

3 KD 6bn deficit seen in 2018-2019 state budget



7 Turkey reopens iconic 'Iron Church' after revamp



11 Iran tanker ablaze, 32 missing after collision



16 New Messi milestone in Barcelona victory



Tabtabaei, activists go on hunger strike over jailing

Assembly panel approves KD 25bn debt law



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Saudi Interior Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef Al-Saud at Bayan Palace yesterday. — AFP

Amir meets Saudi interior minister

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, accompanying Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef Al-Saud at Bayan Palace yesterday. The reception took place in the presence of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah later held a separate meet-

ing with Prince Abdulaziz, discussing issues of mutual interest. Sheikh Khaled extolled his country's exceptional ties with its Gulf neighbor, citing the two nations' common desire to take relations to new levels, according to a statement by the Kuwaiti interior ministry.

The Kuwaiti minister hailed his Saudi counterpart's visit as affirmation of the impenetrable bond that both countries share. Prince Abdulaziz described the talks as productive, saying that both officials see eye to eye on a number of regional and international issues. The meeting also touched on current security conditions in the region as well as the fight against terrorism and organized crime, including drugs, the statement added. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and a dozen other opposition activists, all jailed for storming the National Assembly, said yesterday they have begun an indefinite hunger strike to draw attention to their plight. The activists said in a statement that the purpose of the strike is to tell the world about the contradictions between what the government says at global forums and what it practices at home. They were referring to calls by the Kuwait UN representative on Iran to respect demands by Iranian protesters.

The activists said they were handed harsh jail terms without giving them the opportunity to defend themselves in court after they had already been acquitted by the lower court. Sixty-seven men were given jail terms of up to nine years for storming the Assembly during a protest in November 2011. One of the activists has already been on hunger strike for several days. Those sentenced to jail include three MPs, a number of former lawmakers and opposition activists, mostly youth.

In another case, well-known writer-journalist Fuad Al-Hashem was sentenced yesterday to seven years in jail for publicly accusing the former Qatari prime minister of stirring the Arab Spring revolutions. Qatar has already taken Hashem to court on several similar cases, and this

was the first time he was sentenced to jail. Hashem is currently living in the United Arab Emirates.

Meanwhile, the Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee yesterday approved a government-sponsored law calling to allow the government to borrow up to KD 25 billion from international and domestic markets over the next 10 years. Under Kuwaiti law, the government cannot borrow without a law, which must specify the maximum amount the government can borrow and the duration of the bill's validity.

Kuwait has started borrowing from the domestic and international market to finance the budget deficit resulting from low oil prices. After posting surpluses for 16 consecutive fiscal years, Kuwait posted a budget deficit in the past three fiscal years. The draft law must be debated and approved by the Assembly to become effective.

MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said he will demand a special debate on the country's financial status to prove that Kuwait does not need to borrow because it has abundant funds that can be utilized instead. He said that Kuwait has huge fiscal reserves and that KD 20 billion of public funds are being held by state departments and agencies, which they should have transferred to state coffers under the law. He said the government should utilize these funds rather than borrow.

News in brief

Saudi jet crashes in Yemen

DUBAI: A warplane from Saudi Arabia's air forces fighting the Houthi movement in Yemen crashed yesterday due to a technical fault while conducting military operations, a statement carried by the Saudi state news agency SPA said. The Houthi armed movement's TV channel Al-Massirah earlier said Houthi forces had shot down the fighter in Saada province, adding it was a Britain-made Tornado. The Saudi statement said the plane had crashed in the war zone. It said the Saudi-led coalition conducted a special operation to evacuate the two pilots who survived the crash.

Saudi cleric held for months

BEIRUT: A prominent Saudi cleric arrested in a crackdown on dissent has since been held for four months without charge or contact with the outside world, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. Salman Al-Awda was among more than 20 people arrested in September in what the Saudi government has said was a crackdown on "intelligence activities...for the benefit of foreign parties against the security of the kingdom and its interests". Awda's family, however, believes he is being held over a tweet linked to neighboring Qatar, with which Saudi Arabia has cut all ties over accusations of links to Iran and Islamist extremists, according to HRW. Awda has been held since then in solitary confinement and has been neither charged nor interrogated, said the New York-based watchdog.

Iran bans English in primary

DUBAI: Iran has banned the teaching of English in primary schools, a senior education official said, after Islamic leaders warned that early learning of the language opened the way to a Western "cultural invasion". "Teaching English in government and non-government primary schools in the official curriculum is against laws and regulations," Mehdi Navid-Adham, head of the state-run High Education Council, told state television late on Saturday. "This is because the assumption is that, in primary education, the groundwork for the Iranian culture of the students is laid," Navid-Adham said, adding that non-curriculum English classes may also be blocked.

Egyptian ex-PM Shafiq will not stand for president

CAIRO: Former Egyptian premier Ahmed Shafiq yesterday announced he will not stand in the 2018 presidential elections, reversing a pledge to challenge at polls set to be dominated by leader Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. Shafiq's decision to scrap his candidacy came after he was returned from the United Arab Emirates, where he had been living in exile since 2012, back to Egypt last month. "I have decided to not run in the upcoming 2018 presidential elections," Shafiq said in a statement posted online. "I saw that I will not be the best person."



Ahmed Shafiq

Continued on Page 11

Bibi calls to axe UN Palestinian refugee agency

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday called for the closure of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, days after US President Donald Trump threatened to cut Palestinian aid. Israel has long viewed the UN agency, known as UNRWA, as biased against it, an allegation the agency strongly denies, saying it is only providing necessary services to Palestinians. Israeli officials also criticize the agency's method of classifying refugees, with descendants also eligible to register.

"UNRWA is an organization that perpetuates the Palestinian refugee problem," Netanyahu said while also lauding Trump at the beginning of his weekly cabinet meeting. He said that while millions of other refugees around the world were cared for by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Palestinians have their own body which also treats "great-grandchildren of refugees - who aren't refugees".

Continued on Page 11

CONDOLENCES

Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief, management and staff

convey their deepest condolences to

Mohammad Jassem Al-Saqr

on the sad demise of his daughter

May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on her

Amir receives Huawei Deputy Chairman, Kuwaiti officials

Officials commend Amir on successful tournament



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Guo Ping, Huawei Deputy Chairman and Rotating CEO. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Guo Ping, Huawei Deputy Chairman and Rotating CEO and the delegation accompanying him on the occasion of visiting the country. The reception was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Nasser Al-Roudhan and Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA).

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness also received First Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Premier and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

Gulf Cup

Separately, His Highness the Amir was commended by two Kuwaiti officials who congratulated him on the resounding success of the recently con-

cluded 23rd edition of the Arabian Gulf Cup. His Highness the Amir was the recipient of letters of thanks penned by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah over the well-organized football tournament. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir reciprocated the well-wishes in letters he sent to the pair of officials, saying that the Kuwait-hosted Arabian Gulf Cup bedazzled spectators and proved that the country has risen to international prominence.

In other news, His Highness the Amir is set to patronize and attend today the inauguration of the 11th Meeting of Chairpersons and Speakers of Shura, Representatives Councils and National Assemblies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The opening ceremony will be held in the Sheraton Kuwait Hotel.

The UAE had confirmed that a Federal National Council delegation headed by deputy chief Marwan Bin Ghalita would be attending the annual session. The delegation

will also consist of lawmakers Salem Al-Shamsi, Mohammad Al-Amri, Hamad Al-Rahoumi, Khalifa Al-Mazrouei and FNC secretary general Ahmad Al-Dhaheri, reported the state-run news agency 'WAM'. Attendees of the two-day talks will review the session's annual report, its joint program, relations with the European Parliament, the US Congress and Latin American parliaments and tackling the threat of terrorism and terrorist groups. —KUNA



Amir attends GCC speakers' meeting

PM receives Saudi Interior Minister



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz Bin Saud Bin Nayef Al Saud. —KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, escorting Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz Bin Saud Bin Nayef Al Saud at Bayan Palace

yesterday. The reception was attended by head of Premier's Diwan Sheikha Itemad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Doussari and Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Saudi Interior Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud Bin Nayef Al Saud.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks with the visiting Saudi Minister, focusing on bilateral ties. Sheikh Nasser Al-Ahmad spoke highly of his country's ties with its Gulf neighbor, saying that the

encounter also touched on issues of mutual concern, read a statement by the Kuwaiti defense ministry. The meeting also brought together a number of Kuwaiti officials, including interior minister and Kuwait's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah. —KUNA

Local

Up to KD 6 billion deficit expected in the 2018-2019 state budget

Expected revenue increase by 15-20 percent

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The new state budget is expected to have around KD 4.5 billion in deficit, which could increase up to KD 6 billion when factoring in the 10 percent deducted from total revenue for the future generations' fund. The finance ministry plans to review the 2018-2019 budget with the parliament this month pending passing it according to the constitution. The new budget will be dominated by various reform measures to help fight the hardships Kuwait's economy is facing while maintaining strong governmental investment expenditure to activate the economy and continue the 2035 economic development plan.

Revenues are expected to increase by 15-20 percent to touch KD 15.5 billion compared to KD 13.3 billion in the current fiscal year. The sources elaborated by saying that the increase would be achieved through a 5-10 percent increase of non-oil revenues such as the fees collected for water, electricity, health and some other services (from KD 1.6 billion to KD 1.8 billion) and through increasing oil prices by 12 percent, which is expected to increase oil revenues to KD 13.5 billion.

On the other hand, expenditure will slightly increase to around KD 20 billion despite increasing fuel, water and electricity prices. The cost of energy

subsidies will increase in the new budget to over KD 3.2 billion and the cost of payroll is expected to reach KD 11 billion through coordination between the finance ministry and other government bodies with the aim of stopping wasteful spending. In addition, expenditure on investment is expected to rise from KD 3.4 billion to KD 3.6 billion.

General state spending policies might cut down expenses to face the deficit that has been growing since 2015-2016 by setting maximum limits on spending in addition to having more control on the budget allocated for treatment overseas, which is currently KD 185.5 million. Also, the budget allocated for development projects is expected to increase to help execute them within schedule without delays.



5-10 percent increase in non-oil revenues

Rented buildings

In other news, Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf said that the total number of buildings rented by state department were 294 from 2014 till 2017 with a total annual rent cost of KD 40,536,000 and that some lease contracts with the total value of KD 14 million had been terminated to cut down expenses. Hajraf stressed that the finance ministry is not responsible for constructing buildings for state departments and is only responsible for allocating certain amounts in each department's budget for constructions. Monitoring and supervisory



bodies' approval is conditioned prior to renting any buildings.

Separately, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh said that over 77 entrepreneurs have benefited from the

decision made to allocate special outlets to market their products in various co-operative societies. Sabeeh added that a decision on allocating 20 percent of the ministry's tenders for small entrepreneurs has been activated.

Deputy FM, Omani envoy discuss ties



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Omani Ambassador to Kuwait Adnan Al-Ansari. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with Omani Ambassador to Kuwait Adnan Al-Ansari. During the meeting, they discussed the Kuwaiti-Omani relations and the latest regional and international developments. — KUNA

Diwan Minister visits St Mark Coptic Orthodox Church



KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with Patron of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Kuwait Archbishop Anba Bishoy Bigol. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah visited the St Mark Coptic Orthodox Church of Kuwait in Hawally on the occasion of Christmas mass. — KUNA

Chief of Staff holds talks with Jordanian delegation



KUWAIT: Chief of Staff of Kuwait Armed Forces Lieutenant General Mohammad Khaled Al-Khudher meets with Brigadier Ali Ibrahim Al-Rousan from the Royal Jordanian Command and Staff College. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Chief of Staff of Kuwait Armed Forces Lieutenant General Mohammad Khaled Al-Khudher held talks yesterday with a visiting delegation of the Royal Jordanian Command and Staff College, headed by Brigadier Ali Ibrahim Al-Rousan. The two sides discussed bilateral issues, mainly cooperation in the military field, said Moral Guidance and Public Relations in the Ministry of Defense in a statement. The meeting was attended by Commander of Mubarak Al-Abdullah College for Command and Joint Staff, Marine Admiral Abdullah Dashedi. — KUNA

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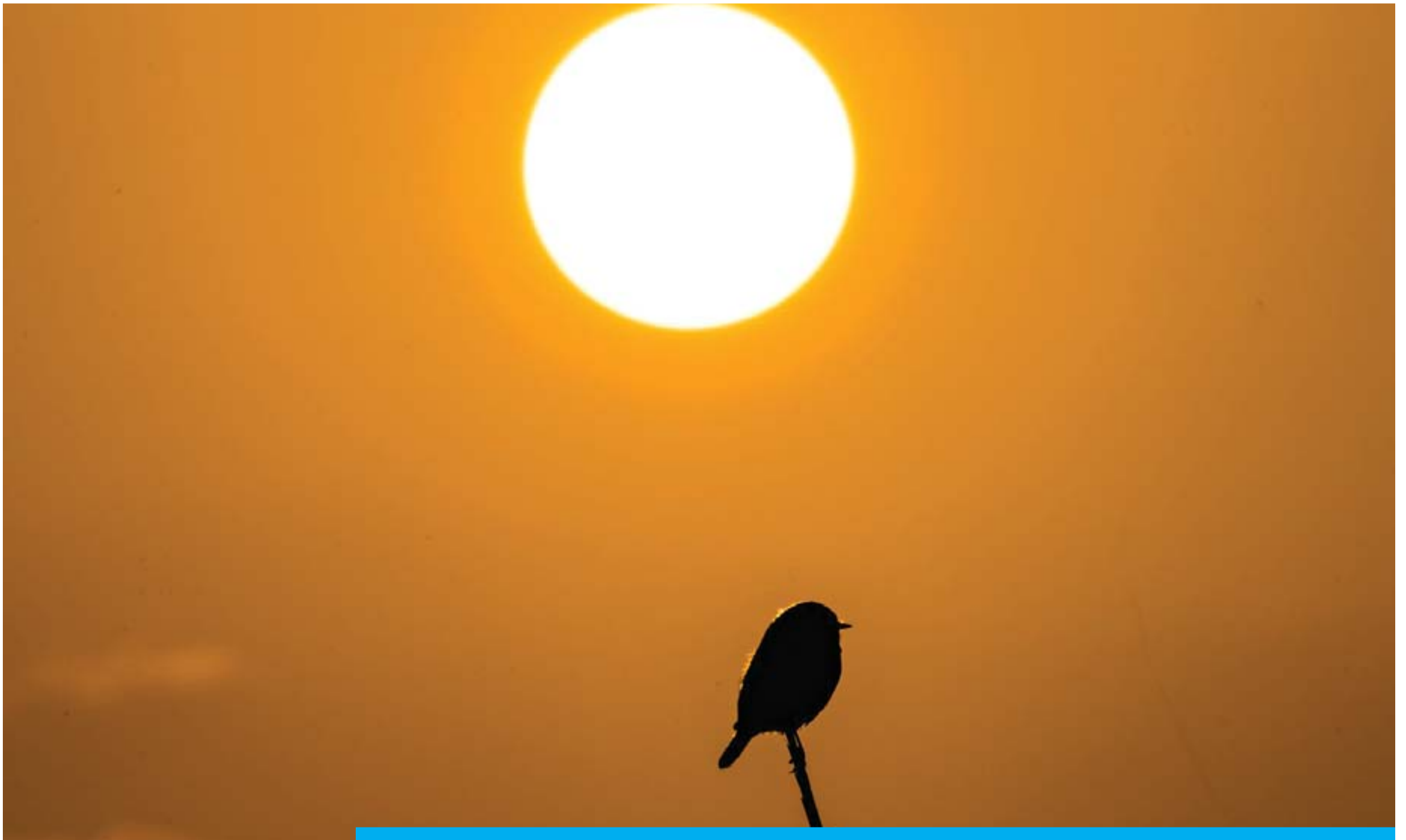
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* This campaign is limited to participants in Kuwait only. Ministries and their departments, companies and NGOs cannot enter the festival.
* Kuwait Times employees, spouses and their second-degree relatives also cannot participate.

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The silhouette of a bird standing on a twig in an unidentified location in Kuwait. —KUNA photo

Zain continues community partnership with Qout Market

Company held competitions for Shaheed Park visitors

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the continuation of its Community Partnership with the new season of Qout Market: Kuwait's largest artisanal farmers gathering. The market, considered the first of its kind in Kuwait, held its second edition last Saturday at the Circle of Peace - Shaheed Park which has witnessed a large presence of those interested in the market.

Zain's partnership with Qout Market comes in line with the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the youth sector, as the company continuously works towards identifying initiatives that carry a clear objective of developing youth talents. The community-based farmers market helps and supports local farmers and artisans to exchange thoughts and ideas while offering the opportunity for visitors to express their opinions towards the products available.

Zain participated in the market through its own booth,

which welcomed the US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman and many visitors to participate in several exciting competitions that saw many winners of valuable prizes. The company also held a competition on social media under the hashtag #ZainQout.

Qout Market has a proven record of success, having attracted over 15,000 visitors in previous seasons. The market's selection of vendors includes a combination of fresh produced items as well as handmade items where people can stop by to enjoy on the spot.

Zain expressed its ongoing keenness in supporting events that uplift the talents of Kuwaiti youth to higher levels, by encouraging outstanding projects and ideas. Zain's support is aimed at investing in the creative abilities of young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, preparing them to engage in the business world by encouraging them further and nurturing innovation within their businesses.

**Over 15,000
visitors in
previous seasons**



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman visits Zain's booth.

NBK gold sponsor of Energy Strategy Forum for third year

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced its gold sponsorship of the Energy Strategy Forum for the third year in a row, which will be held on January 31 at the JW Marriott Hotel in Kuwait. NBK will participate in the Forum, which will be hosted by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and the Petroleum Economist and inaugurated by the Minister of Oil and the Minister of Electricity and Water, Bakheet Al-Rashidi, and the Chief Executive Officer of KPC Nizar Al-Adsani. The Forum will be attended by high-level economic executives from Kuwait and the region in addition to representatives of international oil and gas companies.

In the first panel of the Forum titled 'Achieving Balance in the Oil Market in 2018,' Senior Economist at NBK, Omar Al-Nakib, will discuss the outlook for the oil market in 2018 and provide insights on the key factors and trends affecting oil prices. The panel will also focus on the Saudi-Russian cooperation, the prospects for shale oil and the strategies

adopted by non-OPEC oil producers, with a view to assessing their impact on the oil market.

The first panel will also discuss the crude production capacity of Gulf countries, the most significant changes expected to take place in 2018, the dollar's impact on oil prices, and the impact of China's decision to price oil in its currency. The second panel of the Forum, titled 'Challenges in Financing Energy Amidst Market Changes,' will host the Managing Director Head of Investment Banking at NBK Capital, Rani Selwanes. The panel will discuss challenges in financing oil projects in the context of low oil prices, expected capital spending on oil projects and convenient debt ratios on the medium term as well as the impact of governance and transparency requirements on national oil companies.

The participation of NBK in the Forum is borne out of the bank's desire to share its expertise to support the Kuwaiti oil sector and reaffirm its commitment to the long-standing strategic partnership with KPC



Rani Selwanes



Omar Al-Nakib

and its subsidiaries; NBK has been KPC's leading banking partner for over four decades.

NBK maintains its leading position as the highest ranked credit institution among banks in the Middle East, as rated by the three international credit rating agencies, Moody's, Fitch and Standard & Poor's. The ratings are supported by a series of strong performance metrics such as high capitalization, sound debt policies, a systematic risk management approach, as well as a highly-capable management team. NBK is also ranked among the 50 safest banks in the World for the 12th year in a row by Global Finance.

KJA lauds successful Gulf Cup

KUWAIT: The sports media committee at Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) congratulated Kuwait for the success of the 23rd Arabian Gulf Cup, which concluded on Friday. Kuwait earned much respect and high praise from Gulf media, officials and fans for the success and good organization of the tournament, the committee said in a press statement.

"Kuwait's hosting of the championship in a short notice indicates the outstanding efforts of Kuwaitis in such events," Committee Rapporteur Nasser Al-Enezi said, expressing appreciation for the major role of all those who contributed to the success, led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who ordered that all facilities be employed to ensure the tournament's success.

Enezi also lauded the role of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah for following up with all affairs pertaining with the championship. He also thanked the Higher Organizing Committee chaired by Deputy Premier and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, Commerce and Industry Minister and State Minister for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan, as well as Public Authority for Sport and Kuwait Football Association officials for their "outstanding efforts that were reflected through the procedures of providing participating teams with all their requirements."

Enezi also lauded the role of the Interior Ministry in keeping security and order, while organizing entry and exit of fans. He also thanked the Directorate General of Civil Aviation for the well reception of fans and facilitating their smooth entry to the country.

Finally, he lauded the role of the Information Ministry and the efforts of television and radio personnel in broadcasting the matches.

