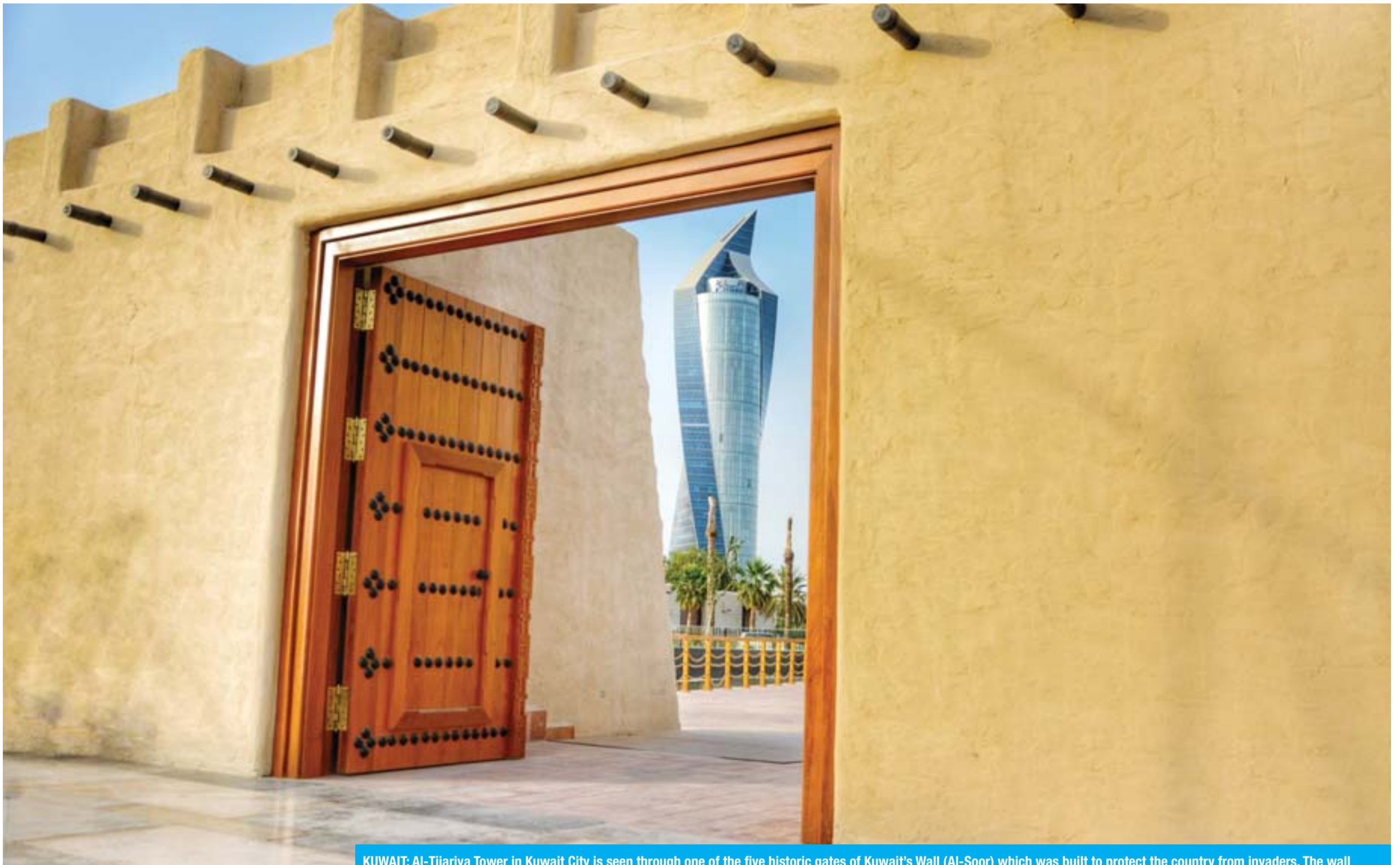


A traditional folklore Kuwaiti band performs during a reception hosted by Kuwait's Consul General in Mumbai, India.



A group photo taken during a reception hosted by Kuwait's embassy in Indonesia to celebrate Kuwait's national days.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Al-Tijariya Tower in Kuwait City is seen through one of the five historic gates of Kuwait's Wall (Al-Soor) which was built to protect the country from invaders. The wall came down in 1957, but the gates were kept to remain as landmarks of Kuwait. — KUNA photo

VIVA main sponsor of NUKS UK's annual conference



KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced its sponsorship of the annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) - United Kingdom branch. The event took place at the InterContinental London - The O2, from 23 until 25 February 2018, in the presence of the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Nasser Al-Roudan, VIVA's CEO, Engineer Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran, Ambassador of Kuwait in London Khaled Abdulaziz Al-Duwaisan and NUKS - UK Branch's President Fahed Khalifa Al-Hayfi.

The conference featured various cultural and entertainment activities, a religious seminar, a sports section, Al-Hamli play show, a political seminar, a national opera, including poetry competitions, drawing, photography and essay writing to motivate the participating students and develop their talents. In addition to VIVA contest presented by Mohammed Al-Sadani, where prizes and gifts were presented to participants who exceeded 1,000 students.

On this occasion, Badran said: "VIVA is sponsoring the annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti

Students, the UK branch, which brings together Kuwaiti students throughout the UK in an academic, cultural, social and entertaining atmosphere". He added: "We at VIVA always strive to foster and nurture activities, events and initiatives that enrich the experience of Kuwaiti students inside and outside Kuwait and our social responsibility at VIVA drives us to support them."

The National Union of Kuwaiti Students is considered to be the lone representative for the Kuwaiti students studying in the United Kingdom, as it is well known to be the oldest branch of the Union, established in London 1950. The students union aims to serve its members by demanding of protecting their rights, ensuring the successful encouragement of students in getting their scientific procurement.

VIVA is keen to continue its ongoing socially responsible role in the community in education, health, sport, environment and entrepreneurship, by spreading the spirit of goodness amongst Kuwaiti society. VIVA believes in taking a holistic approach to their CSR activities, one that engages its employees, and creates goodwill in their communities with a focus on helping to grow and develop the State of Kuwait.

Kuwait Airways needs revamping to compete: CEO



LONDON: Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) needs inclusive revamping in order to compete and make profits again, CEO Ibrahim Al-Khazzam said yesterday. Major efforts are required to salvage the Corporation from losses endured annually, mostly for reasons the current management is not directly linked to, Khazzam said on the sidelines of his visit to London.

"In order for Kuwait Airways to make profits and be part of the world's elite carriers, it needs a complement-free commercial strategy, as well as coordination and cooperation with Kuwait International Airport and the Interior Ministry," he noted. KAC board of April 2017 has drawn a commercial-based strategy, seeing it as a "lifeline" that would stir up all other sectors at the Corporation, he pointed out. KAC does not suffer from any technical problems; au contraire, it has highly-effi-

cient technical teams, Khazzam said.

He revealed that the national carrier had recently purchased 10 Boeing 777, 15 A320 and 10 A350 Airbuses with the aim to expand and commence new routes for next summer, including Tbilisi, Georgia and Trabzon, Turkey.

He also noted that, for the first time, the Corporation is collaborating with the Ministry of Higher Education in designating 180 seats for young Kuwaitis wishing to pursue a career in aviation. Established in 1953, KAC operates scheduled international services throughout the Middle East, to the Indian subcontinent, Europe, Southeast Asia and North America, from its main base at Kuwait International Airport. — KUNA

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'Beast from the East' hits Europe

Earthquake kills 14 in Papua New Guinea

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BANDA ACEH: People watch as Tjia Nyuk Hwa, 45, an Indonesian Christian, is publicly flogged outside a mosque in Banda Aceh yesterday, for playing a children's entertainment game seen as violating Islamic law. — AFP photos

Two Indonesian Christians flogged publicly

Christians accused of playing sharia-banned child's game

BANDA ACEH: Two Indonesian Christians were publicly flogged in conservative Aceh province yesterday for playing a children's entertainment game seen as violating Islamic law, as hundreds of onlookers ridiculed them and took pictures. The pair were among five people—including a couple whipped two dozen times each for showing affection in public—who were lashed with a rattan stick. Aceh is the only province in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country that imposes sharia law and people can be flogged for a range of offences—from gambling, to drinking alcohol to having gay sex or relations outside of marriage.

Yesterday, Dahlan Silitonga, 61, and Tjia Nyuk Hwa, 45, were flogged six and seven times respectively after being arrested for playing a long-stand-

ing game at a children's entertainment complex that lets users exchange coins for prizes or vouchers, including cash. The pair were accused of gambling while another man Ridwan MR got 19 lashes for being involved in the game. "This is to create a deterrent effect, in order for people not to repeat violations of Islamic sharia law," Banda Aceh's mayor Aminullah Usman said. "We purposely do it in front of the public... so it won't happen again."

About 300 spectators, including some two dozen tourists from neighboring Malaysia, jeered the gambling-accused trio as they were whipped on a makeshift stage outside a mosque. "You are old, show remorse," the crowd screamed. Non-Muslim Tjia Nyuk Hwa tried to hide her face in a specially provided white cloak with head-covering hijab. The

two Christians are among just a handful of non-Muslims to be punished under Aceh's strict religious law since it was adopted in 2001 as part of a deal with the central government to end a long-running insurgency.

In January, an Indonesian Christian was flogged for selling alcohol in the province at the tip of Sumatra island, which made headlines recently after local police publicly humiliated a group of transgender women. About 98 percent of Aceh's five million residents are Muslims subject to religious law. Non-Muslims who have committed an offence that violates both national and religious laws can choose to be prosecuted under either system. Christians and other non-Muslims sometimes choose a flogging to avoid a lengthy court process and jail term. — AFP



BANDA ACEH: Dahlan Silitonga, 61, an Indonesian Christian, is publicly flogged outside a mosque in Banda Aceh yesterday, for playing a children's entertainment game seen as violating Islamic law. — AFP

Survivor seeks change to law on reporting abuse

NEW DELHI: When she began an online petition from her home in Canada urging India to remove its three-year statute of limitations on reporting child abuse, Purnima Govindarajulu did not imagine it would resonate with so many in her home country. A year on, her change.org petition to end the statute of limitations has garnered more than 160,000 signatures, and she has been assured by India's minister for women and child development that the government will consider the matter.

"I was ready for a lonely fight when I started this, but the outpouring of survivors and the sheer number of them has been truly sobering," she said. "It is sad that so many people - men and women - are affected and did not have the chance to speak up," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation over the phone. Govindarajulu, 53, says she was abused by a male relative from the age of six to 13, in the southern Indian city of Chennai where she grew up.

She moved to Canada when she was 21. It wasn't until years later, while watching a television show on child abuse, that repressed memories surfaced and she realized she had been abused. She gathered her nerves and

told her family 20 years ago. No one doubted her accounts, and another cousin also spoke of being abused by the same man, who is now in his 70s, she said. But she was told she had no legal options to report him. On a visit to India about five years ago, seeing young children in the family home, she was determined to do something, because she feared for their safety, she said.

After many discussions with lawyers and the police in Canada and India, Govindarajulu decided to launch the online petition to call for a change in Indian legislation around sexual crimes. "Nothing changed for this man, and he has not faced any legal consequences for his actions, while I was traumatized for years," she said. "There is enough research to show victims of child abuse often do not speak up until many years later. They must have some legal route, no matter how much time has passed."

Taboo topic

A total of 106,958 crimes against children were reported in India in 2016, an increase of 14 percent from the previous year, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. India enacted The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in 2012. But sexual violence against children still remains a taboo topic, with most cases going unreported, activists say. Last year, a 10-year-old rape victim who was denied an abortion by India's top court gave birth, drawing renewed attention to sexual abuse of children in the country. She said she had been raped by an uncle. — Reuters

Warplanes strike Ghouta despite a five-hour truce

BEIRUT: Syrian government warplanes struck the eastern Ghouta region yesterday and Damascus accused rebels of shelling a safe route out, despite a Russian call for a five-hour truce that failed to halt one of the most devastating campaigns of the war. Two residents in the region told Reuters warplanes and helicopters were still launching strikes despite the Russian truce. Air strikes were also reported by a war monitoring group, although a Syrian military source denied them.

The United Nations said ongoing combat had made it impossible to bring in aid or rescue the wounded. "We have reports this morning there is continuous fighting in eastern Ghouta," UN humanitarian spokesman Jens Laerke said. "Clearly the situation on the ground is not such that convoys can go in or medical evacuations can go out." Hundreds of people have died during 10 days of government bombardment of the eastern Ghouta, an area of towns and farms on the outskirts of Damascus. The assault has been among the most devastating air campaigns of a war now entering its eighth year.

Russia declared yesterday's unilateral five-hour truce to open what it describes as a humanitarian corridor to evacuate wounded and let civilians escape from the besieged rebel-held enclave. Yesterday its military said it would guarantee the safety of any civilians who wished to leave. Residents in several towns in the district described a brief pause in fighting, but said bombardment swiftly resumed. In the town of Hammouriyeh a man who identified himself by his first name Mahmoud told Reuters helicopters and war-



GHOUTA, Syria: A general view taken from Damascus shows smoke rising from the rebel-held enclave of Eastern Ghouta following fresh air strikes and rocket fire yesterday. — AFP

planes were in the sky and conducting strikes.

Siraj Mahmoud, a spokesman for the Civil Defence rescue service, which is funded by Western governments and operates in rebel areas, said artillery and air strikes had hit the region. Syrian state media and Russian officials accused the rebels of shelling the evacuation corridor to stop civilians leaving eastern Ghouta, which rebel groups denied. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said helicopters and warplanes had struck four towns and artillery shelling killed one person.

UN calls for ceasefire

A UN Security Council resolution passed on Saturday called for a 30-day ceasefire across the entire country, but it did not specify when it should come into effect. It also excludes some militant groups, which Syria's allies say are among the rebel fighters in east-

ern Ghouta. That has meant the ceasefire has not been observed in practice. UN spokesman Larke declined to comment on the Russian proposal for a five-hour truce, but called instead on all sides to obey the full 30-day ceasefire.

"It is a question life and death - if ever there was a question of life and death - we need a 30-day cessation of hostilities in Syria as the Security Council demands," Laerke, spokesman of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), told a Geneva briefing. A rebel spokesman said people in eastern Ghouta did not want to leave the area despite the bombardment, because they feared arrest, torture or conscription by the government. Eastern Ghouta, where the UN says around 400,000 people live, is a major target for Assad, whose forces have clawed back numerous areas with military backing from Russia and Iran. — Reuters

International

Jailed for 'witchcraft, sorcery'
in Central African Republic

Women accused of 'charlatanism and sorcery'

BANGUI: Among the bunk beds in a dimly lit cell deep inside a women's prison near the Central African Republic capital Bangui, religious murmurs take on an almost mystical aura. Huddled around a cluster of icons, inmates jailed for "practices of charlatanism and sorcery" (PCS) pray the rosary, mustering the last of their strength as if the only recourse left to them is the divine.

Almost half of the 42 women held in the Bimbo prison facility have been accused of PCS, listed as a crime on the statute books in the poor central African country. "It's because of my sister Nina that they brought me here. I don't recognize the deed for which I'm in prison," said Sylvie in the jail's main courtyard, where detainees prepare meals, dry their washing and watch over their children. "My sister's husband died because he was poorly cared for and my sister caused trouble for me," Sylvie told AFP in the shadow of walls topped with barbed wire.

Her innocence is not in doubt. Nina even came to apologize for what she had done, but that was insufficient. Sylvie is still awaiting trial after more than a year behind bars. Her story is like that of many others when death or illness afflicts a family. Whether out of sincere conviction or with malicious intent, a family member accuses a relative, a neighbor or someone else of practicing witchcraft to cause trouble. "Sorcery always poses a problem in Central African law," says Nadia Carine Fomel Poutou, head of the Association of Women Jurists in Bangui, which runs public awareness workshops on the thorny topic.



BANGUI: A Bimbo women's prison inmate poses while awaiting trial for 'charlatanism and witchcraft,' after being in protective custody for three years in Bangui. —AFP photos

'The vulnerable people'

"It's always mystical, so it's difficult for a judge to reach a verdict," Fomel Poutou told AFP, noting that proof is difficult or impossible to obtain. Women are always first in the line of fire. In the absence of hard evidence, simple accusations are often enough for a conviction. Some people abuse this judicial flaw to vent their jealousy or settle scores, Fomel Poutou

said. "The vulnerable people—women, children and the elderly—are always accused of sorcery," she said. Bimbo prison director Roger N'Gaka-Passi confirmed that women are primary targets. "You'll find perhaps a score of those women here... There are few PCS cases among men." The phenomenon may result from women entering direct competition with men and challenging the prevailing patri-



BANGUI: Women gather in a special reserved cell for those accused of witchcraft at the Bimbo Women's Prison, in Bangui. Bimbo Prison is the only jail for women in Central African Republic with 47 prisoners, of whom 20 are on trial for witchcraft and 16 are still awaiting trial.

archal order, argues anthropologist Louisa Lombard in her book "Making Sense of CAR" (Central African Republic).

Sylvie is more fortunate than fellow detainees accused of sorcery. After her sister's visit and apology, she can dare hope to return to home once released. "In general, even if women accused of PCS (offences) get out of jail, they

run the risk of being rejected by their community, if they escape popular condemnation," Fomel Poutou said. With resigned sorrow, the jurist called up on her computer a photo taken in 2015 at Boali, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of Bangui. It shows the body of an elderly woman accused of witchcraft who was atrociously mutilated and cut into pieces.—AFP

Quake kills
14 in PNG

MELBOURNE: Up to 14 people were killed in landslides and by collapsed buildings during a powerful earthquake in the remote Papua New Guinea highlands, police and a hospital worker said yesterday, with unconfirmed reports of up to 30 dead. The 7.5 magnitude quake that rocked the region early on Monday also damaged mining and power infrastructure and led ExxonMobil Corp to shut its \$19 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant, the country's biggest export earner.

Two buildings collapsed and along with a landslide killed 12 people in Mendi, the provincial capital of the Southern Highlands, said Julie Sakol, a nurse at Mendi General Hospital, where the bodies were brought to the morgue. "People are afraid. The shaking is still continuing. There's nowhere to go but people are just moving around," she said.

Dozens of aftershocks rattled the area, including a 5.7 quake yesterday afternoon, the US Geological Survey reported. Police

in Mendi said 14 people were killed in the initial quake, including three in Poroma, south of Mendi. "They were killed by landslides destroying families sleeping in their houses," said Naring Bonggi, a police officer in Mendi. Provincial Administrator William Bando said more than 30 people were believed to have been killed in the rugged region, about 560 km northwest of the capital, Port Moresby, the Papua New Guinea Post-Courier reported.

The PNG disaster management office said it was verifying the reports but it could take days to confirm a death toll. With a lack of communications preventing a clear assessment of damage, aid agencies had not yet begun relief efforts, said Udaya Regmi, head of the International Red Cross in Papua New Guinea, in Port Moresby. "The magnitude of the earthquake is quite huge, so there must be an impact... but we cannot say how many people are actually affected and what they need," Regmi said.

ExxonMobil said communications with nearby communities remained down, hampering efforts to assess damage to its facilities that feed the PNG LNG plant. "Communications continue to be one of the most significant challenges," the company said in an emailed

statement. Its partner, Oil Search, said a review of all of its facilities and infrastructure would take at least a week, and an industry source told Reuters that the Exxon plant will likely be shut at least seven days. Miners Barrick Gold Corp and Ok Tedi Mining also reported damage to infrastructure.

LNG shutdown

The PNG LNG project is considered one of the world's best-performing LNG operations, having started exports in 2014 ahead of schedule, despite the challenge of drilling for gas and building a plant and pipeline in the remote jungle of PNG. The liquefaction plant has also been producing at around 20 percent above its rated capacity of 6.9 million tons a year. ExxonMobil said it shut the two LNG processing units, or trains, at its site on the coast near Port Moresby after earlier shutting its Hides gas conditioning plant and Hides production pads in Hela province in the highlands region.

Gas is processed at Hides and transported along a 700 km line that feeds the PNG LNG plant, whose main customers are in Japan, China and Taiwan. Traders said the impact on the LNG market would depend

on the duration of the shutdown, but noted that spot prices have recently fallen from more than \$10 per million British thermal units (mmBtu) as North Asia is coming out of the period of heavy winter gas demand. "The global LNG market is likely to respond immediately as the buyers need to seek alternative sources," said Boseok Jin, a research analyst at IHS Markit.

Infrastructure damage

Barrick said some activities at the Porgera gold mine have been suspended to save electricity as the power station that supplies the mine had been damaged. The mine is co-owned by Barrick and China's Zijin Mining. State-owned Ok Tedi said by email that a landslide had blocked a road and damaged pipelines to its copper and gold mine in the Star Mountains, adding that the road would take up to two days to be cleared. Earthquakes are common in Papua New Guinea, which sits on the Pacific's "Ring of Fire", a hotspot for seismic activity due to friction between tectonic plates. Part of PNG's northern coast was devastated in 1998 by a tsunami, generated by a 7.0 quake, which killed about 2,200 people.—Reuters

Kazakhstan leader
bans cabinet from
speaking Russian

ALMATY: Kazakhstan further loosened cultural ties with its former political masters in Moscow yesterday when a ban on speaking Russian in cabinet meetings took effect - despite many ministers favoring that language over their native Kazakh. Veteran President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who wields sweeping powers while paying close attention to public opinion, ordered the switch the previous day. The only Soviet-era leader still in power, the 77-year-old has run the Central Asian country since 1989. He is fluent in both languages and switches between them in his speeches.

But many Kazakhs, including some senior officials, are not, and prefer Russian, and cabinet meeting have generally been bilingual too. But in yesterday's meeting, broadcast live on state television, only one participant in the chamber, Education Minister Yerlan Sagadiyev, was permitted to speak Russian. Exceptions were also made for provincial officials who joined via videolink. After independence, many former Soviet republics rushed through the process of severing links with Moscow, known as de-Russification.

Kazakhstan, which became self-governing in 1991, took things more slowly, in part because ethnic Kazakhs at that time made up less than half of its population. Four years later, Nazarbayev made Russian the country's second official language. But in a census compiled in 2009, only 62 percent of the population said they were fluent in spoken and written Kazakh, compared with 85 percent in Russian. The ethnic balance has since shifted, with Kazakhs now making up 69 percent of the oil-rich nation's population of 18 million, while ethnic Russians account for just a fifth.

The Russian language has continued to dominate, however, generating public pressure for the government to promote Kazakh more actively. Kazakh, a Turkic language, has very little in common with Russian save for some borrowed words. Nazarbayev last year announced a switch to a new, Latin-based Kazakh alphabet that will gradually replace the current Cyrillic script adapted from Russian. The move was not without hiccups. This month he amended his own decree after many Kazakhs criticized the use of apostrophes combined with Latin letters to denote some Kazakh letters. The new script uses French-style accents instead. Nazarbayev maintains warm ties with the Kremlin and was credited with helping to mend fences between Moscow and Ankara in 2016 after they fell out over Turkey's downing of a Russian warplane. But there is no sign of compromise in his crusade against his officials speaking Russian. He has also ordered all parliamentary hearings to be held in Kazakh, saying those who are not fluent must be provided with simultaneous translations.—Reuters

Prosecutors seek
30-year-jail term
for South Korean
former president

SEOUL: South Korean prosecutors yesterday demanded a 30-year-jail sentence for former president Park Geun-hye, sacked over a wide-ranging corruption scandal which exposed shady links between big business and politics and prompted massive street protests. The 66-year-old daughter of a former dictator was dismissed in March 2017 and has now been in custody for almost a year.

"We ask the court to hand down 30 years in prison and (a fine of) 118.5 billion won (\$110 million) for the accused, who must take ultimate responsibility for the scandal as the 18th president of this country," prosecutors said in a statement. They said Park, in collusion with her secret confidante and long-time friend Choi Soon-sil, took or was promised bribes totaling 59.2 billion won (\$52 million) from three South Korean companies, Samsung, Lotte and SK, in return for policy favors.

Park has also been charged with coercing 18 large firms to "donate" a total of 77.4 billion won to two dubious foundations controlled by Choi. The Seoul Central District Court earlier this month found Choi guilty of abuse of power, bribery and interfering in government business and sentenced her to 20 years in prison. The verdict and sentence was seen as a potential pointer to the decision in Park's separate trial in the same court, because 15 of the 18 charges Choi faced mirror charges against the ex-president.

The verdict on Park is expected on April 6. "The accused (Park) abused her power delegated by the people for private gain for Choi and herself... violated core constitutional values on the protection of the market economy and free democracy," the statement said. "Consequently, the accused became the first president to be sacked through impeachment, leaving an indelible scar on the country's constitutional history." The prosecutors also rebuked Park for "allying with the chaebol instead of the people", in reference to the country's family-controlled large conglomerates, accusing her of strengthening "unhealthy ties between political power and economic power". They also decried her attitude toward justice.

'Cover up'

When allegations about Choi's misdeeds started sur-



Former president Park Geun-hye

facing in news media, Park tried to mislead public opinion and denounced the reports as "political offensives", prosecutors said. "When the court issued an arrest warrant for the accused Park, she tried to cover up the true picture of the case by describing the move as political revenge." Park since October has stopped attending the court, which she denounces as politically biased. Some legal experts believe she is in an even worse position than Choi was, noting that the judge who sentenced Choi had denounced Park for having "delegated" presidential authority to a private individual.

Park's lawyers denied all the charges, asserting there was "no solid evidence" to back them up. "The allegations that the accused has obtained material gains are mere speculations", Lawyer Kim Hae-Young said at the court. The conservative opposition Liberal Korea Party reacted angrily as hundreds of pro-Park supporters took to the street to protest. "This is more cruel than demanding a death sentence," a party spokesman said in a statement. Park, daughter of late dictator Park Chung-Hee, was brought up in Seoul's presidential Blue House.

The scandal sent her once-bulletproof approval ratings to record lows, with tens of thousands taking to the streets for months calling for her ousting. But she retained a loyal following from groups of mainly older rival protesters. Her downfall gave the left-leaning Democratic Party the upper hand in the presidential election last May, which was easily won by Moon Jae-in. Approval ratings for Moon remain high, mainly due to his down-to-earth image, pro-poor policies and pursuit of dialogue with North Korea, as well as the success of the just-ended Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.—AFP

News in brief

'Sexual training' course

BANGKOK: Thai police have arrested 10 Russians who allegedly organized sexual training courses for their compatriots in the seaside resort city of Pattaya. Police said 33 Russian tourists in total attended the class held at a hotel. But only 10 "instructors" were arrested late Sunday on immigration charges, including working without a permit. "The hotel management said they had no details on the event but they booked it for a seminar and training," Pattaya tourist police official Piyapong Ensarn said. "Some participants told police that they had to pay 20,000 baht (\$640) but some said they attended for free."—AFP

Woman dismembered

TOKYO: A US tourist has been arrested in Japan after a local woman he met through a dating app went missing earlier this month, her body believed to have been dismembered and scattered across several locations in western Japan, according to media. Police arrested the 26-year-old man last week on suspicion of confining the woman, who had been reported missing since Feb. 16, media said. They later found what appeared to be the woman's head inside a suitcase at a flat the man had booked in Osaka through a private holiday rental site, media said. Media did not name the woman but cited police sources as saying she was 27 years old and from Sanda city, in neighboring Hyogo prefecture.—Reuters

Congo policeman jailed

KINSHASA: A military court in the Democratic Republic of Congo has jailed a police officer for life for killing a demonstrator opposed to President Joseph Kabila, a judicial source said yesterday. "Police officer Agbe Obeid is sentenced to life in prison for having shot Eric Boloko at point-blank range with live ammunition on Sunday, February 25," in Mbandaka, a registry official at the military tribunal in the northwestern city said. "This trigger-happy policeman shot the young man as he was peacefully going home (after a demonstration). I hope that he will really serve out his sentence," said Fabien Mongunza, president of the civil society movement in Equateur province, of which Mbandaka is the capital. "This verdict has calmed people's minds because the tension was noticeable."—AFP

Top generals on trial

OUAGADOUGOU: More than 80 people went on trial before a military court in Burkina Faso yesterday over a failed 2015 coup in a case being seen as a test for justice in the West African country. Two top generals accused of masterminding the plot, Gilbert Dienderere and Djibrill Bassole, were cheered by supporters as they arrived at the court in the capital Ouagadougou. Security was high, with forces guarding a 200-metre cordon around the military tribunal. Traffic was blocked, mobile phones banned and people entering the zone were searched. Bassole and Dienderere-key allies of former president Blaise Compaore who was chased from power in October 2014 - are among a total of 84 people on trial, including 66 military officials and 18 civilians.—AFP

Strikes hit Guinea

CONAKRY: One man died and several were injured Monday when thousands of young people erected barricades and blocked traffic in the Guinean capital Conakry as mass strikes gripped the city. A general strike was called by the Guinea General Union of Workers (UGTG) in addition to an ongoing walkout by teachers and a complete shutdown of economic activity demanded by the opposition after disputed local elections Conakry's biggest market, Madina, failed to open its doors along with the vast majority of businesses, as youths overturned bins and set tyres on fire, cutting off entire sections of the city to vehicles.—AFP

International

'Beast from the East' sends Arctic blast across Europe

2 killed as snow, sub-zero temperatures paralyze Europe

PARIS: A blast of Siberian weather sent temperatures plunging across much of Europe yesterday, causing headaches for travelers and leading to several deaths from exposure as snow carpeted palm-lined Mediterranean beaches. The icy weather is in stark contrast to conditions in the Arctic itself, which is experiencing an "off-the-charts" heatwave this week, according to the European Geosciences Institute. Meteorologists have documented temperatures above freezing in some parts of the Arctic, causing astonishment among many scientists.

But to the south swathes of Europe were shivering under temperatures well below freezing, claiming at least 10 lives across the continent in a snap dubbed "the Beast from the East" by British tabloids. At least five deaths were reported in Poland alone on Monday as the mercury dropped to minus 16 Celsius (minus 4 Fahrenheit) overnight in Warsaw. That brought the number of Polish deaths from freezing to 53 since November 1, and temperatures are expected to remain below minus 12 Celsius across the country yesterday, with the cold accentuated by a biting wind.

In Lithuania, temperatures dropped to as low as minus 26 degrees Celsius overnight, and one suspected death of a man from freezing was reported in the capital Vilnius. In Britain, authorities warned of five to 10 centimeters of snow yesterday and the likelihood of travel delays on roads, rail networks and at airports, while electricity and even mobile phone service may be cut in some areas. On Monday, British Airways cancelled more than 60 short-haul flights either departing or arriving from London Heathrow airport.

Stalactite near miss

Some of the iciest conditions were reported in Italy, where many schools and daycare centers were closed, to the consternation of parents already preparing for clo-

sures next week linked to this weekend's general election. Public anger was also growing over the disruptions to rail services across the country, as travelers learned that many track switches did not have defrosting equipment, meaning they had to be dug out by hand. In Naples, the airport was closed yesterday and bus services in the city halted because of ice. And a driver in Turin got a fright when a stalactite broke off from an overhead bridge and shattered his windshield—though he managed to keep control of his vehicle. One of the coldest points overnight was at Glattalp in Switzerland, where the temperature fell to -38 Celsius—extreme even for the high-altitude area (1,850 meters),

according to the ATS news agency. In France, which has remained frigid but dry during the cold snap, forecasters warned of heavy snow across much of the country starting Wednesday though spring-like temperatures would soon follow.

Yesterday, residents of Ajaccio on the French Mediterranean island of Corsica woke up to some 15 centimeters of snow on the beach, something not seen since 1986. At least three people have died during the cold snap in France. Across the continent, authorities have been opening emergency shelters and increasing relief efforts for the homeless. The mayor of Etterbeek in Belgium said those sleeping rough would be forcibly detained if they refused to go to shelters, citing the "major risk" from exposure to the cold. In Berlin, rising fears for homeless people led officials to open an additional 100 beds, with the city's shelters, now with a total of 1,200 beds, more than 90 percent full, RBB public radio reported.

Two dead in Romania

Two people were found dead in Romania as snow and sub-zero temperatures across much of Europe saw flights cancelled, road and rail transport disrupted and schools closed yesterday. A Siberian weather system forecasters



SCARBOROUGH: A couple walk their dog on the beach as heavy snow falls in the sea side resort of Scarborough in North Yorkshire. A blast of Siberian weather sent temperatures plunging across much of Europe yesterday, causing headaches for travelers and leading to several deaths from exposure as snow carpeted palm-lined Mediterranean beaches. —AFP

have called the "beast from the east" brought the coldest temperatures for years to many regions. The freeze was expected to continue for much of the week.