Local

Human rights committee starts receiving grievances online

Complaints can be e-mailed for panel members to review

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The parliament's human rights committee will start receiving grievances online through its e-mail address (human.rightss@kna.kw), panel chairman MP Adel Al-Damkhi announced yesterday. This measure will help facilitate communication with the committee to file in various complaints with the relevant authorities, he explained. Damkhi added that online complaints will include the complainant's information such as full name, civil ID number, address and others, in addition to documents needed to support the complaint.



Two draft laws put on hold

proposals to further studies before they are submitted. The reasons behind the withdrawal will be explained during the session, committee chairman MP Salah Khorsheed said and stressed that a foreign company had been assigned to study early retirement within 45 days effective on signing the contract. In this regard, MP Saleh Ashour stressed that lawmakers requested the withdrawal of the two proposals and the project was passed by a majority vote by Salah Khorsheed, Khalaf Dumaitheer, Faisal Al-Kandary and Khalil Abul, while Saleh Ashour, Safa Al-Hashem and Osama Al-Shaheen voted against it. The committee also approved a government project to allow borrowing KD 25 billion from local and international markets after discussing all justifications.

Interests on loans

The parliament's financial and economic affairs committee met yesterday and unanimously agreed to remove reports on banning interests on loans given to retirees and reducing the minimum age of retirement from the agenda of tomorrow's National Assembly session. The decision was made to subject those two draft

Contract violations

MP Majed Al-Mutairi blamed Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan and held him fully responsible for companies violating the contracts signed

with his ministry. He also exclaimed about the delay in handing over the Shadadiya industrial area infrastructure project between the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) and Mishrif Trading and Contracting Company, in which serious violations were detected by the State Audit Bureau. Mutairi has filed a parliamentary inquiry against the minister concerning the KD 84 million project, asking if its phases are complete, whether the contractor has problems in Al-Wafra and Al-Bade'a projects signed with the Ministry of Public Works (MPW), the value of changing orders and when the project will be handed over to PAI. Mutairi has promised to use all possible constitutional tools to protect public funds.



MP Adel Al-Damkhi



MP Salah Khorsheed



MP Majed Al-Mutairi

life, for which the criminal court had initially sentenced him to seven years with labor. Though the court ordered Tabtabai to be released from jail until the next hearing in the case, the lawmaker remains in custody as he serves time in the National Assembly storming case. Separately, Ahmadi district attorney recently excluded criminal intentions in a report filed by a female citizen in her sixties accusing her own son of threatening to kill her on grounds that the son, who was arrested and referred to the psychiatric disease hospital, had a file with the hospital.

Case adjourned

The court of appeal yesterday adjourned hearing the case filed against MP Waleed Al-Tabtabai by his ex-wife till March 4, 2018. Tabtabai was accused of tricking his ex-wife into an intimate relationship outside marital

Employers contacted over 1.5 million job seekers on Bayt.com in 2017

DUBAI: Bayt.com, the Middle East's top job site, just announced the conclusion of 2017 with 142,394 jobs posted online to serve the Middle East and North Africa's job seekers. These vacancies were supplemented with thousands of additional positions that are filled via Bayt.com's CV Search tool, which gives employers access to over 30.3 million professionals and enables them to hire without having to announce a job posting. In 2017 alone, the number of CV searches undertaken by employers approached the two-million mark at 1,710,193 searches. This high job activity goes hand-in-hand with the number of CVs that were contacted: Bayt.com closed the year with 1,488,390 job seeker contacts revealed through CV search.

"Throughout 2017, we have focused our efforts on

connecting as many job seekers as possible with a greater multitude and a variety of job opportunities," said Suhail Masri, VP of Employer Solutions, Bayt.com. "It has always been one of our primary aims to support and grow the Middle Eastern job market by strengthening connections between job seekers and employers, by developing effective hiring tools, and by providing useful, up-to-date and readily accessible information for everyone. We are proud of how many jobs continue to be regularly found on Bayt.com and how many employers make use of tools such as CV search to directly source and hire the talent they need."

On the subject of job seekers, Masri added, "We encourage job seekers to continue putting forward their best effort in applying for the wealth of available positions available on Bayt.com. But we also advise that they aim for higher profile completeness and maintain their CV freshness by keeping their profiles up-to-date such that employers can find and contact them directly for new and exciting career opportunities."

Having a minimum of 10,000 job opportunities available on a daily basis, Bayt.com continues to work with over 40,000 companies and organizations to bring more career opportunities to the region's job seekers.



Two officials shifted in KPC reshuffle



KUWAIT: Aerial view of KPC building. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has assigned a pair of officials to new posts, naming Nabil Bouresly as CEO of Kuwait Petroleum International and Waleed Al-Bader as the Managing Director of the

Global Marketing Sector. Bouresly succeeds Bakheet Al-Rashidi while Bader replaces Bouresly in his new position, read a statement by the Kuwaiti oil sector's spokesman Sheikh Talal Al-Sabah. —KUNA

28,306 tickets in one week

KUWAIT: The Traffic Department at the Interior Ministry carried out several campaigns around Kuwait from December 31, 2017 to January 6, 2018, which resulted in issuing 28,306 traffic violations, impounding 733 vehicles and 17 motorcycles, arresting 17 people, and sending one expatriate woman to deportation for driving without a license.

Reckless driver

Search is on for a reckless driver who ran over

a traffic policeman and escaped, leaving the officer behind with several bruises across his body. The accident took place on Second Ring Road, when the officer asked the reckless driver to pull over then asked for his ID. The suspect got furious and verbally insulted the officer, before he ran him over and drove away. Detectives are investigating.

Traffic dispute

Two motorists exchanged verbal insults following a traffic dispute at Arabian Gulf Road. The quarrel escalated to the point that saw one of them, a Kuwaiti man, throw a stone at the other's car, smashing one of its windows, before driving away. The other motorist, a female citizen, lodged a complaint with the local police.

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UK's Prime Minister to reshuffle government

US military weighs supply options amid Pakistan spat

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UKHIA, Bangladesh: Photo shows Hindu refugees who fled massacres in Myanmar's violence-plagued Rakhine for Bangladesh, in a camp in Ukhiya. —AFP

Hindu refugees await return to Myanmar

Thousands killed in the violence that hit Rakhine

COX'S BAZAR: Hindu farmer Surodhon Pal has packed his bags, eager to return to Myanmar after fleeing for Bangladesh during a wave of violence last year, but he is in a tiny minority—most of the refugees are terrified of going home. Bangladesh wants the more than 655,000 refugees who have flooded into the country since late August to start returning to Myanmar by the end of this month under a controversial agreement between the two nations.

The vast majority are Rohingya Muslims who have faced decades of persecution in Myanmar, which sees them as illegal immigrants, even though many have lived there for generations. They say they would rather stay in the squalid camps in Bangladesh than return to the scene of violence the US and the United Nations have said amounts to ethnic cleansing. But a small community of Hindus who lived alongside the Rohingya in Myanmar's Rakhine state and were caught up in the turmoil say they do want to return.

"We want security and we want food. If the authorities can give us those assurances we'll happily go back," Pal, 55 said. "The Bangladeshi government and the UN looked after us well, but now we have prepared our bags and are ready to return to our country." Last month Dhaka sent a list of 100,000 refugees to Myanmar authorities for repatriation after the two governments signed an agreement in November for the process to begin on January 23. But rights groups and

the United Nations say no one should be repatriated against their will and so far only around 500 Hindu refugees have expressed willingness to go.

Massacre by masked men

Modhuram Pal, a 35-year-old community leader, said some 50 Hindus had already returned to Rakhine where they were welcomed by Myanmar security forces. Hindus who fled the area have told AFP that masked men stormed into their community and hacked victims to death with machetes before dumping them into freshly-dug pits. Myanmar's military alleges the Arakan Rohingya Solidarity Army (ARSA) carried out the massacre on August 25, the same day the rebel group staged deadly raids on police posts that sparked a military backlash. At least 45 bodies have been found in mass graves.

The ARSA has denied the allegations, saying it does not target civilians. But Pal and his fellow Hindu refugees say they will only go back if they are rehoused

away from their former villages in Rakhine. Monubala, a Hindu woman who like many of the refugees goes by one name, told AFP masked men dressed in black had attacked her village near Kha Maung Seik, where the massacre occurred. "I left my home, including my chickens, ducks, goats and all property, and came to Bangladesh to save my life," she said.

Doctors without Borders estimates that thousands were killed in the violence that hit Rakhine in late August. Consistent accounts by Rohingya refugees of security forces and ethnic Rakhine Buddhist mobs driving them out of their homes with bullets, rape and arson have shocked the globe. Although the influx has slowed, hundreds of

Rohingya are still crossing into Bangladesh, now home to around a million refugees. Rights groups say the crackdown was the culmination of years of persecution and discrimination against the Muslim group in mainly Buddhist Myanmar, where they are effectively stateless and denigrated as outsiders.

'Communal divide and rule'

It remains unclear why the Hindus were targeted, but they appear to have been caught in the middle of a conflict between the military and Rohingya militants. Some reports say each side viewed the Hindus as collaborators with the other. Myanmar state media said last month that the Hindus would be first to be accepted back—a stance that expert Shahab Enam Khan called a "classic case of communal divide and rule". "The issue of religion as a tool for repression is visibly clear now, the global community should be aware," Khan, professor of International Relations at Jahangirnagar University in Dhaka said.

Tensions between the two communities have persisted in Bangladesh, where the Hindus live away from the main refugee camps. Pal, the community leader, said two Hindu refugees in Bangladesh had been killed by Rohingya in a dispute over the sale of cattle they had brought over the border.

Local police chief Abul Khaer confirmed that a complaint had been lodged, and the body of one of the alleged victims found. "We were tortured because of the war between Myanmar government and the (Rohingya) rebels," Shshu Pal Shil, 25 said in his makeshift shelter. "That's why we were forced to come to Bangladesh. If the Myanmar government wants to take us back now, we'll be happy to go back." —AFP



Small community of Hindus caught up in the turmoil

air strikes there. Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said the enclave is the regime's "weak spot". "The factions there are strong and directly threaten Damascus," he told AFP.

Rebels 'remain popular'

Even though Eastern Ghouta was one of four "de-escalation zones" agreed under a deal between rebel and regime backers, fighting has continued there. The area is the target of near-daily regime air strikes and artillery fire that has killed thousands of people since 2011. Rebels have killed hundreds of civilians with mortar rounds and rockets fired at Damascus, although such attacks have waned since the regime seized several areas close to the capital. The beleaguered 100-square-kilometre enclave's estimated 400,000 inhabitants are suffering severe shortages of food and medicine.

Children there are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition. Despite the civilian suffering caused by the blockade, rebel groups in Ghouta "still have a popular base, because thousands of their fighters are from the region", Abdel Rahman said. Jaish al-Islam, a powerful Islamist rebel group that has recognized the de-escalation deal and takes part in United Nations-backed peace talks, is among the most powerful groups in Eastern Ghouta. It controls Douma, the largest city in the region, but shares power with Faylaq Al-Rahman, another Islamist rebel group that controls the localities of Erbin and Hammuriyeh.

'Whatever the cost'

But the offensive against the regime military base was the work of Ahrar Al-Sham and an alliance dominated by the jihadists of Fateh Al-Sham, a former Al-Qaeda affiliate. Syria analyst

Syria rebel enclave is Assad regime's weak spot

BEIRUT: Syria's rebel-held enclave of Eastern Ghouta near the capital is the regime's Achilles heel, and because of this it faces an almost inevitable military offensive, experts say. The battle-scarred region east of Damascus, which has been under near-daily bombardment and a crippling government siege since 2013, is strategically vital to President Bashar Al-Assad.

Despite residents facing a humanitarian crisis, rebels controlling the region have been able to use it as a launch pad for rocket and mortar attacks on the capital. Joshua Landis, director of the Centre for Middle East Studies at the University of Oklahoma, said the ongoing rebellion in Eastern Ghouta contrasted with the regime "presenting itself as the winner" of Syria's war elsewhere. "The persistence of the East Ghouta resistance has become a major embarrassment and liability for the Assad regime," he said.

The Assad regime, militarily backed by its ally Russia, has retaken control of more than half of the country with a string of victories against rebel and jihadist forces. "It hopes to convince the international community that it faces little opposition any more save for the enclaves on the margins of Syria," Landis said. But rebel and jihadist groups managed this week to surround a regime base on the edge of Eastern Ghouta, prompting intensified regime



HAMOURIA: A Syrian civil defense volunteer carries a little girl who was rescued from the rubble following reported bombardment by Syrian and Russian forces in the rebel-held town of Hamouria, in the Eastern Ghouta. —AFP

Sam Heller of the Century Foundation think tank said the regime had responded by intensifying its operations, "whatever the cost in terms of troops and reinforcements". Additional forces have been deployed to the area, according to pro-regime Syrian media. Heller said things were moving "towards a militarily settlement in the regime's favor" in areas held by Faylaq Al-Rahman, Ahrar al-Sham and the Fateh-Al-Sham-dominated alliance.

But the situation is different in areas controlled by Jaish Al-Islam, he said. The group "is an armed force that is not to be underestimated, and it controls large residential areas that the regime would struggle to absorb", he said. He

said talks between the group and Russia could lead to "a negotiated solution that would leave it in place once it has made some concessions". Landis said the de-escalation deal over the area would be "nibbled away at" in the coming weeks. "Assad has preferred until now to starve and bomb the Ghouta enclave rather than launch an expensive frontal attack," he said.

Rights groups and the UN have criticized "reconciliation" agreements that see civilians evacuated following sieges and bombardment apparently aimed at forcing civilians to leave their homes. Such deals have seen rebels transferred to Idlib in the north, the only province in Syria fully outside regime control. —AFP

Cornered Merkel upbeat; talks with centre-left begins

BERLIN: Chancellor Angela Merkel said yesterday she was optimistic her conservatives and the Social Democrats (SPD) could agree to join forces as they embarked on five days of talks about reviving the "grand coalition" that has governed Germany since 2013. Persuading the SPD to team up with her is Merkel's best bet of forming a stable government in Europe's largest economy and extending her 12 years in office, after her attempt to form an alliance with two smaller parties failed last year. Arriving at SPD headquarters for talks more than three months after a national election, Merkel said the parties had a lot of work to get through in the coming days but intended to tackle it quickly, adding: "I think it can succeed."

The SPD, which had said it would go into opposition after its worst election showing since 1933, reconsidered when Germany's president intervened. But the centre-left party, among whose membership opposition to a "grand coalition" re-run remains strong, has been playing hard-to-get. A group called "NoGroKo", meaning "no grand coalition", has formed within its ranks to campaign against working with Merkel again, saying that would cost the SPD votes and make the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) the leading opposition party. —Reuters

International

Iran Revolutionary Guard quells unrest, blames 'foreign enemies'

MPs express concern over detained students

DUBAI: Iran's Revolutionary Guard said yesterday the country's people and security forces had defeated unrest fomented by foreign enemies, as parliament and security officials met to discuss the boldest challenge to the clerical establishment since 2009. There has been more than a week of unrest in Iran in which 22 people have died and more than 1,000 arrested, according to Iranian officials. The protests spread to more than 80 cities and rural towns as thousands of young and working-class Iranians expressed their anger at graft, unemployment and a deepening gap between rich and poor.

"Iran's revolutionary people along with tens of thousands of Basij forces, police and the Intelligence Ministry have broken down the chain (of unrest)," the Guards said in a statement on their Sepahnews website. The Guards said the unrest had been "created ... by the United States, Britain, the Zionist regime (Israel), Saudi Arabia, the hypocrites (Mujahideen) and monarchists."

Parliament met behind closed doors yesterday to discuss the week of unrest with the ministers of interior and intelligence, Iran's police chief and the deputy commander of the elite Revolutionary Guards, state television said. Residents contacted by Reuters in various cities have said the protests had subsided after the government intensified a crackdown by dispatching Revolutionary Guards forces to several provinces. Late on Saturday, videos on social media showed a heavy police presence in cities, including Khorramabad in southwestern Iran where on Wednesday evening social media posts showed protesters throwing stones at riot police.

As protests have ebbed, the government has lifted restric-

tions imposed on Instagram, one of the social media tools used to mobilize protesters. But access to a more widely used messaging app, Telegram, was still blocked, suggesting authorities remained uneasy about the possibility of further protests. Meanwhile, thousands of government supporters staged rallies in a backlash against the biggest anti-government protests since widespread unrest in 2009 over alleged election fraud.

State television showed live pictures of rallies in several cities, including central Shahr-e Kord where hundreds, many clutching umbrellas, had gathered despite heavy snowfall. "Death to America", "Death to Israel", "Death to Britain" "Death to seditionists", the demonstrators chanted. The anti-government protests have attracted largely young people and workers as well

as members of the educated middle-class that formed the backbone of a pro-reform revolt almost a decade ago. A police spokesman said most of those arrested were "duped" into joining the unrest and had been freed on bail, the state news agency IRNA reported. "But, the leaders of the unrest are held by the judiciary in prison."

Concerns about arrests

Several parliament members and university officials have expressed concern over the fate of students arrested during the protests. Tehran University Vice-President Majid Sarsangi has said the university had set up a committee to track them. Parliament spokesman Behrouz Nemati said yesterday, MPs had asked security officials for a report about the detained students during the closed session. "One of the issues addressed by deputies and the parliament speaker was that of



TEHRAN: Pro-government demonstrators hold a poster of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (right) and Iran's founder of Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and shout slogans during a march in Tehran. —AFP

detained students, and it was decided that the Intelligence Ministry would vigorously pursue this and submit a report by next week," said Nemati, quoted by IRNA.

A member of parliament said earlier about 90 students were detained, 10 of whom were still not accounted for. Iran has several parallel security bodies and residents say arrests

are often not immediately announced. Videos that appeared on social media in recent days showed relatives of detainees gathering outside prisons seeking information about the fate of their loved ones. The Revolutionary Guards and their affiliated Basij militia suppressed unrest in 2009, in which dozens of pro-reform Iranians were killed. —Reuters

Turkey reopens iconic 'Iron Church' after revamp

ISTANBUL: The leaders of Turkey and Bulgaria yesterday reopened the Bulgarian St Stephen's Church in Istanbul after seven years of restoration, a gesture of harmony in an often turbulent relationship between the two neighbors. The Bulgarian Orthodox church in Balat, a historic Istanbul neighborhood on the shores of the Golden Horn traditionally home to Christians and Jews, was built in 1898 after its original wooden structure was destroyed in a fire. Made out of cast iron, the iconic ornate building has been dubbed the "Iron Church".

For President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who hosted Bulgaria's conservative Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, the ceremony was a riposte to charges that Turkey's Islamic-rooted government does not do enough to protect the rights of Christian minorities and their heritage. "Istanbul has shown once again to the entire world that it is a city where different religions and cultures peacefully co-exist," Erdogan said. He said it was the "states' responsibility to safeguard freedom of worship for all people regardless of their faith or ethnic origins." In an appeal to minorities in Turkey, Erdogan said: "You are free to practice your religion and you are under our protection."

'Normalize Turkey-EU ties'

Bulgaria, which holds the rotating EU presidency for the next six months, shares a 270-kilometre (165-mile) border with Turkey. Speaking during the ceremony, Borisov said: "Today, I am sure, the whole of Europe and the Balkans will see how the ethnic tolerance is an example to follow in one Christian and in one Muslim country." "The symbolism of this day is a symbolism towards Europe. Turkey is the biggest neighbor of the EU, with the biggest army in Europe," he said in his first visit abroad only days after Bulgaria took over the EU presidency. "We must make in 2018 the relations between the EU and Turkey such as they were several years ago, to normalize them." Turkey is home to more than 200,000 ethnic Turks with Bulgarian passports who left Bulgaria during the communist era. Bulgaria, meanwhile, is home to a 700,000-strong ethnic Turkish minority, a legacy of the Ottoman empire.



ISTANBUL: Women wearing traditional Bulgarian costumes pose in front of the Bulgarian St Stephen's Church, also known as the 'Iron Church', after its reopening ceremony, in Istanbul yesterday. —AFP

'Source of inspiration'

The reopening of the 120-year-old church is also seen as a sign of appeasement after a spat erupted ahead of Bulgarian elections last March, and a Turkish referendum on expanding Erdogan's power. Sofia had accused Ankara of meddling in its polls, summoning Turkey's ambassador and recalling its own envoy from Turkey for consultations. Meanwhile, the main party representing the Turkish minority in Bulgaria had denounced Turkey's April vote on granting Erdogan sweeping powers as "madness".

But in a show of cooperation, Bulgaria and Turkey co-funded St Stephen's restoration, one of the world's oldest prefabricated cast iron churches. It cost over 15 million lira (3.3 million euros, \$4 million). The iron elements were produced in Austria in the 19th century and shipped to Istanbul via the Danube and the Black Sea. Vasil Liaze,

president of a foundation overseeing the church, told Turkish media the church had been restored under so-called rules of reciprocity. This means Sofia has given the green light for the Cuma (Friday) Mosque in Bulgaria's second city of Plovdiv to be restored in return.