In southern Romania, an 83-year-old woman from Adancata was found collapsed in the snow and died on the way to hospital, the Institute for Emergency Situations (ISU) said. A 65-year-old man was found dead late on Monday in the eastern county of Suceava, an official told state news agency Agerpres. Parts of a motorway linking the capital Bucharest to Constanta and dozens of other roads were closed. More than 80 trains and 15 flights were cancelled, Romanian police said, and Romania's Black Sea ports were closed.

Record snowfall of 182 cm paralyzed the northern Croatian town of Delnice and rescue services took several hours to evacuate residents in the nearby village of Mrzle Vodice. Temperatures hit a low of -20 degrees Celsius in Zavizan on the Velebit mountain. Schools were closed in Bucharest and ten Romanian counties as well as across western and central Croatia. The roofs of dozens of houses collapsed under the weight of snow in the Unsko-Sanski canton in northwestern Bosnia. State-run RTCG TV reported that Montenegro's main Golubovci airport was closed for several hours overnight. A rare snowstorm in Rome on Monday prompted Italian authorities to call in the army to help clear the streets.—Agencies

News in brief

UK terror plots foiled

LONDON: British police foiled four extreme right-wing terror plots in 2017, according to the country's chief counter-terrorism officer, warning of a "significant" threat. "The right-wing terrorist threat is more significant and more challenging than perhaps the public debate gives it credit for," Mark Rowley said in a speech late on Monday. "Right-wing terrorism wasn't previously organized here," said Rowley, who is stepping down this year. He added: "A deeply concerning characteristic is how both far-right and also Islamist terrorism are growing, allowing each side to reaffirm their grievances and justify their actions." Britain was hit by five terror attacks last year, four Islamist-inspired and one extreme right-wing. In 2016, a neo-Nazi sympathizer assassinated British MP Jo Cox in her constituency in northern England.—AFP

Holy site stays shut

JERUSALEM: The church in Jerusalem built at the traditional site of Jesus' (PBUH) burial remained closed for a third day yesterday as Christian leaders protested against Israeli tax measures and a controversial proposed law. Christian leaders closed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Sunday at noon in a rare move, leaving thousands of pilgrims and tourists seeking to visit what many see as the holiest site in Christianity locked outside. Church officials say the church will be closed until further notice as they seek to pressure Israeli authorities to reverse their measures. The church is built where Christians believe Jesus (PBUH) was crucified, buried and resurrected. Custody of it is shared by the Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Roman Catholic denominations.—AFP

Five soldiers killed

BOGOTA: Five soldiers were killed and 10 others injured in an attack by presumed ELN rebels near the border with Venezuela, the head of the Colombian army said yesterday. Army General Ricardo Gomez, who gave the toll, told W Radio station that the soldiers were on highway security duty in the department of Norte de Santander, when they were hit by an attack using explosives. Peace talks between the government and the ELN guerrillas have been suspended since January.—AFP

Maldive protesters arrested

MALE: Maldives police arrested at least another four opposition members under state of emergency laws for protesting against President Abdulla Yameen's government, the opposition said yesterday. The top court in the Maldives validated last week a 30-day extension of the state of emergency, which was sought by Yameen over what he has called a national security threat and constitutional crisis. Opposition politicians defied a police order to stop protesting after 10.30 pm local time on Monday and continued to demand that Yameen implement a Supreme Court ruling that quashed convictions against nine opposition leaders and ordered the release of politicians and officials held in prison. The Maldivian Democratic Party, the main opposition party, said on Twitter police had arrested Mohamed Ameeth and Abdulla Ahmed, two lawmakers who had defected from Yameen's party, and two more from other opposition parties late on Monday.—Reuters

Catalan separatists to appoint president

MADRID: Catalan separatist parties are considering appointing jailed civil society leader Jordi Sanchez as regional president as their negotiations to try and find a suitable candidate draw to a close, a lawmaker said. The parties—which form an absolute majority in the Catalan parliament—have been negotiating for weeks over who to pick as candidate for the regional presidency as Catalonia's sacked leader Carles Puigdemont is in self-exile in Belgium. Puigdemont wants to govern Catalonia remotely but Spain's Constitutional Court has made his appointment conditional on his physical presence in regional capital Barcelona—and he faces arrest if he returns over his role in the attempt to break from Spain.

"A deal is imminent," said Carles Campuzano of Puigdemont's PdeCAT party on Spanish radio late on Monday, as Catalonia remains without a regional government and under Madrid's direct rule following a failed declaration of independence on October 27. Asked

whether Sanchez, head of the ANC, a hugely influential pro-independence citizens' group, was being considered as candidate for the Catalan presidency, he said: "This is an option that is being worked on." According to Spanish media, Puigdemont would take on a "symbolic" role from Belgium.

Leading from jail?

But choosing Sanchez, 53, is likely to cause further problems as he has been in prison for more than four months, charged with sedition over his role in the secession attempt. He is accused of encouraging a major protest in September as Spanish police raided the Catalan administration's economic offices in the run-up to a banned independence referendum. The October bid to break from Spain prompted Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to sack the region's government, dissolve its parliament and call snap elections in December.

Sanchez, who was second on Puigdemont's Together for Catalonia list in the polls, was elected as a regional lawmaker. If he is chosen as candidate to lead Catalonia, it will be up to a Supreme Court judge to allow him out of jail to be officially appointed at a parliamentary session in Barcelona. This in theory is possible, even if the judge previously refused such a request made by jailed, former



MADRID: In this file photo, Catalan National Assembly (ANC) president Jordi Sanchez, who is under investigation for sedition, gives a thumbs-up as he arrives to the High Court in Madrid. —AFP

Catalan vice president Oriol Junqueras. And even if Sanchez was allowed to go to the session, he would then have to govern from jail and ask to be freed to attend other meetings.—AFP

Afghan Taleban calls for direct talks with US

KABUL: The Taleban has called for direct talks with the US to find a "peaceful solution" to the conflict in Afghanistan, in an apparent policy shift after months of escalating attacks. Civilian casualties surged in recent months as militants from the Taleban unleashed a wave of bloodshed in urban areas and on security forces in response to a new open-ended military policy by US President Donald Trump. In a statement posted late Monday, the Taleban said it "calls on American officials to talk directly to the Political Office of Islamic Emirate regarding a peaceful solution to the Afghan quandary", using the name it calls itself.

The statement referenced local reports that said US envoy Alice Wells had suggested during a recent visit to Kabul that a window was still open for talks. It came days before the second round of a regional peace conference in Kabul, where representatives from 25 countries will discuss counter-terrorism and conflict resolution strategies in the war, which US officials have described as a stalemate. Washington has long called for talks with the Taleban, but historically insisted that any dialogue must include the Afghan government in Kabul. There has been no response to the Taleban's offer from US officials.

Kabul urged the militants to take "practical steps", with government spokesman Haroon Chakhansori adding that "all doors for peace talks are open". "If they are Afghans they should come and talk to the Afghan government, the US will not talk to them," he told a press conference. But a senior Taleban commander said yesterday that the group had little interest in including the Afghan government or Islamabad, the militants' historic backers—in the potential sit down. "We are the real parties, so let's sit and talk directly, without the presence of any third party, either Pakistan or Afghanistan," the commander said.

The apparent openness to negotiations is unusual for the militant group, which has repeatedly stated that it will not enter talks until foreign troops leave the country. Afghan political analyst Abdul Bari said increased US pressure on the Taleban and on Pakistan in recent months had forced the militants' hand. But he urged caution, saying that both the US and the Taleban have used such carrot and stick policies for years. "It is too soon to know whether they are very honest this time. The group has always rejected any talks offer in the past," he said.

Escalation

More than 16 years since the US invasion, less than 60 percent of Afghanistan's territory is under the Afghan government's control or influence, NATO figures have shown, with the rest controlled or contested by the Taleban and other militant groups. Unveiling his new Afghan strategy last August, Trump said the US presence in Afghanistan would remain open-ended, as Washington dramatically stepped up strikes on militant strongholds.

The US has also increased pressure on neighboring Pakistan, which it accuses of supporting the Taleban, freezing millions in aid in January and last week pushing to have the country included on a terror financing watchlist. Analysts have suggested that the pressure may be driving a surge in attacks on soft targets including a spate of deadly assaults in Kabul in January, including on a luxury hotel and a massive ambulance bomb which detonated in a crowded street.

Trump ruled out holding talks with the Taleban in the wake of those attacks, though State Department officials have insisted they still hope to bring the insurgents to the negotiating table. The Afghan capital will host the latest Kabul Process conference today, with President Ashraf Ghani vowing his government will "present a comprehensive peace plan for Taleban and Pakistan". The closest Kabul has come to direct peace talks with the Taleban was in 2015 in Pakistan. But the nascent dialogue was scuttled days later when Afghan officials announced that Taleban supreme Mullah Omar had been dead for years.—AFP

Singapore to bar communications from terror sites

SINGAPORE: Singapore yesterday proposed a new law to prevent people at terror attack sites from taking photographs or videos or communicating about police operations, a measure security experts say would be among the first of its kind worldwide. Although the wealthy city-state ranks as one of the safest countries globally, authorities say it has been a target of Islamic extremists since the 1990s and they have stepped up efforts to deter terrorism in recent years.

"I'm not aware of any other countries taking such a proactive stance against the propagation of images or information during a terrorist incident," said Dan Bould, Asia director of crisis management at Aon, which provides services such as risk management. The measure would stop counter-

terrorism tactics and capabilities from becoming widely known and limit the footage available for propaganda use by terrorist groups and their followers, added Bould, a former captain in the British Army.

Introduced in parliament on Tuesday, the Public Order and Safety (Special Powers) Bill 2018 would allow police to issue a "communications stop order" following approval from the home affairs minister, the Ministry of Home Affairs said. That would "require all persons in the incident area to stop making or communicating films or pictures of the incident area, and stop communicating text or audio messages about the ongoing security operations in the incident area," it said in a statement. The new measures would also cover journalists, and breaches could lead to a maximum fine of S\$20,000 (\$15,200) and prison terms of up to two years, a ministry spokeswoman said. Information leaks to terrorists could risk the lives of security officers and those caught up in an attack, the ministry said, citing media coverage of police operations in a 2015 attack on a Jewish deli in Paris and a 2008 attack in India's financial capital of Mumbai.—Reuters

Pro-Kurdish MPs stripped of seats

ANKARA: The Turkish parliament yesterday stripped two more MPs from the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) of their mandates, the party said, in the latest blow to the embattled pro-Kurdish faction. The government accuses the HDP of being a political wing of the banned Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) which has waged an over three decade insurgency against the Turkish state. The HDP denies the charges.

The deputy head of the HDP's parliamentary faction Ahmet Yildirim and fellow MP Ibrahim Ayhan had their lawmaker status taken away from them at a plenary session of parliament, the party said in a statement. Yildirim's loss of mandate was due to a criminal charge of insulting

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan by using the term "caricature of a sultan", while Ayhan is charged with making "terror propaganda" after praising a Kurdish anti-jihadist fighter. HDP parliamentary faction chief Filiz Kerestecioglu described the decision as "shameful", saying the country was in the throes of a "civilian coup".

Former party leaders Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yuksekdag are among nine HDP MPs currently in jail on charges of links to the PKK which they deny. A total of nine HDP lawmakers have been stripped of their mandates, including some of those jailed. In total, only 46 of the 59 HDP deputies elected in the last 2015 polls can carry out their duties in parliament. The HDP emerged as the third largest party in parliament after the 2015 elections but analysts say in the current circumstances it will struggle to top the 10 percent threshold needed to have MPs in parliament at the next 2019 polls.—AFP

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Analysis

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E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netHas SE Asia lost its
appetite for business
that does good?

When Malaysian entrepreneur Majidah Hashim quit her corporate job and set up a business two years ago helping people with autism make handcrafted teas with local herbs and flowers, the government stepped in to assist. Majidah was one of dozens of social entrepreneurs who received grants from Malaysia's government as part of a 2015 national plan to boost the number of businesses with a mission to help people or the environment to 1,000 by 2018 from 100.

This assistance let her get SevenTeaOne up and running, one of many social enterprises started in Malaysia in recent years. The country was ranked the ninth best country to be a social entrepreneur in a 2016 poll of 45 nations conducted by the Thomson Reuters Foundation and funded by Deutsche Bank. But Majidah said the help was short-lived, fuelling concerns in Malaysia as well as elsewhere in Southeast Asia that official encouragement of the sector was stumbling as businesses were found to need more guidance and time than expected to succeed. "It was like they were pregnant with us, they gave birth and they left us there," Majidah told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The 20-million-ringgit (\$5 million) plan has so far pushed the number of social enterprises up to about 200, according to the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre (MaGIC), a government unit tasked with running the project. This has led to concerns in Southeast Asia's third largest economy that momentum to build the social enterprise sector is fizzing out with patchy official support and issues like a lack of funding and financial sustainability.

Majidah received a 30,000 ringgit grant from MaGIC to help kickstart her business and attended one of its programmes where she learned about social enterprises. "When we graduated we were very energized. We got to know a lot of people, we were out there and ready to run our business," she said. "But very shortly after that, the whole (social enterprise) department was disbanded. There was little follow up from MaGIC on how my company is doing."

Filling the gap

Like Thailand and the Philippines, Malaysia is among Southeast Asian countries which have tried to tap the potential of social enterprises - businesses which aim to address social and environmental problems while making a profit. Rapid economic growth in the region in recent decades has seen nations become wealthier but failed to tackle social challenges such as urban poverty, unequal access to education and environment sustainability.

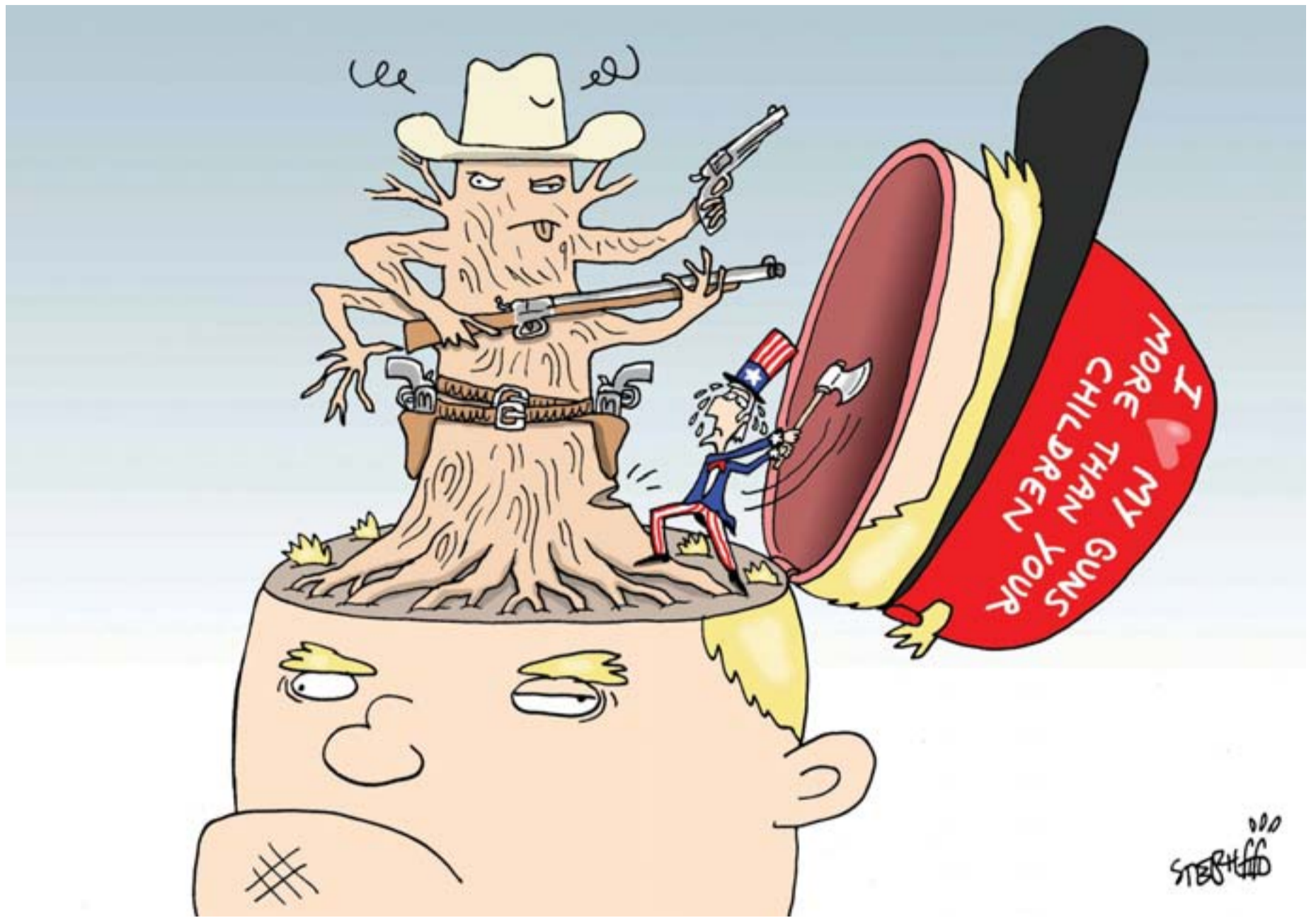
This is where Southeast Asian governments hoped social enterprises could step in to help plug the gap, as most countries have traditionally had low tax models meaning state welfare systems are not comprehensive. Despite concerns, MaGIC insisted there has been strong growth in the sector and its initiatives have helped aspiring social entrepreneurs and raised public awareness. "We are currently at the three-year mark and are still running initiatives and programs to increase the number of social enterprises," Chief Executive Ashran Dato' Ghazi said in a statement to the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Its initiatives include an accreditation scheme which aims to help social enterprises enhance their profile. While social enterprises should be financially independent, in countries where they have been a success, supportive policies have been seen as vital. One example is Britain, where the government has invested heavily into the sector and the number of social enterprises has grown to 70,000, according to Social Enterprise UK, an organization which represents the sector. Its policies include encouraging government procurement officers to consider the social and environmental impact of contracts they award rather than just going with the lowest bid.

Trying to gain a foothold in the market remains one of the biggest barriers for Malaysian social entrepreneurs, said entrepreneur Mastura Rashid who runs The Nasi Lemak Project. Mastura sells a traditional coconut rice with spicy shrimp paste dish known as "nasi lemak", or "fatty rice", made by poor families living around the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur. Mastura also received a grant from MaGIC and enjoyed a steady flow of business but she had to cut back her operation last year by reducing the number of delivery orders. She said the orders tended to be for small quantities so the profit made was barely enough to cover costs. She now only focuses on big orders but these are scant. "It boils down to the issues of costs and human resources," she said, adding she needed a strategic rethink to keep her business sustainable.

'A real need to solve social problems'

Problems have plagued other official efforts to help social enterprises in the region. In Thailand, there are an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 social enterprises, according to the Thai Social Enterprise Office set up by the government in 2010 to boost the sector. But momentum slowed after a 2014 military coup and the office has now been dormant for nearly three years. In the Philippines, where the number of social enterprises has more than tripled over the last decade to about 165,000, over half said limited capital was the biggest barrier to grow their business, according to a 2017 study by the British Council and the Philippine Social Enterprise Network.—Reuters



How to stop hate speech on social media

Donald Trump's retweets of anti-Muslim videos first circulated by an anti-immigrant, far-right British party were just the tip of the iceberg. From Myanmar to the United States, controversial posts by political leaders and public figures have sparked a growing and increasingly global debate about how social media may be facilitating the spread of hatred and discrimination. But this discussion is only the latest in a larger debate that is as old as the internet itself: who should decide the limits of freedom of expression online, and how should they do it?

We have come a long way from the days when Facebook, YouTube and Twitter were hailed as enablers of free speech and democracy. Such platforms have undeniably helped to democratize the public sphere. Individuals can amass tens of thousands of followers, and earn millions of views, without relying on the media, public relations agencies, or governments. Activists can organize, disseminate information and mobilize more effectively than ever before.

It is a testament to the power of social media that many countries are imposing stricter controls or even blocking their access entirely. We must bear the positive aspects of that power in mind when we consider how best to tackle its flip side: The way social platforms can be used to spread abuse, vitriol and hatred more rapidly than ever before. In 2017, politicians in many countries deployed social media to spread hate-filled agendas. Amnesty International's latest annual report on the state of the world's human rights documents a global rise in state-sponsored hate, and chronicles the variety of ways governments and leaders are increasingly peddling hateful rhetoric and policies that seek to demonize already marginalized groups: President Trump's transparently hateful travel ban on citizens from half a dozen Muslim-majority countries was one of the most prominent examples.

As access to social media expands worldwide, it is increasingly being used by governments to promote hateful rhetoric, to control their citizens, and to silence any opposition. From xenophobic statements by politicians

against LGBTI and Roma people in Bulgaria, anti-Rohingya propaganda posted on Facebook by senior military officers and government spokespeople in Myanmar, and the use of troll networks against government critics in the Philippines, those in power are learning how to use social media as yet another tool of repression.

Dilemmas

These findings present many dilemmas. To what extent are social media companies such as Facebook and Twitter - who have responded only belatedly to the torrent of hate speech and "fake news" - at fault? Should governments take action? What can we do to preserve the good that social

Social media
increasingly
being used by
governments

media can offer while countering its more corrosive effects?

There are no simple answers. The right to free expression protects ideas that many people find offensive, and there are many instances where racist, sexist, xenophobic or other hateful material is not prohibited under human rights law.

Nevertheless, freedom of expression comes with responsibilities, and there are cases under human rights law - such as incitement to violence or child sex abuse imagery - where it can legitimately be restricted. Complexities tend to arise because the definition of

"offense" is always subjective: one person's free speech is another's vicious diatribe. Any attempt at regulation must also consider the fact that the right to be able to say things to which others - including those in positions of power - will vehemently object is one of the foundations of an open society. Take that away and you take away the free press and any kind of government accountability.

For all their potential for abuse, social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter provide a space for expression and access to information that is much freer than anything available in the past. Yet, this freedom is fragile - for example, Amnesty's research has shown that online abuse can have a silencing effect on its targets.

So what's the solution? There are three types of actions that can be taken to counter hate on social media and the internet more generally: Legal enforcement, content moderation, and education. States should have in place laws that prohibit advocacy of hatred, and take legal action only in the very clearly-defined cases allowed by international human rights law. Specifically this is when there is a clear show of intent to incite others to discrimination, hostility or violence against a particular group.

Nevertheless, many governments have threatened social media companies with strict rules on intermediary liability, which means that companies may be held liable for content posted on their platforms. The problem is that intermediary liability can easily be used to restrict freedom of expression and to force companies to censor their users for fear of legal consequences.

Regardless of government regulation, companies have a responsibility to avoid causing or contributing to human rights harms. Content moderation by social media companies is therefore an important part of the solution: it does not require legislation and therefore does not open the doors to unjustified restrictions on freedom of expression. All major platforms have community standards and rules of conduct in place to deal with advocacy of hatred and discrimination, which would work well so long as they did not conflict with human rights law.—Reuters

Sister Act: US
women stampede
towards office

From a retired Navy pilot to a millennial web developer and an award-winning romance novelist - US women are running for office in record numbers, propelled by anger against Donald Trump to redress chronic inequality in political representation. Women, who currently make up only 20 percent of Congress, will be a driving force in November's mid-term elections, as Democrats are determined to flip the Republican majority and deliver a bloody nose to a president they detest.

"I have been active for 30 years, I've never seen anything like it," said Patti Russo, executive director of the Women's Campaign School at Yale University, which has been training women to run for office for a quarter of a century. "It's exhilarating." From Trump's shock win in November 2016 and the women's march on Washington in 2017, to the #MeToo sexual harassment watershed, state ballots last year and Trump's State of the Union this January, the phone has been ringing off the hook.

The Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University says twice as many women are on track to run for Congress in 2018 compared to 2016 - 437 for the House of Representatives and 51 for Senate. Most of them are Democrats. They are outraged that a man with zero political experience who boasted of groping women could win the highest office in the land. They are angry that Hillary Clinton, often reputed to have been the most qualified candidate in history, could lose. Women, particularly Democrats, say women's rights are under attack, mobilized by efforts to

repeal the Affordable Care Act, fired up by Trump policies on everything from gun control to the environment to throw off shy, retiring stereotypes and step forward.

'Shocked'

Emily's List, which works to elect Democratic women who support the right to abortion, says more than 30,000 women have contacted them about their interest in running for office since Trump's election. They've hired new staff and knocked down a wall in their office to make room. A generation ago, women were typically in their mid-40s before contemplating a run for office. Today, the median age is early 30s.

Lindsay Brown, a 29-year-old web developer, may buck the trend in being a Republican but otherwise personifies much of the mood - contesting, as a feminist and a progressive, fifth-term incumbent Congressman Leonard Lance in her New Jersey district. "My mom was just shocked," said Brown. "But she's so excited and so proud." A year on, with just a handful of unpaid volunteers, no campaign manager and \$3,300 in donations, she needs to collect 200 signatures to file her candidacy for the Republican primary in April. So far, she has just 20.

By comparison, Democratic candidate and former Navy pilot Mikie Sherrill from a nearby New Jersey district has raised \$42,000 online this month alone. "Pragmatic" about her chances just eight years out of college, Brown is no less driven. If she manages to pull off the impossible, she will be the youngest person ever elected to Congress. If she doesn't, she'll run next time. "I'm way too entrenched now, there's no way there's ever going to be a normal life again." "Millennials," she told AFP at her home in Clark, New Jersey, surrounded by her two rescue dogs and three cats, "are the largest voting bloc right now and we are not represented in most levels of government."—AFP

US top court to
mull rules on
what voters can
wear to polls

Political activist Andy Cilek arrived at his local polling site in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, on Election Day in 2010 wearing a T-shirt touting the conservative Tea Party movement with the words "Don't Tread on Me" as well as a button stating, "Please I.D. Me." His attire was enough to get him stopped in his tracks by a poll worker because Minnesota law forbids voters from donning political badges, buttons or other insignia inside polling places during elections. Cilek eventually was permitted to vote, but the confrontation became a key part of a legal challenge that reaches the US Supreme Court on Wednesday.

The nine justices will hear arguments over whether the state law violates the US Constitution's First Amendment guarantee of free speech. Cilek is being represented by a prominent conservative legal advocacy group, but also has the backing of the American Civil Liberties Union. At least nine other states - Delaware, Kansas, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont and South Carolina - have similar restrictions on political apparel at polling places, according to the plaintiffs.

Minnesota defends its law as necessary to keep order at polling places at a time of intense US political polarization. Political messages on apparel "could give rise to verbal disputes or even physical altercations," a court filing by Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon and other

officials said, citing fights at polling locations in Florida and Michigan on Election Day 2016. "Tensions may well be running high, particularly when the election has been a contentious one," they added.

The Minnesota Voters Alliance, a St Paul-based conservative group headed by Cilek that brought the case with the support of the Pacific Legal Foundation, is appealing a lower court ruling that upheld the state law.

The challengers said merely wearing something political at a polling station is a peaceful act. In Minnesota, election officials have interpreted the law as barring campaign literature and material from groups with political views such as the Tea Party movement or the liberal MoveOn.org. Violators are asked to cover up or remove offending items. If they do not, they may still vote, but their names are to be taken down for possible prosecution. The state said it has no record of prosecutions under the law.

Third time's a charm

Cilek said he was twice turned away from his polling site on Election Day 2010 because the head election judge disapproved of his attire, including the button that alluded to voter-identification laws backed by many Republicans. On his third try, Cilek said, he was allowed to vote. "I was just thinking that they're hell bent on not letting me vote," Cilek said in an interview. "I was just kind of shocked by the whole deal."

Cilek, a 54-year-old former US marine, said the genesis of the lawsuit was a perception that election officials were targeting groups they did not like. "It's an absurd policy that you're going to allow election judges to be the arbiters of free speech," Cilek said. In a brief filed supporting Cilek's group, the ACLU warned against allowing poll workers discretion to decide what is impermissibly political.—Reuters

News

Rock art mystery: Ancient sculptures...

Continued from Page 1

The kingdom is endowed with thousands of examples of painted rock art and ancient inscriptions. Archaeologists last year used Google Maps to find hundreds of stone "gates" built from rock in a remote Saudi desert, which may date back as far as 7,000 years. They also discovered evidence of 46 lakes that used to exist in Saudi Arabia's northern Nefud desert, which experts say has lent credence to the theory that the region swung between periods of desertification and a wetter climate.

The carvings in Al-Jouf may be the most significant recent discovery. "This is an important scientific discovery which reminds us of the important pre-Islamic history of Saudi Arabia," archaeologist Guillaume Charloux, from France's Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), told AFP. "I can only hope that it will lead people to discover the variety and richness of the Saudi Arabian past," said Charloux, who led the research team with Khalifah.

The carvings have different styles, which suggests there was more than one artist behind them. It is possi-

ble, archaeologists say, that the Al-Jouf site was one of veneration or on a caravan route used as a resting place or boundary marker. "My hypothesis today is that the sculptors are local people, and that the site is an emblematic place on the regional and caravan routes towards Mesopotamia," said Charloux.

More fieldwork is now needed to find the answers. Many of the eroded sculptures are hard to date, but archaeologists estimate they were possibly completed in the first centuries BC or AD. "If they pre-date the domestication of the camel, then they represent wild specimens who may have been hunted, and a successful hunt may have been vital for the survival of the local human populations," said Guagnin.

For now, Saudi authorities are closely guarding the Al-Jouf site from any treasure hunters, amid local speculation of hidden gold. The government is also seeking ownership of the site from the local landowner. Saudi officials who gave AFP the tour pointed out how one of the rocky spurs seen from an angle appears like a human face, with a nose-like protrusion. Also visible alongside the engravings were painted art forms, which showed human and mythological beings and an object that appeared to look like a chariot. Khalifah, however, dismissed some of the art as amateurish, "like a child drawing on paper", with no indication whether they came before or after the sculptures. "There are so many unanswered questions," Khalifah said. — AFP

5G wireless race heats up...

Continued from Page 1

Deutsche Telekom CEO Timotheus Hoetges has estimated the cost of providing 5G networks in Europe alone will be €300-500 billion (\$370-615 billion). The telecoms industry will invest \$275 billion in the United States to develop 5G networks there, Sprint chief executive Marcelo Claure said Monday at the mobile congress in Barcelona.

While the European Union wants European companies to start offering 5G in 2020, spending to develop

the network has been lower than in Asia or the United States. "The timescales vary widely on a country by country basis but the USA and China are the most likely winners to be the first" in 5G deployment, Nokia chief executive Rajeev Suri said on Sunday. He said he still believed some European operators would start to move up to 5G next year.

In Europe telecoms firms are focusing their 5G efforts on business uses instead of by the general public as in other regions. European telecom operators are more cautious because the move to 4G by consumers was lower in Europe than elsewhere, said Thillien of BMI Research. "European operators know that demand will be low by the public. They were burned by 4G and see that European consumers are more skeptical," he added. — AFP

Saudi shakeup sees younger generation...

Continued from Page 1

"The changes come on the heels of the SAMI exhibition, which is a critical part of the Prince Mohammed's reform plan to create an indigenous defense program," he said.

SAMI's goal is to become a "major player in the global defense industry" and "localize more than 50 percent of the military spending" by 2030, according to its website. It aims to create 40,000 direct jobs and contribute 14 billion riyals (\$3.7 billion) to the kingdom's gross domestic product by 2030. "The military shake-up is aimed at cleaning up and reinvigorating the structure as Saudi Arabia tries to create a viable, sustainable and eventually an export-oriented military industry," Mohammed Alyahya, a non-resident fellow at the Atlantic Council, told AFP. "Projecting military strength is a key part of the strategy."

"This plan seeks to reform the Saudi armed forces from a large, inefficient fighting force full of top-level bloat to a streamlined and professionalized military," Becca Wasser, a policy analyst at the US-based RAND Corporation, told AFP. "The armed forces have been plagued by wasteful spending, incoherent resource allocation, and unmeritocratic personnel policies, with the different services acting as mini-fiefdoms rather than a coherent whole."