Erdogan said he hoped that the church's reopening would be "source of inspiration" for future cooperation with Bulgaria. Erdogan's government insists it has passed reforms to improve minorities' rights including legislation allowing minority groups to buy and renovate their properties. In June 2014, when prime minister, Erdogan said the government had returned to minority foundations confiscated assets worth over \$2 billion. But opponents say Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party have done little to expand minority rights and showed intolerance for dissenting voices. —AFP

Iraq returning the displaced to unsafe areas

AMRIYAT AL-FALLUJA: Iraqi security forces are forcibly returning civilians from refugee camps to unsafe areas in the predominantly Sunni Anbar province, exposing them to death from booby-traps or acts of vigilantism, refugees and aid workers say. Managing more than two million Iraqis displaced by the war against Islamic State is one of Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi's most daunting tasks. But critics say he is more interested in winning elections in May than alleviating the suffering of displaced Iraqis and returning them safely home.

Authorities are sending back people against their will, refugees and aid workers say, to ensure that the election takes place on time. People must be in their area of origin to vote and if they do not get home, this could delay the election. Abadi is riding a wave of popularity after defeating Islamic State in Iraq and is anxious the election should not be held up. His strategy is not without its hazards. Abadi risks alienating Sunni voters if displaced Sunnis are seen to be suffering from being sent home to dangerous areas. Abadi is seeking

a second term in which he plans to fight corruption and maintain national unity in the face of Kurdish separatism. He will need all the votes he can muster to face down a challenge from candidates linked to Iranian-backed Shiite militias.

Military trucks

Interviews with aid workers and dozens of displaced people at camps in the town of Amriyat Al-Falluja, located in the Sunni heartland of Anbar province, 40 km from Baghdad, as well as with several families who were returned to other areas in the province, reveal that many were forced to go home and several suffered death or injury. Aid workers said military trucks arrive at camps unannounced and commanders read out lists of people, who have one hour to pack their belongings and go. The aid workers, who all spoke on condition of anonymity, estimated that between 2,400 and 5,000 people were forcibly returned between Nov 21 and Jan 2. "These returns are not safe," said one aid worker. "Even those who don't openly resist really have no other choice. They cannot really say no to a bunch of people with guns."

'They gave him a tent'

An Iraqi military spokesman said the claim that the military forced displaced civilians to return against their will was an exaggeration. "Our primary concern is the safety of our citizens, our job is to protect



NAJAF: Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi delivers a speech during a ceremony in the Shiite holy city of Najaf yesterday. — AFP

people," Iraqi Joint Operations Command Spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Rasool said. However, "citizens have to go home" now that Islamic State had been defeated, he said. Some aid workers said local military commanders told them the orders came from Abadi's office. The prime minister's spokesman did not respond to requests for comment. On Nov 25, security forces arrived at a camp in Amriyat al-Falluja and told Saleh Ahmed, 37, and his family to return to their home town of Betaya, his father, Mahdi Ahmed, said. They

refused because contacts at home told them the area was filled with booby-traps left by retreating Islamic State fighters and their houses had been destroyed. A local commander assured them the area was safe, saying it was "better to go live in a tent in your home town than live in a tent in the camp". Saleh reluctantly took his wife and some of his children and got on the truck. Mahdi Ahmed, 72, remained at the camp with his sick wife, another son, and some of Saleh's children as their names were not on the list. —Reuters

No option but to fight: Rohingya insurgents say

YANGON: Rohingya Muslim insurgents said yesterday they have no option but to fight what they called Myanmar state-sponsored terrorism to defend the Rohingya community, and they demanded that the Rohingya be consulted on all decisions affecting their future. The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) launched raids on the Myanmar security forces on Aug 25, which sparked sweeping counter-insurgency operations in the Muslim-majority north of Rakhine State that led to widespread violence and arson and an exodus of some 650,000 Rohingya villagers to Bangladesh.

The United Nations condemned the Myanmar military campaign as ethnic cleansing. Buddhist-majority Myanmar rejected that. But since the August raids, the small insurgent group has launched few if any attacks until Friday, when its fighters ambushed a Myanmar military truck, wounding several members of the security forces. "ARSA has ... no other option but to combat 'Burmese state-sponsored terrorism' against the Rohingya population for the purpose of defending, salvaging and protecting the Rohingya community," the group said in a statement signed by leader Ata Ullah and posted on Twitter. "Rohingya people must be consulted in all decision-making that affects their humanitarian needs and political future."

The ARSA claimed responsibility for the Friday ambush but gave no details of the clash. A Myanmar government spokesman said the insurgents were trying to delay the repatriation of refugees from Bangladesh under a plan the two governments have been working on. "ARSA aims to frighten those who are considering returning, to show the region doesn't have peace," Zaw Htay said. Myanmar and Bangladesh have been discussing a plan to repatriate the refugees but more insecurity in Myanmar is likely to raise even more doubts about how quickly that might happen. The refugees complain that they have not been consulted on the plan.

Fight to the end

Details of the repatriation plan have yet to be finalized and many questions remain, not only about security but also about the terms refugees will return under, and whether they will be able to go back to their homes or be resettled in camps. Rohingya have for years been denied citizenship, freedom of movement and access to services such as healthcare. Myanmar regards them as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

Zaw Htay rejected the ARSA call for the Rohingya to be consulted saying the government was already negotiating with leaders of both the Buddhist and Muslim communities. "We will not accept terrorism and fight against them until the end," the spokesman said, adding that no one should offer any support to the group. The ARSA dismisses any links to Islamist militant groups and says it is fighting to end the oppression of the Rohingya people.

A military spokesman declined to make any immediate comment about the security situation in the north of Rakhine State. The area is largely off-limits to reporters. Serious communal violence between Rohingya and ethnic Rakhine Buddhists erupted in 2012 and sporadic unrest followed. The violence that began in August and the refugee crisis it caused has drawn international condemnation and raised doubts about Myanmar's transition to democracy after nearly 50 years of military rule. ARSA did not say where leader Ata Ullah was but Myanmar suspects the insurgents flee into Bangladesh then slip back into Myanmar to launch attacks. —Reuters

International

British Prime Minister May set to reshuffle government

Theresa May looks to reassert her authority

LONDON: Britain's government is to undergo a reshuffle today as Prime Minister Theresa May looks to reassert her authority following a string of high-profile departures, according to MPs. Deputy prime minister Damian Green is set to be replaced after stepping down last month over a pornography scandal, following on from the departures of ministers Michael Fallon and Priti Patel embroiled in separate controversies.

"Damian Green's departure before Christmas means that some changes do have to be made, and I will be making some changes," May told BBC's Andrew Marr Show yesterday. A Labor MP who wished to remain anonymous said that the reshuffle would take place on Monday, having received confirmation from Conservative colleagues. May's Downing Street office also said that widespread reports that cabinet ministers would discover their fate on Monday were not inaccurate. Green's resignation came as part of a broader scandal over sexual harassment at Westminster, which prompted defense minister Fallon's departure in November.

His resignation was followed a week later by that of Patel, Britain's overseas aid minister, who stepped down over unauthorized meetings in Israel. Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt is believed to be in line to take over Green's role, while the Sunday Telegraph reported that education minister Justine Greening was facing the sack. Leading figures such as foreign minister Boris Johnson, finance minister Philip Hammond and Brexit Secretary David Davis are expected to stay in

their roles. Justice minister Dominic Raab, an ardent Brexit supporter, is reported to be in line for a top job, while May is also predicted to promote more women and racially diverse members.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister said yesterday she will ditch an election pledge for a vote on reversing the fox-hunting ban following a public backlash.

May makes U-turn on fox hunting ban

"On this issue of fox hunting, what I can say is that there won't be a vote during this parliament," she told BBC's Andrew Marr Show. "I've never fox hunted, but I've not changed my view on that," added May, who is a supporter of the sport. "But as prime minister my job isn't just about what I think about something, it's actually about looking at what the view of the country is, I think there was a clear message about that." The manifesto of May's Conservative Party for last year's general election contained a pledge to hold a free vote on overturning the 2004 law banning the use of dogs to hunt foxes and other wild mammals in England and Wales.

The opposition Labor Party focused heavily on the issue during campaigning, helping it to score a shock upset in depriving May of her majority. The subject received extra attention on December 26, Boxing Day, when hundreds of British hunting groups met across the country on the busiest day in the hunting calendar. Britain still allows trail hunts, which let packs follow a route rather than an animal, and drag hunting, in which hounds track artificial scents.

Critics argue that dogs still chase and kill live ani-



KENT: File photo shows the Ashford Valley Fox Hunt being applauded as they set off in Tonderten, Kent, south west England. British Prime Minister Theresa May said yesterday she will ditch an election pledge for a vote on reversing the fox-hunting ban following a public backlash.—AFP

mals on these hunts, with organizers claiming the kills are accidental. Hunters claim they comply with the law. The U-turn is likely to anger parts of May's rural base, who see the ban as an imposition of urban values on their way of life.

Ann Mallalieu, president of the Countryside

Alliance—a rural life lobby group which claims to have around 100,000 supporters—wrote in the Daily Telegraph last month that some lawmakers had admitted their opposition to fox hunting was an element of "class warfare". But Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn has called the sport "cruel and barbaric".—Agencies

News in brief

13 killed in Casamance

ZIGUINCHOR: A ministerial fact-finding mission was headed to Casamance in southern Senegal yesterday after 13 youths were killed in the first upsurge in violence in the isolated region in years. President Macky Sall condemned what he called an "armed attack of rare barbarity" and summoned his national security council, a government statement said hours after the attack on Saturday. The youths were collecting wood in the Bayotte forest, 20 kilometers from the regional capital Ziguinchor, "when they were attacked by an armed band of 15 people", army spokesman Abdou Ndiaye said. A source in Ziguinchor said that 13 were killed and two were able to escape, with Ndiaye adding that seven others were injured in the attack. The Senegalese Press Agency said the assailants would have passed a buffer zone between the Senegalese army and separatist rebels of the Movement for Democratic Forces in Casamance (MFDC).

'Feel free to breastfeed'

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis baptized 34 infants during a long ceremony in the Sistine Chapel yesterday and told their mothers to feel free to breastfeed them there if they were hungry. During the ceremony that lasted more than two hours, Francis baptized 18 girls and 16 boys, including two pairs of twins. "If they start performing a concert (by crying), or if they are uncomfortable or too warm or don't feel at ease or are hungry ... breastfeed them, don't be afraid, feed them, because this too is the language of love," he said in a short improvised homily. Women still face harassment for breastfeeding in public in some countries even though attitudes are changing. The pope has made similar comments in past ceremonies. Television pictures showed at least one mother bottle-feeding her child. The papal baptism is a yearly event restricted to children of employees of the Vatican or the diocese of Rome. Francis is also bishop of the Italian capital.

500,000-year-old site

JERUSALEM: Israeli archaeologists announced yesterday they have uncovered a rare site dating back some half a million years—just next to a modern highway and only several meters underground. Archaeologists envision the site at Jaljulia, northeast of Tel Aviv, as a sort of "paradise" for prehistoric hunter-gatherers, with a stream, vegetation and an abundance of animals. They have uncovered hundreds of flint handaxes as part of the dig just next to Route 6, one of Israel's busiest highways, the Israel Antiquities Authority said. "It's hard to believe that between Jaljulia and highway 6, five meters below the surface, an ancient landscape some half of a million years old has been so amazingly preserved," Ran Barkai, head of Tel Aviv University's archaeology department, which participated in the dig, said in a statement. He added that "for people, it was like a paradise, so they came here again and again." The site is associated with homo erectus, a direct ancestor of today's humans.

Sudan seizes newspapers

KHARTOUM: Sudanese security agents yesterday seized all copies of six newspapers after they criticized the government over soaring bread prices that have almost doubled this week, editors said. Discontent has been simmering over the past few days as bread prices jumped on the back of a sharp rise in the cost of flour after a government decision to shift importing of wheat to private sector companies. Several newspapers have criticized the decision concerning wheat imports, while the country's opposition groups called for nationwide demonstrations against the price rise. Yesterday, members of the powerful National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) confiscated entire print runs of Al-Tayar, Al-Mustaqbil, Al-Karar, Al-Midan, Al-Assayha and Akhbar Al-Watan newspapers.

Arctic blast chills US, Canada in JFK airport meltdown

NEW YORK: The eastern United States and Canada froze yesterday under record-breaking low temperatures following a deadly winter storm as New York's flagship airport descended into chaos, battling to contain flight backlog. In Canada, temperatures approaching minus 50 degrees Celsius (minus 58 degrees Fahrenheit) were forecast in northern Ontario and Quebec. Arctic blasts and dangerously cold wind chills could make it feel as low as minus 45 Fahrenheit across the eastern United States, with the risk of frostbite to exposed skin within 10 minutes, officials warned.

The deep freeze follows a storm, dubbed a "bomb cyclone" by forecasters, which has been blamed for at least 19 deaths in the United States, from Texas to Wisconsin, US media reported. Thursday's storm raked the East Coast with heavy snowfall, glacial temperatures and high winds, forcing the cancellation of flights. But on Saturday, more than 3,420 flights within, into or out of the United States were still delayed, with New York's John F Kennedy airport and South Carolina's Charleston among the most affected.

The Port Authority, which runs New York-area airports, announced that flights were being limited into JFK, "including all flights scheduled to arrive into Terminal 1 for the rest of the evening." It said a surge in flights rescheduled after the storm, combined with severe storm damage to equipment, resulted in delays in getting planes and passengers to gates. Tracking site FlightRadar24 said at least 12 international flights had been waiting, around two to four hours, for a gate to deplane.

Flights diverted

Passengers complained of being stranded on the tarmac for hours and then facing lengthy delays in baggage claim that made traveling, particularly with babies or the elderly, a misery. "Losing patience," tweeted passenger James



NEW YORK: JetBlue airplanes wait at the gates outside terminal five at John F. Kennedy International Airport in the Queens borough of New York City. A winter storm traveled up the east coast of the United States - dumping snow and creating blizzard like conditions in many areas.—AFP

Allen, who said he travelled on Virgin Atlantic and had to wait three hours on the tarmac before reaching the gate, then two hours in baggage claim. "Two small children hungry, thirsty and tired with no facilities or help in baggage reclaim. Very poor," he tweeted. Multiple trans-Atlantic flights simply gave up and went home, including an Aeroflot flight from Moscow that turned back over Iceland.

A Norwegian Air flight from London diverted to Stewart International, 70 miles (112 kilometers) north of Manhattan, while FlightRadar 24 said a Japan Airlines flight from Tokyo diverted to Boston. Adding to the chaos, a China Southern Airlines and Kuwait Airways jet clipped each other's wings at JFK's Terminal 4 late Friday, causing damage to both aircraft but no injuries, officials said. In New York, the National Weather Service chalked up

record lowest high temperatures for the day at each of its climate sites except for Central Park, with temperatures about 25 degrees below normal.

Forecasters says below-normal temperatures are likely to continue into early next week, forecasting freezing rain from Kansas to Tennessee, and that ice could complicate road transport. Mount Washington, New Hampshire recorded the second-coldest temperature on earth early Saturday, minus 36 Fahrenheit. In eastern Canada, which has suffered through extreme cold for two weeks, there were further flight delays and cancellations at Toronto airport, and some communities along the Quebec coast faced flooding. "Frostbite can develop within minutes on exposed skin, especially with wind chill—and keep emergency supplies in your vehicle," the Canadian weather service warned.—AFP

Bonobos prefer the bullies over the 'nice guys'

MIAMI: Sex-crazed, easy-going and cooperative, bonobos are often described as the "hippies" of the ape world. But unlike humans, they seem to have a fondness for bullies, researchers said. A report in the journal Current Biology unveiled a new aspect to the personalities of bonobos, our closest genetic cousins in the animal world along with chimpanzees. Study co-author Christopher Krupenye of Duke University said the results of a series of experiments carried out with bonobos in the Democratic Republic of Congo "surprised" researchers, since bonobos are generally less aggressive than chimps. "Bonobos are highly socially tolerant in food settings and help and cooperate with food in ways that we don't see in chimpanzees," he said.

"However, dominance still plays an important role in their lives." A study in 2007 showed that in people, infants as young as three months prefer people who are kind and helpful. To see if bonobos had the same tendency, researchers designed a series of experiments. In one, they showed 24 bonobos a video of a Pac-Man-like figure trying to make it up a hill. Another

character enters the scene. Sometimes it is a helpful character, other times it was a character that shoved the Pac-Man back down. Then they placed pieces of apple under two cutouts—one of the good guy and one of the bad guy. The bonobos tended to choose the treat under the cutout of the jerk.

In another experiment, "a human actor drops a stuffed animal out of reach. Then another person tries to return the toy to its rightful owner, but before they can a third person snatches it away," said the report. "Afterward, the bonobos choose whether to accept a piece of apple from the do-gooder or the thief." Again, they tended to choose the thief. Prior to the test, researchers measured the apes' baseline preferences for each of the actors. "The bonobos liked the mean people even more after they started behaving badly," it said.

For bonobos, rudeness could be seen as a sign of social status and dominance. They may like these figures because it is beneficial to have mean guys on their side, researchers argued. Having tough allies could gain them better access to food, or mates, or cut the risk of being bullied themselves. The findings suggest that one of the characteristics that makes people different from apes is the tendency to avoid people who mistreat others. "Humans might have this unique preference for helpers that is really at the heart of why we're so cooperative," said Krupenye, who is now a postdoctoral fellow at the University of St Andrews in Scotland.—AFP

Cameroon separatist leader detained in neighboring Nigeria

ABUJA: A leading member of a separatist movement in Cameroon has been taken into custody in the capital of neighboring Nigeria with his aides, sources and secessionists said on Saturday. The once-fringe Anglophone movement in majority Francophone Cameroon has gathered pace in the last few months following a military crackdown on protests. It represents the gravest challenge yet to the 35-year rule of President Paul Biya who will seek re-election this year.

Julius Ayuk Tabe, the Nigeria-based chairman of the Governing Council of Ambazonia separatist movement, was taken into custody alongside six others at a hotel in Abuja on Friday, said an official in the west African country and a member of the separatist group in Cameroon. Bilateral relations have been strained by a separatist movement in Cameroon that has clashed with the Cameroonian army and forced thousands to flee violence by travelling across the border to Nigeria. Cameroonian troops last month crossed into Nigeria in pursuit of rebels without seeking Nigerian authorization, causing diplomatic wrangling behind the scenes. Separatists, including armed radical elements, seek an independent state for the nation's Anglophone regions they call Ambazonia.

A Nigerian official said Tabe and six of his supporters were placed in custody at around 7 pm on Friday. "They were having a meeting at Nera Hotels in Abuja," the official said on condition of anonymity. The official did not know who rounded up the separatists. A member of the separatist group based in Cameroon, who wanted to remain anonymous, said the people were taken into custody. The separatist group later issued a statement saying that Tabe and six others were taken from Nera Hotels by Cameroonian gunmen in an "illegal abduction." Reuters was unable to independently verify the allegation.

The unrest in Cameroon began in November, when English-speaking teachers and lawyers in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, frustrated with having to work in French, took to the streets calling for reforms and greater autonomy. French is the official language for most of Cameroon but English is spoken in two regions that border Nigeria. Protests by separatists prompted a violent crackdown by Cameroon's military last year in which troops opened fire on demonstrators.—Reuters

International

US military weighing supply options amid Pakistan spat

Pakistanis call for retaliatory measures

WASHINGTON: Pentagon officials are watching for Pakistan's next moves after Washington froze security aid payments to Islamabad, saying it is not doing enough to target Afghan Taliban and Haqqani group bases. The Trump administration's decision to withhold hundreds of millions from its "coalition support funds" has riled Pakistan, with some there calling for retaliatory measures that might hamper America's warfighting efforts in neighboring Afghanistan. Most problematic for America as it wages its 16-year war in Afghanistan would be if Pakistan suddenly shut its border points into the country, stemming the vital flow of goods, food and gear from the port at Karachi.

Though US officials insisted they'd seen no evidence Islamabad was planning such a move, it has happened before. In 2011, Pakistan closed its border to NATO supplies following a series of incidents that brought relations between the US and Pakistan to all-time lows. These incidents included a botched American air raid and the killing of Osama bin Laden, who was living in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad. At the time, the US-led forces in Afghanistan endured the closure by relying on cargo flights and a more costly northern route through Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Citing security reasons, the Pentagon declined to provide percentages of US supplies going into Afghanistan through Pakistan, but Afghan security forces in particular rely on the supply lines through Pakistan, with a stream of trucks hauling a plethora of goods into the landlocked country. While the US favors Pakistan supply routes because of cost, officials stressed America has built "flexibility and redundancy" into its supply chains. "As military planners, we develop multiple supply chain contingencies to sustain theater requirements to maintain the train, advise and assist mission to the Afghan National Defense Security Forces," Lieutenant Colonel Kone Faulkner said. In

Pakistan, several figures were quick to call on their government to close supply lines, including opposition leader Imran Khan. "The time (has) come to stand firm and give a strong response to the US," Khan said in a statement. "We must deny the US (supply route) facilities which we were providing the US free of charge." But Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told Pentagon reporters he had gotten no indication the Pakistanis were going to shut off ground supply lines, or air overflights.