The military reform plan appears geared towards reducing inefficient spending and turning the armed forces into a meritocracy, both gargantuan tasks in an institution widely seen as resistant to change. Some of the command shifts saw the removal of "dead weight" from top ranks, Wasser said -military leaders opposed

to change who were sent into retirement. They were replaced largely with younger, more flexible leaders loyal to Prince Mohammed, further consolidating his control within the military.

The decrees also included the appointment of three deputy governors from among the descendants of Princes Ahmed, Talal and Muqrin - brothers of King Salman, some of whom may have felt sidelined by changes since his accession to the throne in 2015. One of them, new deputy governor of Asir province, Prince Turki bin Talal, is the brother of billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, who was detained in the government's anti-corruption campaign and released only last month.

Meanwhile, Prince Mohammed will begin a visit to Britain on March 7 which will include talks with Prime Minister Theresa May on topics such as extremism and societal reform, May's spokesman said yesterday. "The visit will usher in a new era in bilateral relations focused on a partnership that delivers wide-ranging benefits for both the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," the spokesman said. "The visit will also provide an opportunity to enhance our co-operation in tackling international challenges such as terrorism, extremism, the conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen and other regional issues such as Iraq and Syria."

May discussed the visit with her cabinet earlier yesterday, including the much anticipated stock market listing of state oil company Saudi Aramco - potentially the biggest listing in history and the subject of a high profile tug of war between Britain and the United States. "The fact that there is a potential listing of Saudi Aramco was discussed, but in no more terms than that," the spokesman said. In a separate statement issued after the meeting with her cabinet, May said the crown prince's visit - his first since his appointment in June 2017 - would allow Britain to talk "frankly and constructively" about areas of concern like Yemen and security in the Middle East. — Agencies

Outrage as Israel denies its forces shot Palestinian teen

NABI SALEH: Israel yesterday denied its forces shot a Palestinian teenager and said he suffered a severe head injury when he fell off his bicycle, sparking outrage from activists and his family. Mohammed Tamimi, 15, confirmed to AFP that after being arrested from his home in the middle of the night he had told Israeli interrogators the cause of his misshapen skull was falling off his bike, not being shot. But he said it was only because he was afraid of being charged with involvement in a protest, adding that "they knew" he was lying.

A cousin of prominent jailed Palestinian teenager Ahmed Tamimi, he says he was shot in the head with a rubber bullet during a protest in the occupied West Bank in December, leaving part of his skull missing. Israeli rights group B'Tselem produced medical documents appearing to verify that Tamimi was shot. The family has also presented what they say is an X-ray showing the bullet wound. It occurred the day Ahmed, then 16, slapped and kicked two soldiers next to her house in a video that later went viral. She faces a long potential jail sentence in a case that has gained international attention.

Mohammed's alleged shooting has been a key line of defense for Ahmed's actions by her lawyer in court hearings. But on Tuesday, an Israeli defense ministry unit that oversees affairs in the Palestinian territories said Mohammed had confessed the injury was the result of falling off a bike. "In December 2017, the young man Mohammed Tamimi injured his skull when he was riding his bicycle and fell off," it said in an Arabic language statement posted on Twitter. "Today his father Abu Fadel



RAMALLAH: Palestinian Mohammed Al-Tamimi, 15, poses for a picture at his family home yesterday. — AFP

Tamimi is claiming in the media that his son was injured by a rubber bullet in his skull," it said, adding in bold red letters "fake news".

'Obviously a bullet wound'

The claim of the bike accident came from an hour-long interrogation of Mohammed on Monday after he was detained along with a number of other residents from Ahmed's village of Nabi Saleh. Mohammed confirmed that was what he had told investigators but said it was clear to everyone he was lying. He said he had been arrested from his home at 3:00 am Monday and moved between locations before being questioned by two Israeli officers at around 9:30 am without a lawyer or guardian.

He said he was afraid they would charge him with something as he had attended a protest where he had been shot. "I told them I fell from my bicycle. They said 'oh, ok.'" Asked why he lied, he said "they wanted to jail me." He added that the two investigators "knew" that the claim was bogus. He said he came up with the bike story after seeing a bicycle from the car while being driven to be interrogated. — AFP

Courts tackle all crimes with...

Continued from Page 1

But Human Rights Watch has warned the new Philippine ban would likely trigger a wave of unregulated labor migration, exposing thousands to an even greater risk of abuse.

Valued for their fluency in English, over two million Philippine citizens are employed across the Gulf. While the murder rocked the Philippine community in Kuwait, many say they want to remain in the country. "I was truly afraid - but actually because I want to stay here to make sure my children graduate from school," said Luzviminda, who asked that her family name be withheld. "But if the government asks me to leave, I will

have no choice but to comply".

Like many others, her fate - and that of her children - now lies in the hands of diplomats, as the crisis between the two countries deepens. Some plan to lobby by the Philippines' Overseas Workers Welfare Administration to lift Duterte's ban, at least for skilled workers whose status in Kuwait is not tied to a single family under the "kafala" (sponsorship) system prevalent in the Middle East. "There are a lot of opportunities for the Filipinos" in Kuwait, said Anna Bunda, who works with a recruitment agency. "I hope that the government will hear us."

And while rights groups have criticized Gulf countries for failing to protect migrants, 56-year-old Rose, a housekeeper in Kuwait since 1997, said the benefits outweigh the risks. "I worked for five families, the last of which was an American family. They treat me well," she told AFP. "I cook what I want, and I exercise every morning on my own - and I help my family back home to cope with the burdens of life." — AFP

5 lawmakers submit general...

Continued from Page 1

The criminal court had acquitted all the 70 defendants in the case but the appeals court convicted all of them, handing harsh jail terms to 67 activists including three MPs, suspending the terms for two others and dropping charges on one after his death. The case is now being reviewed by the court of cassation, whose rulings are final and cannot be challenged.

The second article stipulates that all verdicts issued in the case will be scrapped, whether they were issued by the lower court or the court of cassation, even if

they were passed in absentia. It also states that those verdicts will be treated as null and void along with all the legal procedures and will not be included in their criminal records.

Article three states that all those jailed under the case - whether in initial or final verdicts - shall be released immediately and the public prosecution will take all the necessary measures to shelve all complaints in the case. The lawmakers said that the proposed general amnesty stems due to the special circumstances that surrounded the events. They also said the move will close a chapter of the past and open a new page to set a bright future for Kuwait, adding the pardon will pave the way for national reconciliation in the country. The draft law must first be cleared by the legal and legislation committee of the Assembly and then sent to the floor for a vote. A number of MPs have already expressed their opposition to the bill.

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Sports

Four-time F1 champion Hamilton sits out second day of F1 testing

'It's great to be back in the car after three months off'

BARCELONA: Four-time Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton sat out the second day of pre-season testing yesterday after Mercedes said they wanted to make the most of good weather with rain threatening.

The Briton had been due to take over from Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas in the afternoon at the Circuit de Catalunya but Mercedes said a decision had been made to continue with one driver. The usual break for lunch was abandoned.

"This is to maximise our mileage after the poor track conditions limited running this morning," Mercedes said on Twitter. "Mileage is king in #F1Testing, so we want to make the most of the current conditions. A driver swap would require switching out seat, pedals, even stickers when we could be out on track."

Hamilton completed only 25 laps on a cold and wet Monday afternoon, with snow later in the evening and temperatures plummeting. "It's great to be back in the car after three months off, but unfortunately we didn't get the chance to complete many laps today owing to the bad weather," he had said on Monday evening.

“This is to maximise our mileage after poor track conditions”

"The track was very cold in the afternoon, meaning it was tough to get any sort of heat into the tyres. The tyres weren't really working in these temperatures, so I could not get a real feel for them."

"It's hard for me to say a whole lot about the car because I did not drive it for a long time, but the initial feeling is good."

The forecast for today is wet and teams have been considering adding an extra day to testing to compensate for the missed track time. Williams have a private filming session scheduled for the circuit on Friday so any extra day would probably have to be added next week.

Hamilton missed the final day of the first test last year, making clear that time that he was not a big fan of wet weather tyres. "I might fake a pulled muscle in the morning and let Valtteri do it," he had said then. Bottas was top of the Tuesday lunchtime timesheets, with 43 laps under his belt and a best time of one minute 20.270 seconds. McLaren had a better morning than Monday, when Fernando Alonso's car lost a wheel and crashed into the gravel, with Belgian Stoffel Vandoorne second fastest and with 32 laps to his credit. — Reuters



MONTMELLO: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton drives at the Circuit de Catalunya on Monday in Montmelo on the outskirts of Barcelona during the first day of the first week of tests for the Formula One Grand Prix season. — AFP

Renault will hold Red Bull to May deadline on 2019 engine

BARCELONA: Renault will hold Red Bull to a May deadline to decide what Formula One engine they will use in 2019, the French manufacturer said yesterday. Renault are supplying McLaren and Red Bull this year as well as their own factory outfit, but Renault Sport F1 managing director Cyril Abiteboul said going down to two teams would be no problem.

"We've always said that to be an engine supplier is a very bad business," he told reporters during testing at the Circuit de Catalunya. The Formula One sporting regulations stipulate that the four power unit manufacturers must inform the governing FIA in May of the preceding season which teams they have a supply agreement with. Anyone without an agreement will be supplied by the manufacturer with fewest teams - which effectively means Honda since the Japanese company only supplies Red Bull-owned Toro Rosso at present. Mercedes and Ferrari both supply three teams.

Red Bull won four titles in a row with Renault engines between 2010 and 2013

but the relationship soured with the introduction of the current V6 turbo hybrid units and an era of Mercedes domination.

It was strained almost to breaking point in 2015 and Red Bull, who have Australian Daniel Ricciardo and Dutch youngster Max Verstappen as drivers, then re-branded the Renault engines as Tag Heuer. "We are not going to hang around forever," Abiteboul said. "I know what (Red Bull team boss) Christian (Horner) is referring to when he says that he has options. He's absolutely right. But one thing that is clear is planning."

"At the end of May there needs to be some clarity as to who is supplying which team. As far as we are concerned, that will be our deadline." The season starts on March 25 in Australia but Horner has expressed concern, despite his car being fastest when testing started on Monday, after Renault said they would put reliability before performance for the first few races.

Abiteboul said being an engine provider was an often thankless task but the rules, with a driver's allocation reduced to three units from four, made reliability even more important. "It's a no-brainer that this is what you have to put as a priority," he said.

"The key message is that the fact of being reliable opens up more options in terms of performance. The two go together. When you work on reliability, you actually work on performance also," added the Frenchman. — Reuters

Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah annual shooting tourney kicks off tomorrow

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Annual Shooting tournament will kick off tomorrow at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex for three days in the Olympic 10 Air pistol and rifle, 50 m pistol and rifle and archery for both men and women.

Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi said the club is keen on organizing the tournament as it carries the name of someone who has many contributions in various fields to his country at the political, economic and social levels, as well as support of Kuwaiti athletes.

MotoGP world champion, Marc Marquez, new Tissot ambassador

PARIS: Marc Marquez is the youngest ever four-time MotoGP World Champion, one-time Moto2 and one-time 125cc World Champion and an accomplished new member of the Tissot family. His endurance, skill and determination to be the best make him the ideal ambassador for Tissot, the Official Timekeeper of MotoGP.

Marc Marquez celebrated his most recent victory in 2017, in a nail-biting championship race against Andrea Dovizioso which saw Marquez power to victory in the final round. Even early in his career, his exceptional ability stood out, and he was delighted to take his place on the podium in his rookie 125cc class campaign in 2008. He won the Championship in 2010 and moved up to Moto2(tm) the following year, but it was not always smooth sailing. His determination to overcome obstacles became clear in 2011 when a crash during practice for the Malaysian Grand Prix disrupted his training and forced him to miss that race and the remaining races without being able to fight for the Championship. After undergoing surgery to repair his vision, Marc Marquez made the most of the small preparation time he had left to turn his season into an exceptional one and achieve the 2012 Moto2 World Championship in the Australian Grand Prix. Since then, the victories have not stopped. The following year saw Marquez's debut in the MotoGP category, replacing Casey Stoner for the Repsol Honda Team, winning the second MotoGP race and - impressively for a rookie - taking the Championship. In 2014 he defended his title, and in 2016, again, he was crowned Champion. He begins this year as reigning Champion with the will to fight to keep his title and eager to prove his position within the Repsol Honda team yet again.

Francois Thiebaud, President of Tissot, has delighted in watching the accomplished rider's career go from strength to strength: "We are honoured to welcome Marc Marquez into the Tissot family. Again and again he has demonstrated his passion for racing and keen determination to work hard, qualities we value above all else at Tissot. The Tissot family shares the same fighting spirit. We take our relationship with MotoGP and our role as Official Timekeeper extremely seriously, and we are fortified by our partnerships with such talented athletes as Marc Marquez."

Marc Marquez is equally as excited by the new alliance, and says:

Formula E to show races live on Twitter in Japan

TOKYO: Formula E races will be streamed live on Twitter in Japan from the next ePrix in Mexico this weekend, the electric series announced yesterday.

"This partnership with Twitter is a first for the series and an area we're looking to expand in the future," Formula E's media and business development director Ali Russell said in a statement.

Al-Osaimi said the Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah Cup annual tournament has a special status for the Kuwait Shooting Community, as all remember the contribution of Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Shooting Club since its start, and backed this noble sport until it was able to make all achievements for our dear country Kuwait. He said Kuwait Shooting Sport Club is keen on organizing the tournament annually in recognition of Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah contributions.

Al-Osaimi, thanked Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for supporting Kuwait Shooting and lauded the role of the organizing committee.



Obaid Al-Osaimi



Marc Marquez

"I am really happy and it's a pleasure to be part of Tissot's family. I am proud to join this important brand with a large history in the MotoGPTM Championship. I have great memories thanks to the watches I received after achieving Pole Positions since 2008. I have a collection of them in my house. I hope to win more watches hereinafter. I am sure Tissot and I will continue improving and experience many successes together."

To the new champion in the family, Tissot says welcome!

Japan is an important market for the series with Nissan set to enter next season and some of the country's top drivers, such as last year's Indianapolis 500 winner Takuma Sato, competing in the past.

Formula E, which races in cities around the world, held its inaugural race in 2014 and is now in its fourth season.

Live-streaming has been one of Twitter's biggest focus areas since last year as it seeks to attract new users. Twitter announced last month it was partnering with Twenty First Century Fox Inc's Fox Sports to stream a live show on this year's soccer World Cup in Russia. The company also has a multi-year deal with the US National Football League to live-stream pre-game coverage as well as a 30-minute show. — Reuters

Williams losing sponsor Martini at end of year

BARCELONA: Martini will be ending its title sponsorship of Williams at the end of the season and leaving Formula One, the team's deputy principal Claire Williams said yesterday.

The partnership between the drinks brand and former world champions is entering its fifth year and had been up for renewal.

"Martini are leaving us at the end of this year," Williams told reporters during Formula One testing at the Circuit de Catalunya.

"It's the end of their contract and we have been in discussions with them for many months now about an extension beyond 2018."

"They are withdrawing not just from Williams but the whole of Formula One, so you won't see them on another team in 2019," she added.

Williams, a family-owned team who won nine constructors championships between 1980 and 1997, last won a race in 2012 and major sponsors like Martini make an important contribution to the overall budget.

Claire Williams said it was important to have the resources to go racing but that might not mean looking for another title partner.

"We are financially stable at the moment...and we are not unduly concerned about them leaving," she added.

There have been some drawbacks with the Martini deal, however, with alcohol regulations limiting the use of under-25 drivers in some jurisdictions.

Williams have the youngest lineup in Formula One, with 19-year-old Canadian Lance Stroll and 22-year-old Russian Sergey Sirotkin.

The former is the son of a billionaire and the other is backed by an oligarch with close ties to Russian president Vladimir Putin.

The team also have Poland's Robert Kubica, 33, as reserve and 25-year-old Briton Oliver Rowland as 'official young driver'. Williams said Martini had been fully supportive of the driver choice and that had not been a factor in Martini's decision.

"I suppose next year it gives us the freedom to do what we need to do without having to worry about any age limit," she added. Most Formula One teams have struggled to attract sponsors of late and Williams said brands had a far greater choice of marketing platforms available now.

"I do think Formula One probably needs to work harder as a collective," she added. — Reuters

"We went through a really wonderful period where this was the ultimate for putting your marketing campaigns. I think we probably do need to work a bit harder to make sure we're delivering for all partners that come into this sport." — Reuters

Sports

Beijing spends big as it prepares for 2022 Olympics

New stadiums, Olympic villages are coming to life

CHONGLI: Villages are being razed in northern China. Mountains are being cut to size. And new stadiums, high-speed train lines, expressways and three separate Olympic villages are coming to life.

With the Pyeongchang Games in South Korea having wrapped up on Sunday, the focus turns to Beijing as China spends big to host its first Winter Olympics in 2022.

Still four years out, the tab for the Games has ticked upwards, with outlays appearing to eclipse the budget in Beijing's winning bid by at least half a billion dollars, according to an AFP review of government requests for the massive project.

Beijing won the Games for its willingness to spend. For the 2008 Summer Olympics the nation poured in an estimated \$40 billion.

That event amounted to a stunning coming out party for the rising giant-but afterwards many of the venues sat empty.

Beijing has pledged this time will be different, with officials drumming up sustainable development and post-Olympics plans for the heap of new facilities.

But in Chongli, where snowboard and ski events like the halfpipe will run, thousands of farmers are being pushed from their land.

In Taizicheng village, the site of a planned Olympic village, mammoth train station and snow town, only soil remains where villagers' homes once stood.

Up the valley, the brick and red-tiled roof homes of Qipanliang village where 300 families once lived were abandoned earlier this year and are set to be demolished.

A new expressway and high-speed train for whisking athletes to events will cut through the area. Ying Gui, 64, and his family of five are among the few remaining villagers.

"We will leave once we sell all this," said his daughter-in-law, waving at the candies, rice wine and gloves packed onto the shelves of their home, which doubles as the village store.

"We will have no home, no land for crops, nothing at all left," she said, adding however that she was satisfied with the compensation offered by the government.

Ying is not sure what he will do. He sold his 40 cows and harvested his last crop of potatoes and purple cabbage.

"I'm a farmer," he said. "I don't know what to think."

For now Ying often wanders up the mountain where workers are burrowing tunnels for the train and expressway. He can sell scrap metal he finds at the construction site for a couple of cents a pound.

BALLOONING BUDGET

Extra budget requests, on top of \$1.5 billion allocated in China's bid for the Games, show Beijing is once again pulling out all the stops to put on a flawless Winter Olympics.

The rural corridor north of the city is turning into ski fields, stadiums and housing. Millions have been budgeted just to bring water to the area and build artificial snow blowers.

"It's 100 percent man-made snow," said a snowcat driver as he groomed the nearby Genting ski resort, which will hold some events.

China's new national sliding centre (for bobsledding and luge) will run to at least \$257 million. The national alpine ski centre for ski racing will cost \$311 million. A Nordic centre with ski jumping is estimated at \$246 million.

Even projects to rehabilitate land scarred by mining that tourists might see out the window as they hurtle north from Beijing are under way.

When summed together, earmarked costs for a portion of the Olympic projects already exceeds \$2 billion, according to the estimates in bid requests reviewed by AFP.

That vast sum does not include the billions needed for the high-speed rail line or expressways to link together the three different Olympic zones, or compensate displaced farmers like Ying.

Ballooning costs for host cities shelved plans to host



PYEONGCHANG: The Olympic flag is brought down ahead of the handover to the next Winter Olympics host Beijing during the closing ceremony of the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games at the Pyeongchang Stadium on Monday. — AFP

the 2022 Games in a slew of European cities, and have been the focus of reforms under way at the International Olympic Committee.

The Beijing Games may not be an example of thriftiness for other nations to emulate.

Heavy private financing described in its bid has given way to funding from government and state-owned enterprises, the bid requests show.

SUPPORT AT HOME

The heavy costs figure little into the discussion in China, where state media continues to paint the upcoming Games with an adoring glow.

In December, Beijing unveiled the emblems for the event in a star-studded ceremony featuring actor Jackie Chan and pianist Lang Lang.

"For winter sports enthusiasts like me, I'm a supporter of the government's investment," said Lu Shan, a Beijing snowboarder sipping tea in a Genting ski lodge.

"Perhaps it's not economically worth it to build this rail project, but the government has ample cash."

Ying's family too said they did not mind giving up their land. "We're happy to give it to the nation," said his daughter-in-law. But they had no plans to hit the fake snow. "No one from here can ski, they come from Beijing," she said. — AFP

Undefeated Thai 'dwarf giant' one win from Mayweather

BANGKOK: Unsung outside the boxing world, a Thai fighter nicknamed the "dwarf giant" is quietly closing in on Floyd Mayweather's undefeated 50 fight record and with it an unlikely place among the sport's greats.

At 5ft 2in (1.57m) and weighing just 105lb (47.6kg), minimum-weight Wanheng Menayothin is shorter, leaner and significantly less wealthy than "Money" Mayweather, the brash American who was teased from retirement last year by a \$100 million purse to fight MMA star Conor McGregor.

But this spring Wanheng could tie Mayweather's 50-0 record and enter boxing lore. His 50th bout in April or May is set to be against Panama's Leroy Estrada in Thailand, a low-key affair that will be followed by fans and boxing enthusiasts, but not the global audience drawn to the cross-discipline spectacle between Mayweather and McGregor.

The milestone is generating boxing buzz in a country that is better known for Muay Thai, the kingdom's boxing-style martial art that also allows kicking, kneeing and elbows to the head. "Am I proud? Yes I am, for being on par with the superstars," the softly spoken



BANGKOK: This photo taken on January 31, 2018 shows the current World Boxing Council (WBC) mini-flyweight champion, Wanheng Menayothin, punching a bag during a training session in Bangkok. — AFP

32-year-old said while sitting on a tyre and wrapping his fists with gauze ahead of a training session at his Bangkok gym.

His record of 49 wins with 17 knockouts has been earned against relative minnows-many of them regional fighters-but he has been dominant in the minimum-weight division and holds the World Boxing Council belt.

With his present stats he has already matched the legendary fighter Rocky Marciano, but he doesn't dwell too much on the numbers.

"I never thought about breaking records. I just want to win every fight like all athletes who don't want to lose. Keep winning until I quit."

"Our major concern is that we are risking killing the soul of the Davis Cup," Kookken told Reuters by telephone.

"The Davis Cup atmosphere is really something unique. The ITF are focusing on having a bigger event but our concern is that this part of it (the home and away format) creates big event value."

The International Tennis Federation, in partnership with Barcelona soccer player Gerard Pique's Kosmos investment company, plan a single city, 18-nation event to be held over seven days, starting in November 2019.

A 25-year, \$3 billion investment would see cities bid for staging rights, with Singapore a possible inaugural venue. While Kookken says change is needed to ensure the participation of the world's top players - he is sceptical about the radical revamp, especially the fact that the traditional home and away ties would be lost. "I can't imagine that (the ITF) are not thinking about this because they know what makes Davis Cup different from all the rest," he said. "You have to change what is necessary to change and strengthen what is good or at least keep it. To drop the most unique thing of a product, that isn't the right way to develop a sport."

Royal Belgian Tennis Federation president Andre Stein was quoted in local media on

FIGHTING WORDS

Wanheng is from Thailand's poor rural northeast. Growing up he viewed fighting as a way out of poverty and moved to Bangkok at age 12 to train. "When he arrived, he didn't have the best skills, but he got to that point with determination," gym owner Chaiyasit Menayothin said. Wanheng's legal name is Chayaphon Moonsri. But like many fighters in Thailand, in both boxing and Muay Thai, he has several nom de guerres for the ring in a nod to sponsors, gyms and his own style. His endurance in bouts combined with his size earned him the label "dwarf giant", while his alias Wanheng Menayothin derives from the gym owner's name. — AFP

Monday as saying he was "absolutely against" the proposals and that other European federations would also vote against it at the ITF's annual meeting in August.

GAME-CHANGER

Kookken stopped short of echoing those comments but said he thought it unlikely the plans, described as a game-changer by ITF president David Haggerty, would pass through easily.

Last year the ITF's board failed to ratify a rule-change that would have scrapped best-of-five-set matches in favour of best-of-three-set rubbers. "Reforms last year were minor compared to this. So I wouldn't expect for it to be a positive outcome," Kookken said.

"And with the emotions involved it's very hard to predict how people will react to this," Ultimately, however, Kookken, said making sure that the leading players commit to the Davis Cup - something that has not been the case in recent years - was vital for its future.

"What is certain is that change was needed," he said. "If the details are presented in a way that top players react positively towards it then yeah, it can go very quickly the other way. But we as a federation will discuss it with our players and captains, see how it fits into their programme." — Reuters

Davis Cup revamp could 'kill its soul', say Belgians

LONDON: A proposal to rip up the Davis Cup format and replace it with a one-week World Cup of Tennis Finals in a single city risks "killing the soul" of the historic competition, according to Belgian tennis chief Gijs Kookken.

When it comes to producing the raucous atmospheres which help make the Davis Cup unique among tennis events, few do it as well as the Belgians who have reached two of the last three finals, losing on both occasions.

The final between Belgium and Britain in the Flanders Expo in Ghent in 2015 was an unforgettable experience for the 13,000 fans who crammed inside the arena over the three days. Last year's first-round clash against Germany in Frankfurt and the final against France in Lille brought thousands of Belgians across the border to roar on their players.

India dumps sari for trousers at Commonwealth Games

NEW DELHI: India's women athletes will for the first time wear trousers and a blazer instead of a traditional sari at the Commonwealth Games opening ceremony in Australia, a move that has pitted reformers against traditionalists.

Many Indian women competitors have welcomed the dark blue blazer and trousers that the Indian Olympic Association said was introduced at the request of the country's athletes' commission.

But female stars like badminton ace PV Sindhu and wrestler Sakshi Malik, both Olympic medalists, prefer the time-honoured sari, a flowing dress draped around the body.

"We always feel happy and proud when we wear a sari during the opening ceremonies," Malik told the Mail Today newspaper. Younger athletes feel it will be a change for the better at the opening parade for the 21st Commonwealth Games starting April 4 in Gold Coast, Australia.

Women's hockey captain Rani Rampal told AFP that she "loves" the new uniform at the official launch of the attire in New Delhi on Monday.

"It's very nice. Time to time there should be changes. Girls always used to wear a sari at the Games but this time it will be different and I love it," said the 23-year-old Rampal.

Fifteen-year-old shooter Manu Bhakar was relieved not to have to wear a sari, which she finds difficult to wrap. "I have never worn these typical women dresses, so it was a bit weird when thinking that I would have to wear the sari. — AFP

Bhakar told AFP that she always wears trousers and shirts so the new uniform will be "comfortable" for her. Indian gymnast Pranita Das wore a sari at the 2014 Commonwealth Games but said she thought the trousers would be a better fit for female athletes.

Male athletes have mostly worn blue blazers with grey trousers at major sporting events while women have had to wear the traditional Indian attire. This time will be more unisex, though the men will have to wear a tie while the women will wear a scarf.

The Raymond company that designed the outfits for the Indian contingent in Australia also said women's modern dress is more practical. "Traditional Indian costume is definitely a sari but women athletes have themselves said that wrapping a saree is a tedious thing to do," a Raymond spokesman Rohit Khanna told AFP.

"So based on their feedback we created this ensemble for the women athletes which is a white shirt, blazer and trouser with a scarf." — AFP



NEW DELHI: File photo taken on February 26, 2018 shows India's Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore (L) and Indian Olympics Association president Narinder Dhruv Batra (2nd L) unveiling the official apparel for Indian athletes during an event in New Delhi. — AFP

Sports

Columbus Blue Jackets score early to beat Capitals 5-1

Lightning goalie Vasilevskiy credited with 27 saves

NHL results/standings

Columbus 5, Washington 1; Philadelphia 1, Montreal 0 (SO); Tampa Bay 4, Toronto 3 (SO); Colorado 3, Vancouver 1; Los Angeles 3, Las Vegas 2 (OT).

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Tampa Bay	43	17	3	227	170	89
Toronto	39	20	6	216	182	84
Boston	37	15	8	195	150	82
Florida	28	25	6	175	193	62
Detroit	26	26	10	165	183	62
Montreal	23	29	10	157	194	56
Ottawa	21	30	10	166	216	52
Buffalo	19	33	11	151	206	49

Metropolitan Division

Philadelphia	34	19	10	189	178	78
Washington	35	21	7	195	189	77
Pittsburgh	36	23	4	206	187	76
New Jersey	32	22	8	185	188	72
Columbus	32	26	5	168	175	69
NY Islanders	29	27	7	207	225	65
Carolina	27	25	10	164	189	64
NY Rangers	27	30	6	177	201	60

Western Conference

Central Division

Nashville	38	14	9	196	155	85
Winnipeg	37	16	9	208	164	83
Minnesota	35	20	7	188	174	77
Dallas	35	23	4	184	164	74
St. Louis	34	25	4	173	164	72
Colorado	33	24	5	190	186	71
Chicago	27	28	8	178	179	62

Pacific Division

Las Vegas	41	16	5	217	169	87
San Jose	33	21	9	182	176	75
Anaheim	31	21	12	176	178	74
Los Angeles	34	24	5	180	157	73
Calgary	32	22	9	182	185	73
Edmonton	27	31	4	177	204	58
Vancouver	24	32	7	168	204	55
Arizona	18	34	10	148	205	46

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).

WASHINGTON: Mark Letestu scored in his return to the Columbus Blue Jackets and helped pave the way for a 5-1 victory over the visiting Washington Capitals on Monday night. Letestu, who previously played for Columbus from 2011 to 2015, was acquired from the Edmonton Oilers on Sunday to provide depth at center. Washington's Alex Ovechkin, who appeared in his franchise-record 984th game, had a first-period goal, his NHL-leading 39th on the season. The teams got into a scuffle at the first-period horn, and Ovechkin was shaken up when he was hit in the face by Matt Calvert, leaving blood on the ice. Following a discussion by the officials, Calvert was called for a match penalty for the infraction. The Blue Jackets set the early tone and led 4-1 in the opening period on goals by Artemi Panarin, Sonny Milano, Letestu and Seth Jones. Cam Atkinson added an empty-net goal in the third period.



Colorado beat Vancouver in Denver

CHICAGO: File photo shows Alex Ovechkin #8 of the Washington Capitals turns with the puck behind the Chicago Blackhawks net at the United Center in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

LIGHTNING 4, MAPLE LEAFS 3 (SO)

Brayden Point scored the lone goal in a shootout, leading Tampa Bay to a victory over visiting Toronto. Lightning goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy was credited with 27 saves, including a penalty-shot stop on Mitch Marner with 6:02 left in the third period. He stopped all three shots he faced in the shootout, helping Tampa Bay earn a fourth consecutive win. Tyler Johnson, Adam Erne and Chris Kunitz scored in regulation for Tampa Bay, which lost NHL leading scorer Nikita Kucherov in the first period due to an upper-body injury. Marner, Tyler Bozak and James van Riemsdyk scored for the Maple Leafs, who got 39 saves from Frederik Andersen.

FLYERS 1, CANADIENS 0 (SO)

Philadelphia goaltender Petr Mrazek stopped all 28 shots he faced through regulation and overtime, and



CHICAGO: File photo shows Alex Ovechkin #8 of the Washington Capitals turns with the puck behind the Chicago Blackhawks net at the United Center in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

Sean Couturier scored in the bottom of the sixth round of a shootout to give the Flyers a win at Montreal. Couturier beat Lindgren on the blocker side with the score tied 1-1 after Paul Byron and Jakob Voracek scored in the shootout session. Mrazek recorded his first shutout for the Flyers and won his third straight game with Philadelphia since being acquired from the Detroit Red Wings a week ago. Goalie Charlie Lindgren made 33 saves for Montreal in his first start since Nov. 21.

KINGS 2, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 1 (OT)

Dustin Brown scored a power-play goal with 1:46 remaining in overtime as Los Angeles rallied to defeat visiting Vegas. Anze Kopitar, who had an assist on the game-winner, forced overtime when he scored with 10.8 seconds left in regulation. Jeff Carter also scored for the Kings, who trailed 2-0 in the third period.

Smith and Erik Haula scored for the Western Conference-leading Golden Knights, who got 41 saves from Marc-Andre Fleury. Kings goalie Jonathan Quick stopped 37 shots.

AVALANCHE 3, CANUCKS 1

Nathan MacKinnon scored two goals, including the winner, as Colorado beat Vancouver in Denver. MacKinnon's first goal, on a wrist shot during a rush down the wing at 7:52 of the third period, gave the Avalanche an insurmountable 2-0 lead. His 28th of the season went into an empty net in the final minute after Daniel Sedin scored a minute earlier for the Canucks. Avalanche goaltender Semyon Varlamov stopped 31 of 32 shots. Canucks goalie Jacob Markstrom, starting for the second night in a row, recorded 25 saves on 27 shots. On Sunday, he stopped 41 shots in a 3-1 win at Arizona. — Reuters

Australia's fearsome attack creates dilemma for South Africa

DURBAN: Some of the world's best fast bowlers will square up when the first Test between South Africa and Australia starts at Kingsmead tomorrow. They may find, however, that some of their sting drawn by pitch conditions.

Kingsmead has lost the reputation it once had as a fast bowler's paradise. It has been many years since wicketkeepers had to leap around as balls soared and sped off the playing surface.

Indications are that the pitch will offer encouragement but not excessive help to the fast men, with enough grass on the surface to assist movement off the seam. The South African team, it seems, has given up on trying to influence conditions after their "requests" to groundsmen resulted in pitches that were less than ideal for a recent three-Test series against India. The surface for the third Test at the Wanderers was condemned as poor by International Cricket Council match referee Andy Pycroft.

"Everybody knows what happened at the Wanderers, so we've left the groundsmen to prepare the best possible pitches that they can," coach Otis Gibson said last week. Assuming the conditions are fair, it should be a red-blooded battle between the teams ranked second and third in Test cricket behind India. Both have potent fast bowlers and exciting, if fragile, batting line-ups. South Africa won the first two Tests against India with a four-man pace attack, left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj and just six top-quality batsmen. But may be tempted to strengthen their batting at the expense of one of the specialist bowlers.

That decision may be influenced by a lack of form of key players as well as injuries which kept several out of action in recent weeks. Captain Faf du Plessis is expected to play, although the right index finger he broke four weeks ago remained bandaged and he took a minimal part in the team's first practice in Durban on Monday.

Wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock, was woefully out of form with the bat before being injured in a one-day series against India, opening the door for Heinrich Klaasen to take over the gloves and play some crucial innings. Both Klaasen and De Kock have been named in a 15-man squad for the first two tests.

South Africa's batsmen will face a fast bowling attack of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins, backed by the off-spin of Nathan Lyon - rated by former Australian captain Steve Waugh as the best in the world. Australia's batting has relied greatly in recent times on captain Steve Smith and opener David Warner, so South Africa will be hoping to get through their two stars and put pressure on the rest of the batting line-up with a bowling attack spearheaded by Morne Morkel, Vernon Philander and Kagiso Rabada. — AFP

England's Topley signs white-ball deal with Hampshire

LONDON: Reece Topley has become the latest England international to switch his focus from first-class cricket to the white-ball game, following in the footsteps of Adil Rashid and Alex Hales.

The fast bowler, who has played 10 one-day internationals and six Twenty20 matches for England, has penned a contract with Hampshire for the 2018 season during which he will only play limited-overs cricket.

"Hampshire Cricket can announce that seamer Reece Topley has signed a white-ball contract with the club for the 2018 season," the club said in a statement.

"Topley, who joined Hampshire at the end of 2015, penned the new deal in December as part of a programme to help maximise his playing opportunities while preventing injury throughout the course of the season." The left-arter's 2017 season was ravaged by injury and he did not play after July due to a stress fracture in his back following an earlier hand problem.

"It has been a frustrating time for me as a young bowler," said the 24-year-old. "It is hoped that this proposal will assist me by preventing further injury as my body matures."

"Going forward, I do hope to return to red-ball cricket and still harbour ambitions of being the first left-arm fast bowler to take 100 Test wickets for England but that remains a long-term goal."

Batsman Hales announced last week he had signed a new limited-overs contract with Nottinghamshire after England leg-spinner Rashid said he would focus solely on white-ball cricket for Yorkshire this season.

The moves are likely to strengthen fears that England's top limited-overs internationals could abandon first-class, or red-ball, cricket, which includes five-day Test matches, in favour of playing in lucrative domestic Twenty20 competitions around the world.

But England's Jos Buttler, currently on tour in New Zealand, still hopes for a return to Test cricket.

"I haven't played a great deal of red-ball cricket recently. Whether that opportunity comes (depends on) performance," he was reported as saying in the Guardian newspaper. "I think at the back-end of this year I'll be available for quite a lot of (County) Championship cricket-so if I'm going to get back in that's when I need to score runs." — AFP



Ford Fiesta WRC rally car joins LEGOSpeed champions range

DUBAI: Ford, The LEGO Group and rally specialists M-Sport revealed a new model from the LEGOSpeed Champions range that is set to bring the thrill of the rally stage to living room floors - the title-winning M-Sport Ford Fiesta WRC rally car.

The designers at LEGO have recreated the striking looks of the M-Sport Ford Fiesta WRC car complete with powerful wheel arches and dramatic front and rear spoilers. The new set includes a choice of wheel trims,

two interchangeable bonnets - one featuring spotlights for night driving, authentic miniature race-graphics and a driver mini figure with helmet and racing overalls that can be placed inside the car through the removable windshield. When complete, the 203-piece Ford Fiesta M-Sport WRC LEGOSpeed Champions model measures 6 centimetres (2 inches) high and wide, and 13-centimetres (5 inches) long.

"With two World Rally Championship titles and five rally victories in 2017, it's hard to think of a more worthy addition to the LEGOSpeed Champions range than the M-Sport Ford Fiesta WRC car", said Mark Rushbrook, Ford global director of Motorsport. "The LEGOSpeed Champions series is a fun way to celebrate the success of Ford cars in motorsport. We hope it will inspire future generations of car designers, engineers and rally drivers."

The M-Sport Ford Fiesta WRC car last year powered to victory in both the FIA World Rally Championship Drivers' and Manufacturers' competitions, driven by Sebastien Ogier and co-driver Julien

Ingrassia, who are driving for the new M-Sport Ford World Rally Team this year alongside upcoming talent Elfyn Evans co-driver Daniel Barritt.

Powered by Ford's 1.6-litre EcoBoost petrol engine, the real-life M-Sport Ford Fiesta WRC rally car has already started the 2018 World Rally Championship season in winning-style with victory for Ogier and Ingrassia at Rallye Monte-Carlo in January.

Ford and LEGO have also introduced a new 1968 Ford Mustang Fastback model to the LEGOSpeed Champions range. The 184-piece kit features green bodywork with gold-coloured wheels and comes with a timing board, race-graphics stickers, removable wind-screen and a mini figure driver wearing a classic-style racing suit. The iconic Ford GT40 and new Ford GT racing cars that won Le Mans 24 Hours in 1966 and 2016 are also available as part of the LEGOSpeed Champions collection. The new LEGOSpeed Champions M-Sport Ford Fiesta WRC rally car and 1968 Mustang Fastback will be available to order at LEGO.com/shop from March 1, 2018.



Sports

Football beats politics for fans ahead of Iraq, Saudi clash

FIFA president Gianni Infantino invited

BASRA: With his social media campaign welcoming Saudi Arabia's football team to Iraq—"Greens, you're at home!"—Arkan Taqi has broken a taboo in his hometown Basra, close to the Iranian border. On the eve of a friendly match between Iraq and Saudi Arabia today that marks the return of international football to the city, Arkan and around a dozen supporters hope they have changed minds in Basra, an overwhelmingly Shiite Muslim city, as they await Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia.

A 90-minute match could have long-lasting repercussions in other ways. It is the first time football-mad Iraq, who almost made the cut for the 2018 World Cup themselves, have hosted an international match since 1990.

The country has not played full internationals on home turf ever since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait that sparked an international embargo. The ban, covering all but domestic matches, stayed in place after the US-led invasion of 2003 that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein.

RETURN TO 'NORMALCY'

With this friendly, Iraq aim to strengthen their case with world football governing body FIFA to lift the ban on them hosting competitive international matches. By hosting a team which has qualified for this year's World Cup in Russia, Iraq hope to instigate a diplomatic rapprochement with Riyadh and convince FIFA they are fit

to host internationals. Outside the futuristic 60,000-seater Basra Stadium—a vast arena inspired by the national tree, the palm—security forces are already in place to try and ensure the match goes ahead without a hitch. As Iraq returns to the international scene following the war with the Islamic State, which has now been forced out of all major cities in the country, Baghdad is seeking to enhance this return to "normalcy" in other areas. Football is one of the first of those areas, and convincing FIFA is the perfect place to start to reach

millions of fans around the world. FIFA president Gianni Infantino has been invited to the event, though it is unclear yet if he will attend.

'THIS IS A DREAM'

"There are still hostile feelings between Iraqis and Saudis, but they are shrinking more and more," says Arkan, 26. While Saudi supported

90-minute match could have long-lasting repercussions

Iraq in its eight-year long war with Iran from 1980, it was on the frontline against Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and was part of the international coalition that supported an embargo against Baghdad.

No Saudi flags fly in the streets around the stadium in the southern city of Basra, which has some two million inhabitants, as old rivalries persist. But the authorities have said they will hand out hundreds of Saudi green flags in the run-up to kick-off.

Online, the match has already begun with millions of Iraqis and Saudis interacting thanks to Arkan and his



BASRA: Iraqi fans cheer as their national football team players take part in a training session yesterday a day ahead of their friendly match against Saudi Arabia. — AFP

friends, who created a hash-tag to welcome their visitors. Throughout Iraq, travel agencies have also organized trips to Basra.

"For us, seeing Arab teams play in Basra was a dream," Ammar Kitan, 56, who works for the city council in Basra, told AFP. And this dream "is not only important for Basra but for all Iraq", said Ahmed Massoud, a 25-year-old student, because "this match against a

team that goes to the World Cup will help lift the (FIFA) ban and prove that the city is safe".

On the pitch, Iraqi defender Ali Faez said the significance of the match is also felt by the players. "The match with Saudi Arabia is of great importance on more than one level: to lift the ban on our stadiums, but also for us, as a team, to improve our image in the world rankings," said the 24-year-old international. — AFP

Neymar could still face Real, no operation planned

PARIS: Neymar still has a "small chance" of playing against Real Madrid in the Champions League and there are no plans for an operation on his cracked bone, Paris Saint-Germain coach Unai Emery said yesterday.

"For Neymar there has been no decision to have an operation," said Emery, denying an earlier report in the Brazilian press that the world's most expensive player would go under the knife to fix the cracked bone in his foot. "Neymar is the first to want to play every match, he's very focussed on Real. I think there's a small chance that he'll be ready for the match," added Emery. PSG trail 3-1 from the last 16 first leg in Madrid two weeks ago and the loss of Neymar would be a huge blow to their chances of overturning that deficit at the Parc des Princes on March 6 and reaching the Champions League quarter-finals.

Neymar suffered a cracked metatarsal in his foot and a twisted ankle in an innocuous looking incident against Marseille on Sunday night. And while Spaniard Emery said there is a possibility he'll recover by next week, he was more pessimistic than he had been on Sunday night. "Today, after analysing Neymar, it looks less likely than it did on Sunday that he'll be ready for this match," said Emery. However, he was clear in his dismissal of a report published by Brazilian media outlet Globo Esporte on Tuesday morning that claimed a decision had already been reached for Neymar to undergo an operation, and that he would be out until May. "Last night (Monday) the club issued an official statement: it said how the player was medically," added Emery. "Things (like operations) aren't decided like



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar Jr is evacuated on a stretcher during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Marseille (OM) at the Parc des Princes in Paris on Monday. — AFP

that," he added, clicking his fingers.

"You need discussions with the doctor, the player, his entourage. "To make such an important decision you need tranquility and a bit of patience. "Right now, I don't think you need anything else. There's a lot of information from outside, but the truth is what I told you, which is what the doctor told me."

While PSG's primary concern is having the world's most expensive player available for their Champions

League match next week, in Brazil it is Neymar's participation at the World Cup that is most important.

The 26-year-old captained Brazil to their first ever Olympic gold medal 18 months ago on home soil and is seen as crucial to their hopes in Russia in June and July. Were he to undergo an operation now and return to fitness in May, that would suit Brazil, who could rely then on a fully fit and fresh Neymar for the World Cup. — AFP

Is a weak Bundesliga hurting Bayern in Europe?

BERLIN: Bayern Munich's iron-grip on the Bundesliga shows no signs of weakening, but in Germany there is fear the lack of strong domestic rivals is hurting their Champions League chances. Despite Saturday's goalless draw at home to Hertha Berlin, Bayern finished the weekend 20 points clear.

Bayern are steaming towards a sixth straight title, but recent European success has eluded them. "Until April, Bayern won't have any challenges," bemoaned German magazine Kicker. "How can they keep up pressure in the squad?"

"It won't be easy given a sixth successive title is practically in the bag and there isn't a single week in March, other than the return trip to Istanbul, with two matches." Their 5-0 hammering of 10-man Besiktas in last week's last-16 first leg, leaves Bayern on the verge of a Champions League quarter-final berth, unless disaster strikes in the return leg on March 14.

Bayern last won the competition in 2013, but in each of the four seasons since they have lost in the Champions League knock-out stage to Spanish clubs. Pep Guardiola's team bowed out of the semi-finals to Real Madrid, Barcelona and Atletico Madrid in consecutive seasons.

Last season, under Carlo Ancelotti, Bayern lost in the quarter-finals to Real. Critics say a dearth of strong domestic rivals means Bayern are rarely tested and struggle when under pressure.

Bundesliga teams tend to defend conservatively against Bayern. "The attitude is often that opponents don't want to lose heavily," said ex-Bayern midfielder Michael Ballack.

"There is often too much respect." Former West Germany striker Dieter Hoernes, brother of Bayern president Uli, says Bayern's huge lead does them no favours. "When you have such a big lead, you lack a bit of bite," he told Sky.

"This huge gap is a problem for the Bundesliga, but also for Bayern." Bayern are Germany's sole remaining Champions League side—compared to England's five teams—in the last 16.

Borussia Dortmund and RB Leipzig both failed to make it past the group stage. In order for Bayern to continue competing on the European stage, they need genuine domestic rivals.

"It would be good if alongside Dortmund and Bayern, a third team constantly reached the Champions League," said Bayern striker Robert Lewandowski. To do so, German clubs would need increased spending power.

In a bid to boost foreign investment, the German Football League (DFL) is considering ditching its '50+1' rule, which ensures clubs are majority owned by their own membership rather than external investors. A change could see cash from overseas filling Bundesliga clubs' coffers in the future.

GERMAN TALENT MAGNET

Too often, though, the rest of the Bundesliga is dwarfed by Bayern's financial might and prestige. For

years, they have lured Germany's best young talent from rivals to Munich, such as Serge Gnabry, Sebastian Rudy, Niklas Sule, Sandro Wagner and Leon Goretzka.

But the last player to come through the club's academy and make the grade was Austria defender David Alaba—back in 2010. While Bayern tend to keep their top players, their domestic rivals often lose theirs—either to Munich or big-spending foreign clubs.

Dortmund lost two stars in the space of six months. Ousmane Dembele joined Barcelona for 105 million euros (\$129.2m), before Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was sold to Arsenal for £56 million (\$78 million).

In contrast, Bayern paid a Bundesliga record 47.5 million euros for French midfielder Corentin Tolisso last year. Excluding the Tolisso deal, the Bundesliga's biggest transfer this season is the 25 million euros Dortmund paid Dynamo Kiev for Andriy Yarmolenko—a paltry sum compared to what Paris Saint-Germain, Barcelona and Real Madrid are prepared to spend.

In return, Bundesliga clubs are getting young players from England looking for experience. Former Germany coach Bertie Vogts says the Bundesliga is in danger of becoming a feeder to the English Premier League rather than a rival.

"It must be a warning signal that English clubs send their young players to the Bundesliga just for them to play, because they do not have places in the Premier League," said Vogts. This season, Jadon Sancho joined Dortmund because he felt he had limited opportunities at Manchester City.

Fellow England prospect Reece Oxford is on loan at Borussia Moenchengladbach from West Ham and Everton's Ademola Lookman opted for a stint at RB Leipzig. — AFP

Napoli crush Cagliari to pull clear in Serie A

MILAN: Napoli pulled four points clear at the top of Serie A on Monday with a 5-0 hammering of Cagliari a day after champions Juventus' game in Turin was snowed off. Jose Callejon and Dries Mertens gave Maurizio Sarri's side a comfortable two-goal lead at the break with a goal from captain Marek Hamsik, a Lorenzo Insigne penalty and Mario Rui's free-kick sealing a 10th straight league win. Napoli are targeting a third Serie A title and first since 1990, with their sole focus now on the Scudetto after their Europa League and Italian Cup exits. "It's an important result," said Napoli forward Insigne. "We are ahead but it depends on us, we must always win. Juve never give up, but we have shown we have great character and big heart."

"We're playing every game as if it were a final. We hope it will pay off in the end."

And in Sardinia they dominated Cagliari—who are just five points above the drop zone—as snow wreaked havoc on the Italian Peninsula.

Sunday's Serie A game between champions Juventus and Atalanta in Turin was postponed because of blizzard-like conditions in northern Italy. Napoli have 69 points from 26 matches, four points ahead of Juventus, who have a game in hand, with Lazio moving up to third after Sunday's 3-0 win over Sassuolo. "I hope to get to 100 points," said Sarri. "But for us it would be unknown territory, we don't know if we can get there. "I told the lads that of the 12 games left we have to win 11 and draw one," he added with Napoli's next two games against Roma and Inter Milan.

Cagliari gave a first start to North Korean forward Han Kwang-Song who has returned to the Mediterranean island from a loan spell at Perugia. Brazilian Allan set up Callejon for the opener after 29 minutes and, three minutes before the break, Mertens finished off an Elseid Hysaj cross.

Cagliari also had their chances but Leonardo Pavoletti was off target twice with Pepe Reina denying Han. But after the break Napoli dominated with Hamsik getting the third on the hour mark for his sixth in the league this season.

Insigne then converted a penalty awarded after Leandro Castan raised his hand to clear, with Rui completing the rout with a free-kick, condemning Cagliari to their 15th defeat of the season. — AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE		
Athletic de Bilbao v Valencia	beIN SPORTS HD 3	21:30
Malaga v Sevilla	beIN SPORTS HD 1	21:30
Getafe v Deportivo La Coruna	beIN SPORTS HD 4	21:30
Atletico de Madrid v Leganes	beIN SPORTS HD 3	23:30
Villarreal v Eibar	beIN SPORTS HD 4	23:30

13 Undefeated Thai 'dwarf giant' one win from record



14 Columbus Blue Jackets score early to beat Capitals 5-1



15 Football beats politics for fans ahead of Iraq, Saudi clash



NEW ORLEANS: Anthony Davis #23 of the New Orleans Pelicans shoots the ball against the Phoenix Suns on Monday at the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. — AFP

Davis powers Pelicans over Suns

Golden State Warriors beat New York Knicks 125-111

LOS ANGELES: Anthony Davis carried New Orleans on his back on Monday, scoring a season-high 53 points, grabbing 18 rebounds and blocking five shots as the Pelicans overpowered the struggling Phoenix Suns 125-116. Davis has spearheaded the Pelicans' attack during a six-game winning streak one of their longest in recent years-and over that time he is averaging more than 40 points a game.

Jrue Holiday scored 20 points for the Pelicans, whose season-best unbeaten run has pulled them into a tie with Portland for fifth place in the Western Conference despite being without all-star DeMarcus Cousins, who was lost for the season with a torn Achilles tendon. The Pelicans are just 1.5 games back of third spot.

"Thank, you Anthony, for carrying us," Holiday said. "Look at his numbers, man. He's something else." The 24-year-old American Davis became the first player in NBA history to tally at least 50 points, 15 rebounds and five blocks in a game as he delivered the second-best scoring performance of his six-year NBA career. He scored 59 points in a game on February 2016. Davis also made clutch plays on defence, tipping away a loose ball from Suns' Elfrid Payton with less than 40 seconds remaining in the fourth to help preserve a

seven point lead in front of a crowd of 17,200 at the Smoothie King Center arena.

"I just wanted to hang around the rim as much as possible, knowing I had the size advantage," Davis said. Devin Booker had 40 points and 10 rebounds for Phoenix, which lost its 10th straight. T.J. Warren added 23 points and Josh Jackson tallied 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Suns, who led by as many as 17 in the second quarter but fell behind for good with about five minutes left in the fourth quarter. Payton scored 16 points, and his layup pulled Phoenix within 116-114 with 2:29 left, but the Pelicans scored the next five points to ice the victory.

CURRY'S GARDEN PARTY

In New York, Klay Thompson and Stephen Curry combined for 47 points as the Golden State Warriors trampled all over another NBA opponent by beating the New York Knicks 125-111. Thompson finished with 26, Curry added 21 and Kevin Durant tallied 22 points and nine rebounds for Golden State, which trailed by one at halftime before outscoring New York 39-18 in the third put the game out of reach at Madison Square Garden. The Warriors improved to 3-0 since the all-star break and beat the Knicks for the eighth straight time.

ban, UEFA said. The method is on the World Anti-doping Agency's prohibited list and carries a maximum ban of four years. Nasri is currently without a club having left Turkish side Antalyaspor by mutual consent last month. The doping affair started when a Los Angeles clinic called Drip Doctors tweeted the fact they had treated Nasri with an intravenous vitamin booster whilst the player was on holiday there. Nasri was at that time on loan from City at Sevilla, who expressed surprise when the story broke in the media-Spanish anti-doping authorities quickly took up the matter and opened an inquiry at the end of 2016.

After shining as a youngster at his hometown club Marseille, Nasri was recruited by Arsene Wenger at Arsenal and switched three seasons later to City for a then sizeable £25 million (28m euros, \$35m) transfer.

He won two Premier League titles at City but was loaned out to Sevilla and then sold to Antalyaspor at the end of last season. — AFP

NBA results/standings

LA Lakers 123, Atlanta 104; Boston 109, Memphis 98; Brooklyn 104, Chicago 87; Golden State 125, New York 111; Toronto 123, Detroit 94; New Orleans 125, Phoenix 116; Oklahoma City 112, Orlando 105; Dallas 109, Indiana 103; Houston 96, Utah 85; Minnesota 118, Sacramento 100.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference					
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division					
W	L	PCT	GB						
Toronto	42	17	.712	-	Minnesota	38	26	.594	-
Boston	43	19	.694	0.5	Portland	34	26	.567	2
Philadelphia	32	26	.552	9.5	Oklahoma City	35	27	.565	2
New York	24	38	.387	19.5	Denver	33	27	.550	3
Brooklyn	20	41	.328	23	Utah	31	30	.508	5.5
Central Division				Pacific Division					
Cleveland	35	24	.593	-	Golden State	47	14	.770	-
Indiana	34	26	.567	1.5	LA Clippers	31	27	.534	14.5
Milwaukee	33	26	.559	2	LA Lakers	26	34	.433	20.5
Detroit	28	32	.467	7.5	Sacramento	18	42	.300	28.5
Chicago	20	40	.333	15.5	Phoenix	18	44	.290	29.5
Southeast Division				Southwest Division					
Washington	35	25	.583	-	Houston	47	13	.783	-
Miami	31	29	.517	4	San Antonio	36	25	.590	11.5
Charlotte	27	33	.450	8	New Orleans	34	26	.567	13
Orlando	18	42	.300	17	Dallas	19	42	.311	28.5
Atlanta	18	43	.295	17.5	Memphis	18	41	.305	28.5

This week marks the five-year anniversary of Curry's memorable 54-point performance at Madison Square Garden. Curry had plenty of help on Monday as the Warriors made 15 three-pointers and had a half dozen players in double figures. Emmanuel Mudiay scored 20 points and Trey Burke had 18 for the Knicks.

Elsewhere, DeMar DeRozan and Kyle Lowry each scored 20 points, Serge Ibaka had 19 and the Toronto Raptors routed the Detroit Pistons 123-94 for their seventh win in eight games. Pascal Siakam added 11 points as the Raptors improved to 25-5 at home, the best record in the league. — AFP

UEFA hit Nasri with 6-month doping ban

PARIS: Former Manchester City midfielder and France international Samir Nasri was handed a six-month doping ban "for using a prohibited method" by European football governing body UEFA yesterday.

Nasri, 30, had appealed to UEFA for a therapeutic use exemption (TUE) following a multi-vitamin intravenous booster he received at a Los Angeles clinic in 2016. That was rejected last March, as was an appeal in December to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

However, he still has the right to appeal against his



Samir Nasri

Business

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2018

18 Real estate sales in Kuwait remained robust in January



19 Comcast challenges Murdoch, Disney with \$31bn offer for Sky



21 Finalists for prestigious Lexus Design Award 2018 announced



BARCELONA: (Left to right) Yazen Altimimi, CEO of Zain Cash Iraq; Jennifer Suleiman, Head of Corporate Sustainability; and Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, during the release of the annual thought leadership report.

Zain publishes thought leadership report

Report showcases how Zain Cash saves lives by empowering people

BARCELONA: Zain Group, the leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces the publication of its annual thought leadership report, this year entitled, 'Saving Lives by Empowering People through Zain Cash'.

The report launched during the 2018 Mobile World Congress Barcelona, showcases how Zain Cash, a dynamic and life enhancing mobile banking service, impacts and transforms people's lives, particularly those of the most vulnerable in society. The report draws much of its primary data from examples found in Iraq, with NGOs and humanitarian aid agencies being key Zain Cash users.

It is estimated that 89 percent of Iraq's adult population does not possess a bank account, though the great majority of these unbanked adults own a mobile phone. Many adults have begun to use their phones beyond just voice and text messaging, to include activities such as sending and receiving payments and other transactions.

The report highlights how shared value and value creation should drive a company's strategy when developing offerings for a market, as it helps sustain the business by creating new ways to achieve economic success. 'Saving Lives by Empowering People through Zain Cash' examines how this application is an example of the strong link that exists between Zain's core commercial activity and the transformational impact that this service has on people's lives. Commenting on the publication of the company's latest report, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi commented, "The global spread of mobile technology has elevated society's expectations and demands for

an accessible, user-friendly, fast, and effective tool for conducting financial transactions. With its broad scope, rich portfolio and wide range of services, Zain Cash responds to these needs as it plays an instrumental role in empowering individuals by providing everyone with a smartphone access to safe and reliable mobile financial services."

Al-Kharafi continued, "Iraq is a special and unique case given the instability it has endured for nearly a decade and a half now. Iraqis are proud and industrious people, and in many ways mobile communications has been one of their greatest tools of recovery in this period. We are immensely proud to operate in the country, and we are gratified to see the positive impact innovations such as Zain Cash have had on the lives of millions of regular citizens."

Jennifer Suleiman, Zain Group's Head of Corporate Sustainability said, "At Zain, we remain committed in addressing various developmental issues as we firmly believe in being an inclusive business that provides tangible value for the communities we serve and beyond. Our goal is to foster prosperity and truly align to the Sustainable Development Goals in the hope that we all live prosperous

economic outlook remains strong" and "further gradual increases in the federal funds rate will best promote attainment of both of our objectives" of full employment and stable inflation. The central bank's preferred inflation measure rose only 1.5 percent last year, well short of the target, but Powell repeated the Fed's view that it was held down partly by "transitory influences that we do not expect will repeat."

The Fed raised the benchmark interest rate in December, and has indicated that three rate hikes are expected this year. However, that was before strong wage gains in the January employment report fueled fears the Fed will have to raise rates faster to head off inflation.

Many economists now expect four moves in 2018, with the first coming at the policy meeting in late March. While Powell gave no hint in his testimony of the number of increases he expects, he was bullish on the outlook, noting that "some of the headwinds the US economy faced in previous years have turned into tailwinds."

In particular, in the wake of the tax cuts Congress passed in December, "fiscal policy has become more stim-

ulative" while demand for US exports has firmed given the "solid economic growth of our trading partners," which is helping the manufacturing sector.

"In this environment, we anticipate that inflation on a 12-month basis will move up this year," reaching the two percent goal in the medium term, he said. "Wages should increase at a faster pace as well." The Fed chief will take questions from lawmakers after his testimony, which could provide more details in his thinking. Fed policymakers anticipate three rate increases this year, and Powell gave no indication in prepared remarks to the House Financial Services Committee that the pace needs to quicken even as the "tailwinds" of government stimulus and a stronger world economy propel the US recovery. "The [Federal Open Market Committee] will continue to strike a balance between avoiding an overheating economy and bringing ... price inflation to 2 percent on a sustained basis," Powell said in his first monetary policy testimony to Congress as Fed chief. "Some of the headwinds the US economy faced in previous years have turned into tailwinds," Powell said, noting recent fiscal policy shifts and the global economic

efforts valuable for many communities across Iraq, especially in disaster relief. Our capabilities have led us to join forces with key NGOs to overcome a shared challenge, with humanitarian agencies hailing the model for its quick delivery, higher transparency and control, and cost effectiveness." To gather critical insights that could be used to analyze, assess and grasp the transformational aspect of the mobile banking service with the aim to increase Zain's responsiveness to any rising issue or concern and for

insights to increasing its widespread acceptance, the Zain Cash team identified potential users, created and circulated questionnaires to material stakeholders. These stakeholders included the Central Bank of Iraq; local point of sales and retailers; service and utility providers; NGOs and Aid agencies; refugees and internally displaced people; and various Ministries.

The findings of the questionnaire will see Zain Cash increase its point of sales network, increasing the capacity of the platform to accept more users, and create more awareness and invest more resources in educating the public on mobile banking and banking in general as most of the population are unaware of the logistics of banking.

Mobile money and digital payments methods are critical enablers in achieving several of the targets that fall under the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. Through this agenda, governments, corporations, NGOs, and civil society can all come together to help put the whole world on a more prosperous and sustainable development path. Mobile money can be linked to 11 out of the 17 goals as it promotes a more inclusive financial ecosystem.

Financial inclusion has proven to be an effective means for reducing poverty and minimizing the gap between the poorest and wealthiest segments in society. By providing access to financial services to unbanked populations, a social and economic transformation can materialize in that specific society.

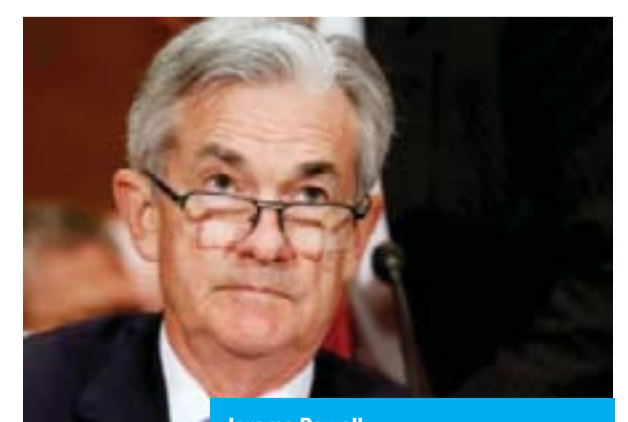
Fed Chair: US outlook strong, gradual rate hikes expected

WASHINGTON: The US economic outlook is strong and continued gradual increases in the key interest rate will help keep it on track, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said in his debut congressional appearance yesterday. Powell said inflation has been held down by temporary factors but is set to rise this year closer to the two percent goal, as wage gains also accelerate at long last. In semi-annual testimony to the House Financial Services Committee, his first as Fed chairman, Powell said "the eco-

nomie outlook remains strong" and "further gradual increases in the federal funds rate will best promote attainment of both of our objectives" of full employment and stable inflation. The central bank's preferred inflation measure rose only 1.5 percent last year, well short of the target, but Powell repeated the Fed's view that it was held down partly by "transitory influences that we do not expect will repeat."

The Fed raised the benchmark interest rate in December, and has indicated that three rate hikes are expected this year. However, that was before strong wage gains in the January employment report fueled fears the Fed will have to raise rates faster to head off inflation. Many economists now expect four moves in 2018, with the first coming at the policy meeting in late March. While Powell gave no hint in his testimony of the number of increases he expects, he was bullish on the outlook, noting that "some of the headwinds the US economy faced in previous years have turned into tailwinds."