'Humongous problem'

"I am not concerned about them," he said, referring to the supply lines. Mattis said the US continues to work with

Pakistan and would restore security payments "if we see decisive movements against the terrorists who are as much of a threat against Pakistan as they are against us." For Christine Fair, a South Asia expert at Georgetown University, this part of the problem is key. The Trump administration must clearly lay out what it expects from Pakistan and what additional punitive steps would be taken

if it shuts down the supply lines, she said.

She was particularly concerned about the possibility of Pakistan closing its air space to America, meaning efforts to fly air cargo into Afghanistan could get much more difficult. Pakistan "could within its rights... say you will not use our air space," she said. "That would be a humongous problem." Unlike in 2011, the US no longer has an air base in Kyrgyzstan, which had been the main transit point for American military personnel and cargo in and out of Afghanistan but was abandoned amid a price row in 2014 with the Obama administration.

Additionally, Washington's fraught relations with Russia could make flying over Central Asian states less reliable, with Moscow able to exert influence on its smaller neighbors. After



BALUCHISTAN: Pakistani demonstrators gather during a protest against US aid cuts at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border post in Chaman. —AFP

more than a decade of simmering US anger at Islamabad's links with the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network—a Taliban affiliate—the Trump administration is trying to draw a line in the sand. Fair said almost all US deaths from the Taliban in Afghanistan can be attributed to the Pakistanis. "They literally take our money with one hand and they give it to the Taliban with the other," she said. "You cannot fight a war and win when the country you are dependent upon for

logistical supplies is undermining your efforts there." A US defense official told AFP that the military already has plenty of options to keep its troops well supplied, and could fill gaps by chartering commercial air delivery planes. "The question is, if it were to happen, how long would it last?" the official said. Weeks or months would probably be "something that we could deal with through temporary solutions and wouldn't matter so terribly much." —AFP

Washington freezes security aid payments to Islamabad

Stand-off between Afghan president, governor turns into bitter election fight

MAZAR-I SHARIF: A stand-off between Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Atta Mohammad Noor, the powerful provincial governor he is trying to remove from his northern stronghold, is increasingly turning into a battle over next year's presidential election. Noor, a leader in the Jamiat-i Islami party and governor of the strategic province of Balkh, is defying Ghani, denouncing the "weak, lazy and corrupt" Kabul government in daily rallies with thousands of supporters and warning the government against trying to remove him by force.

The deadlock, which has alarmed Western embassies and sparked fears of civil violence, has highlighted a fractious political climate that threatens to undermine recent battlefield successes from the sharp increase in US air strikes last year. Noor accuses Ghani of trying to remove a potential rival and divide Jamiat ahead of a presidential election likely to be shaped by the ethnic faultlines that dominate Afghan politics, notably between Pashtuns and Persian-speaking Tajiks.

"This is about the 2019 presidential election," he told Reuters in an interview at his office in the provincial capital Mazar-i Sharif, where his portrait adorns streets and buildings across the city. "They have no grassroots support among the people and they are afraid of public figures who do." Ghani has not explained an announcement last month that he had accepted a letter of resignation from Noor,

signed earlier last year during negotiations over a possible national role for the governor who has ruled Balkh for more than a decade.

But Noor says the letter, which has not been made public, was conditional on steps that Ghani has not taken and has refused to go. Ghani has not said anything publicly about the stand-off. His spokesman did not answer calls seeking comment. Noor, a former commander in the anti-Soviet Mujahiddin considered one of the richest men in Afghanistan, has faced repeated accusations of corruption, which he denies. In 2015 Human Rights Watch said there was "strong evidence that he controls and funds local militias implicated in serious abuse". But Balkh, which sits on vital trade routes into central Asia, is also one of Afghanistan's most stable and prosperous provinces, with a much smaller Taliban and Islamic State presence than in other northern regions.

Noor enjoys strong support, notably from a business community that has done well out of the lucrative transit trade through Hairatan, the border crossing into Uzbekistan that handles hundreds of millions of dollars worth of goods a year. "People have been very unhappy about the problems between the president and the governor," said Khairuddin Mayel, who runs a large cooking oil and foods business. "The governor has been very successful and people don't want this province to become like the others. They do not want to lose this governor."

Disputed election

As the stand-off in Balkh has continued it has become a national issue, with Noor now demanding wider concessions, including what Jamiat sees as proper implementation of the accord underpinning Ghani's national unity government. Like many of the political problems of the past three years, the crisis stems from the fraud-marred presidential election in



MAZAR-I-SHARIF: Afghan women prepare food in a refugee camp on the outskirts of Mazar-i-Sharif. —AFP

2014 that left no agreed winner.

Under a US-brokered deal, Ghani, an ethnic Pashtun, was appointed president while his rival Abdullah Abdullah, from Jamiat, was given the specially created post of chief executive. Ever since, Jamiat supporters have bitterly resented what they see as Ghani's betrayal of the deal and favoritism towards Pashtuns, traditionally the strongest group in Afghan politics. While Noor has been angry with Ghani, he has also been incensed by Abdullah, his long-time party rival, whom he describes as a "snake".

"Jamiat will never trust Dr Abdullah," he said. "He has shown he is weak and a partner in the incompetence and crimes of the government." Abdullah has confirmed he had approved the decision to oust the governor, but has had little to say about Noor's reac-

tion. The dispute has also highlighted the role of a clutch of regional leaders, of whom Noor is one of the most prominent, whose strong local support have made them difficult for the central government to control. Over recent months, Ghani has sidelined several of them, forcing ethnic Uzbek vice-President Rashid Dostum into exile following a torture scandal.

He has also clashed with General Abdul Raziq, a powerful police commander whose successes against the Taliban in the southern province of Kandahar have given him a growing national profile. In June, Noor joined Dostum, currently in Turkey, in forming a "Coalition for the Salvation of Afghanistan", uniting figures from the Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek communities. Pictures of the two, together with Hazara leader Mohammad Mohaqiq, are on prominent display in Mazar. —Reuters

Turkish Cypriots vote in snap polls

NICOSIA: Turkish Cypriots yesterday voted in a snap parliamentary election overshadowed by last year's failure to reach a peace deal for the divided island in UN-backed talks. More than 190,500 people are registered to vote in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), established in the wake of Turkey's 1974 invasion of the island in response to an Athens-backed coup.

The vote comes ahead of presidential polls later this month in the internationally recognized Greek-majority Republic of Cyprus with peace efforts on hold until both sets of elections are over. Polling stations opened at 0600 GMT and are to close at 1600 GMT. The election in the northern third of Cyprus comes six months after efforts to reunify the island collapsed at a UN-hosted peace summit in Switzerland over a number of disputes, including the withdrawal of Turkey's 45,000 troops.

The TRNC, whose statehood is only recognized by Turkey, is currently governed by a coalition of the right-wing National Unity Party (UBP) and its junior partner the Democratic Party (DP). Analysts say the DP of Serdar Denktaş—son of late TRNC founder and hardline leader Rauf Denktaş—could fall under the five percent threshold due to intra-party disputes. The UBP and the pro-solution Republican Turkish Party (CTP) are the other major parties in the election, followed by the Peoples' Party (HP) of Kudret Ozersay—a former negotiator in peace talks with the Greek Cypriots. The election, originally planned for July, were brought forward after tensions in the ruling coalition and the opposition pressed for snap polls.

'New beginning'

Analysts say a coalition government is the most likely outcome because no one party is likely to win an absolute majority in the 50-seat parliament. The Social Democracy Party (TDP) of Turkish Cypriot president Mustafa Akinci—regarded as strongly pro-solution—and the newly established far-right Rebirth Party (YDP) founded by settlers of Turkish origin are also running in the election. "Every election, like every new year and every new day is a new beginning. I hope and wish that this will be a good beginning for our community," Akinci told reporters after casting his vote.

"Depending on the results, as the president, I will be doing whatever my responsibilities dictates me to do. So we will see what the results will be and we'll take our actions accordingly." Observers say that the Cyprus problem has not played a central role in the campaign, which focused on bread-and-butter issues like the economy, with Turkish Cypriots still hugely dependent on Turkish assistance. But a pro-solution government could give Akinci a better hand to play in any future talks with the Greek Cypriots while a harder line administration would deal a blow to his authority.

The personal life of UBP leader and Prime Minister Huseyin Ozgurgun came under the spotlight during the campaign, after he announced in December that he was getting divorced following reports he had an affair with a well-known Turkish Cypriot actress. On January 28, the Republic of Cyprus is set to hold a presidential election in which conservative incumbent Nicos Anastasiades is the frontrunner. Anastasiades has campaigned on a pro-peace ticket, vowing to try to revive talks with Akinci, despite the souring of their relationship after two years of tough and ultimately fruitless negotiations.—FP



NICOSIA: A Turkish-Cypriot woman fills in an application as people cast their ballot for the parliamentary election at a polling station in the northern part of Nicosia. —AFP

News in brief

New-born found dead

JAKARTA: Indonesian police yesterday detained the suspected mother of a new-born baby who was found dead in an aircraft toilet at Jakarta's international airport. Hani, a 37-year-old migrant worker from Cianjur in West Java, was held soon after arriving from Bangkok at Soekarno-Hatta airport around 1:00 am, said airport police chief Ahmad Yusef. "She didn't look healthy and won't be questioned until she is fit. The woman is now at the airport's health centre," Yusef said. Police suspect that Hani, who had worked as a domestic helper in Abu Dhabi for four years, secretly gave birth during an Etihad flight from there to Jakarta on Saturday. Around four hours after take-off she began bleeding, forcing the captain to divert to Bangkok. "The woman was in economy class but then laid on a business-class seat with an oxygen mask. The captain then announced we should divert to Bangkok," crew member Francesco Calore said.

PNG volcano erupts

SYDNEY: Some 600 residents on a tiny island off Papua New Guinea (PNG) have been evacuated after a volcano previously believed to be dormant erupted and spewed a "continuous plume" of ash, officials and reports said yesterday. The volcano on the northern island of Kadovar, more than 500 meters high, erupted on Friday, the Darwin Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre said. "Since then, it's been emitting a continuous plume out to the west-northwest," centre forecaster Chris Kearney said. "It's been kept mostly over the ocean and still continuing as we speak." American Christian non-governmental organization Samaritan Aviation said all residents on the island were evacuated. "The reports we have is that all of the residents of the island have been evacuated and that there has not been any loss of life," the NGO wrote on Facebook late Saturday. Kearney said the volcano was thought to be dormant before the surprise eruption.

Snow traps motorists

MADRID: Spain deployed 250 soldiers yesterday to help rescue hundreds of drivers who were trapped overnight in vehicles as heavy snowfall cut off several roads, officials said. The army's emergency unit UME said it had sent two companies of specialist soldiers and 95 vehicles to free hundreds of cars stranded on the AP6 highway linking Madrid and the northwestern city of Segovia. "There are many trapped vehicles on the AP6 but we are working without restlessly to advance kilometer by kilometer to reach everyone as soon as possible, we are on it!" the unit said on Twitter. Soldiers and firefighters used snowplows to try to clear the snow, and distributed blankets and hot drinks to motorists, images broadcast on Spanish television showed. The rough weather comes as many Spaniards are travelling home after the end of the Christmas holidays. Motorists took to social media to complain that they had been trapped on the highway since Saturday night.

Mahathir named candidate

SHAH ALAM: Malaysia's veteran ex-leader Mahathir Mohamad was named as the opposition's prime ministerial candidate yesterday as a bruising election battle looms against scandal-plagued premier Najib Razak and his long-ruling coalition. The decision means the 92-year-old, a hugely divisive figure criticized for ruling with an iron fist during his long reign, could return as premier 15 years after stepping down. But he also agreed to make way for jailed opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim his former nemesis turned political ally—to become prime minister on his release from prison if Anwar is granted a royal pardon. Mahathir's ascent to opposition prime ministerial candidate is the latest sign of how dramatically Malaysia's political landscape has been shaken up by a massive financial scandal that has rocked Najib's government. Mahathir came out of retirement to take on Najib as anger mounted at allegations billions of dollars were looted from a state investment fund, 1MDB, founded by the current premier.

Analysis

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Focus

2018 year
for protecting
the planet

This will be a big year for the Paris climate agreement. The broad outlines of the deal were figured out in 2015, but the specific rules governing what it requires countries to do will have to be written by the end of 2018.

In spite of Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the accord, the deal appears surprisingly strong. In the final months of 2017, Nicaragua and Syria, the last two holdouts of the more than 190 nations that met in Paris, signed on. The United States, meanwhile, will not be able to withdraw from the agreement until November 4, 2020 - four years to the day after the agreement went into effect and, coincidentally, one day after the next US presidential election.

Now it's time to figure out the fine print. The process that must wrap up before the end of 2018 is comparable to the period after Congress passes any legislation, when regulatory agencies need to figure out what a given law will mean in practice. Over the course of 2018, negotiators from around the world will be working through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the treaty that undergirds the Paris Agreement, to do something similar.

At the top of their to-do list are rules for what the UN calls "transparency" - that is, rules for measuring countries' emissions, and for measuring their progress toward reducing that pollution. When each country signed on to the agreement, it offered a goal, or a "national determined contribution," stating how much it planned to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Over time, countries are expected to improve on those pledges. The Paris Agreement's objective is that these goals will gradually add up to a large enough reduction in global emissions that global warming can be contained within 2 degrees Celsius.

Transparency

Transparency is essential to determine whether that 2-degree target is realistic. Practically speaking, the UN needs to figure out how countries will report their progress toward their emission-cutting goals. It will also need to figure out how to determine whether those reports are accurate. This will mean digging into topics that, during past rounds of negotiations, have proven to be complex and technically intricate.

When it comes to reporting, "the Paris Agreement itself essentially points to a common approach for countries but also acknowledges a need for flexibility for the countries that need it," says David Waskow, head of the DC-based World Resources Institute's International Climate Initiative. That "common approach" is key, and something that US diplomats representing both Republican and Democratic administrations have pushed for years. If the UN has different standards for different countries - for instance, if it holds India and China to lower transparency standards than the European Union - then the agreement will be weakened at a time when it needs to get much stronger.

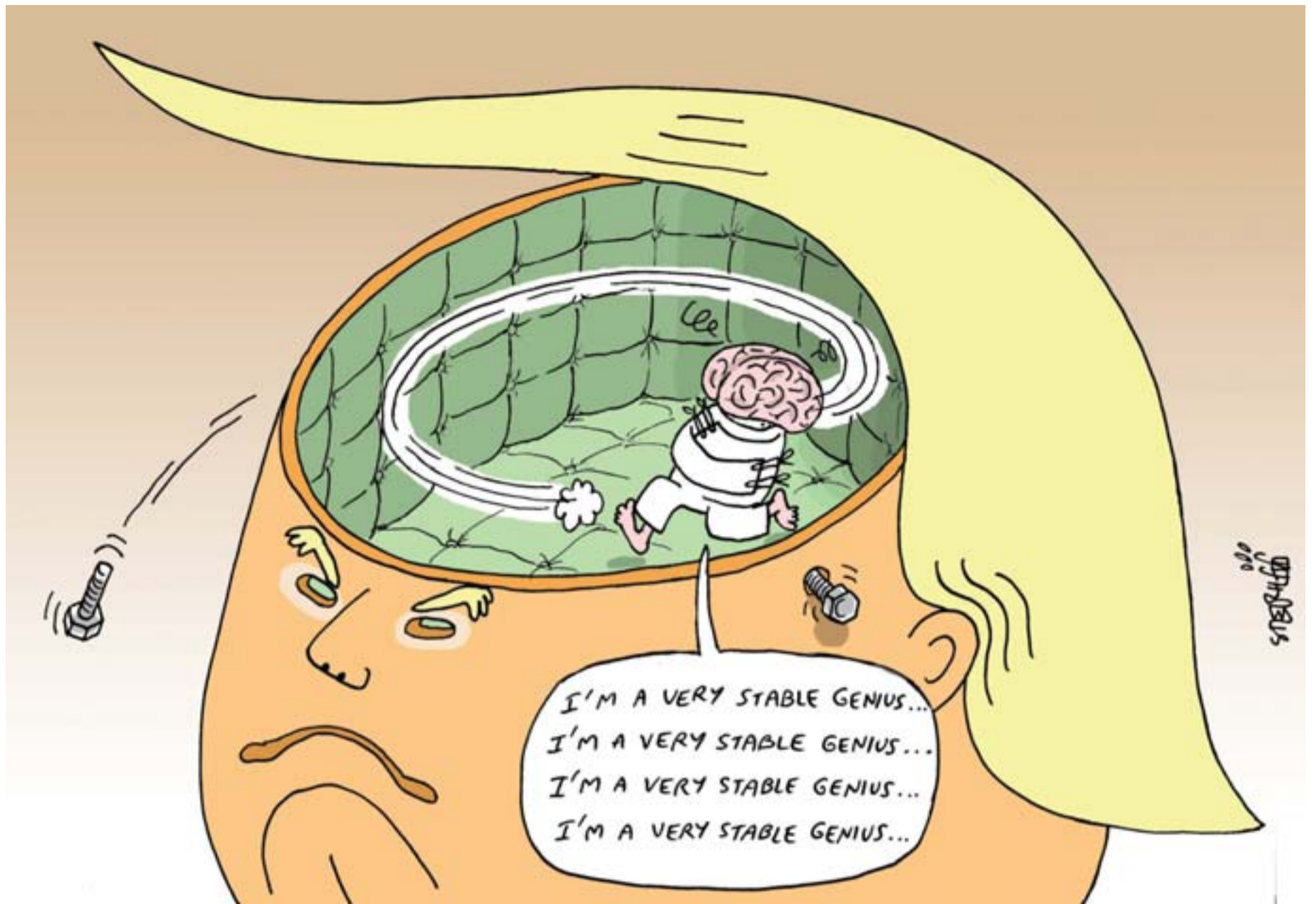
The flip side of those common reporting standards is flexibility. By allowing for some variation in the information that countries report, the UN acknowledges that not every country will be able to measure their greenhouse gas emissions with the same degree of accuracy.

A national government, Waskow explains, needs "to know basic data about not only power plants but industrial facilities, what's happening with transportation systems and vehicles, what kind of fuels are being used, what's happening in the agriculture sector, what's happening with land use, et cetera. It requires government capacity not only at the national level but at the sub-national level - the city and state and provincial level - to be able to know what power plants and industrial facilities are in operation and at what level they're producing and emitting."

Accuracy

Not every country has that capacity. The specifics of how the UN deals with the range of data available is one of the things that must be figured out in 2018. One of the goals of the Paris Agreement is that every country eventually will be able to report information with the same degree of accuracy. Initially, however, that won't be the case. So negotiators this year will have to write rules that require strong, accurate reports, but that leave developing countries some wiggle room.

Negotiators will also have to figure out how the UN will measure emissions outside national borders, including those from airplanes and boats in international waters. Planes and boats together account for about four percent of global emissions, by some estimates, and both air travel and maritime cargo shipping are expected to increase in coming years. Measuring these emissions will likely involve greater use of technology, especially satellites that can measure carbon dioxide and other climate change-causing pollutants from space. — Reuters



There's still time for diplomacy in Korea

Amid ever-heightening tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons program, there are finally some positive diplomatic signals. On Jan 3, Pyongyang reopened a long-closed border hotline with South Korea - one day after Seoul proposed bilateral negotiations and two days after Kim Jong Un said in his New Year address that he was open to speaking with the South.

Yet when asked about this possible breakthrough, United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley threw cold water on the whole idea: "We won't take any of the talk seriously if they don't do something to ban all nuclear weapons in North Korea."

Haley's statement is as clear an articulation of the Trump administration's foreign policy as you can get: Diplomacy is a waste of time; we will only talk to adversaries after they unilaterally capitulate and obey all our commands. The problem is that this approach is rarely effective. Sure, sometimes diplomacy fails, but more often than not, bluster and intimidation elicits nothing but bluster and resistance in return.

Consider Washington's post-World War Two approach to the Soviet Union. According to the historian Melvyn P. Leffler, there was "nearly universal agreement" in the military and intelligence communities that the Soviet Union, though expansionist, "was by no means uniformly hostile or unwilling to negotiate with the United States." Yet, in contrast to the internal consensus, Leffler cites US officials increasingly depicting Moscow as "constitutionally incapable of being conciliated" and hell-bent on "world domination."

In July 1947, a War Department intelligence report found the Truman administration's more confrontational approach "tend to magnify the significance of conflicting points of view, and reduce the possibility of agreement on any point." According to Leffler, this "had resulted in a more aggressive Soviet attitude toward the United States and had intensified tensions."

By contrast, history is replete with examples of tactful statecraft successfully yielding major concessions from adversaries. Although the Cuban missile crisis had for decades been misrepresented as an example of a

steely-eyed American president staring down a retreating Soviet Union, the truth was later revealed in declassified documents. John F. Kennedy secretly offered to withdraw US missiles from Turkey, while Russia's Nikita Khrushchev agreed to take the missiles out of Cuba in exchange. Nuclear war was averted through diplomacy and mutual concessions.

President Barack Obama's approach to Iran was successful because it followed this diplomatic model. For years, Washington approached Iran with obstinate condemnations, extreme demands, and little interest in serious negotiations. This all-sticks-no-carrots posture resulted in stubborn hostility on both sides and an

expanding Iranian nuclear program. Only when the Obama administration conceded Iran's right to peaceful civilian nuclear enrichment and offered sanctions relief did Tehran agree to major restrictions on its nuclear program. This resulted in what Yukiya Amano, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, describes as "the world's most robust nuclear verification regime."

History replete
with statecraft
yielding major
concessions

So why is Trump ignoring his predecessor's example? A popular argument against the prospect of rapprochement with North Korea is that we tried diplomacy in the 1990s and Pyongyang took advantage of American overtures and failed to live up to its commitments. But that is an incredibly misleading representa-

Back-up plan

tion of the 1994 Agreed Framework. Negotiated by the Clinton administration, the Agreed Framework froze Pyongyang's plutonium pathway to a nuclear bomb and opened its program up to inspections in exchange for economic and diplomatic concessions from Washington. Unfortunately, according to Stanford University's Siegfried S. Hecker, many in Congress opposed the deal and "failed to appropriate funds for key provisions of the pact, causing the United States to fall behind in its commitments almost from the beginning."

Pyongyang took this as a signal that it needed a back-up plan. Early in the George W. Bush administration, which took a markedly tougher line from the start, US intelligence found Pyongyang was secretly developing uranium enrichment capabilities, which violated the spirit, though not the letter, of the Agreed Framework. The Bush team pulled out of the deal in response, prompting Pyongyang to expel international inspectors.

In 2002, Bush put North Korea in the infamous "Axis of Evil," which strongly implied a future regime change effort. Pyongyang soon after withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and only a few years later, the Kim regime tested its first nuclear weapon.

Diplomatic efforts have a better track record, even with North Korea. North Korea tends to respond to toughness and attempts at coercion with its own set of belligerent policies. However, over the past 25 years, according to a study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, periods of diplomacy correlate with a reduction in North Korean provocations.

Simply put, the Trump administration's central premise on North Korea is wrong. More threats and pressure won't elicit surrender from Pyongyang. In fact, the estimated costs of war are so catastrophically high that military threats at this point are probably not credible. The CIA assesses "no amount of economic sanctions will force the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, to give up his country's nuclear program." — Reuters

There is a
better way to
unite Europe

The European political year, grinding back into gear for 2018, is full of doubt, even woe. The continent's major countries politics are stuck, or likely to stick, in cul-de-sacs from which exit is difficult. Only in France, under the banner not so much of the tricolor as the injunction En Marche! (Let's Go!), is there official optimism and vigor.

Germany, Europe's leading economy, has yet to agree on a government. Talks between the governing Christian Democrats and the opposition Social Democrats on the formation of a third coalition are due to start on Jan 7. A coalition agreement may take a long time - and even if successful, the marriage will be even more loveless, and thus more fragile, than the two preceding.

Yet Germany remains strong in its economy and forecasts are bullish for this year, its businesses apparently insouciant about the politicians' dilemmas. By contrast, Italy's growth, up a little from the stagnation of recent years, remains highly dependent on a coherent government emerging from elections on March 4. The outcome, however, is forecast to end in a hung parliament, as a weakened governing Democratic Party faces a rejuvenated right and a populist Five Star Movement, presently the most popular single party.

In Spain, expected economic growth has been reduced from 2.6 percent to 2.3 percent on fears of continued turbulence between the Madrid government and the separatists in Catalonia, where pro-independence parties are in the majority. Poland, with its popu-

lation of 38.5 million, is locked in moral and mortal combat with the European Union. And the United Kingdom is, of course, leaving the group.

Still, hope must spring eternal in an EU which works under the rubric of "ever-closer Union," and that hope focuses itself on the youthful 40-year-old shoulders of Emmanuel Macron, whose "En Marche" party slogan is the daily wake-up call to a France he believes had gone prematurely old, cold and weary. His plans for the Union are bold and aimed at relatively rapid integration of the economy, but also designed to be protective of European citizens, a bulwark against the chill winds of globalization. It will be a trick hard to pull off, but at least an injection of optimism into a torpid continent.

The plans have strong supporters in other countries - Germany's Social Democrats are led by the former president of the EU's parliament, Martin Schulz, passionate for "more Europe," and in Italy, a new political grouping is actually called More Europe (Piu Europa), led by the veteran radical and former foreign minister, Emma Bonino. Like Macron, they want a United States of Europe; unlike him, they are in a minority.

Euro Fragile

Brave as Macron's plans may be, they lack the central, necessary element which would give them a chance of success against already-heavy odds. They frame the advantages of closer integration in terms of a more efficient economy and a necessary underpinning of the euro currency. Many economists believe the euro is too fragile to survive ongoing shocks unless it has a kind of state backing similar to that provided by national central banks. Since the EU is at best a state-in-embryo, its currency's fragility remains.

That makes sense to bankers and economists. But much of what comes out of the EU is not comprehensible to ordinary citizens, and the missing element in Macron's project is a credible plan to bring the countries of the EU together. That integration cannot just

make sense to an establishment, it must make the resulting state-in-construction understandable (again) and above all acceptable to European citizens on democratic grounds, with a parliament and other institutions whose functions they can both grasp and affect with their votes, their views and their protests.

We should reflect on what that integration means. It means that European citizens will have to accept a government, which rules at least initially in the financial-economic sphere, and which thus makes decisions affecting their incomes, jobs, pensions and much more. These decisions will be made not by Spaniards for the Spanish or Finns for the Finnish, but by ministers likely to come from other countries, whose names and biographies are unknown to most and who will be unlikely to speak their language.

Where these decisions hurt the pockets or the job prospects of the governed - as they are bound to do, especially in times of low growth - will these ministers command assent, even if grudging? Or will the populist-nationalists receive a shot in the arm, and lead a revolt - the more widely supported for being attractive to both left and right?

That missing narrative - how to get from national to European democracy - is the fatal flaw of the Macron project. That weakness is one which will haunt him not just beyond the borders of France, but within them, since his large majority over Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Front conceals the fact that several of the candidates defeated in the first round of last year's presidential election were almost as anti-EU as Le Pen - and with her, constituted a Euroskeptical majority.

Given the lack of a democratic "story" for the EU, the need is not to pursue an integrationist pipe dream, but to strengthen national governments and in doing so, address the gulf which has opened up between the haves (have higher education, have secure jobs, have good salaries) and the have-littles (have little education, little secure employment, little pay.) — Reuters



Iranian men walk past a mosaic decorated wall in downtown Tehran yesterday. — AFP

Egyptian ex-PM Shafiq will not...

Continued from Page 1

Shafiq, appointed premier by former president Hosni Mubarak shortly before his overthrow in 2011, was seen as a main challenger for Sisi, who is expected to cruise to a new term despite not yet officially announcing his candidacy. The ex-prime minister announced his plans to compete for the presidency in a November 29 video from the UAE, stating that it seemed the country need-

ed "new blood" to face its current "many problems in all aspects of life".

But after angering his Emirati hosts by claiming in a video first aired by Al-Jazeera that he was being prevented from leaving the country, his aides said he was deported to Egypt on Dec 2. After arriving back in his homeland, Shafiq disappeared from view for around 24 hours, before reemerging to tell a talk show host that he was reconsidering his bid for the presidency. In his withdrawal statement yesterday, Shafiq appeared to have dramatically changed his tune on the situation in Egypt since his initial pledge to stand. Being out of the country in exile "may have kept me away from carefully following updates in the homeland, of progress and accomplishments," he said. — AFP

Bibi calls to axe UN Palestinian...

Continued from Page 1

"This absurd situation must be ended," Netanyahu said. UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunness said that its mandate came from the UN General Assembly "whose members give wide and strong support to the agency's humanitarian and human development mission". "What perpetuates the refugee crisis is the failure of the parties to deal with the issue," he wrote in a statement. "This needs to be resolved by the parties to the conflict in the context of peace talks, based on UN resolutions and international law."

In June, Netanyahu said he had raised the issue with Washington's UN envoy Nikki Haley. On Wednesday, Trump threatened to cut aid worth more than \$300 million annually to the Palestinians in a bid to force them to negotiate. The United States has long provided the Palestinian Authority with much-needed

budgetary support and security assistance, as well as an additional \$304 million for UN programmes in the West Bank and Gaza.

A Friday report on Israeli Channel 10 television said the US had frozen a payment due to UNRWA, but a spokesman for the UN organization said on Saturday that they "have not been informed directly of a formal decision either way by the US administration". UNRWA runs hundreds of schools for Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip, the occupied West Bank, Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

It also distributes aid and provides teacher training centers, health clinics and social services. Many analysts, including Israelis, warn that closing the agency without having an effective replacement could lead to further poverty and perhaps violence. "While UNRWA is far from perfect, the Israeli defence establishment, and the Israeli government as a whole, have over the years come to the understanding that all the alternatives are worse for Israel," Peter Lerner, a former spokesman for the Israeli military, wrote in an opinion piece in Haaretz newspaper last week. "In an extreme situation, the administration of those refugees could fall on Israel's shoulders." — AFP

Iran tanker ablaze, 32 missing after collision off China

BEIJING: A tanker carrying oil from Iran to South Korea was ablaze and spilling its cargo off eastern China yesterday after a collision with a cargo ship which left 32 tanker crewmembers missing. The vessel, carrying 136,000 tonnes of oil condensate, caught fire after the collision Saturday night and its crew of 30 Iranians and two Bangladeshis were missing, China's transport ministry said. The other vessel had been damaged but "without jeopardizing the safety of the ship" and all its 21 Chinese crew had been rescued, it added in a statement.

The tanker was still ablaze yesterday. Footage from state television channel CCTV showed the ship in the grip of an intense fire, enveloped in clouds of black smoke. The Panamanian-flagged 274-m tanker Sanchi was operated by Iran's Glory Shipping and heading to South Korea with

its cargo, the ministry said. The accident happened 160 nautical miles east of Shanghai. The second vessel involved was a Hong Kong-flagged cargo ship, the CF Crystal, carrying 64,000 tonnes of grain.

"The Sanchi is still floating and continues to burn, there is oil on the sea surface; search and rescue operations are rushing and underway," the ministry said in a statement. The foreign ministry said China had deployed specialised "cleaning ships" to the scene to minimize environmental damage. The cause of the collision was under investigation, it added. Chinese maritime authorities have sent eight ships and South Korea has sent a plane and a 3,000-tonne coastguard ship. "Our ship and plane have arrived at the site and are working closely with Chinese maritime authorities," a coastguard official said.

Iran's Petroleum Ministry said the tanker belongs to the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) and was delivering its cargo to South Korea's Hanwha Total. The ship and its cargo were insured, a statement said. It was the second accident in less than two years involving a tanker owned by the NITC. In Aug 2016 an Iranian supertanker and a container ship collided in the Singapore Strait, causing damage to both vessels but no injuries or pollution. — AFP



The Panamanian-flagged tanker "Sanchi" is on fire after a collision with a cargo ship at sea yesterday. — AFP

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Sports

Unstoppable Mikaela Shiffrin wins fourth race in a row

Stylish Hirscher clinches Swiss double

KRANJSKA GORA: Overall World Cup leader Mikaela Shiffrin won her fourth race in a row yesterday, storming to victory in the slalom at Kranjska Gora by a huge 1.64 seconds. It was her seventh win in the last eight races in all disciplines, her form peaking with the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang just one month away, and the 40th World Cup win of her career.

Shiffrin is widely expected to retain the Olympic slalom title she won at the 2014 Games in Sochi, Russia, as well as having a shot at gold medals in the giant slalom and Super G. "I was really aggressive, especially the first run," she told Swiss television, adding that she did not take an interest in passing the 40-win milestone.

"It doesn't mean so much," she said. "I'm not focusing on that, I'm really happy with my skiing right now and that's what I'm focusing on." The 22-year-old produced an astonishing first run as she charged down the course in 51.44 seconds, with Frida Hansdotter of Sweden the second-best on 52.91.

Even though Shiffrin eased off slightly on the second run, when her time was bettered by two other skiers, nobody else could get near her total time of one minute 43.50. Hansdotter was second and Switzerland's Wendy Holdener third.

Shiffrin, who won her maiden overall World Cup title last season, tops the overall standings with 1,281 points, an overwhelming lead of 721 points over second-placed Holdener.

This season she has won four slalom races, two giant slaloms, one parallel slalom, the Oslo city event and a downhill.

Austria's Marcel Hirscher won a second race of the weekend yesterday, adding a slalom victory to a giant slalom triumph 24 hours earlier for a 52nd career World Cup win with a classy display on the steep, tightly-gated Adelboden slopes.

Hirscher timed 1min 50.94sec with his compatriot Michael Matt, younger brother of the 2014 slalom gold medalist Mario Matt, second at 0.13sec down the soft, ski-rutted run. Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen was narrowly edged into third at

0.16sec.

On a relatively warm day in rutted conditions Hirscher took his foot off the gas on the second run of what is considered a tough, steep course, but still had enough to cruise to a seventh win of the season, three in slalom and four in giant slalom.

It is the kind of form that will make him the man to beat out in Pyeongchang for February's Winter Games, as he seeks a first individual Olympic gold. The win



KRANJSKA GORA: First-placed US' Mikaela Shiffrin reacts on the podium during the trophy ceremony after competing in the FIS World Cup Ladies Slalom race in Kranjska Gora, yesterday. — AFP

extends the 28-year-old's overall World Cup tally to 774, ahead of Kristoffersen in second at 660, and 354 to 295 over the same man in the slalom standings.

Hirscher is closing in on Austrian Hermann Maier's total of 54 World Cup wins, but is still far behind the record of 86, held by Sweden's Ingemar Stenmark. — Agencies

Norway's Bjoergen eyeing medal history in Pyeongchang

STOCKHOLM: Four years after equalling the record for the number of Olympic medals won by a woman, 37-year-old cross-country skier Marit Bjoergen will be aiming to make that accolade her own in Pyeongchang as she leads the Norwegian medal charge.

Bjoergen has collected 10 Olympic medals, the same number as fellow cross-country skiers Raisa Smetanina of Russia and Italy's Stefania Belmondo, and another, of any hue, at the 2018 Games will put her out there on her own.

With more gold medals than either of those two, Bjoergen is arguably the most successful female athlete in the history of the Games, and few would bet against her adding to her tally.

"The Olympics are my goal. This will be my last Olympics, so I want to do all I can to be as well-prepared as possible for it," she said in a recent interview. Bjoergen, who won gold in the 15 km skiathlon, team sprint and 30 km freestyle events in Sochi, has returned from maternity leave as dominant as ever.

She and her Norwegian team-mates swept the board clean of women's cross-country medals at the 2017 World Championships in Lahti, Finland, with Bjoergen picking up three individual wins and one team victory as Norway topped the overall medals table.

A superb skier in both the classic and skating styles, Bjoergen says the birth of her son Marius in December 2015 has changed things somewhat. "I get time to train, (but) the challenge is to get enough recovery and rest. When you don't rest enough it affects your training," she told reporters recently. — Reuters

Queen of the Luge, Geisenberger eyes more gold

MANCHESTER: Four years on from her double Olympic gold medal success in Sochi and German luger Natalie Geisenberger shows no signs of slowing down. The 29-year-old, who won in singles and mixed-team gold in Russia four years ago, has dominated the sport since 2013 when she won her first FIL World Cup title - a crown she has won every year since.

An Olympic bronze medalist in the singles at Vancouver 2010, Geisenberger arrived at the Winter Games in Sochi in outstanding form and lived up to all expectations. The Bavarian police officer was fastest in all four legs of the singles competition, winning by a massive 1.139 seconds from her compatriot Tajana Huefner, the Vancouver champion in 2010.

Fast forward to this year's World Cup campaign and little has changed-Geisenberger leads in the standings from Huefner as Germany continue to leave their rivals trailing. The nature of the circuit means that Geisenberger finds herself in the company of the 34-year-old Huefner and her room-mate Dajana Eitberger but she says luge is no longer a topic of conversation.

"We do not talk about sledging anymore. When the room door is closed, we will talk about handbags or creams or anything else," she told the Westfalenpost newspaper. "You cannot spend the whole day with only racing in your head in the head".

Born in Munich, Geisenberger grew up some 50 kilometres away in the Bavarian mountain town of Miesbach, which has a summer luge track. She joined the Miesbach luge club at the age of 10 and went on to win 14 Junior World Cup events and six Junior World Championships.

It may have taken time to overtake Huefner as the leading lady on the German team but Geisenberger showed at Sochi that she knows exactly what it takes to win on the biggest stage. Not that she is taking anything for granted. — Reuters

Biathlon aiming to woo more fans in Pyeongchang

STOCKHOLM: With a record number of viewers having watched some thrilling action the 2017 World Championships, the sport of biathlon is in rude health and aiming to win even more fans during the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang.

Statistics released by the European Broadcasting Union following the 2017 championships in Hochfilzen, Austria, showed a 50 percent increase in the number of viewers compared to the 2013 event.

In total, 140,000 spectators turned out to watch 315 athletes from 37 different countries compete and they were treated to some thrilling finishes, such as American Lowell Bailey's stunning win in the men's 20km individual race.

Laura Dahlmeier's superb haul of five gold medals for Germany also lifted the sport's prominence there, and many of these new-found fans will be keeping an eye out for her and her team mates in South Korea. The sport has its origins in the military forces of the Nordic region, where it was developed as a winter training method for troops.

Historical records in Norway indicate that soldiers there took part in combined skiing and shooting competitions as far back as the late 1700s but much has changed since the Scandinavian soldiers pioneered the sport.

For example, the modern-day biathlon rifle bears little resemblance to its military counterparts, having been developed specifically for the sport. The modern rifles usually have four magazines containing five shots each attached to them, with the athletes inserting a new magazine each time they stop to shoot. Adopted as the standard for biathlon rifles in 1978, the .22 calibre rounds have a low recoil, making it easier for shooters to control the rifles. But perhaps the greatest development in the rifles has been the addition of the repeater, a rifle-bolt mechanism which makes it easier and quicker to reload the rifle after each shot.

Japan ski jumper Kasai set to break Olympic record

TOKYO: Japanese ski jumper Noriaki Kasai could become the first athlete to compete at eight Winter Olympics after being selected for next month's Pyeongchang Games, officials said yesterday. The 45-year-old, who made his Olympic debut at Albertville in 1992, will take sole possession of the record he currently shares-seven appearances-with disgraced Russian luger Albert Demchenko.

Kasai won team silver at Lillehammer in 1994, plus silver for the large hill and team bronze at Sochi in 2014 - making him the oldest Olympic ski jumping medalist. He also has 17 individual World Cup victories to his name after first joining the tour in 1988. Kasai, who hails from Japan's rugged northern island of Hokkaido, joins siblings Junshiro and Ryoyu Kobayashi, Daiki Ito and Taku Takeuchi on his country's ski jumping team for the February 9-25 Games in Pyeongchang in South Korea.

He enjoys a cult following in ski jump-obsessed Finland, where Helsinki punk band Van Damme recorded a tribute single called "Mr Noriaki Kasai" in 2014. Polish rapper Koldi has also penned a song about the Japanese legend. Demchenko, who won a silver medal in Sochi, was one of 11 Russian athletes banned for life by the International Olympic Committee last December for doping offences at those Games four years ago. — AFP



OBERHOF: Frederik Lindstroem of team Sweden (L) and Thierry Chenal of team Italy compete at the shooting range during the men's 4 x 7,5 km relay event of the IBU Biathlon World Cup in Oberhof, eastern Germany, yesterday. — AFP

Previously, a shooter would have to remove their hand from the rifle grip to manually operate the bolt-action of the rifle before each shot, an action which cost valuable seconds. Invented in the 1980s by German gunsmith Peter Fortner, the repeater allows the shooter's hand to remain on the grip and reload with the thumb and forefinger, giving the athletes greater speed and more stability when shooting.

But while improvements have been made to rifles and skis, the basic tenets of the sport remain the same. Racers have to go as fast as they can around the course before stopping to shoot, and it is essential for them to get their pulse under control if they are to be able to consistently hit the target.

Four-time Olympic biathlete Jean-Marc Chabloz told Reuters that ideally, the body must always be in

the same position for every shot, and kept completely still while shooting. "It's a lot of work. They have to be fit and have good stamina, and at the same time be able to focus, to shift from the energetic skiing to being a calm shot," explained Chabloz, who now coaches young biathletes in Sweden.