In particular, in the wake of the tax cuts Congress passed in December, "fiscal policy has become more stim-



Jerome Powell

recovery. Still, "inflation remains below our 2 percent longer-run objective. In the (FOMC's) view, further gradual rate increases in the federal funds rate will best promote attainment of both of our objectives." — Agencies

Business

NBK Economic Report

Real estate sales in Kuwait remained robust in January

Overall sales for 3 sectors reached KD 226m in January

KUWAIT: Real estate sales were higher in January 2018 due to continued robustness in residential sales as well as the largest monthly sales figure in the investment sector in years. It was a strong start for the year as overall sales for the three sectors reached KD 226 million in January 2018, a 26 percent year-on-year (y/y) jump. Transactions, however, grew a mere 1.9 percent y/y to reach 375. Some of the strength was due to a base effect: the performance in January 2017 was subdued, as it followed very strong figures in December 2016.

Residential sector sales and transactions picked up as prices continued to make progress. Sales were up 11.7 percent y/y in January 2018 to KD 87.5 million, though this was below the KD 96 million monthly average in 2017. Activity rose to 283 transactions, two thirds of which were residential home sales. The most active areas in terms of residential plot sales were Funaitees, Abu Futaia, and the Sabah Al-Ahmad Coastal area.

Residential home prices showed improvement in January 2018 while residential land prices eased after gains in the second half of 2017. The NBK Residential Home price index posted positive annual growth (1.1 percent y/y reaching 151.9) as sales activity in the sector improved in the second half of 2017 and into 2018. The NBK Residential Land index, however, showed easing prices (down 5.5 per-

cent y/y to 171.3), but this comes after some decline in land prices in the second half of 2017.

Investment property sales took off in January, as several large deals in buildings and plots came through. Though the number of contracts witnessed a significant decline (24 percent down to 87), a number of large transactions offset this fall in activity. Sales totaled KD 122.2 million (83 percent y/y) and half of which came from building sales. The largest sale was for a building in Jabriya for over 4,400 square meters at KD 14 million. There were several sales in key areas such as Salmiya, Hawalli, and Kuwait City. Sabah Al-Salem witnessed a significant pick up in investment plot sales, the largest of which was a 5,600 square meter plot that sold for KD 18.8 million.

Investment sector prices appear to be stabilizing as the pace of decline eased. The index reached 177.9 in January 2018, down 1.1 percent m/m and 3.1 percent y/y. The price index appears to be in line with 2017, showing a steadier performance and a slower pace of easing relative to 2016.

Commercial sector sales slowed in January after an active December 2017. January saw sales of KD 16.2 million from five transactions, an improvement from just one transaction in December, and in line with the average monthly performance in 2017. Three commercial buildings were sold in Al-Mirqab at KD 3 million each.



Strong start to residential sales in 2017

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Samer Ahmad Ali Abd Rabboh
2. Raied Shaban Zaqout
3. Mostafa Mohammad Hasan Alhajjar
4. Naser Abdulaziz Abdullah Alawadhi
5. Mohammed Abdulkareem Ghloum Haidar

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks. The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has to its credit the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years.

Greek economy minister quits in housing stipend row

ATHENS: Greece's economy minister quit early yesterday, the prime minister's office said, hours after his wife was ousted as a junior minister over a housing stipend controversy. "Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has accepted the resignation of Economy Minister Dimitri Papadimitriou," the premier's office said in a statement.

Papadimitriou's wife Rania Antonopoulou, the junior labor minister, had been ousted hours earlier.

According to reports, a reshuffle will be announced tomorrow. The case has embarrassed the government, which has pledged to eliminate state profligacy and has imposed tax hikes and benefits cuts on Greeks. It also comes at the start of an audit by Greece's international creditors, who are vetting a final batch of reforms before the scheduled completion of the country's bailout in August. Privatizations, a sector supervised by the ministry formerly headed Papadimitriou, are to feature in the talks. Papadimitriou oversaw investment issues while Antonopoulou was tasked with reducing unemployment.

The pair, who were prominent US-based economists before both took leave of absence to return to Greece to join the government in 2015 and



ATHENS: A picture taken at the Greek parliament in Athens shows Greece's junior labor minister, Rania Antonopoulou (second left) standing next to Greek Minister of Economy Dimitri Papadimitriou (right, seated). —AFP

2016, while keeping a permanent home in the US.

But despite being personally wealthy, Antonopoulou sparked a controversy after it emerged she had requested a 1,000-euro (\$1,200) monthly housing stipend available to government members without permanent homes in Athens.

The case was exposed by pro-opposition daily Eleftheros Typos last week. Antonopoulou on Monday said she had received 23,000 euros (\$28,000) over two years, and was technically within her rights to do so. "It was never my intention to insult the Greek people," she said

in a statement.

"I understand that my financial standing, as reflected in my tax declaration, has increased public outrage," she added. The pair are senior scholars at the New York-based Levy Economics Institute of Bard College. In 2015, Antonopoulou declared stocks worth \$340,000 and an annual income of 70,000 euros. Papadimitriou in 2015 declared a portfolio of some \$2.7 million and an income of over \$450,000.

Tsipras, who trails in opinion polls, is reportedly planning to also replace migration minister Yiannis Mouzalas, who is battling ill health. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL				
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL		
			Europe	
British Pound	0.413700	0.421200		
Czech Korune	0.006607	0.015907		
Danish Krone	0.045731	0.050731		
Euro	0.364628	0.372128		
Georgian Lari	0.133906	0.133906		
Hungarian O.001132	0.001322			
Norwegian Krone	0.034434	0.039634		
Romanian Leu	0.064218	0.081068		
Russian ruble	0.005405	0.005405		
Slovakia	0.008925	0.018925		
Swedish Krona	0.032882	0.037882		
Swiss Franc	0.313742	0.324742		
			Australasia	
Australian Dollar	0.227311	0.239311		
New Zealand Dollar	0.212334	0.221834		
			America	
Canadian Dollar	0.231442	0.240442		
US Dollars	0.296550	0.300970		
US Dollars Mint	0.297050	0.300970		
			Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003189	0.003773		
Chinese Yuan	0.046149	0.049649		
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036554	0.039304		
Indian Rupee	0.004211	0.004852		
			Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018
			Japanese Yen	0.002730
			Korean Won	0.000270
			Malaysian Ringgit	0.073108
			Nepalese Rupee	0.002999
			Pakistan Rupee	0.002530
			Philippine Peso	0.005702
			Singapore Dollar	0.223272
			Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001643
			Taiwan	0.010315
			Thai Baht	0.009228
			Arab	
			Bahraini Dinar	0.790912
			Egyptian Pound	0.014079
			Iranian Riyal	0.000083
			Iraqi Dinar	0.000202
			Jordanian Dinar	0.419429
			Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
			Lebanese Pound	0.000154
			Moroccan Dirhams	0.022676
			Omani Riyal	0.774591
			Qatar Riyal	0.078291
			Saudi Riyal	0.079087
			Syrian Pound	0.001273
			Tunisian Dinar	0.121097
			Turkish Lira	0.074027
			UAE Dirhams	0.080430
			Yemeni Riyal	0.000977
				0.000024
				0.002910
				0.000285
				0.079108
				0.003169
				0.002820
				0.006002
				0.233272
				0.002223
				0.010495
				0.009778
				0.799412
				0.019797
				0.000084
				0.000262
				0.428429
				1.000000
				0.000254
				0.046676
				0.780271
				0.083231
				0.080387
				0.001493
				0.130097
				0.084327
				0.082130
				0.001057

S African minister: Budget may not stave off downgrades

CAPE TOWN: South Africa's Finance Minister Nhlhla Nene said yesterday his predecessor's budget last week might not prevent further credit ratings downgrades as new President Cyril Ramaphosa tries to revive the economy. The state of government finances forced the Treasury last week to take the politically risky step of raising value-added tax for the first time in 25 years.

Ramaphosa, 65, hailed a "new dawn" after his inauguration and has promised to fight corruption.

The move was welcomed by ratings agencies and markets priced in expectations that it would enable South Africa to hang on to its last investment grade rating in a Moody's review due soon.

Ramaphosa announced Nene's return on Monday in a reshuffle that saw the removal of some ministers allied to former president Jacob Zuma. Nene, who served as finance minister from May 2014 to December 2015 before being sacked by Zuma, was asked during a radio interview whether the budget would stave off further downgrades that could make it more costly for South Africa to borrow. "I wouldn't say that yet," Nene told Talk Radio 702.

S&P and Fitch last year downgraded South Africa's

credit ratings to sub-investment grade after Zuma fired Pravin Gordhan from his second stint as finance minister.

Nene's return to the Finance Ministry comes after Zuma was ordered to step down by his own African National Congress (ANC) party and replaced by Ramaphosa almost two weeks ago.

Ramaphosa told traditional leaders meeting in parliament yesterday that land reform needed to be attended to "immediately" and the government was starting talks with the mining sector on a new industry charter. Two decades after the end of apartheid, the ANC is under pressure to redress racial disparities in land ownership where whites own most of the land.

Zuma's nine years as president were marked by corruption allegations, economic mismanagement and disputed appointments. Zuma denies any wrongdoing.

Market reaction to the cabinet shake-up was muted but there has been a strong rally since Ramaphosa was elected ANC president in December, with the rand gaining 14 percent since then, hitting three-year highs on Monday.

Call of duty

The rand was weaker on profit-taking after rallying after Monday's cabinet reshuffle, with investor focus switching to the first US congressional testimony by new Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell later in the session. Asked about his priorities, Nene, who will be formally sworn-in later, told Reuters: "I will still have to sit down and familiarize myself with the budget." —Reuters

Business

World 5G leader Ooredoo plans 2018 Doha rollout

Ooredoo Group leverages Nokia Innovations to catalyze 5G-based economy



BARCELONA: Ooredoo, at Mobile World Congress, yesterday announced that it has strengthened its framework agreement with global technology innovator Nokia, paving the path towards 5G adoption across the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia.

In line with Ooredoo Group's network modernization program, "Evolution to 5G", Ooredoo Group and Nokia will continue to collaborate on 5G deployments starting 2018 in Qatar. Ooredoo is the world's first communications company to launch 5G, launching services in Qatar, and aims to roll out the service nationwide on its award-winning network, Supernet, at an accelerated pace, having acquired 5G spectrum and 5G New Radio (NR) with commercial equipment suitable for business customers.

Waleed Al-Sayed, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, Ooredoo Group, and Chief Executive Officer, Ooredoo Qatar, said:

"This year, we are pushing forward with our network modernization projects at a blistering pace, delivering on our promise to enrich people's digital lives wherever we are. In strengthening our partnership with Nokia, Ooredoo Group will pioneer 5G innovations to deliver superior mobile data experiences for our customers. 5G will catalyze mobility, industrial networking, remote healthcare, virtual reality, and ultra-high-

definition video, and enhance our customers' digital experience and help them enjoy the Internet in new and exciting ways."

Ooredoo is leveraging Nokia's commercially-available 5G-ready products, such as the AirScale radio platform and 5G Adaptive Antenna System based on 3GPP Rel. 15 New Radio.

Nokia's advanced telecommunications technologies and professional services will also transform Ooredoo existing 2G, 3G, 4G LTE-A, 4.5G Pro, and 4.9G networks to ensure best-in-class service delivery.

Amr K El Leithy, Head of Middle East and Africa Market, Nokia, said: "We have worked with Ooredoo Group on many path-breaking projects, and the current framework agreement facilitates us to continue to collaborate for transforming the group's networks across its operations in various countries. With this, we are further

committed to leveraging our latest technology advancements and professional services to help Ooredoo Group in preparing its networks for providing the best-in-class services, including 5G for its customers."

This partnership with Nokia is aligned with Ooredoo Group's Mobile World Congress themes of the Ooredoo Network 2022, Digital Partners, and Digital Customer Experience. The 5G commercial



Nokia to continue 5G deployments starting in Qatar



Sheikh Saud bin Naser Al-Thani during the conference.

service experience will also bring to life Smart Cities and Smart Stadiums.

At Mobile World Congress, visit the Ooredoo stand in Hall 2 - Stand 2H60 at the Fira Gran Via in Barcelona, Spain, from 26 February through 1 March 2018.



Comcast challenges Murdoch, Disney with \$31 billion offer for Sky

LONDON: US cable giant Comcast offered to buy Sky for \$31 billion in an unsolicited approach, taking on Rupert Murdoch's Fox and Bob Iger's Walt Disney in the battle for Europe's biggest pay-TV group. The world's biggest entertainment company, which owns NBC and Universal Pictures, said yesterday it proposed to offer 12.50 pounds per share, significantly higher than the 10.75 pounds Fox had agreed to pay for the British company.

The offer pits Comcast's Brian L. Roberts against Murdoch, the 86-year-old tycoon who helped to launch Sky and pioneer pay-TV in Britain. Iger is also a long-time rival after Comcast tried and failed to buy Disney for \$54 billion in 2004.

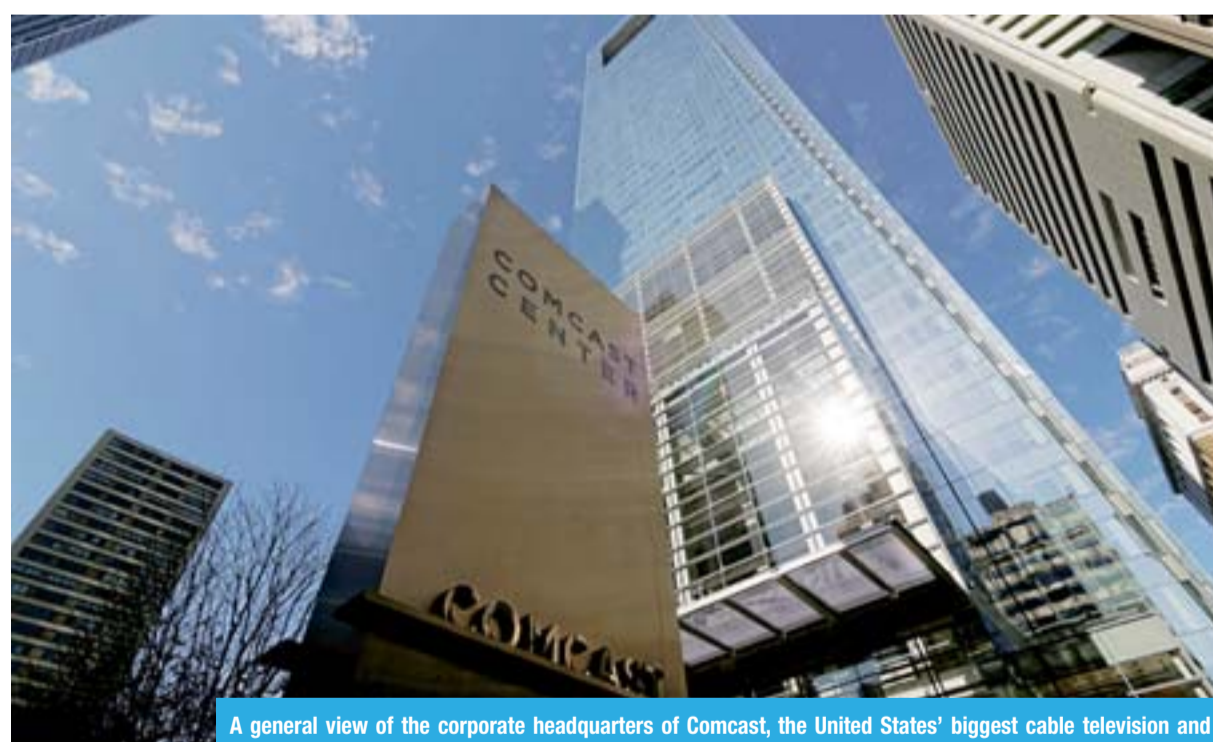
Disney had agreed to buy Sky from Fox at a later date along with other assets in a separate deal worth \$52 billion. Media owners have been forced to embark on a wave of dealmaking and hunt for growth after the success of online groups Netflix Inc and Amazon.com Inc. prompted customers to start ditching their subscriptions.

Comcast bid \$60 billion last year to clinch a deal with Murdoch's Fox before losing out to Disney. Shares in Sky soared 21 percent to 13.34 pounds, indicating that investors expect a bidding war for a company that provides sports programming, films and broadband to 23 million homes across Britain, Ireland, Germany, Italy and Austria. "Sky and Comcast are a perfect fit: we are both leaders in creating and distributing content," Comcast Chief Executive Roberts, 58, said. "We think Sky is an outstanding company."

Sky urged its investors to take no action since the approach did not represent a firm offer. Murdoch's Fox agreed to buy the 61 percent of Sky it did not already own in December 2016 but the takeover has been repeatedly held up by regulators over concerns the media tycoon wields too much influence in Britain.

The shares had been trading above the asking price since Sky this month agreed to pay less than expected for Premier League soccer rights, boosting its future earnings and prompting investors to demand a higher offer. The prospect of a fight for a higher price also attracted the attention of US hedge fund and activist investor Elliott, which has built up a 2.5 percent stake in Sky in recent weeks.

Hedge fund manager Crispin Odey, a former son-in-



A general view of the corporate headquarters of Comcast, the United States' biggest cable television and Internet provider, the Comcast Center on JFK Boulevard in downtown Philadelphia. —AFP

law of Murdoch who holds 1 percent of Sky, said he expected a counter offer and speculated whether Disney could make a direct bid for Sky to avoid Fox's regulatory problems. "Once you're in a bidding war, it's not about fair value, it's about what do you think it's worth," Odey added.

"Let battle commence"

Formed in 1990, Sky has built its business by offering leading content and technology. It snapped up Murdoch's pay-TV groups across Europe in 2014 to offer a distribution platform across the continent that is now proving attractive to the big US content owners. Comcast said it had not yet engaged with Sky over the proposal. Its finance director, Michael Cavanagh, declined to comment on whether it could lead to a renewed bid for Fox.

Sky's chairman is Murdoch's son James, who is the chief executive of 21st Century Fox, so Comcast will have to gain the support of the independent directors for its better offer if it does not make a hostile bid.

Comcast's Brian Roberts, the son of Ralph who founded the company in 1963, called Sky's Deputy Chairman Martin Gilbert just before 0700 GMT yesterday to notify him of the offer, and called Sky Chief Executive Jeremy Darroch shortly afterwards, minutes after its statement had been published.

Sky's independent directors are expected to meet in

the coming days to discuss the offer. The company said its independent directors were mindful of their duties to investors. Comcast went public with the proposal to trigger the regulatory timetable on the deal because timing will be a key factor when investors choose which offer to take. "We would like to own the whole of Sky and we will be looking to acquire over 50 percent of the Sky shares," Roberts said, indicating he could be willing to share ownership of Sky as long as it has control. "Innovation is at the heart of what we do: by combining the two companies we create significant opportunities for growth." Disney's Iger, in Paris on a business trip, declined to comment.

Murdoch to lead the charge?

Murdoch had been edging towards a deal for Sky in recent weeks, eight years after he first tried to buy the company. Britain's competition regulator said in January that Murdoch's planned takeover should be blocked unless a way was found to prevent him from influencing the network's news operation, Sky News.

The Australian-born Murdoch has been a power-broker in Britain since he bought the News of the World in 1969. Critics, including many politicians, argue that he wields too much influence through his other titles, the Sun and Times newspapers, and in 2011 he had to close the News of the World after its journalists admitted hacking phones to get scoops. —Reuters

Fresh disclosures expose UK banks' gender pay gulf

LONDON: Standard Chartered and Virgin Money disclosed striking gender pay gaps yesterday, underlining an industry-wide chasm between male and female pay in Britain's financial sector.

Ahead of an April deadline to report on gender pay, Asia-focused StanChart reported a gap of 30 percent in Britain, while Virgin Money - the only major UK lender run by a woman - said its female staff earned on average 32.5 percent less per hour than its male workforce.

The two banks are the latest major financial institutions to reveal significant differences in average pay earned by male and female employees, which most firms have blamed on a dearth of high-flying female executives. The pay gaps have drawn criticism from lawmakers and are likely to spur questions from investors in the upcoming season for shareholder meetings, with stock prices and future earnings potential strongly linked to efforts to draw a line under the sector's crisis-era image.

In its annual report, Virgin Money Chief Executive Jayne-Anne Ghadia said her bank had made progress against a target to have a 50:50 gender balanced workforce by 2020 and that female representation in senior management had improved to 29 percent by the end of 2017, up from 22 percent a year earlier. But it conceded that men continued to dominate its executive committee and senior management team, accounting for 68 percent and 71 percent respectively.

Lloyds Banking Group and Royal Bank of Scotland also said a lack of women in senior roles had skewed their average pay levels, after reporting similar gender pay gaps of 32.8 percent and 37 percent respectively on Friday. With just HSBC still to release data on its gender pay gap, Barclays appears to have the biggest task among the major UK lenders to bring male and female pay closer together.

It said it paid women in its international division, which houses its investment bank, on average 48 percent of what men earned in fixed pay, while the mean gender pay gap for bonuses was 79 percent, due to fewer female employees in better paid, senior roles.

A spokeswoman for HSBC earlier told Reuters the bank would comply with the April deadline on disclosure but declined to give a timeline on publication. —Reuters

Business

World stocks jump ahead of Powell debut

LONDON: World stocks held near three-week highs yesterday, helped by a decline in borrowing costs ahead of Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell's first testimony before the United States Congress later in the day.

The MSCI All-Country World Index, was up 0.1 percent by afternoon trade in Europe. Although it has recovered two-thirds of its losses from a sell-off earlier this month, the index is set to break a 15-month streak of gains since Donald Trump won the US elections in November 2016. This month's decline will be its worst since January 2016.

After gains in opening deals, European shares turned red, with the pan-European STOXX 600 down 0.3 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 advanced 0.1 percent.

Japan's Nikkei rose 1.1 percent to three-week highs while MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan also hit a three-week high before giving up gains on profit-taking in Chinese shares.

Wall Street was set for a lower open, although falling US bond yields helped the S&P 500 advance 1.18 percent on Monday. The 10-year US Treasuries yield eased to 2.8715 percent, dropping further from its four-year peak of 2.957 percent touched on Feb. 21, driven by month-end buying as well as position adjustments ahead of Powell's testimony.

Powell's debut appearance is seen as critical for financial markets at a time when many investors are nervous about the Fed's policy normalization following years of stimulus in the wake of the financial crisis almost a decade ago.

Many investors expect the Fed to raise interest rates three times this year, with some pundits predicting four, if US inflation starts to take off, especially as growth is set to get another boost from the Trump administration's tax cuts and spending plans. Yet there are worries that higher dollar bond yields could prompt investors to shift funds to bonds from riskier assets, especially when the

valuation of the world's stocks are quite expensive even after their sell-off earlier this month.

The two-year US Treasuries yield was 2.2219 percent, well above the dividend yield of the S&P 500, which stood at 1.88 percent. "The consensus view in the market is that Powell will continue with a gradualist stance and deliver an upbeat view of US economic prospects," said Neil MacKinnon, economist at VTB Capital Research.

"The markets are already pricing in three 25 basis points rate hikes, with the first hike expected to be announced at the 20-21 March FOMC meeting. Investors are alert to the possibility of a fourth hike this year, though if Powell emphasizes the likelihood of this then markets might react negatively."

Fed funds rate futures were almost fully pricing in a rate hike at the Fed's next policy meeting on March 20-21. Any talk of 'overheating' or risks of an 'inflation overshoot' could result in the money markets revising up estimates of where the termi-

nal fed funds rate might end up in this cycle, MacKinnon said.

A rise in dollar interest rates could also bode ill for potential borrowers, including US home buyers and many companies that have expanded borrowing for years to take advantage of low dollar funding costs. Against a basket of currencies, the dollar traded 0.1 percent higher.

Elsewhere in currencies, the euro was flat at \$1.2317, off its three-year high of \$1.2556 hit earlier this month. Oil edged lower ahead of weekly data that is forecast to show a rise in US crude inventories, although investor faith in OPEC's ability to curtail production helped stem a larger price slide.

US West Texas Intermediate futures fetched \$63.65, down 0.4 percent, after hitting a three-week high of \$64.24 the previous day. London Brent crude traded 0.3 percent lower at \$67.34 a barrel, after hitting a three-week high of \$67.90 the previous day. —Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report						
Tuesday, February 27, 2018						
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing			
Price Index	▲ 13.76	6,770.30	6,756.54			
Weighted Index	▲ 2.75	412.89	410.14			
KSX 15	▲ 6.47	955.09	948.62			

Trades						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
IPG	393	450	393	8	22,050	▲ 450.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 810.0
ENERGYH	28.0	28.0	29	2	5,000	▲ 28.0
GPI	29.4	29.4	29	14	214,600	▲ 29.0
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 77.8
Oil & Gas			450	24	241,660	▲ 965.00

Basic Materials						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
KFOUC	238	238	222	11	10,450	▲ 228.0
BPCO	702	708	702	10	11,053	▲ 708.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 0.0
ALQURAN	341	341	330	69	578,241	▲ 337.0

Consumer Goods						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
KCEM	450	450	450	1	5,000	▲ 450.0
CABLE	411	421	411	6	58,790	▲ 421.0
SHP	200	202	198	5	50,680	▲ 202.0
PCEM	1,042	1,055	1,042	9	36,557	▲ 1,054.0

Health Care						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
KDC	99	99	99	1	1,000	▲ 99.0
HCC	99	99	99	1	1,000	▲ 99.0
NCSM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 195.0
EQUIPMENT	34.3	37.0	34	3	7,200	▲ 37.0

Consumer Services						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 1,590
YSACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 0.0
KOIN	1,099	1,099	1,099	4	1,201	▲ 1,099
KHGT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 197

Telecommunications						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
NBK	759	767	759	127	2,480,280	▲ 767
GBK	255	256	254	63	2,840,729	▲ 256
CBK	460	516	440	34	32,415	▲ 460
AKB	310	310	310	3	100,582	▲ 310

Financial Services						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
KIB	234	235	233	41	548,087	▲ 235
BURG	294	294	289	62	539,978	▲ 290
KFIN	582	592	588	174	2,833,398	▲ 591
BOUBAYAN	474	481	474	32	121,204	▲ 474

Insurance						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 290
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 700.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 510.0
WINS	56	56	56	1	19	▲ 56.0

Real Estate						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Change
SOKOUC	46.8	47.0	46.8	4	102,730	▲ 47.0
KRE	56	56	54	58	1,818,103	▲ 54.0
URC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 72.0
NRE	117	120	117	12	74,876	▲ 119.0
SRE	340	340	340	1	10,000	▲ 340.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 400.0
AREEC	141	158	141	8	12,539	▲ 158.0
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 39.9
ARABREC	34.2	34.9	34	6	60,160	▲ 34.7
ERESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 34.5
MABANEE	725	733	725	16	75,003	▲ 725.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 91.0
INVESTORS	15.9	16.0	16	35	1,890,914	▲ 15.6
IRC	29.3	30.8	29	31	1,080,406	▲ 30.0
ALTUARIA	92	92	92	1	20,000	▲ 92.0
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 32.0
AAYANRE	75	77	74	7	84,131	▲ 77.0
AGAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 77.2
ALAQARIA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 30.0
MAZAYA	110	110	109	58	2,835,803	▲ 110.0
TUARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 63.8
TAAMEER	29.7	29.7	29	3	3,127	▲ 29.4
ARKAN	87	88	87	5	30,000	▲ 88.2
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 170.0
ASYAAR	20.4	20.4	20	28	1,888,079	▲ 19.8
MUNSHAAT	80	80	80	23	360,615	▲ 80.0
FIRSTDUBAI	48.5	49.0	48	25	724,216	▲ 47.9
KBT	51	52	49	78	1,406,731	▲ 51.0
RIAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	▲ 1,288.0
MEINA	30.0	32.0	30	7	252,394	▲ 32.0
ALMUDON	34.0	39.0	34	2	20,100	▲ 39.0
MARAKEZ	33.5	33.5	34	1	100	▲ 33.5
REMAIL	37.6	38.0	38	3	46,000	▲ 38.0
Mashaer	56	60	53	10	240,121	▲ 56.0
Real Estate			2,277	422	13,802,828	▲ 1191.61

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report						
At 02:00 PM Previous Day						
Global Stock Indices						
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %	
Dow Jones	25,309.99	25,709.27	399.28	▲	1.58	4.01
NASDAQ	7,337.39	7,421.47	84.08	▲	1.15	7.51
S&P 500	2,747.30	2,779.60	32.30	▲	1.18	3.87
Financial Times	7,289.58	7,299.22	9.64	▲	0.13	-5.05
DAX	12,527.04	12,515.71	-11.33	▼	-0.09	-3.11
CAC 40	5,344.26	5,349.20	4.94	▲	0.09	0.69
Swiss	9,026.11	9,005.43	-20.68	▼	-0.23	-4.01
Nikkei 225	22,153.63	22,389.86	236.23	▲	1.07	-1.44
Topix	1,774.81	1,790.34	15.53	▲	0.88	-1.50
Hang Seng	31,498.60	31,268.66	-229.94	▼	-0.73	4.51
Strait Times	3,555.85	3,540.39	-15.46	▼	-0.43	4.10

MENA Stock Indices						
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %	
Kuwait	6,756.54	6,770.30	13.76	▲	0.20	5.16
Saudi Arabia	7,471.90	7,483.87	11.97	▲	0.16	3.40
Dubai	3,306.53	3,286.48	-20.05	▼	-0.61	-1.89
Abu Dhabi	4,593.30	4,599.22	5.92	▲	0.13	4.43
Bahrain	1,370.71	1,365.81	-4.90	▼	-0.36	2.93
Qatar	8,992.64	8,929.50	-63.14	▼	-0.70	5.51
Oman	4,985.28	4,993.16	7.88	▲	0.16	-2.24
Lebanon	1,172.82	1,173.27	0.46	▲	0.04	2.11
Jordan	2,240.15	2,230.09	-10.06	▼	-0.45	5.33
Egypt	15,454.00	15,550.46	96.46	▲	0.62	2.90
Morocco	13,147.78	13,132.47	-15.31	▼	-0.12	6.00
Tunisia	6,686.10	6,692.65	6.55	▲	0.10	6.44

Global Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwaiti Dinar		12.3922	3.1184	2.6922	2.3757	3.1080	355.04	4.2289
Saudi Riyal	0.08070		0.2678	0.2172	0.1917	0.2508	28.45	0.3413
US Dollar	0.30135	3.7344		0.8113	0.7159	0.9366	106.99	1.2744
Euro	0.37144	4.6030	1.2326		0.8828	1.1546	131.92	1.5715
Sterling Pound	0.42093	5.2162	1.3968	1.1328		1.3087	149.45	1.7807
Swiss Franc	0.32175	3.9872	1.0677	0.8661	0.7641		114.26	1.3606
Japanese Yen	0.00282	0.0349	0.0093	0.0076	0.0067	0.0088		0.0119
Australian Dollar	0.23647	2.9304	0.7847	0.6363	0.5616	0.7350	83.96	

MENA Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30135	3.7344	0.3742	3.6270	0.3831	3.6574	17.5050
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.1184		12.3922	1.2416	12.0358	1.2714	12.1367	58.0886
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08070		0.1002	0.9712	0.1026	0.9794	4.6875
Bahraini Dinar	2.6727	0.80540	9.9808		9.6937	1.0240	9.7750	46.7848
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08309	1.0296	0.1032		0.1056	1.0084	4.8263
Omani Riyal	2.6101	0.78655	9.7471	0.9766	9.4668		9.5461	45.6895
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08239	1.0211	0.1023	0.9917	0.1048		4.7862
Egyptian Pound	0.0571	0.01722	0.2133	0.0214	0.2072	0.0219	0.2089	

Global Interest Rates					
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.31	1.69	1.88	2.13	2.38
US Dollar	1.47	1.63	1.95	2.18	2.45
Euro	-0.42	-0.40	-0.38	-0.32	-0.25
Sterling Pound	0.48	0.49	0.57	0.68	0.89
Swiss Franc	-0.80	-0.79	-0.74		

Business

Finalists for prestigious Lexus Design Award 2018 announced

Designs of 12 finalists to be showcased at Lexus Design Event



KUWAIT: Lexus International recently announced the 12 finalists who have been short-listed for the Lexus Design Award 2018, an international design platform that identifies and recognizes the next generation of global creators and designers, and gives them the opportunity to receive mentorship from established global designers, prototype funding, and an invitation to exhibit at the Lexus Design Event during Milan Design Week.

Now in its sixth consecutive year, the theme for this year's award is 'CO-' derived from the Latin prefix meaning 'with or together in harmony.' 'CO-' explores the possibilities of how design can seek solutions and overcome barriers for a range of global challenges by ensuring the harmonious co-existence of nature and society.

This year's Lexus Design Award involved an unprecedented level of participation attracting over 1,300 entries from 68 countries. Sir David Adjaye, one of the judges, said: "It has been thrilling to gain insight into how the next generation of designers is translating new concepts and philosophies into innovative solutions to answer the fundamental concerns facing us today."

The creations of former Lexus Design Award finalists and winners have been drawing positive attention at prominent industry events, including 'Iris' by 2014 finalist Sebastian Scherer that won the German Design Award 2016 and 'Sense-Wear'

by 2015 finalist Caravan that won Venice Design Week's Wearable Technologies Contest in 2016.

Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative of Middle East & North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "It has been exciting to follow the journey of the 12 finalists and the promising work they have delivered to create innovative solutions that can help shape a better future. Through the Lexus Design Award, Lexus is supporting the next generation of

as a constant source of inspiration for us to continuously create amazing experiences."

The 12 finalists were chosen after considerable deliberation by a panel of prestigious judges, which was further strengthened this year with the addition of world-renowned architects Sir David Adjaye and Shigeru Ban. Four of the 12 finalists (listed below) were selected to prototype their designs under the guidance and mentorship of an elite team of established creators, namely Lindsey Adelman, Jessica Walsh, Sou Fujimoto, and Formafantasma.

- CO-RKs, DIGITALAB (Brimet Fernandes da Silva (Portugal), Ana Trindade Fonseca (Portugal)): Mentored by Lindsey Adelman - A system connecting cork thread, a sustainable material and computational process that generates design products.

- Honest Egg, aesthetid (Paul Yong Rit Fui (Malaysia), Jaihar Jailani Bin Ismail (Malaysia)): Mentored by Jessica Walsh - Connecting Technology (Intelligent Ink Pigment) and Design (Indicator) to show egg's edibility.

- Recycled Fiber Planter, Eriko Yokoi (Japan): Mentored by Sou Fujimoto - Co-fusion textile and green design to repurpose used clothes.

- Testing Hypotheticals, Extrapolation Factory (Christopher Woebken (Germany), Elliott P. Montgomery (USA)): Mentored by Formafantasma - A collaborative-



ly imagined test site that explores speculative relationships between society, technology and the environment. The four prototypes and detailed presentation boards from the designs of the other eight finalists will be showcased as part of the Lexus Design Event at this year's Milan Design Week in April. The 12 finalists will present their work to the judging panel and international media. Following the presentation, a Grand Prix winner will be selected.



Milan Design Week in April 2018

designers and creators by offering them a platform to explore their creativity, visualize, and develop their unique design ideas, and work under the expert guidance of distinguished mentors, to showcase their designs to the world. We thank our customers and fans for their support, which serves

KAMCO records a net revenue of KD 9.61m for 2017

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company K.S.C. (Public), a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announces its financial results for the year ending 31 December 2017. The Company recorded a net revenue of KD 9.61 million, an increase of 16 percent as compared to KD 8.29 million in 2016. Net profit attributable to the equity holders for the year stood at KD 1.14 million, compared to last year's profit of KD 1.27 million. KAMCO recorded earnings per share of KD 4.80 fils, compared to KD 5.36 fils in 2016. Fee Income reached KD 7.0 million, an increase of 9 percent from KD 6.4 million achieved in 2016. KAMCO's Assets Under Management (AUM) increased in 2017 to KD 3.37 billion, in comparison to KD 3.20 billion during the same period in 2016.

Faisal Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer of KAMCO, said, "The year started on a positive note with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia reaching multi-month highs, continuing the momentum seen during late 2016. Kuwait capital markets also managed to gain momentum with the positive sentiments surrounding the FTSE qualification, which has helped push the market higher. Oil prices also reached multi-month highs by the end of 2017 led by the extension of the ongoing oil production cut pact that should augur well for GCC economies."

Commenting on the results, Sarkhou added, "During 2017, KAMCO achieved several significant milestones in addition to the Firm's standard-setting and result-driven investment solutions for its clients. Our prudent investment philosophy, coupled with our leading-edge research driven approach resulted in KAMCO managing the top performing equity fund in Kuwait and the region, the KAMCO Investment Fund ("KIF"), as on 31st December 2017."

He also added, "Through a strategic and diligent approach, KAMCO has also successfully completed several key real estate transactions, increasing the Firm's international real estate portfolio to reach \$263 million as of year-end. We have also successfully managed 3 major investment banking transactions amounting to over \$1 billion."

Looking ahead, Sarkhou mentioned that KAMCO will continue to integrate, optimize and further grow the Firm's products and services on an international and regional scale, increasing KAMCO's financial and strategic returns to support the diversification of the local Kuwaiti economy. Sarkhou also emphasized that KAMCO will continue to build on its progress into 2018 with the objective of identifying and executing attractive opportunities to its growing client base.



Faisal Sarkhou

ITS upgrades Al-Jazeera Islamic Finance platform

KUWAIT: International Turnkey Systems Group (ITS), the market leading provider for comprehensive Islamic financial solutions suite, has announced the successful replacement of Al-Jazeera Finance financial solution to its world-class range of Islamic ETHIX solutions suite. This latest project's 'Go Live' marks a key milestone for ITS, with all finance companies in Qatar now operating on ETHIX Solutions.

Al-Jazeera Finance, an Islamic finance company which provides a comprehensive range of innovative and personalized sharia-compliant financing solutions, selected ITS to replace its legacy system with the ETHIX range of cutting-edge technology. The project, which was completed within recorded time, will add a whole new range of features that will further position Al-Jazeera Finance as a market leader.

Commenting on the announcement, ITS Chief Executive Officer, Esam Alkhesnam, said: "Al-Jazeera Finance (Tamweel) has now gone live with ITS' new Islamic Finance Suite "ETHIX". With the completion of this project, we have crossed a significant milestone with 100 per cent of finance companies in the State operating using ITS' ETHIX solutions."

Aamer Al-Jabri, Chief Executive Officer of Al-Jazeera

Finance (Tamweel) said: "Since our establishment in 1989, Al-Jazeera Finance have grown and developed to become a market leader in the provision of innovative and personalized Sharia-compliant financing and customer-oriented services. By upgrading our IT Solutions with the cutting-edge technology "ETHIX", we can provide our customers with an even better financing experience and at the same time expand our business and services."

ITS' ETHIX product, which recently won the "Best Islamic Finance Technology Product 2017" at the prestigious Global Islamic Finance Awards ceremony held in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, continues to be widely adopted throughout the Middle East region, North African, and East Asian regions, as well as the Caribbean.

"ITS have a growing network of ETHIX clients which is testament to the outstanding design of the product range that helps banks grow and satisfy customers' needs in the shortest possible time. ETHIX provides a comprehensive array of functions that are fully integrated and can effectively handle the strategic complexities and challenges faced by financial institutions across the world in a secure manner," Alkhesnam added.



Esam Alkhesnam

Huawei and partners stride towards a fully connected, intelligent world

KUWAIT: At the Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2018, Huawei is presenting technologies and solutions for 5G, All-Cloud network, video, and IoT. Huawei will be engaging with industry leaders, sharing its experience and successes, and showcasing leading products and scenario-specific solutions. In particular, it will focus on the three key issues of better connections, better business growth, and better experience. With its carrier customers and partners, the company is helping to build a fully connected, intelligent world.

Huawei booth in MWC 2018

The intelligent world is here. As they go beyond current boundaries in terms of capabilities, connections, business models, experience, and partnerships, carriers are set to become the cornerstone of a digital transformation market worth \$23 trillion. Huawei delivers ICT infrastructure and smart devices, and will act as a 'rich soil' of information, automation, and intelligence technologies. Within this 'soil', partners can grow their content, applications, and even clouds. Together, they can bring digital to every person, home and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world.

Better connections: By building more connections and expanding data pipes, Huawei is enabling industry-wide digitization and helping carriers fully leverage the power of 5G and cloud-network synergy.

Better business growth: Huawei helps carriers dig deeper into their installed base to maximize network value. It also helps carriers develop video and IoT services to enable new business growth.

Better experience: Huawei's digital operation & maintenance solutions enable agile business and intelligent and efficient operations. This helps carriers deliver a Real-time, On-demand, All-online, DIY, and Social (ROADS) experience.

At MWC 2018, Huawei will launch over 20 new products, showcase the results of its work with over 300 partners, host five forums, and share its experience and ideas with the industry. The aim is to jointly embark on the ROADS to a fully-connected, intelligent world.

Huawei Rotating CEO Ken Hu said, "Huawei's presentation at MWC this year has three notable features. First, real experience. We are exploring the industry ourselves, and we have over 300 carriers and partners with us here, showing our cutting-edge technologies and services in action, including 5G, video, and IoT. Second, a focus on business success. We have launched a series of scenario-specific solutions for individuals, homes, and enterprises, including site solutions for all scenarios, high-quality home broadband, and cloud-network synergy. Third, leading products and solutions, including 5G, Intent-driven Network, the AUTN digital O&M platform, and Dorado18000 flash memory solutions. We look forward to speaking with industry leaders at the Huawei booths to discuss how the industry is to develop."

Huawei will also report its progress with leading global carriers on 5G testing and deployment. It is an active player in the 5G Slicing Alliance, a new industry organization announced at MWC to propel the industry forward. Ken Hu noted, "5G standards and technologies are maturing. As market demand continues to grow, Huawei plans to launch a full range of end-to-end 5G products, including customer premise equipment, to help carriers get a head start on 5G. Huawei will continue to develop new technologies and work with industry partners to develop a 5G ecosystem. The ultimate goal is to build a fully connected, intelligent world."

MWC 2018 runs from February 26 to March 1 in Barcelona, Spain. Huawei is showcasing its products and solutions at booth 1J50 in Fira Gran Via Hall 1, booth 3130 in Hall 3, and the Innovation City zone in Hall 4.

CBK announces winners of Al-Najma account draw

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the daily draw on Al-Najma Account yesterday at the bank's head office to select five winners to win a cash prize of KD 7000 for each. The draw was held in the presence of Latifa Al-Jaan, representative of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. The following names were announced as winners of the prizes:

1. Ali Mahmoud Awadh
2. Zainab Fadhel Abbas Hussain
3. Jack Al-Armani
4. Faisal Ali Khan
5. Gerald Luis Francis Rodrigues

Al-Najma Account allows its customers to win a daily prize of KD 7000 which is the highest daily prize in Kuwait. In addition, the Account offers quarterly draws that provide customers with opportunity to get their dreams turned to reality by winning great prizes starting from KD 100,000 for the first quarter escalating thereafter by KD 50,000 for each quarter to reach KD 250,000 in the last quarter. Customers can enjoy additional benefits including obtaining ATM card and a credit card against the customer's account along with enjoying all other banking services.

The Bank congratulates all the lucky winners and draws their attention that the cash prizes will be credited into their accounts with the Bank. Further, the Bank appreciates the Ministry of Commerce & Industry's significant role and its continuous cooperation and effective supervision on the draw that was smoothly and transparently organized.

Technology

Secondhand smartphone market takes off but it's far from green

'There's a dirty side to our tech obsession'

BARCELONA: Thanks to a fast-growing secondhand market, smartphones are increasingly being re-used but large-scale handset recycling is not happening as the industry struggles to go green. Thrown in the trash or left abandoned in a drawer, the fate of mobile phones — which consumers replace on average every two years—is starting to change amid growing criticism over their environmental impact.

"People love technology—the upgrades, the unboxing, the new features," the EEB network of environmental groups in Europe said in a statement as the world's largest mobile phone fair opened this week in Barcelona. "But there's a dirty side to our tech obsession: trainloads of e-waste trundling out of our cities and towards hellish waste dumps in Africa and Asia."

Growth in reused mobiles

According to a recent UN report, small devices like smartphones represented nine percent of all e-waste in the world in 2016, up from seven percent in 2014. But things in the mobile sector are slowly starting to change. "There is very strong growth in the reused phone market," said Bertrand Grau, a technology analyst at Deloitte, which forecasts sales of second hand mobile phones will expand by 20 percent a year between 2015 and 2020.

The surge in sales of secondhand phones—which may just need a change of battery or screen—is being fuelled in part by consumers, who are reluctant to dish out more money for new models that offer little innovation. "Phones are becoming more and more expensive, more than 1,000 euros for the iPhone X, but the established brands are attractive so people prefer to buy a refurbished Apple phone rather than a cheaper Chinese brand," said Grau.

As such, mobile brands and operators are increasingly offering phone exchange programs. Consumers can turn in their old model to get a discount on a new

one or cash. "Today this has become almost a mainstream practice around the world," said Biju Nair, the head of Hyla, a Texas-based firm which helps the industry collect and repurpose used phones and had a stand at Barcelona's Mobile World Congress. Hyla and other such firms provide operators with software that checks the state of the phone, makes sure it was not stolen, erases all the data on the device and makes it reusable.

French start-up Volpy, meanwhile, has created an app that buys phones directly from consumers and sends a courier to fetch the handset. "We realized that smartphones that had significant market value were not recycled, even though there was an interest for consumers to do so," said Volpy head Marc Simeoni.

Phone design

The system is still in its infancy. Only 7 to 15 percent of smartphones sold in France, and 20 to 25 percent of those sold in North America, are reconditioned. But "it's a first step to responsibly handling phones," said Elizabeth Jardim, an e-waste specialist with the US branch of Greenpeace. "We advise to keep the phones in use for longer, whether it is the original owner, or whether it's a second-hand owner" since this reduces the amount of energy and raw materials used to make a new one, she added.

A smartphone is made up of about 50 different materials, including rare materials that are sometimes extracted from nations in conflict like the Democratic Republic of Congo. Manufacturing smartphones also requires a huge amount of energy, often fossil fuels since 60 percent of them are made in China where coal remains the main source of energy. And only about 20 percent of all e-waste—defined as anything with a plug or a battery—is going in the official collection and recycling schemes, according to a UN report.



BARCELONA: A person holds the new ZTE's dual screens foldable smartphone AXON on the first day of the Mobile World Congress (MWC) on February 26, 2018. —AFP

"One thing that makes it difficult is the way the phones are designed. They're incredibly fragile, for instance the glass they use for the display. Often, the phones are designed to be difficult to be repaired," said Jardim. Faced with these problems, efforts by major brands remain slim. Technology giant Apple said last year it wants to "one day" end

the need to mine materials from the earth to make its gadgets. It has melted down iPhone aluminum enclosures to make mini computers used in its factories. And under pressure from Greenpeace, Samsung agreed to recycle the Galaxy Note 7 smartphones it was forced to recall in 2016 because of problems with its battery. —AFP

Cisco 2018 annual Cybersecurity report

DUBAI: Malware sophistication is increasing as adversaries begin to weaponize cloud services and evade detection through encryption, used as a tool to conceal command-and-control activity. To reduce adversaries' time to operate, security professionals said they will increasingly leverage and spend more on tools that use AI and machine learning, reported in the 11th Cisco (r) 2018 Annual Cybersecurity Report (ACR).

While encryption is meant to enhance security, the expanded volume of encrypted web traffic (50 percent as of October 2017)—both legitimate and malicious—has created more challenges for defenders trying to identify and monitor potential threats. Cisco threat researchers observed more than a threefold increase in encrypted network communication used by inspected malware samples over a 12-month period.

Applying machine learning can help enhance network security defenses and, over time, "learn" how to automatically detect unusual patterns in encrypted web traffic, cloud, and IoT environments. Some of the 3,600 chief information security officers (CISOs) interviewed for the Cisco 2018 Security Capabilities Benchmark Study report, stated they were reliant and eager to add tools like machine learning and AI, but were frustrated by the number of false positives such systems generate. While still in its infancy, machine learning and AI technologies over time will mature and learn what is "normal" activity in the network environments they are monitoring.

"Last year's evolution of malware demonstrates that our adversaries continue to learn," said Scott Manson, Cybersecurity Lead - Middle East and Africa, Cisco. "We have to raise the bar now - top down leadership, business led, technology investments, and practice effective security - there is too much risk, and it is up to us to reduce it."

Cisco 2018 Annual Cybersecurity Report Additional Highlights

The financial cost of attacks is no longer a hypothetical number. According to study respondents, more than half of all attacks resulted in financial damages of more than US\$500,000, including, but not limited to, lost revenue, customers, opportunities, and out-of-pocket costs.

Supply chain attacks are increasing in velocity, complexity. These attacks can impact computers on a massive scale and can persist for months or even years. Defenders should be aware of the potential risk of using software or hardware from organizations that do not appear to have a responsible security posture.

Security is getting more complex

Defenders are implementing a complex mix of products from a cross-section of vendors to protect against breaches. This complexity and growth in breaches has many downstream effects on an organization's ability to defend against attacks, such as increased risk of losses. In 2017, 25 percent of security professionals said they used products from 11 to 20 vendors, compared with 18 percent of security professionals in 2016. Security professionals said 32 percent of breaches affected more than half of their systems, compared with 15 percent in 2016. Security professionals see value in behavioral analytics tools in locating malicious actors in networks. 92 percent of security professionals said behavior analytics tools work well. Two-thirds of the healthcare sector, followed by financial services, found behavior analytics to work extremely well to identify malicious actors.

Use of Cloud is growing

In this year's study, 27 percent of security professionals said they are using off-premises private clouds, compared with 20 percent in 2016. Among them, 57 percent said they host networks in the cloud because of better data security; 48 percent, because of scalability; and 46 percent, because of ease of use. While cloud offers better data security, attackers are taking advantage of the fact that security teams are having difficulty defending evolving and expanding cloud environments. The combination of best practices, advanced security technologies like machine learning, and first-line-of-defense tools like cloud security platforms can help protect this environment.

5G: The cornerstone of the digital revolution

BARCELONA: Blazing fast 5G wireless networks promise to unlock the potential of internet connected devices, or the Internet of Things-making driverless cars and talking fridges a reality. With most European operators targeting 2020 for its rollout, 5G is the term on everyone's lips at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona.

How does 5G work?

Like the 4G networks currently widely available, 5G is based on radio frequencies, the same used for television broadcasts, walkie-talkies, wi-fi signals or a garage door remote control. It will use a higher radio frequency which are not in use and can move data at a much faster speed. But since higher radio frequencies don't travel as far as lower frequencies, it will rely on denser arrays of small antennas and artificial intelligence to offer data speeds up to 50 or 100 times faster than current 4G networks.

What can it do?

5G will allow people to send texts, make calls, and browse the web as always—but will dramatically increase the speed at which data is transferred across the net-

work. This will make it easier to download and upload Ultra HD and 3D video and allow smartphones to run more complex mobile internet apps. 5G will also make room for the thousands of internet-connected devices entering our everyday world. The combination of speed and quicker response times could unlock the full capabilities of other hot trends in technology, offering a boost to self-driving cars, drones, virtual reality and the wider Internet of Things. Beyond speed, the biggest benefit of 5G is its low latency, or the short lag time between a device pinging the network and getting a response. A 5G network virtually eliminates it, meaning a surgeon may not need to be in the same room as a patient in the future for example.

Why is 5G seen as essential?

The tech industry is counting on 5G to trigger a wave of growth in equipment sales and mobile services. For years telecom operators and device makers have debated common standards, which will make it possible to have a similar network everywhere and develop products that could be targeted to it.

What are the obstacles to its adoption?

The industry is still fighting over the nitty-gritty details of the technology itself and a lack of common standards could slow its adoption. 5G compatible phones are still not on the market and in many countries 4G deployment is not yet complete. In a number of African countries it is only just starting. Telecoms operators must make a massive investment to deploy 5G.

ManageEngine to highlight evolving role of cybersecurity at Mideast User Conference

DUBAI: ManageEngine, the real-time IT management company, yesterday announced that it will be hosting its 7th Middle East User Conference in Dubai from February 27 to 28, 2017 at the Address Dubai Marina. Raj Sabhlok, President, ManageEngine, will deliver the keynote, highlighting the evolving role of IT management and cybersecurity in addressing the latest developments in global cloud, networking, and security management with the advent of new technologies such as Bot, AI, Machine Learning, and Blockchain.

According to IDC, despite crossing the \$2.4 billion mark in 2018, security spending in Middle East, Africa, and Turkey (META) will continue to be insufficient due to the increasingly complex nature of the threat landscape. The quest to scale digital businesses will make organizations in the META region adopt a cloud-first or cloud-only approach, with spending on public cloud services topping \$1.1 billion in 2018. Spending on big data and analytics solutions in the META region will tip the scales at \$2.4 billion in 2018.

"With market situations being volatile and due to the significant increase in attacks, cybersecurity will continue to be a key focus for ManageEngine in the months ahead. We have recently launched an endpoint security solution - Patch Manager Plus on Cloud, and also tuned our SIEM solution to adhere to global compliances such as GDPR, PoPI, and Australia's Notifiable Data Breaches Scheme, in line with the move. We believe that our revamped solutions will be instrumental in protecting organizations, combatting security threats, and enhancing operational efficiency for our customers worldwide. We look forward to discussing the best use cases with our customers in the Middle East during the user conference," said Raj Sabhlok, President, ManageEngine.

"Regional enterprises are looking at securing their networks, cloud, and application assets in the most agile and cost-effective manner. Moreover,



Raj Sabhlok, President, ManageEngine



Nirmal Manoharan, Regional Director - Sales, ManageEngine

the dynamic environment is compelling them to expand their business offerings as they increase their regional footprint. The latest cloud and mobile-friendly solutions from ManageEngine are well equipped to meet these requirements of regional enterprises in IT management and cybersecurity standards," said Nirmal Manoharan, Regional Director - Sales, ManageEngine.

At the Middle East User Conference 2018, customers can expect to hear from ManageEngine experts on the company's Middle East business plans and channel strategy, R&D focus, product development pipeline, investment in new technologies such as Bot Technology, A.I., Machine Learning, and Blockchain. The two-day user conference will also offer a detailed walk-through and demo sessions on various ManageEngine solutions such as ServiceDesk Plus, OpManager Plus, Applications Manager, Desktop Central, Mobile Device Manager Plus, Password Manager Pro, Key Manager Plus, AD suite of products, Site24x7, and Log360, amongst others.



BARCELONA: Huawei CEO Richard Yu gives a press conference to present the new Huawei Balong 5G01, a 3GPP 5G commercial chipset on February 25, 2018 in Barcelona, on the eve of the inauguration of the Mobile World Congress (MWC). —AFP

Deutsche Telekom CEO Timotheus Hoettges has estimated the cost of providing 5G networks in Europe alone at EUR300 billion to EUR500 billion (\$370 billion to \$615 billion). 5G also faces competition from other technologies that may be better suited for the connected devices, such as French firm Sigfox's non-cellular IoT network or LoRa, a rival non-standardized low power wide area (LPWA) offering backed by France-based Orange amongst others. —AFP

Brothers look to harness AI for greater good

SAN FRANCISCO: As debate swirls on whether artificial intelligence will be a boon or a curse for humanity, two Indian-American entrepreneur brothers are out to ensure the emerging technologies don't just benefit the richest in society. Romesh and Sunil Wadhvani this week launched what is billed as the world's first nonprofit institute dedicated to putting AI to work improving lives of poor farmers, rural health care workers or teachers in communities with scant resources.

"AI will go where AI will go; it is difficult to predict where," Sunil Wadhvani said of the conflicting views on the emergence of computers more brilliant than their human creators. "Our focus is how many tens of millions of lives can we improve in the next five or 10 years. Where AI goes in 100 years, it will go." The entrepreneur brothers, who have a series of lucrative startups to their name, have committed \$30 million over 10 years to the Wadhvani AI institute, established in Mumbai with the Indian government as a partner.

Areas targeted at the outset will include health care, education, agriculture and urban infrastructure. The project's founders hope AI could help nurses in rural areas with diagnoses, advise how to optimize crops, translate text books into various languages as needed or even spot signs students might be on paths to dropping out. "AI is a game-changing technology," said Sunil Wadhvani, who is based in Pittsburgh as a trustee for Carnegie Mellon University. "A lot of developing countries are getting left behind; US and China are leaping ahead."

Students from New York University and the University of Southern California will travel to Mumbai to collaborate, while the brothers also plan to partner with players in Silicon Valley, where Romesh Wadhvani is based. The ethical issues raised by AI—from its potential to destroy jobs to the power it could exert over people's lives—will be front of mind, according to institute chief P. Anandan, a former Microsoft Research director. "It has the potential to be used badly, or run away on its own," Anandan said of AI. "At the end of the day, you are going to manage that by being aware of it from the start and applying it where intentions are good." —AFP

Health

Czech schoolboy maps life from disabled to designer

Found peace and order in sophisticated maps of his own making

CERNOSICE: The toy cars, double-deckers, stuffed toys and pillows on his bed are meticulously ordered into neat rows, but Matej Hosek still inspects his room with a frown, looking for shortcomings. He pushes one car back by a millimeter with satisfaction, then opens a folder with dozens of transport maps he has drawn as part of his battle with autism.

Diagnosed with severe Asperger syndrome, the 13-year-old bespectacled boy has found peace and order in sophisticated maps of his own making. Not only that—they have also turned him into a fashion designer of sorts. “I guess this is something God has given him in exchange for what he has taken away from him,” says Matej’s mother Michaela Hoskova. Matej was a noisy child, “crying 23 hours a day,” she says, recalling their life in a Prague block of flats where neighbors regularly banged on their walls or, worse, left scratches on their cars. The family, which includes Matej’s little sister Sofia, moved to a house in Cernosice, a small town just southwest of Prague, where Matej “could cry as loud as he wished”. Then he discovered maps.

Calming effect

“People used to kick us out of trams because he was yelling all the time. Then one day, on a tram, I gave him a map to read, I don’t even know where I got it. And he calmed down,” says Hoskova. Matej started to ask for tram and underground rides to check if the transport maps were correct. He started to copy maps, including his favorite, the London Underground, which he knows by heart, before drawing his own. Picking Cardiff off a map of Britain for its cool name, Matej drew an imaginary underground for the Welsh capital. Other cities followed, and the metro plans improved. “With some cities, he said their system had no logic so he started to re-draw the plans,” says Hoskova, a former journalist.

‘We need maps’

The family’s life began to change as Matej’s condition improved—they started to go on holidays, which was unthinkable when he was small. “We always go to the information centre first. We need maps,” chuckled Hoskova. Officially diagnosed with Asperger syndrome at age 10, Matej gradually started coming to terms with his condition.

“Children with Asperger syndrome have a problem with verbal communication. When they see things in a picture, they become easier to understand,” says Lenka Michalikova, an adviser to autistic people. “Structure and visualisation serve as an anchor in their uncertainty. They offer predictability, a clue.” Grappling with

depression and anxiety since puberty, Matej needs an assistant at school but his results are above-average.

When he moved from fourth grade to fifth and had to go to different classrooms, he struggled—until he drew a map of the school. “I must pay good attention to how I’m drawing the maps because I like everything to be precise,” he tells AFP, explaining how he measures the maps he copies with a ruler beforehand. “Every time I look at a map, I calm down. That’s what’s interesting about me.”

On the catwalk

Inspired by a film about the Christian Dior fashion house, Matej once wrapped one of his maps around a mannequin standing in the living room as decoration. “I’m a big fashion fan, and I said ‘Matej, this is not bad at all,’” says Hoskova, recalling how proud she was until Matej started to pin the map onto her own body. Her magazine at the time partnered with Prague Fashion Week and Matej soon found his underground design shown on the catwalk at a Prague department store in autumn 2016. The clothes were sold and the income went to the AuTalk fund helping children with autism, within a project called Autist for Autists.

“This is unique, using Matej’s work to help other kids with autism,” says Katerina Sokolova, Miss Czech Republic 2007 and AuTalk founder. “His design is universal, you can put it on anything—T-shirts, underwear, trainers,” she told AFP. Building on the success, the Hoseks have started a small

family company selling clothes and other items such as backpacks, cups and mobile phone cases with Matej’s underground designs.

“We have registered immense interest from different chains, but right now we’re not able to produce the amount of goods they want,” says Matej’s father Martin, the manager of the Maappi company currently hunting for an investor. Part of the income will go towards treatment for autistic children, he told AFP, adding that he would like the company to expand abroad one day. Matej is currently busy drawing maps for the Run Czech company organizing public runs in the Czech Republic. He has also designed a T-shirt for his mum’s favourite singer Craig David eight metro lines for his eight CDs, with songs in the place of stations. Maappi is now shipping 10 T-shirts to the English singer after his manager said he had loved the design. Standing on a rug emblazoned with the British flag, underneath a map of the London Underground and surrounded by toy double-deckers and iconic British red phone boxes, Matej discloses his modest dream. “I’d love to go to London. To take a ride on the Underground.” —AFP



CERNOSICE, Czech Republic: Matej Hosek, a Czech schoolboy with Asperger syndrome, shows a map that he designed, on January 29, 2018, in his bedroom in the village of Cernosice. —AFP

“Crying 23 hours a day”

Trunk show: Elephant genome study offers surprises

WASHINGTON: The most comprehensive elephant genome study ever conducted, covering seven living and extinct species, is offering some surprises about the family tree of the world’s largest land animal while also settling a debate about Africa’s elephants. Researchers said on Monday their research confirmed that the two types of African elephants, those inhabiting forests and those roaming savannas, are separate species that have lived in nearly complete isolation from one another for the past half million years despite their close proximity. They join the Asian

elephant as the world’s three existing elephant species. The scientists sequenced the genomes of two African savanna elephants, two African forest elephants, two Asian elephants, two extinct so-called straight-tusked elephants, four extinct woolly mammoths, including two from North America and two from Siberia, one extinct Columbian mammoth and two extinct American mastodons. Mastodons are not classified as members of the elephant lineage but are cousins.

“I hope that this study can create an appreciation for the rich evolutionary history of elephants and emphasize the need for protecting the only three elephant species that still walk the planet today, who are all under imminent risk of extinction from poaching and habitat loss,” said Harvard Medical School geneticist Eleftheria Palkopoulou, one of the researchers. The research found multiple instances of gene flow—interbreeding—between different extinct elephant species, though this has virtually stopped among today’s elephants. —AFP

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What's On

IWG holds walkathon with Dar Al Shifa Hospital



On the occasion of 57th National and 27th Liberation Day, International Women Group (IWG) with Dar Al Shifa Hospital held 2.4 kilometers walkathon 'A Step Up With Healthier Living' yesterday. Ambassador of Guyana Prof Shamir Ally's wife won the third place in this event. Dar Al Shifa Hospital provided a full team of doctors and nurses as well as nutrition team and an ambulance. Water and healthy snacks were distributed by the hospital as well and Gifts were distributed along with additional trophies at the end of the walk. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Landmark 'Happiness Booths' draw community together in the 'Global Dialogue for Happiness'

Landmark Group, the Middle East-based retail and hospitality conglomerate, was the Exclusive Retail Partner at the 'Global Dialogue for Happiness' as a precursor to the World Government Summit for the second consecutive year. The Group took this opportunity to invite residents to share their happy stories across the UAE through 'Happiness Booths' and social media. The booths were installed at popular shopping destinations including Oasis Mall, Mall of the Emirates and City Centre Mirdif.

The 'Happiness Booth' provided insight into what makes UAE residents happy, in alignment with the message on happiness that was a highlight of several discussions during the World Government Summit at which Landmark was the Retail Partner. Unsurprisingly, the major source of happiness for the 1000 plus respondents were their family and friends.

This was done to extend the "Global Dialogue for Happiness" to the community at which Nisha Jagtiani, Director and Chief Happiness Officer at Landmark Group, was guest speaker. Her session 'The Return on Happiness' was moderated by Jenn Lim, co-founder and CEO of 'Delivering Happiness'. The session explored the private sector's potential to drive well-being in society at the Global Dialogue for Happiness Forum in Dubai on February 10, 2018. The forum was a 'curtain raiser' for the opening of the fifth World Government Summit in Dubai.

Landmark Group has a plethora of brands under its portfolio whose value-driven proposition combined with the ability to deliver the latest lifestyle trends have made them consumer favorites in the region. The Group's key brands include Centre point, Babyshop, Splash, Shoe Mart, Lifestyle, Iconic, Max, Shoexpress, Home Centre, Home Box and Emax.