Each miss is penalised by either by straight time penalty or the athlete being forced to ski in a "penalty loop" that is usually 150 meters long. This means that a considerable lead built up while skiing can be quickly wiped out if the shooter fails to hit the target. For Chabloz, it is the simplicity of the sport that makes it so appealing to athletes and audiences alike. "It's about skiing fast and shooting straight," he said. — Reuters



OBERSTDORF: File photo taken on December 29, 2017 shows Japan's Noriaki Kasai soaring through the air during his training jump of the ski jumping event in Oberstdorf, southern Germany. — AFP

Sports

Cooked England lurching to defeat after Marsh brothers' tons

Cook becomes sixth batsman to score 12,000 test runs

SYDNEY: Nathan Lyon was hailed as Australia's "key" bowler as the team closes in on an emphatic victory in the final Ashes Test after beleaguered England unravelled on a torrid day in Sydney yesterday. The Australians amassed a massive 303-run innings lead in blistering heat and then reduced the battle-weary tourists to 93 for four at the close with a day to play.

Compounding England's woes was a finger injury for skipper Joe Root, his team's last major hope of staving off a 4-0 series rout today's final day of the Test. Root was unbeaten on 42 at the close with Jonny Bairstow not out 17. Lyon captured the important wickets of Alastair Cook and Dawid Malan to have two for 31 off 19 overs at stumps.

"I think Gaz (Lyon) is the key tomorrow. The wicket is definitely suiting his conditions, especially with the left handers, he'll come into play," Australian centurion Shaun Marsh said. "I thought he bowled really well today and showed his class and hopefully he can come out tomorrow and get a few early breakthroughs for us."

Australia called a halt to their epic first innings at 649 for seven, and soon had England in trouble after the tourists had been cooked in the field for more than two draining days. Mark Stoneman was leg before wicket to Mitchell Starc for a duck and lost a review in the process, and next ball Cook was put down at first slip by Marsh off Josh Hazlewood for five.

But Cook's reprieve did not last long and he was bowled for 10 when a sharp Lyon turner hit the top of off-stump in the off-spinner's first over. Cook, who became during his innings only the sixth batsman to score 12,000 test runs, finished the series with 376 runs at 47.

James Vince survived a caught behind off Lyon on review on 15, but three runs later edged Pat Cummins to Steve Smith at slip. Dawid Malan followed when Lyon trapped him leg before wicket for five.



SYDNEY: Australia's Mitchell Marsh (R) sends his brother Sahun Marsh (L) back to his crease as he celebrates scoring his century against England on the fourth day of the fifth Ashes cricket Test match at the SCG in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

TON-UP BROTHERS

"In many ways the last few days have summed up our trip," said England assistant coach Paul Farbrace. "It's been exceptionally tough, we've come up against a team that's playing very good cricket but the one thing that we've been talking about is making sure we keep on fighting and battling."

Shaun and Mitchell Marsh earlier became the third set of brothers to score centuries in the same innings for Australia. The Marsh boys joined Greg and Ian Chappell and Steve and Mark Waugh to score brotherly centuries for Australia, while it was the eighth time overall it had happened in Test cricket.

The Chappells were the first Australian brothers to notch centuries in the same innings at The Oval in 1972 with the Waughs the last to do it against England, also at The Oval, in 2001. Mitchell Marsh almost spoiled his century in all the excitement as he embraced his brother mid-pitch before he had completed the second run scrambling back to his crease to avoid being run out.

Mitchell Marsh was bowled next ball by Tom Curran for 101 off 141 balls with 15 fours and two sixes. The century came after his 181 in the third Test in Perth. He was the third centurion of the massive Australian first innings total, following Usman Khawaja's 171 on Saturday.

Shaun Marsh was eventually dismissed after lunch, run out for 156 by Stoneman's direct throw from the covers. He batted for 403 minutes and faced 291 balls for his second century of the series and his sixth in 28 Tests.

Starc slogged Moeen Ali for six and was out the next ball finding Vince at long on for 11. Tim Paine (38) and Pat Cummins (24) were at the crease when Steve Smith called them in about an hour before tea. Big-hearted pacer James Anderson bowled with great economy in the stifling conditions as temperatures hit 42 Celsius (108 Fahrenheit), taking one for 56 off 34 overs.

Spinners Ali and debutant Mason Crane conceded a combined 363 runs in taking three wickets between them. — AFP



SCOREBOARD

SYDNEY: Scoreboard at the close on day four in the fifth Ashes Test between Australia and England in Sydney yesterday:

England first innings 346 (J. Root 83, D. Malan 62; P. Cummins 4-80)	Bowling: Anderson 34-14-56-1, Broad 30-2-121-1, Ali 48-10-170-2, Curran 25-3-82-1 (1w), Crane 48-3-193-1 (2nb), Root 8-3-21-0.
Australia first innings (overnight 479-4)	
C. Bancroft b Broad 0	
D. Warner c Bairstow b Anderson 56	
U. Khawaja st Bairstow b Crane 171	
S. Smith c and b Ali 83	
S. Marsh run out (Stoneman) 156	
M. Marsh b Curran 101	
T. Paine not out 38	
M. Starc c Vince b Ali 11	
P. Cummins not out 24	
Extras (lb4, w1, nb2) 9	
Total (7 wickets dec: 193 overs) 649	
Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Bancroft), 2-86 (Warner), 3-274 (Smith), 4-375 (Khawaja), 5-544 (M. Marsh), 6-596 (S. Marsh), 7-613 (Starc)	
To bat: J. Hazlewood, N. Lyon	
England second innings	
A. Cook b Lyon 10	
M. Stoneman lbw b Starc 0	
J. Vince c Smith b Cummins 18	
J. Root not out 42	
D. Malan lbw b Lyon 5	
J. Bairstow not out 17	
Extras (lb1) 1	
Total (4 wickets; 46 overs) 93	
Fall of wickets: 1-5 (Stoneman), 2-15 (Cook), 3-43 (Vince), 4-68 (Malan)	
Bowling: Starc 9-2-17-1, Hazlewood 9-1-26-0, Lyon 19-6-31-2, Cummins 7-1-12-1, Smith 2-0-6-0.	

Play abandoned in South Africa versus India Test

CAPE TOWN: Rain prevented any play on the third day of the first Test between South Africa and India at Newlands yesterday, but with fine weather expected for the remaining two days there is still a good chance of a result. South Africa were on 65 for two in their second innings—an overall lead of 142 — at the close of play on Saturday. With a potential 98 overs on both Monday and Tuesday, the bowlers of both sides will be hoping for more success on a pitch which has helped the fast bowlers.

South Africa will be without fast bowler Dale Steyn, who suffered a left heel injury on Saturday. He was consulting a specialist on Sunday and was not at the ground but initial estimates were that he would be out of action for between four and six weeks.

Unseasonal rain fell for much of the day across drought-stricken Cape Town. There was a brief break in the weather at lunch-time when the ground staff started to remove the covers, only for rain to return.

Brief scores:

South Africa, first innings, 286
India, first innings, 209
South Africa, second innings, 65-2 in 20 overs (A. Markram 34; H. Pandya 2-17)

Match situation: South Africa lead by 142 runs with eight wickets remaining in the second innings. — AFP



CAPE TOWN: A cricket supporter is stopped by security staff after they invaded the pitch shortly before the game was called off due to rain during the third day of the first Test cricket match between South Africa and India at Newlands in Cape Town yesterday. — AFP

Al-Attiyah takes Dakar opener, Loeb finishes without brakes

PISCO: Two-time winner Nasser Al-Attiyah stunned defending champions Peugeot when he steered his Toyota to victory on the opening stage of the 9,000km Dakar Rally on Saturday. The Qatari driver, who took the title in 2011 and 2015, swept across the short 32km Peruvian desert stage between Lima and Pisco in 21 min 51 sec.

However, it was a miserable first day for nine-time world rally champion Sebastien Loeb who is bidding for a maiden Dakar win. The Frenchman's hopes were hit when his Peugeot developed brake problems which left him 5 min 37 sec off the lead and down in 29th place. "Happily, it was only 31 kilometres!" said Loeb who is bidding to become just the fourth man to win both the world rally title and Dakar after

Finnish duo Ari Vatanen and Juha Kankkunen and Spain's Carlos Sainz.

"I made it without brakes! Zero brakes!" he added before admitting he had no idea where the problem originated and that his car's brake lights had not provided any warning. The car's hand-brake also failed the Frenchman. "Without brakes, it's really shit."

South Africa's Bernhard Ten Brinke (at 25 sec behind Attiyah) and Peru's Nicolas Fuchs, in a Borgward (34 sec) filled out the podium. Peugeot, who swept the podium in 2017 with Stephane Peterhansel taking a 13th overall title, endured a day to forget with their cars struggling in the sand and wind of the desert. Peterhansel, who has won the last two car titles, lost 2 min 15 sec and is 11th overall while teammate Cyril Despres is 2 min 36 sec behind and in 15th. "I didn't have a good feeling," said Peterhansel. "The sun was high and I couldn't see the other sides of the dunes. So I preferred to be safe. We will have to wake up."

Al-Attiyah admitted that tonight's stage will be a challenge as he starts first, therefore acting as a pathfinder for his rivals. "I know it will be very difficult, but I'm just really happy for today, tomorrow's another day. We try to do our best," he said.

Britain's Sam Sunderland got the



LIMA: Toyota's Qatari driver Nasser Al-Attiyah (R) and co-driver French pilot Mathieu Baumel are pictured at the podium during the start of the 2018 Dakar Rally, ahead of the rally's Lima-Pisco Stage 1, in Lima. — AFP

defence of his motorcycling title off to a winning start. Sunderland, on a KTM, finished ahead of France's Adrien Van Beveren, on a Yamaha, and Pablo Quintanilla of Chile on a Husqvarna.

The British rider finished the desert sprint in 20 min 56 sec with his rivals 32 sec and 55 sec further back. The second stage of the two-week event takes place in and around the town of Pisco. — AFP

Bangladesh drop Soumya, Taskin from ODI squad

DHAKA: Bangladesh yesterday dropped opening batsman Soumya Sarkar and paceman Taskin Ahmed from their 16-man squad for the opening two matches of the forthcoming tri-nation one-day international tournament.

Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka will also take part in the tournament, Bangladesh's first ODI competition at home in more than a year. It will begin in Dhaka on January 15. "Taskin and Soumya both were dropped for their poor form. They will play in the BCL (a franchise-based first-class competition) to improve their skills," chief selector Minhajul Abedin told a press conference. Soumya has been a regular face in the Bangladesh squad for all three formats since making his international debut in 2014 but paid the price for a prolonged spell of poor form.

The left-hander played just one ODI in the South Africa tour last October and scored only eight runs. Fast bowler Taskin also fared poorly in South Africa, picking up two wickets in three ODIs. Left-arm fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman returns to the side after missing out on Bangladesh's last one-day series in South Africa with a twisted ankle. Mustafizur was joined by batsmen Anamul Haque and Mohammad Mithun, paceman Abul Hasan and spinner Sunzamul Islam in the squad, which features several changes from the South Africa series in October.

Bangladesh failed to win a single game in South Africa in any format. Head coach Chandika Hathurusingha resigned in the middle of the series, though his decision was only made public in December.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board also sacked Test captain Mushfiqur Rahim and his deputy Tamim Iqbal and replaced them with Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah respectively. The ODI squad also had no room for batsman Liton Das, who played all three ODIs in South Africa but could score only 41 at 13.66. But left-arm spinner Sunzamul returned after playing his only ODI in Ireland in June.

Bangladesh will face Zimbabwe in the opening match. The tri-nation tournament will be followed by a home series against Sri Lanka featuring two Tests and two Twenty20 Internationals.

Squad: Mashrafe Mortaza (capt), Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Imrul Kayes, Anamul Haque, Mohammad Mahmudullah, Mushfiqur Rahim, Sabbir Rahman, Nasir Hossain, Mohammad Mithun, Mehedi Hasan, Mustafizur Rahman, Abul Hasan, Rubel Hossain, Mohammad Saifuddin, Sunzamul Islam. — AFP

Sports

Kyrgios claims Brisbane title with scintillating display

Kyrgios, Harrison have history of bad blood dating back to 2015

BRISBANE: Nick Kyrgios was at his brilliant best as he downed American Ryan Harrison to claim the Brisbane International in straight sets yesterday. The 6-4, 6-2 win was the third-seeded Australian's fourth title on the ATP tour and his first on home soil.

"I didn't know what kind of performance I was going to put in this week, whether I was going to do well," he said. "But as the week went on, I felt that I was serving a lot better, hitting the ball better. And I knew today was obviously a great opportunity." Kyrgios is a polarising figure in Australian sport—his superb tennis skills are often marred by poor behaviour on court. But the packed crowd at the Pat Rafter Arena saw only his brilliant side, with Harrison having no answer to the mercurial Australian's huge serve and stunning all-court play.

Kyrgios beat top seed and world number three Grigor Dimitrov in the semi-finals and if he maintains form and motivation, he will be a major threat at the Australian Open this month.

"Even if I had lost the first round here, I would probably still feel good next week, going into next week," he said. "But obviously, just playing a lot of matches, that's confidence for any player. Right now it's all about recovering and feeling the ball for the Oz Open."

Because obviously I'm playing well under pressure and in pressure situations." After struggling with his

first three service games when he had to defend five break points, Kyrgios lost only one point on serve after that. He fired down 17 aces in the two sets while Harrison's normally strong serve began to falter.

Kyrgios broke Harrison in the seventh game of the first set to take the opener in 36 minutes, at which point the American left the court to change his clothes. Kyrgios complained to the umpire about the length of time Harrison was taking. But the delay did nothing to upset Kyrgios's rhythm and he broke Harrison twice more to take the title in one hour and 13 minutes, fittingly winning the title with an ace.

Kyrgios and Harrison have a history of bad blood dating back to 2015 when in a match against Stan Wawrinka, Kyrgios told the Swiss star that fellow Australian Thanasi Kokkinakis had slept with his girlfriend. A week later Harrison and Kokkinakis had to be separated by officials during a fiery match, with Harrison reportedly saying "Wawrinka should've decked Kyrgios and I should deck that kid."

But apart from Kyrgios's frustration with Harrison leaving the court at the end of the first set, there was no evidence of tension and the two shook hands warmly at the end of the match.

Harrison conceded later he had his chances but Kyrgios was just too good. "I thought that he hit his spots really well, especially on big points," Harrison



BRISBANE: Nick Kyrgios of Australia holds the trophy with a 10-year anniversary of the tournament number after beating Ryan Harrison of the US to win the men's singles final at the Brisbane International tennis tournament at the Pat Rafter Arena in Brisbane. — AFP

Wins first title on home soil



star that fellow Australian Thanasi Kokkinakis had slept with his girlfriend. A week later Harrison and Kokkinakis had to be separated by officials during a fiery match, with Harrison reportedly saying "Wawrinka should've decked Kyrgios and I should deck that kid."

Harrison conceded later he had his chances but Kyrgios was just too good. "I thought that he hit his spots really well, especially on big points," Harrison

said. "And, you know, sometimes it goes like that. I mean, you got a guy who serves that well, you're not going to get looks on every service game. My chances happened to be early in the match, and then he con-

verted his chances." The men's doubles title was won by Australian John Peers and Finland's Henri Kontinen, who defeated Argentine combination Leonardo Mayer and Horacio Zeballos 3-6, 6-3, 10/2. — AFP

Julia Goerges humbles Wozniacki to win Auckland title

AUCKLAND: World number 14 Julia Goerges won her third successive tournament as she blasted her way to a 6-4 7-6(4) victory over Caroline Wozniacki to seal the Auckland Classic title yesterday. Goerges was rarely troubled by the world number three as she used a powerful service and blistering forehands that kept the Dane pinned deep and unable to extend rallies beyond a few shots.

The 29-year-old German, who has played at the Auckland tournament every year since her first visit in 2010, extended her winning streak to 14-matches stretching back to last year when she won in Moscow and then the WTA Elite Trophy in Zhuhai.

"It feels amazing, but it's not just about winning here but about my consistency over the last few months," Goerges said after she became the first woman to be presented with a korowai, or Maori feather cloak, that will be awarded to every subsequent winner.

"I have become much more mature, that's thanks to my team who have really changed my brain." Bad weather

throughout the week wreaked havoc with the schedule in New Zealand's largest city and both had been required to play their quarter-finals and semi-finals on Saturday.

Both players had made the final at the Auckland Tennis Centre before, with the German losing to Sloane Stephens in 2016, while Wozniacki lost to Venus Williams in 2015. Goerges however stamped her intentions on the opening point when she smashed a forehand service return back at Wozniacki's feet and broke to take a 1-0 lead that she never relinquished.

She sealed the first set after 35 minutes with her seventh ace and then broke Wozniacki again in the first game of the second set and continued to just overpower the Dane. Wozniacki had an opportunity to get back on serve in the fourth game when she had a break point but Goerges simply pulled out another ace and consolidated her lead.

The Dane, however, was finally getting into the match and while she blew her second break point two games later she finally broke in the eighth to get back on serve and then took a 5-4 lead. That was the only chance she had, however, as Goerges forced a tiebreak and then raced through it to seal the title after 91 minutes with another forehand winner.

"I have got a lot of matches under my belt and it was the type of preparation I hoped for," Wozniacki said as she looked ahead to the Australian Open from Jan. 15-28. "Hopefully it will be a great couple of weeks." — Reuters

Curry lights up Clippers in Warriors win

LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry torched the Los Angeles Clippers for a season-high 45 points in less than three quarters Saturday, leading the Golden State Warriors to a 121-105 rout at Staples Center in Los Angeles. Curry connected on 11 of 21 field-goal attempts, 8 of 16 3-point attempts and 15 of 16 free throws, as Golden State earned its fourth straight win and its sixth victory in seven games. Curry also grabbed six rebounds and came up with three steals in 30 minutes. Klay Thompson and David West added 10 points for the Warriors, while Draymond Green had nine points, 12 rebounds and seven assists. Guard Lou Williams came in off the bench and tossed in 23 points to lead the Clippers. DeAndre Jordan collected 15 points and 11 rebounds. Los Angeles forward Blake Griffin scored five points in 10 minutes before leaving with a concussion.

CELTICS 87, NETS 85

Rookie Jayson Tatum scored the final five points for Boston, which overcame a difficult shooting performance and eked out a victory over Brooklyn. Tatum scored half of his 14 points in the fourth quarter to help Boston win its sixth straight and beat the Nets for the eighth consecutive meeting. Kyrie Irving led the Celtics with 21 points but shot 8-of-22. Tatum recorded a career-best six blocked shots as Boston had 13 blocks while playing without Al Horford (sore left calf). Spencer Dinwiddie scored 20 points for the Nets.

PISTONS 108, ROCKETS 101

Tobias Harris fired in 27 points and pulled down eight rebounds, and Detroit held on for a home victory over Houston. Dwight Buycks scored a career-high 16 points as the Pistons bounced back from a 36-point loss at Philadelphia on Friday. Ish Smith tossed in 17 points for the Pistons. Detroit center Andre Drummond, the league's second-leading rebounder, sat out for the second time in three games due to a rib contusion. The Rockets fell to 1-2 since star guard James Harden was sidelined by a hamstring strain, and they have lost seven of their past nine. Chris Paul led Houston with 16 points and 13 assists, and he added seven rebounds.

PACERS 125, BULLS 86

After missing four games with a sore right knee, Victor Oladipo showed no signs of rustiness in scoring 23 points in 23 minutes to lead Indiana to a rout of visiting Chicago. Oladipo, who hit 9 of 11 shots, also had nine assists, five steals and six rebounds as the Pacers snapped a five-game losing streak. Domantas Sabonis scored 22 on 9-of-12 shooting off the bench for Indiana. The Bulls, who beat Dallas 127-124 on Friday night, looked like a tired team on the second night of a back-to-back, making just 30 of 80 shots (37.5 percent). Bobby Portis came off the bench to lead Chicago with 15 points.

CAVALIERS 131, MAGIC 127

Isaiah Thomas returned to the starting lineup and scored 19 points as Cleveland outlasted Orlando. LeBron James finished with 33 points, 10 rebounds and 9 assists. He also had six steals. Kevin Love had a big game with 27 points. Cleveland won for just the second time in six games and is in third place in the Eastern Conference behind Boston and Toronto. Aaron Gordon led the Magic with 30 points. Elfrid Payton scored 20 and Evan Fournier added 18.



WASHINGTON: John Wall #2 of the Washington Wizards puts up a shot between Giannis Antetokounmpo #34 and John Henson #31 of the Milwaukee Bucks in the second half at Capital One Arena in Washington, DC. — AFP

BUCKS 110, WIZARDS 103

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 21 of his 34 points in the second half as Milwaukee overcame a slow start and earned a victory over host Washington. The Bucks hadn't won in their past six visits to the nation's capital. Eric Bledsoe finished with 21 points for Milwaukee, and Khris Middleton had 20. Antetokounmpo, who had 12 rebounds, and John Henson (11 points, 11 rebounds) finished with double-doubles. Bradley Beal's 20 points led the Wizards. Marcin Gortat had 17 points, and John Wall contributed 16 points and 16 assists. Markieff Morris amassed 14 points and 10 rebounds for Washington.

TIMBERWOLVES 116, PELICANS 98

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 21 points and grabbed 16 rebounds as host Minnesota continued its dominance of New Orleans. The

Timberwolves won the two previous meetings in November, both of which were played in New Orleans, by scores of 108-94 and 120-102. The Pelicans had won their last three road games by a combined 39 points. Jimmy Butler matched Towns' 21 points and added eight assists for Minnesota.