ASSE 'Lead Auditor' training program

Adding on to its illustrious pathways of educating and empowering its members, American Society of Safety Engineers, (ASSE) Kuwait Chapter organized Food Safety Management System Lead Auditor training program "ISO 22000:2005 Lead Auditor" on 11th to 15th February 2018 at Best Western hotel, Mahboula.

ASSE- Kuwait Chapter lead by Chairman Fadhel Al Ali, is a non-profit organization which always strives to excel in providing quality trainings and consultation in the field of Health Safety and Environment all across different public and private sectors in Kuwait.

Jahid Thakor, Treasurer of ASSE Kuwait chapter welcomed the participants. He briefed about the significance of the training seminar and the

importance of conducting the training program to help the people get certification in the field of Health, Safety & Environment. Jahid Thakor thanked the participants for their interest shown towards this program and shared upcoming chapter activities and introduced the trainer, Dileep K Nandikonda from TUV Middle East, Abu Dhabi.

Training Session was held for Five days. Alamgir, President of ASSE Kuwait & Adnan Yousaf, Head, Training Committee visited the venue and took feedback from participants on the final day. Sixteen ASSE Members utilized this opportunity. ASSE Kuwait Chapter will continue its strive to do their best for the progress of the society and its members, by organizing such important and remarkable events in future too.



TV



01:05 Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes
02:55 The Mask Of Zorro
05:15 Hunting The Phantom
07:00 Crossfire
08:35 Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes
10:25 The Mask Of Zorro
12:45 The Veil
14:15 Rumble
15:50 Point Break
17:45 The Legend Of Zorro
20:00 Jurassic World
22:05 The Bodyguard
23:45 Under Siege 2



00:50 Untamed & Uncut
01:45 Treehouse Masters
02:40 America's Cutest...
03:35 Dark Days In Monkey City
04:00 Orangutan Island
04:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
05:15 Your Pet Wants This
06:02 Bahama Blue
06:49 Untamed & Uncut
07:36 Meet The Penguins
08:00 Meet The Penguins
08:25 Dark Days In Monkey City
08:50 Orangutan Island
09:15 Treehouse Masters
10:10 America's Cutest...
11:05 Bahama Blue
12:00 Dark Days In Monkey City
12:28 Orangutan Island
12:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
13:50 Your Pet Wants This
14:45 America's Cutest...
15:40 Bahama Blue
16:35 Untamed & Uncut
17:30 Treehouse Masters
18:25 Tanked: On Call
19:20 The Pool Master
20:15 America's Cutest...
21:10 Orangutan Island
21:38 Orangutan Island
22:05 Tanked: On Call
23:00 The Pool Master
23:55 Bahama Blue



00:20 Stella
01:10 The Coroner
02:00 War And Peace
02:50 Silent Witness
03:45 Stella
04:35 Doctors
05:05 Holly City
06:00 Holly City
06:55 Doctor Who
07:50 Stella
08:45 Holly City
09:40 Holly City
10:40 The Coroner
11:30 Doctor Who
12:25 Stella
13:15 Holly City
14:15 Holly City
15:15 The Coroner
16:05 Doctor Who
17:10 Stella
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:00 The Coroner
20:00 Stella
20:45 The Durrells
21:35 The Coroner
22:25 Doctors
22:55 Eastenders
23:25 Stella



00:00 Deadly Secrets: The Lost Children Of Dozier
02:00 Evil Up Close
03:00 The First 48
04:00 Deadly Secrets: The Lost Children Of Dozier
06:00 Evil Up Close
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:30 It Takes A Killer
08:00 The First 48
09:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
11:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
12:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
13:00 The First 48
14:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
15:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
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 Jo Frost On Britain's Killer Kids
21:00 Jo Frost On Britain's Killer Kids
22:00 Jo Frost On Britain's Killer Kids
23:00 Escaping Evil: My Life In A Cult



00:05 Nightcap
00:30 Broad City
00:55 Broad City
01:20 Chris Ramsey Stand Up
Central
01:45 Tosh.0
02:10 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Tosh.0
03:50 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
04:15 Kroll Show
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Brotherhood
05:30 Impractical Jokers
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:50 Punk'd (Bet)
07:15 Punk'd (Bet)
07:40 The Jim Gaffigan Show
08:05 Impractical Jokers
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Kroll Show
09:45 Key And Peele
10:10 Brotherhood
10:35 The Jim Gaffigan Show
11:00 Impractical Jokers
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:20 Impractical Jokers
12:45 The Dude Perfect Show
13:10 The Dude Perfect Show
13:35 Brotherhood
14:00 Friends
14:23 Friends
14:45 Impractical Jokers
15:15 Key And Peele
15:35 Kroll Show
16:00 Comedy Central Presents

Comedy 3alwagef
16:25 Ridiculousness Arabia
16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 Lip Sync Battle UK
19:00 Lip Sync Battle UK
19:25 Impractical Jokers
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends
20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
22:00 Teachers
22:25 Tosh.0
22:50 Tosh.0
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds
01:20 Now That's Funny
02:10 Now That's Funny
03:00 Everest: Beyond The Limit
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 Everest: Beyond The Limit
11:10 The Know It All Guide To...
11:35 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
12:00 Invent It Rich
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
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19:05 Destroyed In Seconds
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Tanked
21:10 The Know It All Guide To...
21:35 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
22:00 Invent It Rich
22:50 Everest: Beyond The Limit
23:40 Ultimate Survival



00:50 Kiss Of Death
01:45 How (Not) To Kill Your Husband
02:40 Killing Field: People Magazine Investigates
03:35 Murder Online
04:30 Kiss Of Death
05:25 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad
05:50 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It
07:10 Evil Online
08:00 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad
08:25 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
09:15 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad
09:40 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad
10:10 Evil Online
11:05 Dead On Arrival
12:00 Fatal Encounters
12:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 Evil Online
15:40 Betrayed
16:35 The Perfect Murder
17:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
18:25 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad
18:50 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
20:15 Evil Online
21:10 Betrayed
22:05 Married With Secrets
23:00 Kiss Of Death
23:55 Love Kills
Disney HD
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 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:45 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
08:20 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
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 Tangled: Short Cuts
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



Disney Junior
00:00 PJ Masks
00:30 PJ Masks
01:00 PJ Masks
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopidoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopidoo
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 Loopidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 PJ Masks
08:00 Trulli Tales
08:25 Junction Junction
08:40 Special Agent Oso
09:00 Handy Manny
09:15 PJ Masks
09:30 Vampirina
10:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
10:25 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
10:55 Puppy Dog Pals
11:20 Puppy Dog Pals
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
17:10 PJ Masks
17:35 Miles From Tomorrow
18:00 The Lion Guard
18:30 Puppy Dog Pals
19:00 Trulli Tales
19:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
20:00 Sofia The First
20:30 P-King Duckling
21:00 Vampirina
21:30 PJ Masks
22:00 Trulli Tales
22:30 Sofia The First
23:00 P-King Duckling
23:30 Puppy Dog Pals



00:15 Yukon Men
01:05 Street Justice: The Bronx
01:50 Gear Dogs
02:35 Jesse James Outlaw Garage
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Flying Wild Alaska
04:50 Dirty Jobs
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Backroad Bounty
06:45 How Do They Do It?
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Flying Wild Alaska
08:20 Backroad Bounty
09:10 Dirty Jobs
09:55 Dirty Jobs
10:45 Gear Dogs
11:30 Jesse James Outlaw Garage
12:20 Backroad Bounty
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 How Do They Do It?
13:55 Dirty Jobs
14:40 Yukon Men
15:30 Dirty Jobs
16:15 Gear Dogs
17:05 Jesse James Outlaw Garage
17:50 Flying Wild Alaska
18:40 Dirty Jobs
19:25 Yukon Men
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Heavy Rescue
21:50 Railroad Australia
22:40 Outback Truckers
23:30 Flying Wild Alaska

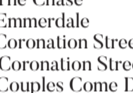


06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
06:25 Milo Murphy's Law
06:50 Right Now Kapow
07:15 Mech-X4
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Walk The Prank
08:10 Walk The Prank
08:35 Right Now Kapow
09:00 Right Now Kapow
09:25 Mighty Med
09:50 Mighty Med
10:20 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
10:45 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
11:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
11:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
12:00 Kid vs. Kat
12:25 Two More Eggs
12:30 Kid vs. Kat
12:55 Kirby Buckets
13:20 Kirby Buckets
13:45 Supa Strikas
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Supa Strikas
14:40 Right Now Kapow
15:05 Right Now Kapow
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law
15:55 Two More Eggs
16:00 The Suite Life Of Zack & Cody
16:25 Lab Rats Elite Force
16:50 Lab Rats
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man

18:05 Supa Strikas
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man
18:35 Walk The Prank
19:00 Gravity Falls
19:25 Milo Murphy's Law
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Mech-X4
20:20 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
20:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
21:10 Kid vs. Kat
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:10 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am
KSA



00:10 WAGS Atlanta
01:00 WAGS Atlanta
01:50 E! News
02:50 Botched
03:40 Botched
04:35 Botched
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
06:55 E! News Middle East
07:10 Rob & Chyna
07:40 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
10:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
11:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
12:00 E! News Middle East
12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
13:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:00 E! News Middle East
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 WAGS Atlanta
17:10 WAGS Atlanta
18:05 WAGS Atlanta
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 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 E! News Middle East
23:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



00:10 The Chase
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Couples Come Dine With Me
03:25 Endeavour
05:15 Don't Tell The Bride
06:15 The Chase
07:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
08:05 Endeavour
09:55 Don't Tell The Bride
11:00 The Chase
11:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 The Chase
15:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
16:00 Diana: The Day The World Grieved
16:55 Broadchurch
17:50 Don't Tell The Bride
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
21:00 Diana: The Day The World Grieved
21:55 Broadchurch
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Million Dollar Genius
01:00 Cities Of The Underworld
02:00 In Search Of Aliens
03:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 Breaking Mysterious
05:30 Million Dollar Genius
06:20 In Search Of Aliens
07:10 Ancient Impossible
08:00 Cities Of The Underworld
09:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Breaking Mysterious
12:00 Million Dollar Genius
13:00 Cities Of The Underworld
14:00 In Search Of Aliens
15:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 Breaking Mysterious
18:00 Ancient Impossible
19:00 Cities Of The Underworld
20:00 In Search Of Aliens
21:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Modern Marvels



00:20 Swamp People
01:10 Swamp People
02:00 American Pickers
02:50 Britain's Bloodiest Crown: War Of The Roses
03:40 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle
04:30 Swamp People
05:15 Swamp People
06:00 Mountain Men
06:50 Forged In Fire
07:40 American Restoration
08:30 Detroit Steel
09:20 American Pickers
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Forged In Fire
11:50 American Restoration
12:40 Detroit Steel
13:30 Duck Dynasty
13:55 Duck Dynasty
14:20 American Pickers
15:10 Mountain Men
16:00 Forged In Fire
16:50 Mountain Men
17:40 Detroit Steel
18:30 Mountain Men
19:20 Forged In Fire
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Counting Cars
21:25 Car Hunters
21:50 Fifth Gear
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 Mountain Men



00:45 Carnival Eats
01:10 Glamour Puds
01:40 Places We Go
02:05 Places We Go
02:35 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
03:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
03:55 One Man & His Campervan
04:25 My Dubai
04:50 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
05:20 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
05:45 John Torode's Asia
06:15 Confucius Was A Foodie
07:10 Places We Go
07:35 Places We Go
08:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
09:00 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
09:25 One Man & His Campervan
09:55 My Dubai
10:20 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
10:50 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
11:15 John Torode's Asia
11:45 Confucius Was A Foodie
12:40 Eat: The Story Of Food
13:35 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
14:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
14:55 One Man & His Campervan
15:25 My Dubai
15:50 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
16:20 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
16:45 John Torode's Asia
17:15 Confucius Was A Foodie
18:10 Eat: The Story Of Food



00:10 Yukon Gold
01:00 Wicked Tuna
02:00 Air Crash Investigation
03:00 The Witch Doctor
04:00 Yukon Gold
05:00 Filthy Riches
06:00 Breakthrough
07:00 Cesar Millan: Love My Pit Bull
08:00 India's Mega Kitchens
09:00 Filthy Riches
10:00 Inside: China's Biggest Gala
11:00 Dog Whisperer
12:00 Dog Whisperer
13:00 Mega Breakdown
14:00 India's Mega Kitchens
15:00 Killing Kennedy
16:00 Dog Whisperer
17:00 Dog Whisperer
18:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
20:00 Mega Breakdown
20:50 Dog Whisperer
21:40 Dog Whisperer
22:50 Years Of Living Dangerously
23:30 India's Mega Kitchens



00:20 Little Killers
01:10 Hooked
02:00 Cheetah: Fatal Instinct
02:50 Monster Fish
03:45 Snakes In The City
04:40 World's Deadliest Animal Apocalypse
05:35 Cheetah: Fatal Instinct
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 Snakes In The City
08:20 World's Deadliest Animal Apocalypse
09:15 Africa's Deadliest (2018)
10:10 Maneater Manhunt
11:05 Ultimate Predators GPU
12:00 Fish Tank Kings
12:55 Return Of The Lion
13:50 Hooked
14:45 Viper Queens
15:40 Ultimate Predators GPU
16:35 Africa's Deadliest (2018)
17:30 Maneater Manhunt
18:25 Ultimate Animal Countdown

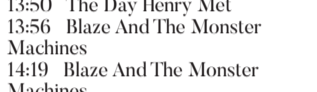


00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbits Invasion
01:00 Rabbits Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:24 Rabbits 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 Harvey Danger
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbits Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Massive Monster Mayhem
13:48 Hunter Street
14:12 I Am Frankie
14:36 The Thundermans
15:00 Rabbits 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 Harvey Danger
18:36 Rabbits 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 Rabbits Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:16 Kid-E-Cats
00:21 Shimmer And Shine
00:44 Sunny Day
01:06 Max & Ruby

01:29 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:39 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:50 The Day Henry Met
01:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:41 Paw Patrol
02:53 Kid-E-Cats
02:57 Kid-E-Cats
03:03 Shimmer And Shine
03:25 Nella The Princess Knight
03:38 Paw Patrol
04:00 The Day Henry Met
04:06 Max & Ruby
04:29 Dora The Explorer
04:51 Sunny Day
05:13 Nella The Princess Knight
05:36 Shimmer And Shine
05:59 Wallykazam!
06:22 Zack & Quack
06:32 The Day Henry Met
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:00 Rusty Rivets
07:13 Paw Patrol
07:37 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight
08:12 Kid-E-Cats
08:16 Kid-E-Cats
08:22 Bubble Guppies
08:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:08 Paw Patrol
09:31 Shimmer And Shine
09:54 Nella The Princess Knight
10:15 The Day Henry Met
10:21 Paw Patrol
10:43 Rusty Rivets
11:06 Wallykazam!
11:29 Bubble Guppies
11:53 Team Umizoomi
12:16 Kid-E-Cats
12:21 Shimmer And Shine
12:44 Sunny Day
13:06 Max & Ruby
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13:40 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
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14:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:41 Paw Patrol
14:53 Kid-E-Cats
14:58 Kid-E-Cats
15:04 Shimmer And Shine
15:26 Nella The Princess Knight
15:38 Paw Patrol
16:00 The Day Henry Met
16:06 Max & Ruby
16:29 Dora The Explorer
16:51 Sunny Day
17:13 Nella The Princess Knight
17:36 Shimmer And Shine
17:59 Wallykazam!
18:21 Zack & Quack
18:32 The Day Henry Met
18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
19:00 Rusty Rivets
19:13 Paw Patrol
19:37 Dora The Explorer
20:00 Nella The Princess Knight
20:12 Kid-E-Cats
20:16 Kid-E-Cats
20:22 Bubble Guppies
20:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
21:08 Paw Patrol
21:31 Shimmer And Shine
21:54 Nella The Princess Knight
22:15 The Day Henry Met
22:21 Paw Patrol
22:43 Rusty Rivets
23:06 Wallykazam!
23:30 Bubble Guppies
23:53 Team Umizoomi



00:10 Yukon Gold
01:00 Wicked Tuna
02:00 Air Crash Investigation
03:00 The Witch Doctor
04:00 Yukon Gold
05:00 Filthy Riches
06:00 Breakthrough
07:00 Cesar Millan: Love My Pit Bull
08:00 India's Mega Kitchens
09:00 Filthy Riches
10:00 Inside: China's Biggest Gala
11:00 Dog Whisperer
12:00 Dog Whisperer
13:00 Mega Breakdown
14:00 India's Mega Kitchens
15:00 Killing Kennedy
16:00 Dog Whisperer
17:00 Dog Whisperer
18:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
20:00 Mega Breakdown
20:50 Dog Whisperer
21:40 Dog Whisperer
22:50 Years Of Living Dangerously
23:30 India's Mega Kitchens



01:00 Alone For Christmas
02:30 A Tiger's Tail
03:55 Capture The Flag
05:35 A Little Game
07:10 Alone For Christmas
08:40 Olaf's Frozen Adventure
09:10 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked
10:40 A Tiger's Tail
12:05 A Royal Christmas
13:40 Olaf's Frozen Adventure
14:10 Mune
15:40 A Sunday Horse
17:30 Lego DC: Justice League Gotham City Breakout
18:55 All She Wishes
20:30 A Royal Christmas
22:05 Mune
23:40 Lego DC: Justice League Gotham City Breakout



00:55 Stakeout
02:55 Jeff Who Lives At Home
04:20 Joe Somebody
06:00 7 Chinese Brothers
07:20 Summer Villa
08:50 Christian Mingle
10:35 My Bakery In Brooklyn
12:20 Joe Somebody
14:00 7 Chinese Brothers
15:20 Big Stone Gap
17:05 Fan Girl
18:40 Love The Coopers
20:30 Pitch Perfect 2
22:25 Uncle Kent 2
23:45 Tales Of Halloween



00:05 The Stanford Prison Experiment
02:15 Meadowland
03:55 Antwone Fisher
06:00 African Safari
07:30 XV: Beyond The Tryline
09:10 Antwone Fisher
11:45 African Safari
12:50 Worlds Apart
14:55 I Believe In Miracles
16:50 James White
18:25 The Beat Beneath My Feet
20:45 The Man Who Knew Infinity
21:55 The Descendants
23:55 When Life Keeps Getting In The Way



00:35 Legend Of The Sea
02:00 An American Tail: Fievel Goes West
03:20 Moomin And Midsummer Madness
04:40 Felix The Toy Rabbit And The Time Machine
06:10 Dinofroz The Origin
07:45 Bunny Tales
09:05 Phantom Boy
10:40 Emilie Jolie
12:00 An American Tail: Fievel Goes

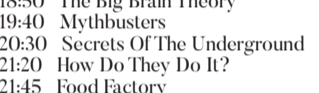
West
13:20 Moomin And Midsummer Madness
14:40 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
16:00 Phantom Boy
17:35 Ivan The Incredible
19:05 Back To The Sea
20:50 Dinofroz The Origin
22:25 Bunny Tales
23:45 Emilie Jolie



01:00 Boys Don't Cry
03:10 Tekken: Kazuya's Revenge
05:10 Before We Go
07:10 In The Heart Of The Sea
09:30 Leatherheads
11:30 As Good As It Gets
14:00 Oleanna
15:45 Years In Tibet
18:10 Zoolander 2
20:00 Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them
22:15 Bram Stoker's Dracula



00:40 Mythbusters
01:30 How Do They Do It?
01:55 Food Factory
02:20 The Man Who Tweeted Earth
03:10 The Strangest UFO Stories Of All Time
04:00 The Big Brain Theory
04:48 Mythbusters
05:36 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Food Factory
06:24 The Man Who Tweeted Earth
07:12 The Strangest UFO Stories Of All Time
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 The Big Brain Theory
09:14 Mythbusters
10:02 The Strangest UFO Stories Of All Time
10:50 How Do They Do It?
11:14 Food Factory
11:38 The Man Who Tweeted Earth
12:26 The Big Brain Theory
13:14 Mythbusters
14:02 How Do They Do It?
14:26 Food Factory
14:50 The Strangest UFO Stories Of All Time
15:38 The Big Brain Theory
16:26 The Man Who Tweeted Earth
17:14 Mythbusters
18:02 The Strangest UFO Stories Of All Time
18:50 The Big Brain Theory
19:40 Mythbusters
20:30 Secrets Of The Underground
21:20 How Do They Do It?
21:45 Food Factory
22:10 The Strangest UFO Stories Of All Time
23:00 Secrets Of The Underground
23:50 The Big Brain Theory



00:00 The King's Speech
02:00 Duplex
03:30 The Upside Of Anger
05:30 About Adam
07:00 Moonrise Kingdom
08:30 The Blair Witch Project
09:50 Admission
11:30 Serendipity
13:00 Her
14:55 Duplex
16:25 Heshel
18:00 The King's Speech
20:00 The Good Dinosaur



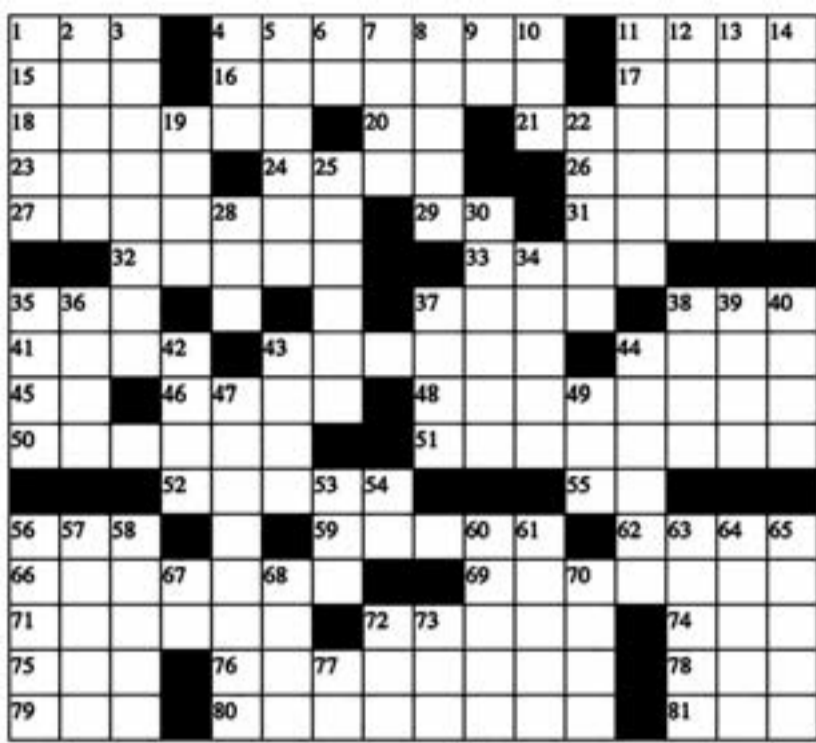
00:00 Fashion Star
01:00 Fashion Star
02:00 Making Mr. Right
03:00 Along For The Ride
03:30 Along For The Ride
04:00 Cougar Town
04:30 Cougar Town
05:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
05:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker
06:00 Fashion Star
07:00 Fashion Star
08:00 Making Mr. Right
09:00 Along For The Ride
09:30 Along For The Ride
10:00 Cougar Town
10:30 Cougar Town
11:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
11:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker
12:00 Fashion Star
13:00 Fashion Star
14:00 Making Mr. Right
15:00 Along For The Ride
15:30 Along For The Ride
16:00 Cougar Town
16:30 Cougar Town
17:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
17:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker
18:00 Cedar Cove
19:00 Cedar Cove
20:00 Making Mr. Right
21:00 Along For The Ride
21:30 Along For The Ride
22:00 Cougar Town
22:30 Cougar Town
23:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
23:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker



00:20 Extraordinary Pregnancies
01:05 My Extreme Excess Skin
01:50 Outrageous 911
02:12 Outrageous 911
02:35 90 Days To Wed: Before The 90 Days
03:20 Big & Little
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras: Coach Wars
04:50 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress
06:00 Say Yes To The Dress UK
06:22 Say Yes To The Dress UK
06:45 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
07:30 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
08:15 Big & Little
09:00 Cake Boss
09:25 Toddlers & Tiaras: Coach Wars
10:10 Say Yes To The Dress
10:32 Say Yes To The Dress UK
10:55 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
11:40 Kate Plus 8
12:25 Cake Boss
12:47 Cake Boss
13:10 Say Yes To The Dress
13:55 Toddlers & Tiaras: Coach Wars
14:40 Big & Little
15:25 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
16:10 Cake Boss
16:35 Cake Boss
17:00 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
1

Stars

CROSSWORD 1845



ACROSS

1. A unit of pressure.
4. (zoology) Lacking a tail or taillike appendage.
11. Old World wild swine having a narrow body and prominent tusks from which most domestic swine come.
15. A hotel providing overnight lodging for travelers.
16. English author.
17. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
18. Referring to the second of two things or persons mentioned (or the last one or ones of several).
20. A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
21. Slang for 'drunk'.
23. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
24. South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
26. At right angles to the length of a ship or airplane.
27. Important European leguminous forage plant with trifoliate leaves and blue-violet flowers grown widely as a pasture and hay crop.
29. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
31. annoy continually or chronically.
32. A medium to dark brownish yellow color.
33. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
35. A machine-readable version of a standard dictionary.
41. United States humorist who wrote about rural life (1818-1885).
45. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
46. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
48. Taxonomic kingdom comprising all living or extinct animals.
50. The cavity in which the large intestine begins and into which the ileum opens.
51. Frivolous banter.
52. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
55. Being one more than fifty.
56. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
59. United States chemist (1839-1903).
62. A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
66. A small republic in the eastern Pyrenees between Spain and France.
69. Dyed with henna.
71. South American plant cultivated for its large fragrant trumpet-shaped flowers.
74. A master's degree in business.
75. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
76. Not wearing rouge.
78. A decree that prohibits something.
79. The basic unit of money in Romania.
80. Pearl oysters.
81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Low-growing tropical perennials grown for their stingless foliage.
2. A vicious angry growl.
3. The Palestinian uprising (beginning in 1987) against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
4. (informal) Of the highest quality.
5. A bottle with a stopper.
6. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
7. The capital and largest city of Mongolia.
8. The basic unit of money on Sao Tome e Principe.
9. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
10. A three-year law degree.
11. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
12. Being on the outside or further from a center.
13. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
14. (of buildings and rooms) Having ample space.
19. A cooperative unit.
22. An avalanche volcanic water and mud down the slopes of a volcano.
25. A person who is rejected (from society or home).
28. 36th President of the United States.
30. A chain of connected ideas or passages or objects so arranged that each member is closely related to the preceding and following members (especially a series of patristic comments elucidating Christian dogma).
34. Insectivorous usually semiaquatic web-footed amphibian with smooth moist skin and long hind legs.
36. Fertility goddess in ancient Greek mythology.
37. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
38. The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
39. A large and hurried swallow.
40. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
42. A city in east central Texas.
43. The highest level or degree attainable.
44. East Indian tree that puts out aerial shoots that grow down into the soil forming additional trunks.
47. A distinct and often subordinate group within a group.
49. A unit of length equal to one thousandth of an inch.
53. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
54. An expression of greeting.
57. Complacently or inanely foolish.
58. A farewell remark.
60. God of wealth and love.
61. Fastened with stitches.
63. A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
67. (informal) Being satisfactory or in satisfactory condition.
68. (the feminine of raja) A Hindu princess or the wife of a raja.
70. A quantity of no importance.
72. A licensed medical practitioner.
73. Temporary military shelter.
77. A radioactive gaseous element formed by the disintegration of radium.

Sunday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, memories of a long ago time in your youth stay with you; the desire to revisit these days is overwhelming. Even so, your focus on the present demands your attention. The life you live offers security, love and family; consider this before making a foolish decision that could rock your world. An opportunity arises for a change in position involving work; take some time with this. You may consider working with new people or perhaps returning to a former company. You devote some time to someone who loves you. Communication skills are high and clear. You hold the keys to the future; choices to sabotage yourself could be made but it seems that you are now serious about creating stability and prosperity for yourself and those you love, Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, the energy is one of ease and accomplishment today. Working with others is a breeze and you could have valuable ideas the boss wholeheartedly approves of. You find that working with people is much easier than working against them. You feel appreciated and valuable as you discover that you could be considered for a promotion or a raise. A new client or customer makes your day when they brag to others about your work and creative style. You find yourself engaging with people in a convention or workshop setting; you're around a large number of people. Travel plays a big part in your work or spiritual pursuits. You meet someone who reminds you of yourself. A nice dinner with friends and family creates enjoyment. Taurus!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, your needs are simple; you run from anything complicated or consuming just now. Stripping a situation down to the bare bones helps your efforts to gain information. Prayer and meditation are valuable tools when dealing with disruption. Your interest in taking new directions along your path in life opposes where you actually are along the way; realities clash with hopes and dreams. Letting things unfold on their own schedule is difficult for you. If you insist on having your way damage could occur that may be long lasting; though most challenging, let patience defeat ego. Being surrounded by those who love you brings strength and confidence that more than gets you through; a gathering with excellent food is likely this evening, Gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, your commitment to the health of your body strengthens when you experience a dip in physical energy. Diet, exercise and supplements are in your consideration as you look through different options. You're eager to find more ways to have a better opinion of yourself; try not to be too harsh in self-judgment. This is a good time to start new projects or research for different investments in stock market or real estate. A new romance could be indicated or the reigniting of an already established love relationship. If your focus moves off of your work, take a moment to breathe and stretch; you're capable of overcoming distractions now. You prefer to think about home and family this evening as you try a new recipe on several at a small gathering, Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, let your ambitions be known; the energy of accomplishment is present and operating at top levels. If you have wanted to be promoted at work or take a chance with earning money somewhere new, the time is now; the only blockages and obstacles are in your mind, ignore doubts and go for the win! If you're aware of pitfalls, avoid them no matter what, use your instinct here. You're honestly in touch with your true self; you can't work on flaws if you can't see them, so good, brave job! You mention something by mistake and save someone a large sum of money and heartache. Something or someone you find utterly irresistible makes an appearance. You know what's best for you and where to find it; use your heart as well as your head for this choice, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, you're able to see straight to the center of the web; you can unravel complicated issues and puzzling circumstances by seeing through the jumbled details clearly. Things fall into place, forming productive situations that can come to fruition as you deserve; you have worked and planned carefully to get where you are, haven't you continue on this path and in this direction. Something unusual, actually sort of bizarre, demands your attention later; this is a result of your past behavior. This could be a great window of time to let something go, just release it so it can release you! Explaining your theories or plans comes naturally and those who listen understand. After a day full of demanding moments, you've come to a place you can rest; do it now, Virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, important information comes from a place you least expect; use this wisely as it could unlock a difficult situation. You could find yourself planning a block party or family reunion. A need arises to get things straight with someone close to your heart; a difficult confrontation ends well after the truth comes out. You're on guard with what you say and do during a meeting with superiors; a favorable outcome is indicated. Someone will seek your guidance later when you have a moment alone. Your star rises high at a social function you attend in honor of a coworker or family member; compliments on your appearance make your day. After dinner, take your shoes off and put your feet up after a day filled with accomplishment and positive energy, Libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

Scorpio, you would prefer to be anywhere but work today. Duties and coworkers insist on having your attention regarding something new and detailed oriented; you're good at it. Events demand that you re-arrange schedules and re-make plans to cover your position; this is something you do effortlessly as it all comes together with ease. A tender subject may be brought up by someone who means well but comes across as harsh and meddling; the way you respond to this is very important. Temptation to spend money on something foolish is tough to overcome. Something unfolds on the domestic front that enhances your life and provides comfort. Others enjoy your off the wall humor and jovial manner. Good food and company for you this evening, Scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

Sagittarius, you're rather annoyed with both job and home life; you could feel as though people are going out of their way to irritate you. This isn't a time to make choices or decisions regarding personal or professional directions to take. Instead of stressing out, step back and let this pass without your input or worry. You review the path you have taken thus far and make notes about the positives and negatives that have resulted; continue to be who you are! You feel good about yourself today and there's a spring in your step. A new outfit or shoes could be the ticket as you have an event to prepare for! Someone new at work appears to be agreeable and capable. Tonight, you could just find that you have been selected as the winner of a contest, Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, the day feels wide open for new opportunities; hopes and dreams are supported. There's something valuable within your reach, if you go about it correctly this can be yours; be patient and watch! A mentor shares motivational input and energy. Something you needed to know comes from a surprising source; sometimes people we have never met can lend a helping hand they have no idea they're even extending! A neighborhood gathering draws more people than you thought and good progress is made. Pulling people together by explaining something in a way everyone can understand makes a huge difference. A person who doesn't have all the facts criticizes something in a petty way. Your ability to be patient is becoming stronger, Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Aquarius, your suggestions for a project appeal to the entire team. Story telling skills set you apart as you speak and take people in directions they would never have known about. There could be a person that is not interested in what you have to say; this could be someone that is normally easy to work with and be around. You may find that you can no longer please everyone around you; remember that the energy you surround yourself with creates more of the same energy! An elderly person tests your judgment and questions your honor. You find that daydreaming is a productive pastime. Let yourself dream, these days do not come too often, so do not ignore the opportunity to follow your fantasies. Relax and smile this evening, Aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, the past reaches into your mind; you may discover a new fact regarding this issue that provides relief. Younger people seek your input and guidance on a certain topic that you can help with. Now isn't the time to seek approval from everyone around you; being honest is more important than being liked or agreed with. You could feel trapped or painted into a corner when you are challenged on a matter of a sensitive nature. You may feel a strong desire to start over with a diet you tried once before. Working through issues isn't easy but definitely doable if you focus and look at all angles. You shine when addressing coworkers in a meeting with new ideas regarding a customer or client; your thoughts are clear and helpful today and this evening, Pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Old TV Shows 4

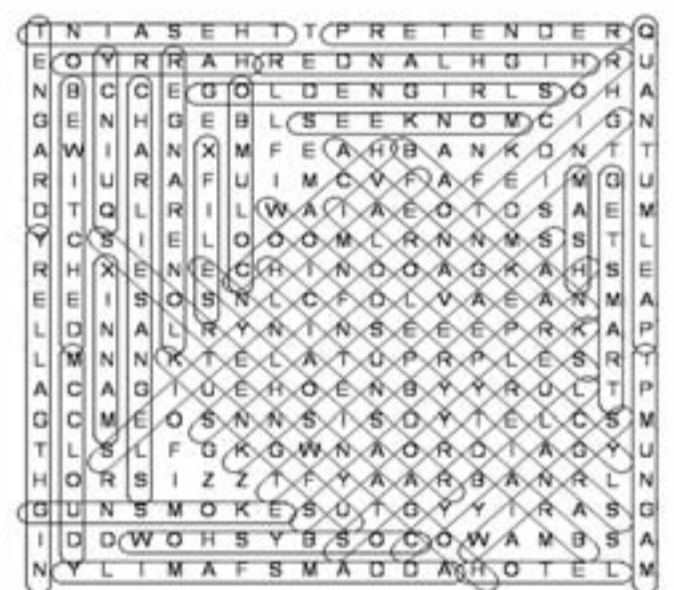
Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.



- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ALIEN NATION | DUE SOUTH | HERE'S LUCY | PERRY MASON |
| ALLY MCBEAL | ELLEN | IN LIVING COLOR | PEYTON PLACE |
| AMEN | EMPTY NEST | LARAMIE | RHODA |
| BANACEK | F TROOP | LOST IN SPACE | RYAN'S HOPE |
| BAYWATCH | FALL GUY | LOU GRANT | SEA HUNT |
| BLOSSOM | FAMILY | MAJOR DAD | SPIN CITY |
| CHICAGO HOPE | FELICITY | MARTIN | THE ROOKIES |
| CHINA BEACH | FRAGGLE ROCK | MATLOCK | VEGAS |
| COACH | HART TO HART | MR BELVEDERE | WISEGUY |
| DEAR JOHN | HAZEL | NASH BRIDGES | ZORRO |

Sunday's Solution

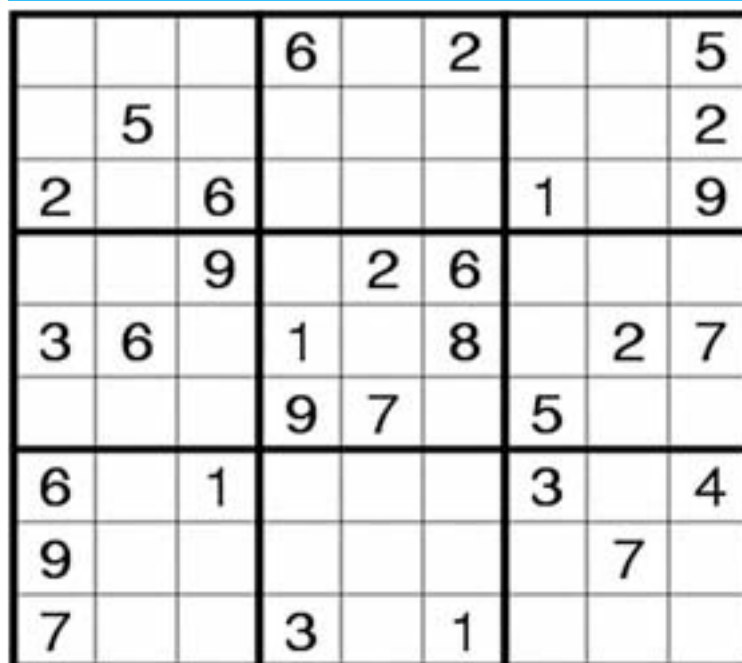
Old TV Shows 3



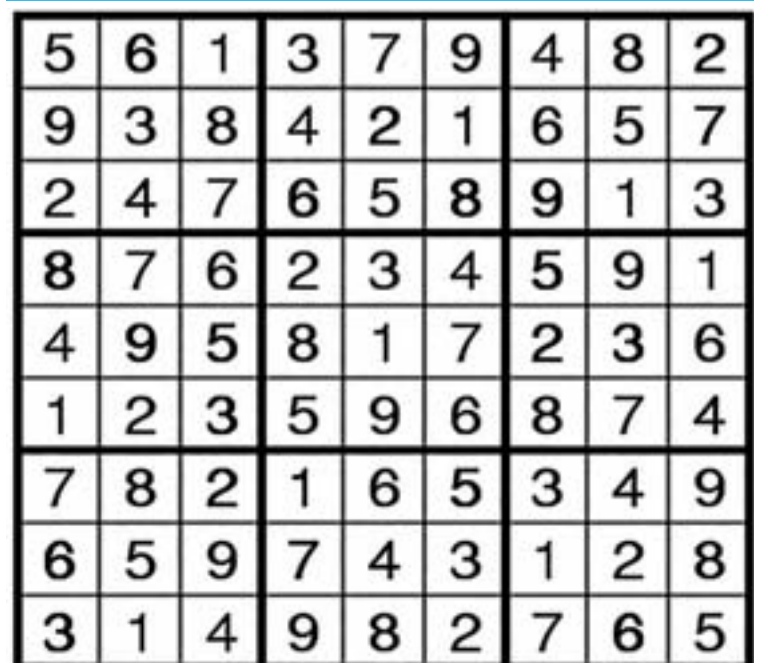
- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| ADDAMS FAMILY | FAMILY TIES | KNOTS LANDING | QUANTUM LEAP |
| AVENGERS | GET SMART | KUNG FU | QUINCY |
| BATHAN | GOLDEN GIRLS | LOVE RANGER | ROCKFORD FILES |
| BEWITCHED | GUNSMOKE | MAGNUM P.I. | ROSEANNE |
| BRADY BUNCH | HAPPY DAYS | MANNIX | STAR TREK |
| CHARLIE'S ANGELS | HARRY O | MASH | THE SAINT |
| COACH | HIGHLANDER | MCCLOUD | TWIN PEAKS |
| COLUMBO | HOGAN'S HEROES | MONKIES | WINGS |
| COBAY SHOW | HOTEL | NIGHT GALLERY | WONDER YEARS |
| CYBILL | I LOVE LUCY | PRETENDER | X FILES |
| DRAGNET | | | |

The hidden TV show is: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GRIZZLY ADAMS

Daily SuDoku



Sunday's Solution



Classifieds

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

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

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy and with light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for fog forming over some areas.

BY DAY: Visibility will improve gradually and Partly cloudy with light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 20 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

WEATHER WATCH			Thunder Rain	
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 27/02/2018 1200 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	17 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	23 °C	15 °C		
ABDALY	24 °C	15 °C		
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C		
JAHRA	26 °C	16 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	21 °C	17 °C		
SALMIYAH	19 °C	17 °C		
AHMADI	19 °C	17 °C		
NUWASIB	24 °C	16 °C		
WAFRA	24 °C	15 °C		
SALMY	26 °C	13 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	02/28	Visibility will improve gradually and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	22 °C	15 °C	VRB	08 - 20 km/h
Thursday	03/01	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	23 °C	16 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 26 km/h
Friday	03/02	Warm	25 °C	14 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Saturday	03/03	Warm	27 °C	12 °C	VRB	06 - 20 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:57
Sunrise	06:16
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:18
Sunset	17:46
Isha	19:03

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	24 °C
MIN. Temp.	12 °C
MAX. RH	96 %
MIN. RH	44 %
MAX. Wind	SE 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	1.04mm

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

REQUIRED

CHEF

For a Private Residence

- Male / Female (preferably married)
- 10 years experience
- International / Continental cuisines along with others
- Should speak English language fluently
- 2 years Contract
- Transferable residence

Interested applicant's may send their CV's with their contact telephone number to:

saadalyaseen14@gmail.com

or may contact on telephone No.:
(+965) 99305447

Airline	
American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
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



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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 28/2/2018				Departure Flights on Wednesday 28/2/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	607	Kochi	00:10	JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	504	Luxor	01:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR	142	Doha	01:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
WAN	548	KTM	02:40	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
RJA	644	Amman	03:05	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
FEG	931	Alexandria	03:15	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
KAC	796	Madinah	03:50	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
UAE	873	Dubai	04:25	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	QTR	1091	Doha	05:05
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	KAC	205	Islamabad	05:20
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:05
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	JZR	786	Riyadh	06:25
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	RJA	645	Amman	07:05
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	08:10
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	165	Rome	08:15
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	08:45	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	BAW	156	London	08:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	KAC	117	New York	09:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
IRC	6552	ABD	09:50	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
KIS	6032	Mashhad	10:00	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
IRA	665	Shiraz	10:40	KAC	101	London	09:45
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	ETD	9882	SGN	09:50
AXB	890	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
IRM	1188	Mashhad	11:15	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:15	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
KAC	286	Dhaka	12:35	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
KAC	798	Taif	12:45	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:40
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	ZAV	4101	QA	11:00
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	IRA	674	Lar	11:40
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	WAN	953	Baku	12:00
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:20	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:40	MSC	404	Asyut	12:15
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	QTR	1075	Doha	12:30
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	JZR	606	Kochi	12:45
KAC	618	Doha	14:15	MSC	405	Beirut	12:55

Oscars forge new credibility in the furnace of scandal

With the Oscars just days away, industry figures have tried to strike a reflective, humble tone in light of a glut of recent controversies that have dogged Hollywood. From the #OscarsSoWhite row of 2016 to the Weinstein sexual misconduct scandal currently engulfing the business, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is acutely aware of the need to project a more wholesome image. The good news is that both the viewing public and the deep-pocketed advertisers who make the annual telecast so lucrative, far from being fazed by Tinseltown's manifold iniquities, seem to trust the Oscars brand more than ever.

"There is no doubt that Oscar has made a total turnaround," said celebrity branding expert Jeetendra Sehdev, author of a recent study on attitudes to the glitzy climax of Hollywood's annual awards season. "It's a phenomenal achievement for the leaders of the Academy, not only because the brand has been highly discredited and distrusted over the past few years but also because of the politically charged environment in Hollywood." Sehdev, an influential academic with more than a million followers on social media, solicits opinions about the rich and famous from 2,000 randomly-selected adults in the US as part of an ongoing study established in 2012. In his most recent survey, entitled "The Power of the Oscar," 71 percent of respondents said they saw the Oscars brand as trustworthy-up from 51 percent in 2015.

'Color-blind' millennials

Around three quarters agreed that the

Oscars was a premium entertainment brand and that the annual show is "innovative," while 69 percent said the brand was "visionary"-a rise from less than half in 2015. This is despite a now-infamous mixup in the 2017 ceremony that resulted in Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway being handed the wrong envelope for the best picture announcement. A big factor in improving trust has been major reforms within the 8,500-strong Academy after a second consecutive crop of all-white acting nominees in 2016 prompted calls for a boycott and widespread outrage on social media.

“There is no doubt that Oscar has made a total turnaround”

Many of the Academy's long-nonworking and mostly white male members had their voting privileges revoked, while the vast majority of almost 1,500 people invited to join in 2016 and 2017 were women or people of color. The credibility of the Oscars matters to the stars vying for the statuette because it translates into cold, hard cash, says Sehdev. "Celebrities who win an Oscar this year will benefit from the halo effect of an award that has greater rele-

vance in the eyes of both audiences and brands," he told AFP.

"Oscar winners will inevitably score higher priced endorsement deals as brands look for celebrities who can influence millennials-our most color-blind and multicultural generation yet." Some eight in 10 respondents to Sehdev's survey agreed that black Americans were responsible for the improvement in trust and respect, while just 5 in 10 credited women, suggesting that the #MeToo movement had less impact on brand-building than #OscarsSoWhite.

Makeover

"However, the brave women of Hollywood who have spoken out against sexual harassment are also seen to be critical to driving Oscar's makeover," said Sehdev, the bestselling author of "The Kim Kardashian Principle." Advertisers seem as unfazed as the public by the Weinstein scandal, the #OscarsSoWhite controversy, "Envelopegate" or-perhaps most importantly-dwindling viewing figures that hit a nine-year low of 33 million last year. ABC, which airs Sunday's ceremony, sold out of commercial time during the telecast by February 15, the fastest takeup in recent history, putting it way ahead of last year's schedule and chalking up record ad revenue.

The broadcaster will air 16 commercials made specifically for the ceremony, up from just five last year, with at least 12 clients buying up airtime for spots celebrating female empowerment and inclusivity. Advertisers, reportedly shelling out around \$2.6 million for a 30-second spot, include prestige or



In this file photo Oscar statues stand at a Hollywood back lot. —AFP

household names like Cadillac, Rolex and Google, while MGM, Microsoft, Netflix, Nike, Twitter and Disney are among the sponsors. "In addition to being the most highly viewed event that celebrates storytelling and excellence in film, the Oscars pro-

vides advertisers opportunities to engage with viewers in meaningful ways during a cultural moment they care about," president of advertising Rita Ferro said in a statement. The Academy did not immediately respond to requests for comment. —AFP

'Case closed' in death of Bollywood star Sridevi: Dubai prosecutor



This file photo taken on December 17, 2012 shows Indian Bollywood actress Sridevi (second left) with her husband Boney Kapoor (left) and daughters Khushi (second right) and Jhanvi Kapoor (right), posing during the unveiling of the latest Indian edition of People magazine in Mumbai. — AFP

An investigation into the death of Bollywood superstar Sridevi Kapoor, who drowned in her bathtub in a Dubai hotel, has been closed, police said yesterday. "The Dubai public prosecutor's office has decided to release the body of Indian actress Sridevi to her family after the investigation into the incident was concluded and the case closed," read a tweet by the Dubai police. Sridevi, 54, drowned in her bathtub after los-

ing consciousness at the weekend in a hotel in Dubai, where she was attending a wedding.

Dubai had held the superstar's body since Saturday, pending the results of the post-mortem investigation. Born Shree Amma Yanger Ayappan in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, Sridevi appeared in around 300 films and was awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian award, for her service to the film industry. — AFP

Shakira pays 20 mn euros to Spain taxman

Superstar Shakira has handed over more than 20 million euros (\$24.6 million) to tax authorities in Spain, a report said yesterday, accused of not paying taxes despite being a resident between 2011 and 2014. Catalan daily El Periodico reported that the Colombian award-winning singer had paid the money "to settle part of the debt claimed by Spain's tax authorities", corresponding to what she allegedly owes for 2011.

The fiscal authorities filed an official complaint to prosecutors in Barcelona accusing her of not paying taxes, sparking an investigation. Jose Miguel Company, spokesman for the prosecutors' office, told AFP. The official complaint only covers the period from 2012 to 2014, however, as the timeframe to prosecute alleged tax offences in 2011 has expired. In a relationship since 2011 with FC Barcelona center-back Gerard Pique, with whom she has two sons, the 41-year-old transferred her official residency to the Catalan city in 2015. Until then, it was in the Bahamas. But "that doesn't match reality, with the children in school in



Barcelona and her partner here," Company said, adding that prosecutors will decide in June whether to pursue the case. Shakira's representatives, meanwhile, say that until 2014 she earned most of her money in international tours and didn't live more than six months a year in Spain-a prerequisite to be an official tax-paying resident in the country. — AFP

Stars to wear #MeToo white ribbons at 'French Oscars'

Stars attending the "French Oscars"-the Cesars-on Friday will wear a white ribbon in protest at violence against women, organizers said. "We are all going to wear white ribbons," Alain Terzian, the head of the French Academy told AFP yesterday, after actors and directors at the Golden Globes and the British Bafta awards wore black in solidarity with the #MeToo movement.

The Berlin film festival, which wrapped up at the weekend, also came under pressure to replace its red carpet with a black one in support of victims of sexual harassment in Hollywood after the Harvey Weinstein scandal. The Cesars sparked feminist fury last year by inviting controversial Franco-Polish director Roman Polanski to preside over the awards before he was forced to pull out.

The veteran filmmaker-who has been accused of sexual assault by several women-is wanted in the United States for the statutory rape of a 13-year-old girl in 1977. Terzian said the Franco-American actress and director Tonie Marshall came up with the white ribbon idea to support a French foundation that works to stop violence against women. "We will all wear the ribbon with conviction and determination," he added. French Culture Minister Francoise Nyssen said film producers had a huge "responsibility to fight stereotypes, discrimination and harassment" both on camera and behind it.

'Patriarchal gaze'

"No matter who were are dealing with, we cannot have any tolerance or complacency about unacceptable behavior," she added. Nyssen also was highly critical of how few films directed by women get made. "Certainly we have made some progress in recent years, but



Alain Terzian

it is still not acceptable that there are fewer women film-makers, that they are less visible and less supported" than their male counterparts, she said.

"In 42 years the Cesar for best director has only been won once by a woman," she added, referring to Marshall, who won in 2000 for "Venus Beauty". She said only one in five feature films subsidized by the French state every year are made by women. The situation in Hollywood is even worse, with only seven percent of the top 250 films in 2016 directed by women. Several actors at Berlin launched a campaign to bring equal rights to the red carpet.

German star Anna Bruggemann urged actresses to ditch high heels and low-cut dresses to challenge the "patriarchal gaze" women face at award ceremonies. She launched a Twitter hashtag #NobodysDoll and signed up a number of other mostly German stars to her causes. —AFP

'Black Panther' bags N America's 2nd best sophomore weekend ever

Marvel's "Black Panther" sunk its claws into the top spot once again this weekend at the North American box office, taking a staggering \$111.7 million, industry data showed Monday. Following a record-shattering opening weekend-raking in \$242.2 million the frenzy to see the 18th entry in the Marvel Cinematic Universe continued, bringing total domestic earnings to an astronomical \$403.6 million in just 10 days, according to tracker Exhibitor Relations.

Its global take is now more than \$700 million, with the film yet to open in China or Japan, the two largest overseas markets. It is only the fourth movie ever to make more than \$100 million in its second weekend, joining the elite club behind "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" (\$149.2 million), and ahead of "Jurassic World" (\$106.6 million) and Disney-owned Marvel's "The Avengers" (\$103.1 million).

Directed by Ryan Coogler, "Black Panther" features an almost entirely black cast led by Chadwick Boseman as the first non-white superhero to get his own standalone movie in the franchise. Starring alongside the likes of Michael B Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o and Daniel Kaluuya, Boseman plays the titular superhero also known as T'Challa, king and protector of Wakanda, a technologically advanced, affluent, never-colonized utopia in Africa.

In an anything-but-close second was newly-released dark comedy "Game Night," with \$17 million. Featuring Jason Bateman and Rachel McAdams, the film follows a group of friends whose game night descends into a murder mystery. Dropping one place into third was "Peter Rabbit," based on Beatrix Potter's classic children's book. Sony's family-



Black Panther toys are displayed to attendees at the Hasbro showroom during the annual New York Toy Fair in New York. — AFP

friendly offering brought in \$12.8 million in its third week in theaters.

Paramount's new science fantasy horror "Annihilation" was off to a weak start, debuting in fourth place at only \$11.1 million. Starring Natalie Portman, the film-based on the novel by Jeff VanderMeer tells the story of a team of military scientists who go into a quarantined alien crash zone known as "The Shimmer." Finally, in at fifth was "Fifty

Shades Freed"-the last film in the trilogy based on the wildly successful novels by EL James-with takings of \$7.1 million. Rounding out the top 5 were:

"Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" (\$5.7 million)
 "The 15:17 to Paris" (\$3.6 million)
 "The Greatest Showman" (\$3.4 million)
 "Every Day" (\$3 million)
 "Early Man" (\$1.8 million). — AFP



DOLCE & GABBANA SENDS DRONES DOWN RUNWAY



Designers have made plays big and small for the loyalty of younger admirers at Milan Fashion Week. They have reached out with Instagram-savvy supermodels like Gigi Hadid, styles that incorporate more elements of street-wear and ever-evolving technology, as highlighted with Dolce & Gabbana's clever use of drones during their womenswear show. Some highlights from Milan Fashion Week womenswear previews for next fall and winter Sunday:

Drone Devotion

The fashion crowd was mystified and then miffed when the Dolce & Gabbana show was delayed by repeated announcements that all Wi-Fi connections needed to be turned off and then the announcer calling out the scofflaws. Vogue Editor-in-Chief Anna Wintour got out of her seat to investigate. There were catcalls. Then, 45 minutes after the scheduled start time, relief at the sound of opening music turned quickly to awe as the doors of the mocked-up church facade opened and out flew a series of drones. Each carried one of the fashion house's quilted leather handbags of the season, named Devotion and featuring a heart-shaped closure.

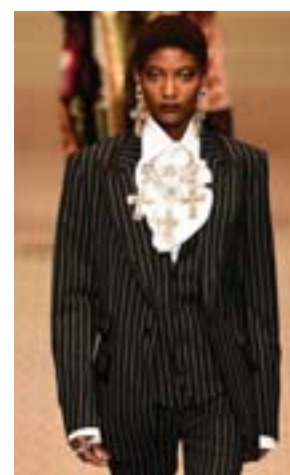
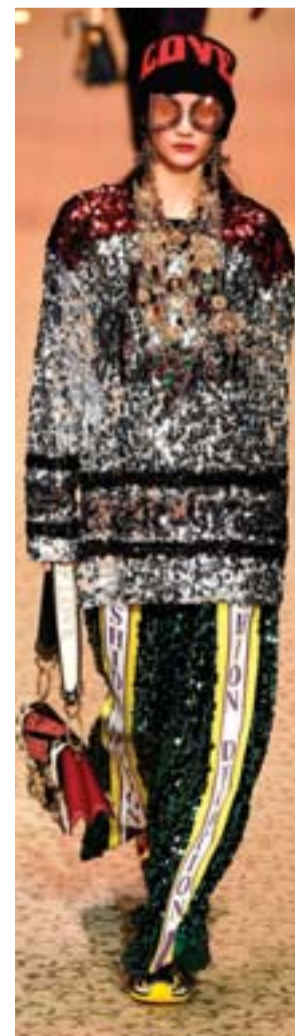
While the designing duo of Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana again showed their mastery of marketing, the collection that followed made clear they would have sent the bags down the runway with flying cherubs, if only they could figure out how.

Fashion Sinners

Dolce & Gabbana have often played with church iconography. Now, they have come out and openly said what many had long suspected by opening their show with a look emblazoned "Fashion Sinner." The audacious collection kept smartphones snapping during a parade that included pink cotton candy wigs, headbands topped with purses, hoods with zebra manes, angel wings on an ornate jacket and cherubs perched on eyewear.

The looks were fun and varied, from sequin encrusted jerseys and athletic-striped trousers proclaiming "Fashion Devotion," to a coordinated zebra-striped jacket, leggings and shoes, to pretty chiffon dresses in florals and lingerie-inspired dresses. There were angelic looks, too: sequined dresses with cherubs and mini-skirts with detailing that might as well have been taken from church ceilings, worn with bejeweled cross necklaces. "Love is Love," and "Fashion is Beauty" were among the other messages displayed on looks with generous helpings of sequins and crystals.

Dolce & Gabbana had a (not-so) secret show on Saturday night at their downtown party spot, featuring models and millennials in every manner of crystal-covered evening dress and playsuit. Models for the "Secrets & Diamonds" show included real life royalty, Lady Kitty Spencer, a cousin of Princes William and Harry.



Lifestyle | Fashion



Models present creations by Dolce & Gabbana during the women's Fall/Winter 2018/2019 collection fashion show in Milan. — AFP photos



Italian fashion designer Giorgio Armani (center) poses with models at the end of his women's Fall/Winter 2018/2019 collection fashion show by Emporio Armani in Milan.



Emporio Armani

Giorgio Armani said he was inspired by what he sees on the streets to mix night and day looks in his ultra-feminine Emporio Armani collection for next fall and winter. "Today everything gets mixed in absolute freedom," the stylist said after the show. "Young people today dress in contradictions. They go to clubs in their brother's sweat-shirts and to the office in chiffon." Armani captured that spirit with mini-skirts worn with cowboy boots, jackets with curved hemlines worn over a jumpsuit, fuzzy long coats over short-shorts and knitted cardigan jackets with athletic striped trousers. The color palette ranged from Kelly greens to soft blue, anchored by black.

The collection also reinvented the Emporio Armani logo as a simple EA heat-stamped on suede purses, as dangling crystal amulets on jackets and subtly emblazoned on dresses. With antagonism between the sexes receiving so much attention, the Emporio Armani collection put a refreshing eye on friendship between men and women. The designer grouped a female model in a fuzzy EA sweater with a pair of male models in layers of knitwear, the trio dressed for a relaxed day out. "I like this story," Armani said.





Marni's Harmony
 Francesco Risso's Marni collection for next season turned on bold colors and prints and intended to evoke a feel, according to the show notes, that is "basic, raw, immediate." "They are women who scream colors and take the vital message into the streets," the designer said. The collection opened with shiny belted trenches of treated leather or plastic that had unfinished threads left trailing.
 Sweater dresses clung and bunched seductively on the frame, a contrast to the oversized layering of tunic, vest and wide-legged trousers all in bright greens, purples or red. Silken dresses were composed of panels of complementary fabrics and prints, united by a big, bent brass button. Knit hoods peeked out of tailored jackets with feline eye prints, reminiscent of a spookier version of the Cheshire cat. There was a suggestion of recycling in the ponchos formed from blankets and sweaters sewn together with seams inside out - an idea reinforced by the piles of newspapers and used clothes that became the show room seating. Big gold and silver moon earrings or long trailing feathers finished the looks. Shoes included closed-toed sandals on wavy rubber wedges. Surprisingly, there was none of the brand's trademark fur. —AP

Models present creations by Marni during the women's Fall/Winter 2018/2019 collection fashion show in Milan.



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2018



Indian widows covered in coloured powder sit aside while others dance during Holi festival or festival of colors celebrations in Vrindavan yesterday. Holi, the popular Hindu spring festival of colours is observed in India at the end of the winter season on the last full moon of the lunar month, and will be celebrated on March 1 this year. — AFP



Wrestlers Brillo de Luna (Moonbeam) (center) and Lilly Star (left) take part in a training session with trainer Gabriel Martinez in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl.



Mexican wrestler "Brillo de Luna" (Moonbeam) (left), 42, performs at the 2 de Junio Arena.



Mexican wrestler "Brillo de Luna" (Moonbeam) (left), 42, performs at the 2 de Junio Arena.



Mexican wrestler 'Brillo de Luna' (Moonbeam) (center), 42, signs an autograph for a fan after performing at the 2 de Junio Arena in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl.

Mexican women wrestlers wage war of sexes in 'lucha libre' ring

The crowd goes wild as the masked wrestlers toss each other around the ring in colorful spandex. But this is no ordinary Mexican "lucha libre" match: it is the "War of the Sexes," in which three women wrestlers battle three far bigger men. Mixed matches like this, which emerged on the wildly popular pro wrestling scene some 20 years ago, could be a metaphor for gender relations in Mexico—a country with a deep tradition of machismo, where women are fighting for equal rights even as thousands of them are raped and murdered each year.

"Get back in the kitchen, you damn hag!" yells a fan in the stands in an expletive-strewn outburst, as a wrestler called Moonbeam, decked out in a sequined leotard and tall boots, throws a left hook at her hulking opponent, Nazi Warrior. Instead of getting upset, Moonbeam says it is "very beautiful" when male fans hurl insults at her. "It means you're doing a good job. You're provoking them and giving them an outlet for their stress," she says.

"They take out their frustration by yelling at you," instead of shouting at or hitting their wives when they get home, she tells AFP. Moonbeam, a 42-year-old mother of three, says she loves fighting in mixed matches, which she sees as a "power struggle." "We want to show the public and our opponents that we can do this too. You don't have to be a big, strong man. We're skilled, we know how to fight a match, and we can beat them." Her record backs her up: she has beaten nearly 70 men in her 15-year career.

Cuts and bruises

Lucha libre, one of Mexico's most popular spectator sports, falls somewhere between actual sport and entertainment. With its outlandish masks, costumes and characters, it packs more than a little spectacle. But the results are not predetermined, insist wrestlers like Moonbeam and her fellow "luchadoras" Melisa, Princess Legna and Lilly Star. And the body blows can be all too real. The women all bear battle scars: bruised arms, scraped legs, back injuries.

They also endure sexism and criticism—sometimes from their own families—for pursuing a "masculine" sport. "Four out of five matches on every fight card are for men," says Princess Legna, wearing a turquoise mask. There are rarely separate dressing rooms for women, and "sometimes you can feel (the male

wrestlers) sexually harassing you with their eyes," she says.

Nazi Warrior—who insists he chose his name because it "sounds scary," not for ideological reasons—says he tries to be "less rough" in the ring when he fights with women. Violence against women "is OK, but only up to a point," he jokes, before climbing into the ring with his own mother, a fellow wrestler who goes by the name Swastika. Moonbeam's husband and coach, fellow wrestler Gabriel Martinez, says he gets upset when he sees her getting hurt in the ring. But "it's her job. It's part of the price she pays for doing what she loves," he adds.

Something different in life

Bathed in sweat, Moonbeam launches herself off the ropes at a towering opponent called Pambacin the Clown and knocks him flat. She says she always knew she wanted something different than to be a homemaker. Compared to many Mexican women, she was lucky: not only is her husband a feminist, her father also supported her unconditionally, she says. "My dad gave me this career. He paid my gym membership, he bought my sneakers. He was always very proud of me," she says at the gym where she now trains, in a rough neighborhood in Mexico state, outside the capital.

The state has the worst statistics in the country for violence against women: 301 were murdered there last year. Moonbeam never finished high school, like many women in her neighborhood. But she says being a wrestler "earns you a different kind of recognition than any degree." "If you have your picture taken with a 'luchadora,' your family will say, 'Wow, you know her!'" she says. "It makes you happy when people applaud and admire you," says



Lilly Star, a slight 28-year-old who divides her time between wrestling and being a mom.

Promoting violence?

Martinez, Moonbeam's husband, says wrestling "helps women confront their fears, and their own husbands, who often oppress them." He says the "luchadoras" he coaches often arrive at training sessions with cuts and bruises they got at home. Wrestling "raises their self-esteem" and teaches them to defend themselves, he says. "Violence isn't something we're proud of, but a woman who knows her place and knows how to put those misogynists in theirs? That's something to be proud of."

But wrestler Tania the Warrior, a white-haired veteran with 41 years in the ring, sees mixed matches as dangerous. "We're trying to stop violence against women. What message are we sending to the audience when we put women up against men who are way bigger than them?" It turns out not to be an issue for Moonbeam and company in this night's "War of the Sexes." After enduring elbows, body slams and pulled hair, they manage to deliver a devastating blow to Nazi Warrior's stomach, winning them the match—and a hail of boos and cheers from the frenzied crowd. — AFP



Wrestler Princess Legna, poses for pictures in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico State.

Wrestler Princess Legna (right) takes part in a training session with trainer Gabriel Martinez in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico State. — AFP photos



Wrestler Lilly Star, 28, poses for pictures in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico State.