KINGS 106, NUGGETS 98

Rookie De'Aaron Fox scored 18 points, and Sacramento never trailed while capitalizing on 26 turnovers by visiting Denver. The Kings' Willie Cauley-Stein added 17 points and set a career high with seven steals. Sacramento scored 40 points off Denver's turnovers and recorded a season-best 16 steals. The Kings ended a three-game slide despite playing without Zach Randolph (oral surgery) and George Hill (personal). Trey Lyles led the Nuggets with 19 points and nine rebounds, and Jamal Murray added 18 points. — Reuters

NBA results/standings

Minnesota 116, New Orleans 98; Washington 103, Milwaukee 110; Sacramento 106, Denver 98; Detroit 108, Houston 101; Indiana 125, Chicago 86; Orlando 127, Cleveland 131; Brooklyn 85, Boston 87; LA Clippers 105, Golden State 121.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Boston	33	10	76.7	—	Golden State	32	8	80.0	—
Toronto	27	10	73.0	3	Houston	27	11	71.1	4
Cleveland	26	13	66.7	5	San Antonio	27	13	67.5	5
Washington	23	17	57.5	8.5	Minnesota	25	16	61.0	7.5
Detroit	21	17	55.3	9.5	Oklahoma City	22	17	56.4	9.5
Milwaukee	21	17	55.3	9.5	Portland	20	18	52.6	11
Miami	21	17	55.3	9.5	New Orleans	19	19	50.0	12
Indiana	20	19	51.3	11	LA Clippers	17	21	44.7	14
Philadelphia	19	19	50.0	11.5	Utah	16	23	41.0	15.5
New York	18	21	46.2	13	Phoenix	15	26	36.6	17.5
Charlotte	15	23	39.5	15.5	Sacramento	13	25	34.2	18
Brooklyn	15	24	38.5	16	Dallas	13	27	32.5	19
Chicago	14	26	35.0	17.5	Memphis	12	27	30.8	19.5
Orlando	12	28	30.0	19.5	LA Lakers	11	27	28.9	20
Atlanta	10	28	26.3	20.5					



AUCKLAND: Julia Goerges of Germany celebrates winning her singles final match against Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark at the WTA Auckland Classic tennis tournament in Auckland yesterday. — AFP

Sports

Newport stun Leeds, West Ham survive FA Cup test

McCoulsky heads in a dramatic 89th-minute winner

LONDON: Lowly Newport County came from behind to send Championship side Leeds United crashing out of the FA Cup yesterday but Premier League West Ham stayed alive with a goalless draw at Shrewsbury.

On-loan forward Shawn McCoulsky headed in a dramatic 89th-minute winner for Welsh club Newport to seal a 2-1 victory against the 1972 Cup winners and send the crowd at Rodney Parade wild.

Leeds had earlier taken an early lead in the third-round tie when Gaetano Berardi's deflected long-range shot found the net. But Newport, currently 11th in League Two—the fourth tier of the English game—levelled 14 minutes from time when Leeds defender Conor Shaughnessy sliced into his own net.



Leeds were reduced to 10 men

going. I told them we don't have to win the game in the first 10 minutes of the second half and we got crosses into the box. "It was an outstanding header. He has 11 goals for us this season and he has been superb for us. He was hungry and wanted it and I am delighted." The Championship visitors had made nine changes from the side held by Nottingham Forest on New Year's Day, and manager Thomas Christiansen's decision backfired in a frenzied finale.

It is another miserable result in the FA Cup for Leeds, who crashed out in the fourth round last year to non-league Sutton United.

HART SAVES

West Ham had goalkeeper Joe Hart to thank for keeping them in the Cup with a 0-0 draw after an uninspired performance against Shrewsbury Town of the third tier. The England goalkeeper, returning to the club where he started his career, was handed a cap from the crowd as he battled against the slanting winter sun. He made a fine save from Mat Sadler with about 10 minutes to go until the interval and repeated the trick against Alex Rodman to keep the score at 0-0. The League One high-flyers continued to take the game to David Moyes's team in the second half but there were few clear-cut opportunities for either side.

Shrewsbury's Jon Nolan had a golden chance to seal a dramatic victory in the dying minutes of normal time but blazed over and the two sides will meet again at the



NOTTINGHAM: Nottingham Forest's US defender Eric Lichaj (2L) heads the first goal past Arsenal's Colombian goalkeeper David Ospina during the English FA Cup third round football match between Nottingham Forest and Arsenal at The City Ground in Nottingham. — AFP

London Stadium.

On Saturday, League Two Coventry City sent Premier League side Stoke City crashing out, prompting the sacking of Mark Hughes. In later games,

Tottenham host AFC Wimbledon while north London rivals Arsenal travel to Nottingham Forest, seeking to join the two Manchester clubs and Liverpool in the fourth-round draw. —AFP

Bernardeschi keeps Juventus on Napoli's heels

MILAN: Fernando Bernardeschi scored the only goal as champions Juventus kept Serie A leaders Napoli on their sights with a 1-0 win over Cagliari in Sardinia on Saturday. Napoli cemented their position in top spot before Italy's two-week winter break with 51 points from 20 games after seeing off Verona 2-0.

They are one point clear of Juventus with Inter Milan a distant third, nine points behind the leaders, after being held 1-1 at Fiorentina on Friday. Italian winger Bernardeschi nudged home on 74 minutes following a solo break by Douglas Costa down the right flank, but there were worries for Massimiliano Allegri's side with Argentina star Paulo Dybala limping off with a suspected hamstring strain.

Both Napoli's goals came in the second half against a dogged Verona, with Kalidou Koulibaly breaking the deadlock after 65 minutes in Naples and Jose Callejon sealing the win 13 minutes later.

Coach Maurizio Sarri remains cautious despite heading into the second half of the season ahead of the reigning six-time champions. "We know that Juventus have years of certainties—that they can safely close above 90 points, while we cannot say the same thing about ourselves," said the Napoli boss.

"We know that we must repeat last season's performances to get back into the Champions League and anything more than that is undiscovered territory."

Roma missed the chance to join Inter on 42 points, slipping to fifth after a shock 2-1 defeat to ten-man Atalanta in Rome. Atalanta—fresh from their Italian Cup defeat of Napoli—were two goals up by half-time through Andreas Cornelius and Marten de Roon.

Edin Dzeko reduced the deficit on 56 minutes but Roma failed to take advantage of playing the entire second half with an extra man on the pitch after de Roon was sent off for a second yellow card.

"We started well for 10 minutes, then fell apart and lost our confidence after going a goal behind," said Roma coach Eusebio Di Francesco. Midfielder Radja



CAGLIARI: Juventus' French midfielder Blaise Matuidi (R) vies for the ball with Cagliari's Italian midfielder Luca Cigarini during the Italian Serie A football match between Cagliari Calcio and Juventus at the Sardegna Arena stadium in Cagliari, on the Mediterranean island of Sardinia. — AFP

Nainggolan was dropped by Roma for posting a video of himself smoking, drinking and swearing on New Year's Eve. "You have to make difficult choices in life to do the right thing and from the next game Radja will be more fired up than ever to contribute to the cause," said Di Francesco.

IMMOBILE MAGIC

Lazio-like Roma with a game in hand—moved just two points behind Inter into fourth after Ciro Immobile hit four goals in a 5-2 goal blitz in against SPAL. Immobile is having another great season at Lazio after scoring 23 times last campaign, and moved two ahead of Inter's Mauro Icardi at the top of the Serie A scorers charts, with 20 goals in 19 games.

Spaniard Luis Alberto opened for Lazio after just five minutes with Immobile bagging a first-half hat-

trick, completing the scoreline five minutes after the break. "It's a magic time for us," said Immobile. "My goals come thanks to everyone's work, there were perfect assists on the first three. We can now enjoy the holidays after this win." Captain Leonardo Bonucci headed in his first AC Milan goal to see off Crotona 1-0 win at San Siro, further boosting the struggling side after their Italian Cup win over Inter. "The new year could not have started better," said the Italy defender of Milan who are on 28 points in eleventh position.

"The derby improved our confidence, our self-belief, and you could see that by how we took risks." Bottom club Benevento won their game second in a row, with Massimo Coda's brace giving them a 3-2 win over 10-man Sampdoria, while Andrey Galabinov scored late to move Genoa away from the relegation zone with a 1-0 at Sassuolo. — AFP

Spanish La Liga table

MADRID: Spanish La Liga table after yesterday's early game (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Barcelona	17	14	3	0	45	7	45
Atletico Madrid	18	11	6	1	27	8	39
Valencia	18	11	4	3	38	18	37
Real Madrid	16	9	4	3	30	14	31
Sevilla	18	9	2	7	23	27	29
Villarreal	17	8	3	6	24	20	27
Eibar	18	8	3	7	24	30	27
Leganes	17	7	3	7	13	14	21
Real Betis	18	7	3	8	30	34	24
Getafe	18	6	5	7	22	18	23
Real Sociedad	18	6	5	7	31	30	23
Girona	18	6	5	7	22	28	23
Celta Vigo	17	6	3	8	30	25	21
Athletic Bilbao	17	5	6	6	18	19	21
Espanol	17	5	5	7	14	21	20
Levante	17	3	9	5	15	22	18
Alaves	17	5	0	12	13	25	15
Deportivo La Coruna	7	4	3	10	19	34	15
Malaga	17	3	2	12	13	31	11
Las Palmas	18	3	2	13	14	40	11

Cagliari apologises to Matuidi for fan racism

ROME: Serie A club Cagliari apologised on Sunday to Blaise Matuidi for the racist abuse fans directed at the Juventus winger during the Italian champions 1-0 win in Sardinia on Saturday, the second time he has received such abuse in as many weeks. Writing in French on their Twitter account, Cagliari apologised for the abuse, which took place late in the first half of a tense encounter at the Sardegna Arena following a clash between Matuidi and a Cagliari defender. "You are a fantastic player and an example to young people. We want to apologise to you if you were insulted for the colour of your skin at the Sardegna Arena," said the club.

"The Sardinian people want nothing to do with racism. Only ignorance can explain certain behaviour. Respect." After hearing the abuse from the stands Matuidi rushed to referee Giampaolo Calvarese but the official ignored the French international's pleas to intervene and Medhi Benatia and Paulo Dybala had to calm their teammate down. "Today I experienced racism during the match. Weak people try to intimidate with hate, I am not a hater and can only be sorry for those who set bad examples," Matuidi said in a statement to AFP. "Football is a way to spread equality, passion and inspiration and this is what I am here for. Peace."

On Sunday Matuidi's old club expressed their support for their former player, saying on Twitter that "The Paris Saint-Germain family is with you". The abuse Matuidi received at Cagliari came after similar racist chants directed at him during Juve's 3-1 win at Hellas Verona late last month, for which Verona were fined 20,000 euros (\$24,000) by the Italian league. — AFP

Kane scores twice as Tottenham beat AFC Wimbledon

LONDON: Harry Kane took his goal tally for the season in all competitions to 27 with a quickfire double in Tottenham Hotspur's 3-0 victory over third-tier AFC Wimbledon in the FA Cup third round at Wembley Stadium yesterday.

Premier League Tottenham were labouring to break down the visitors before Kane effectively sealed the tie with goals in the 64th and 66th minutes. Jan Vertonghen added his side's third.

Wimbledon had proved stubborn opposition until a Moussa Sissoko cross found Kane who slid in to prod the ball home. Kane made it 2-0 when he turned in an attempted shot by team mate Kyle Walker-Peters from close range.

Vertonghen fired home a spectacular third goal from distance eight minutes later for his first Tottenham goal for four years. AFC Wimbledon, founded in 2002 to replace the existing club that became Milton Keynes Dons and who have worked their way back up through the various leagues, came close to scoring in the first half when Jimmy Abdou's shot hit the bar. — Reuters



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English midfielder Dele Alli (C) controls the ball during the English FA Cup third round football match between Tottenham Hotspur and AFC Wimbledon at Wembley Stadium in London. — AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE

Malaga v Espanyol 23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3

12 Unstoppable Mikaela Shiffrin wins fourth race in a row



14 Kyrgios claims Brisbane title with scintillating display



15 Newport stun Leeds, West Ham survive FA Cup test



NOTTINGHAM: Nottingham Forest's English striker Ben Brereton (R) misses a chance at goal during the English FA Cup third round football match between Nottingham Forest and Arsenal at The City Ground in Nottingham. — AFP

Arsenal dumped out of FA Cup

Forest continued to probe an inexperienced Arsenal line-up

LONDON: FA Cup holders Arsenal were sensationally dumped out of the competition by Nottingham Forest yesterday, joining Leeds United as big-name casualties on a day of shocks.

Championship side Forest revived memories of their glory years under Brian Clough, putting 13-times winners Arsenal to the sword in an incident-packed 4-2 win at the City Ground. "It was good. My wife told me

that if I score a hat-trick at any point this year then I get a dog, so I was trying to get the penalty," said two-goal hero Eric Lichaj.

"Vaughany (David Vaughan) told me politely-I won't say what he said to me-to go away," US international Lichaj opened the scoring for the home side with a header midway through the first half but Per Mertesacker equalised for the much-changed away

team just three minutes later.

However, Forest continued to probe an inexperienced Arsenal line-up and got their reward just before half-time when Lichaj volleyed in spectacularly from the edge of the box. Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, serving a touchline ban, was forced to watch powerless from the stands as Rob Holding conceded a penalty that teenager Ben Brereton converted in the 64th

minute to stretch the home side's lead to 3-1.

At Wembley, Harry Kane broke the deadlock against AFC Wimbledon with just under half an hour to go before Kane again and Jan Vertonghen made it 3-0 to put the game beyond the reach of the visitors. On Saturday, League Two Coventry City sent Premier League side Stoke City crashing out, prompting the sacking of Mark Hughes. — AFP

Messi marks new milestone in Barcelona victory

MADRID: Lionel Messi marked his 400th appearance in La Liga with the opening goal as Barcelona eased to a 3-0 win over Levante at the Camp Nou yesterday.

Messi's 365th goal in Spain's top flight came inside 12 minutes, with Luis Suarez adding the second before the interval and Paulinho completing the victory late on as Barcelona stretched their lead at the top of the table back to nine points over Atletico Madrid.

The Catalans are still unbeaten in La Liga this season and have Philippe Coutinho to come in, with the Brazilian expected to be officially unveiled as a Barcelona player on Monday following the announcement of his

160 million-euro (\$192 million) move from Liverpool. The 25-year-old Brazilian, whose transfer is the third-biggest in football history, was not in attendance at the Camp Nou as the club's previous record recruit Ousmane Dembele started. The Frenchman, signed for 105 million euros from Borussia Dortmund at the start of the campaign, was included in the line-up for the first time since tearing his hamstring nearly four months ago.

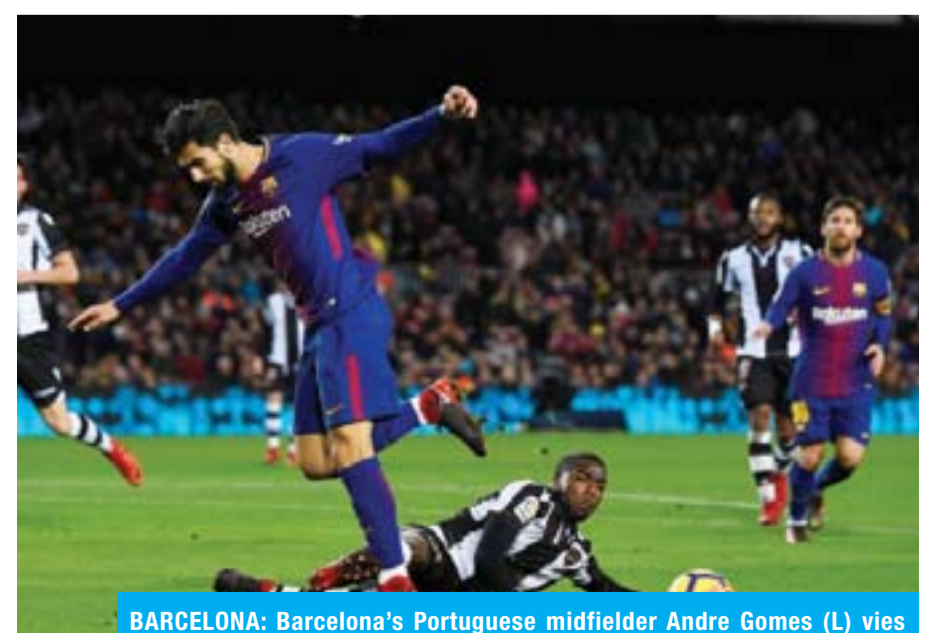
He came close to scoring on a couple of occasions, including from one 20-yard strike that was beaten away by Levante's ex-Barcelona goalkeeper Oier Olazabal. But it was Messi who broke the deadlock from a Jordi Alba assist, a combination that has proved fruitful on so many occasions this season. The Argentine's flighted pass found Alba, and the left-back headed the ball down for Messi, arriving in the area, to finish first-time in off the far post for his 16th league goal of the campaign. The second goal arrived seven minutes before the interval, as Suarez controlled Sergi Roberto's fine ball into the box before firing home.

It was the Uruguayan's 400th professional goal, his 131st for Barca putting him seventh on the club's all-time list of leading scorers. Levante, who have now won just once in 13 La Liga games and are hovering just above the drop zone, did not threaten a comeback in the second half.

A little over half-full Camp Nou did afford Dembele an ovation as he came off in the 67th minute to be replaced by Nelson Semedo. And Barca rounded out the victory in the third minute of added time as Messi's low ball across goal at the end of a jinking run was turned in by Paulinho.

Atletico beat Getafe 2-0 at the Wanda Metropolitano on Saturday, with Diego Costa scoring and then being sent off in his first league appearance since returning to the club from Chelsea. Valencia are 11 points behind Barcelona in third after coming from behind to beat Girona 2-1 at Mestalla on Saturday.

Real Madrid are a massive 17 points adrift of the leaders in fourth spot, although they do have two games in hand, including away to Celta Vigo. — AFP



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Portuguese midfielder Andre Gomes (L) vies with Levante's US defender Shaq Moore during the Spanish league football match FC Barcelona vs Levante UD at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona yesterday. — AFP

Business

MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2018

18 US dollar remains subdued as markets look to fundamentals**18** Venezuela to issue \$5.9 bn in oil-backed cryptocurrency**22** Researchers eye patches to solve Intel chip flaws

HONG KONG: This file photo taken on December 18, 2017 shows a man using his phone as he walks past ATM machines (L and R) for digital currency bitcoin. — AFP

Bitcoin blitz: Japan embraces cryptocurrency

Legal tender in the world's third-biggest economy

TOKYO: Known as "Miss Bitcoin" on Japanese social media, Mai Fujimoto says she invests all of her savings in the virtual currency that has proved a huge hit in Japan. "I convert all my disposable income into cryptocurrency," the 32-year-old tells AFP. "I've been doing this for nearly a year now. I convert all my savings into cryptocurrency instead of putting them in a bank." She is not alone in her enthusiasm.

Bitcoin is recognized as legal tender in the world's third-biggest economy and nearly one-third of global bitcoin transactions in December were denominated in yen, according to specialized website ipbitcoin.com. This has led to many analysts speculating that the famous Mrs Watanabe—shorthand for Japanese individual foreign exchange investors—is behind the recent volatile frenzy that pushed the price of bitcoin up to nearly \$20,000 before dropping back. But why Japan?

Firstly, unlike regional rivals China and South Korea, whose regulators have clamped down hard on the crypto-currency, Japan has wel-

comed it with open arms. In April, Japan passed a law recognizing bitcoin and other virtual currencies as legal tender—while also stressing the need for transparency and financial stability. And there is little doubt that Japan's global weight grew after China closed down bitcoin trading platforms last year.

Ultra-low rates

Some well-known Japanese businesses have started accepting payment in bitcoin and one firm made waves when it said it would pay part of its employees' salaries in the currency if they wish. "The involvement of big companies, the sense of security derived from government approval and media exposure really brought in a whole new group of people to the market," said Koji Higashi, a well-known commentator on the crypto-business in Japan.

Another factor contributing to a bitcoin boom in Japan: ultra-low interest rates from the

deflation-battling central bank that has left investors scratching their heads for places to find returns on their cash. While Japanese are generally considered risk-averse investors, they



Recent frenzy pushed the price up

are also well-versed in the complexities of market trading, especially in foreign exchange.

A lot of ordinary Japanese people are trading "high levels" of money on the foreign exchange

markets, said Yuzo Kano, founder and chief executive of bitFlyer, Japan's main bitcoin trading platform. A lot of these stay-at-home FX day traders—the mythical Mrs Watanabe—are now turning their hand to bitcoin, noted analysts from Deutsche Bank in a recent report. Analyst Higashi, on the other hand, thinks that the blanket domestic and international media coverage of the rise of bitcoin has prompted many Japanese to join the party. "Everyone else is doing it now and I heard they are making a lot of money. I have to get on it now." That's a very Japanese way of thinking," he told AFP. "To be honest, I am not sure if people are buying into bitcoin based on rational decision-making. It feels more of a short-term irrational mania to me," he added.

Not all plain sailing

Whatever the reason, "Miss Bitcoin" has been a convert since 2012. "At the time, I was

working with children and creating an online donation platform. And for the first time, I learned how expensive it is to send money abroad," Fujimoto recalled. "So, I was really impressed when I heard that I don't have to go through banks if I use bitcoin payment," added the businesswoman.

She snapped up her first bitcoin for 1,200 yen (\$10) in 2012. Yesterday, it was trading at \$16,726. But the cryptocurrency mania has not been all plain sailing in Japan. In 2014, Tokyo-based exchange platform MtGox filed for bankruptcy, with French CEO Mark Karpeles saying it had lost nearly half a billion dollars' worth of the digital currency in a possible theft. And another factor may end up cooling the enthusiasm of individual investors—profits made from bitcoin trading are considered as "miscellaneous income" and subject to a higher tax rate of 55 percent. "Now, a lot of traders are struggling to calculate the amount to be taxed and I think there will be a lot of tax evasion scandals in the near future," said Higashi. — AFP

Asia taking different approaches to bitcoin

TOKYO: From clampdowns to a warm embrace, regulators in Asia have taken very different approaches to dealing with the bitcoin phenomenon. Here are the developments in a few key markets:

Chinese clampdown

In mid-September, China's central bank, the People's Bank of China (PBOC), told virtual currency trading platforms based in Beijing and Shanghai to cease market operations. Authorities also clamped down on ethereum and any other electronic units that are exchanged online without being regulated by any country.

The PBOC said it wanted to fight "speculation" around the crypto-currencies, which "seriously disrupted the financial system". This came after the National Internet Finance Association of China—an offshoot of the PBOC—drew up a damning report on virtual currencies, saying they were "increasingly used as a tool in criminal activities" such as drug trafficking. Experts say

Chinese authorities are also concerned about possible capital flight which could harm the value of the yuan. However, the authorities in Beijing have not yet attacked bitcoin mining—the creation of the digital currency. Between 60 and 70 percent of new bitcoins are created in China.

Korean concern

Hyper-wired South Korea was also a hotbed for virtual currencies such as bitcoin, accounting for some 20 percent of global transactions, about 10 times its share of the world economy. But South Korean authorities late last year banned financial institutions from dealing in virtual currencies on fears of a bubble fuelled by retail speculators. About one million South Koreans, many of them small-time investors, are estimated to own bitcoins and demand is so high that prices are around 20 percent higher than in the US.

Initial coin offerings (ICOs) — where companies sell newly mined cryptocurrencies to

investors for real money—were also outlawed. The government has also pledged to strengthen investor protection rules, in an effort to curb speculation and potential fraud. Announcing the ban on ICOs in September, South Korea's Financial Services Commission declared "cryptocurrencies are neither money nor currency nor financial products". Youbit, a South Korean exchange trading bitcoin and other virtual currencies, declared itself bankrupt in December after being hacked for the second time this year. North Korea was accused of being behind the first attack.

Singapore caution

Singapore's central bank has issued a warning over cryptocurrencies, cautioning the public about the risk of jumping in on the "bitcoin bubble". The Monetary Authority of Singapore noted they are not backed by any central bank and are unregulated, which means those who lose their investments have no grounds for redress under Singapore law. Yusho Liu, co-founder of Singapore-based cryptocurrency wallet Coinhako, says demand has been soaring, with transactions up around 10-fold over the past year.

However, while regulators have been prepared to offer a cautious free rein to the digital units,



TOKYO: A man walks past a poster that informs customers that bitcoin can be used in this shop. — AFP

"financial institutions and service providers have been rather resistant", Liu told AFP. "In fact, I believe that only 30-40 percent of the market

potential is fulfilled because of the friction generated by such matters. This is the key missing piece of Singapore being the fintech hub," said Liu. — AFP

NBK money market report

US dollar remains subdued as markets look to fundamentals

KUWAIT: The US dollar remained subdued in the first week of 2017 as markets turned back to the fundamentals of the US economy after the fiscal tax plan was finally delivered. Despite being at near full employment for the majority of 2017, inflation remained subdued when removing the effects of oil prices. The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation index, the core personal consumption expenditure actually decreased from 1.9% to 1.5% over the course of the year while headline inflation was last at 2.2%. Nonetheless, a majority of the FOMC members held on to the belief that low unemployment will eventually lead to a higher rate of inflation.

Not even the FOMC minutes of their December meeting were able to move markets. The minutes contained few surprises and came as expected. The minutes restated the committee's positive outlook for the economy and that further gradual increases in the federal funds rate would be "warranted" to achieve the FOMC's dual goal of maximum employment and inflation close to 2.0%. More importantly, policymakers indicated that their views regarding the outlook for inflation were "little changed" despite the decline in core inflation earlier in the year.

The US monthly employment came back weaker than expected aiding in the US dollar's stagnation. Non-farm payrolls rose by 148,000 against an expected 190,000 jobs. The unemployment rate however remained unchanged at 4.1%. The most anticipated figure was wage growth however, which has a sizable effect on inflation. As wages grow, consumers spend more and spur economic activity increasing prices. The average hourly earnings for December met expectations increasing by 0.3% from 0.1% in November.

The US dollar index remained in a tight range throughout the week as few developments were able to nudge the dollar to a new direction. The US dollar index opened the week at 92.240 and closed at 91.949. Looking at treasuries, the 2-year note yield, which is the most sensitive to shifts in interest-rate expectations, moved up 4 basis points to 1.96% while the 10-year note increased to 2.476%.

The euro was well supported at its new highs as the euro zone economy closed out the year with the strongest growth in nearly seven years. IHS Markit's Final Composite Purchasing Managers' Index which is seen as a good overall growth indicator for the euro zone, rose to 58.1 in December from 57.5 in November. The EUR/USD opened the week at 1.2001 and closed at 1.2028.

The British pound also maintained its newly acquired levels as economic data released over the week pointed to the economy picking up speed at the end of last year with businesses growing more optimistic for the year ahead. Furthermore, markets are cautiously waiting to

see new developments on Brexit negotiations before taking new positions. The GBP/USD opened the week at 1.3512 and close at 1.3568.

The Japanese yen reversed course this week moving higher mostly reacting to economic developments in the US. Renewed tensions between the US and North Korea, positive ADP non-farm payrolls report and slightly hawkish federal minutes saw the USD/JPY pair increase earlier in the week from 112.65 to a high of 113.30. The yen managed to close the week at 113.06 after the disappointing US employment report was released.

Oil prices fell on slightly Friday, dropping from highs last seen in 2015, as soaring US production undermined the rally from December that was driven by tightening supply and political tensions in OPEC member Iran. The political tensions in Iran, the third-largest producer in OPEC helped pushed prices higher over the past 2 weeks. Benchmark Brent crude oil opened the week at 66.55 and closed a 67.65.

US Manufacturing PMI

US factory activity increased more than expected in December boosted by a surge in new orders growth in a further sign of strong economic momentum at the end of 2017. The Institute for Supply Management said its index of national factory activity jumped to a reading of 59.7 last month, the second-highest reading in six years. The survey also showed manufacturers upbeat about the economic outlook strong international sales.

EUROPE & UK

UK construction PMI

Britain's construction PMI showed growth slowed down last month despite the progression in Brexit negotiations. Construction has been bogged down in 2017 after the Brexit uncertainties deterred and delayed investments from the commercial sector. However, residential building activity expanded for the sixteenth consecutive month making it the key driver of growth. The construction PMI was at 52.2 in December, down from 53.1 in November.

UK manufacturing PMI

Britain's manufacturers finished the year on a positive note amid resurgent eurozone growth lifting demand for goods. The UK manufacturing PMI showed an average of 57 in the three months to December, in the strongest reading since the three months to June 2014. The surveys showed activity and new orders expanding throughout the past 17 months in the UK, as firms reported increasing production in response to new orders and the launch of new product lines at home and abroad.



UK services PMI

Britain's services PMI indicated a rise in business activity in December while new order growth eased to a 16-month low. Higher levels of business activity have now been recorded for seventeen months running supported by the resilient economic backdrop and rising consumer spending. However, service providers noted that Brexit-related uncertainty continued to hold back clients' willingness to spend at the end of 2017. At the same time, they mentioned the increase in average prices charged for their services due to the rising costs from inflation. The seasonally adjusted UK Services PMI registered 54.2 in December, up from 53.8 in November.

ASIA

China manufacturing

The manufacturing sector proved to be tolerant despite new government regulation on pollution and the high degree of financial leverage. The manufacturing index was elevated to a four months high in December, thanks to robust demand. The index increased 0.7

points to 51.5. Business morale edged higher, however business entities claimed subdued client demand and changes to national policies dampened confidence at the end of the year. Overall, conditions in the manufacturing sector improved in December, supporting the notion that economic activity has stabilized last year and performed better than anticipated. However, some downward pressure is expected on growth due to tightening monetary policy and strengthening oversight on local government financing.

Australia trade balance

Australia's trade balance came out at a \$628 million deficit, underperforming analyst expectations for an A\$550million surplus. The previous month's trade balance figures were also revised lower from an A\$105million surplus to an A\$302million deficit. The data reported little change in exports from the month prior, while imports rose roughly 1%. This marks 2 months of negative trade balance performance in Australia, which has not occurred since October of 2016.

Venezuela to issue \$5.9 bn in oil-backed cryptocurrency

CARACAS: President Nicolas Maduro said on Friday that Venezuela would issue 100 million units of its new oil-backed cryptocurrency in coming days, although it is unclear whether any investors will want to purchase the "petro" at a time when the OPEC member is going through a deep economic crisis and its leftist government has little credibility. Socialist Maduro surprised many last month when he announced the launch of the cryptocurrency, to be backed by Venezuela's oil, gas, gold and diamond reserves, as a way to circumvent U.S. sanctions that have hurt Venezuela's access to international banks.

Maduro specified on Friday that each unit of the currency would be pegged to Venezuela's oil basket, which this week averaged \$59.07 per barrel, according to the oil ministry. That implies the total cryptocurrency issued would be worth just over \$5.9 billion. There is much confusion, however, over how the mechanism will work. Opposition politicians have already panned the project as a fanciful idea doomed to fail and useless at

getting food to the millions who are suffering from product shortages and the world's highest inflation.

Maduro says the cryptocurrency will usher in the "21st century" and boost Venezuela's access to hard currency. "I have ordered the emission of 100 million petros with the legal sustenance of Venezuela's certified and legalized oil wealth," said Maduro in a state television address. "Every petro will be equal in value to Venezuela's oil barrel."

Venezuela has the world's largest oil reserves, according to OPEC, and makes some 95 percent of its export revenue from oil. Critics say the government has squandered wealth from a decade-long oil boom and that without reforms any influx of resources will also be burned through. Strict currency controls have forced people onto the black market, on which a dollar can buy 137,000 bolivars. The country's strongest official rate, meanwhile, is 10 bolivars per dollar.

That fall in value combined with money printing by the central bank is behind what many analysts are measuring as hyperinflation. Local economic consultancy Ecanalítica said prices rose more than 80 percent in December alone. Money supply, according to the central bank, was up more than 1,000 percent last year. Maduro said the cryptocurrency issuance would take place through virtual exchanges in the coming day, but did not give further details. Cryptocurrencies are decentralized and their success relies on transparency, clear rules and equal treatment of all involved.—Reuters

UK new car sales record biggest drop since 2009

LONDON: British new car sales recorded their biggest drop since 2009 last year, falling 5.7 percent due to uncertainty over potential new diesel charges and weakening consumer confidence since Brexit, an industry body said on Friday. Demand for new diesel cars plunged 17.1 percent, and with some buyers switching to petrol motors, average CO2 emissions for new cars rose for the first time in two decades, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) said.

Total registrations ended 2017 at 2.54 million, with drops among both business and private consumers, and are set to fall up to 7 percent this year, the SMMT forecast. Britain said last year it would hike the levy on new diesel cars

that do not meet the latest emissions standards after months of uncertainty over a potential diesel scrappage scheme and confusion over government plans to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2040.

Since the 2015 Volkswagen emissions cheating scandal, some major cities including Madrid, Paris and Athens have announced plans particularly focused on cutting diesel emissions including bans, fines and restrictions. Once touted as a cleaner alternative to petrol, which emits more CO2, diesel has come under fire for releasing other toxic fumes. Car sales in Britain have previously been a leading indicator for the performance of the economy and last year's drop is the biggest since demand nosedived in 2009 after the financial crisis, but comes after record highs in 2015 and 2016. Sales in December fell 14.4 percent and SMMT Chief Executive Mike Hawes said further drops were likely in the coming months.

Brexit blues

"The two main reasons are business-led and consumer confidence and the confusion around diesel which has caused hold-off," he said of last year's

fall. "The first quarter is going to be tough and March (last year) in particular was an all-time record month. We ain't going to get that next March." Britain's automotive sector is also concerned its cars could face tariffs of up to 10 percent and be hit by customs delays if the government fails to strike the right Brexit deal.

There are investment decisions which are pending as companies await clarification on the terms of a transitional deal which will bridge Britain's exit from the EU in March 2019 into a new relationship with the bloc, Hawes said. "Some of those decisions are overdue, they need clarity urgently and certainly the turn of the first quarter is what they have been saying to me," he said. Honda is one of several carmakers considering contingency plans involving possible extra warehousing and stockpiling of parts and has said it needs clarity by March on a transitional deal. Hawes said any additional cost borne by British plants could hit the sector. "That's the thin end of the wedge ... How do you secure that next piece of investment when you're less competitive because you've got to warehouse?" —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.683
Indian Rupees	4.26
Pakistani Rupees	2.737
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.968
Nepali Rupees	2.970
Singapore Dollar	227.860
Hongkong Dollar	38.683
Bangladesh Taka	3.638
Philippine Peso	6.056
Thai Baht	9.323

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.654
Qatari Riyal	83.070
Omani Riyal	785.473
Bahraini Dinar	803.110
UAE Dirham	82.366

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.000
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.992
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.214
Tunisian Dinar	123.700
Jordanian Dinar	426.420
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.015
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.500

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.250
Euro	365.120
Sterling Pound	410.610

Canadian dollar	242.280
Turkish lira	80.710
Swiss Franc	312.400
Australian Dollar	238.630
US Dollar Buying	301.500

GOLD

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer Selling Rate

US Dollar	301.900
Canadian Dollar	241.565
Sterling Pound	409.475
Euro	364.345
Swiss Frank	295.590
Bahrain Dinar	801.265
UAE Dirhams	82.585
Qatari Riyals	83.410
Saudi Riyals	81.365
Jordanian Dinar	427.090
Egyptian Pound	17.059
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.969
Indian Rupees	4.742
Pakistani Rupees	2.734
Bangladesh Taka	3.662
Philippines Peso	6.078
Cyprus pound	17.965
Japanese Yen	3.675
Syrian Pound	1.585
Nepalese Rupees	2.967

Malaysian Ringgit	75.265
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.885
Thai Bhat	10.280
Turkish Lira	80.265

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.405259	0.412759
Czech Korune	0.006285	0.015585
Danish Krone	0.044942	0.049942
Euro	0.358669	0.366169
Georgian Lari	0.134621	0.134621
Hungarian 0.001139	0.001329	
Norwegian Krone	0.033560	0.038760
Romanian Leu	0.064650	0.081500
Russian ruble	0.005300	0.005300
Slovakia	0.009000	0.019000
Swedish Krona	0.032118	0.038118
Swiss Franc	0.303918	0.314918
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.229772	0.241772
New Zealand Dollar	0.210814	0.220314
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.238480	0.247480
US Dollars	0.298150	0.302570
US Dollars Mint	0.298650	0.302570
Asia		
Bangladeshi Taka	0.003284	0.003868

Chinese Yuan	0.044864	0.048464
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036760	0.039510
Indian Rupee	0.004138	0.004779
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002596	0.002776
Korean Won	0.000274	0.000289
Malaysian Ringgit	0.071671	0.077671
Nepalese Rupee	0.003016	0.003186
Pakistan Rupee	0.002559	0.002849
Philippine Peso	0.005952	0.006252
Singapore Dollar	0.225858	0.232585
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001734	0.002314
Taiwan	0.010370	0.010550
Thai Baht	0.009046	0.009596
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.794943	0.803443
Egyptian Pound	0.014704	0.020422
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000185	0.000245
Jordanian Dinar	0.421693	0.430693
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000155	0.000255
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022073	0.046073
Omani Riyal	0.778747	0.784427
Qatar Riyal	0.078731	0.083671
Saudi Riyal	0.079513	0.080813
Syrian Pound	0.001281	0.001501
Tunisian Dinar	0.117831	0.125831
Turkish Lira	0.075810	0.086110
UAE Dirhams	0.080866	0.082566
Yemeni Riyal	0.000982	0.001062

Business

KAMCO REPORT

GCC IPOs: 2017 - the year that was

The IPO market in the GCC had a robust year in 2017, after witnessing muted activity in 2015 & 2016, as trends exhibited during 2017 was higher than the prior two years combined. Total number of corporate IPOs and REIT IPOs combined in the region jumped to 25 issuances from 4 issuances witnessed in 2016 and 6 issuances witnessed in 2015, and was the highest since 2007. Capital issuances via IPOs was also at a three year high, as capital raised reached USD 3.2 Bn, compared to USD 0.7 Bn in 2016 and USD 1.5 Bn in 2015. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that corporate issuers were still vary of volatility in GCC markets, oil prices, and geopolitical concerns, barring which more frontline corporates would have taken the IPO route in 2017, in our view.

Global IPOs jump 49% y-o-y in 2017

The global backdrop for IPOs was also extremely robust, as deal activity witnessed in 2017 was the highest in terms of number of deals since 2007. The number of IPOs globally jumped by 49% y-o-y in 2017 to reach 1,624 deals, from 1,093 deals in 2016, according to EY. They also mentioned that proceeds in 2017 also surged by 40% y-o-y from USD 134.5 Bn in 2016 to USD 188.8 Bn in 2017. In terms of regional participation Asia Pacific reportedly continued to dominate global activity both in terms of number of deals and proceeds in 2017, as they accounted for more than 58% of deal numbers and 39% of the proceeds.

UAE accounts for 70% of capital issuances in 2017

In the GCC, Saudi Arabia continued to provide leadership for the GCC IPO market, as they witnessed the highest number of IPOs. The number of IPOs in Saudi Arabia jumped to 16 in 2017 from 4 deals witnessed in 2016. In terms of proceeds however, UAE was the major player, accounting for over 70% of the total capital issuances, largely due to the two mega IPOs of Emaar Development (USD 1.3 Bn) and ADNOC



(USD 851 Mn). Total proceeds came to over USD 2.2 Bn, while Saudi Arabia followed with capital issuances of USD 767 Mn. Unlike in 2016, where Saudi Arabia was the lone participant in GCC's IPO markets, 2017 saw more widespread participation from other GCC countries. Though activity amongst corporates in the main exchanges did not pick up substantially from the previous year in terms of the number of issues, REIT issues and parallel market IPOs more than compensated for this moderate activity and saw several issuances in 2017.

Stronger secondary markets would be needed for frontline

KAMCO Research believes that the outlook for IPO markets in the GCC in 2018 will continue to depend on the alleviation of geopolitical risks, stability of oil prices, better macroeconomic data points and stable secondary capital markets.

Though we feel larger corporates would look at the aforementioned conditions to go ahead with their IPOs, we expect parallel market activity in Saudi Arabia to pick up, especially with the Saudi CMA's decision to give foreign investors complete access to the Nomu index in 2018. We further expect more

REITs in the region to be listed in 2018 as well. Moreover, apart from the anticipated Aramco IPO from Saudi Arabia, more state-owned enterprises (SOE) and quasi-government owned assets in the GCC are expected take the primary market (IPO) route in the medium term.

Industrials & technology were most active sectors globally

In terms of exchanges which contributed to the global IPO activity, the NYSE led all exchanges in terms of capital proceeds and reportedly saw proceeds of USD 30 Bn in 2017, followed by Shanghai (SSE) (USD 20.2 Bn) and Hong Kong & Growth Enterprise market (USD 15.6 Bn), as per EY. Greater China reportedly was the leader in deal numbers and contributed to 36% of global primary deals. The most active sectors globally by number of deals were reportedly Industrials and technology, while financial services corporates led the amount of capital issuances, followed by technology and industrials. The IPO market in the US also saw robust activity as the number of IPOs across the NYSE and Nasdaq jumped by 55% to 174 in 2017, while proceeds rose by 84% y-o-y to reach USD 39.5 Bn.

Oman & Qatar saw participation in the GCC

Apart from Saudi Arabia and UAE, Oman saw significant activity in their primary capital markets, albeit from Muscat Securities Market's parallel market, as five IPOs were witnessed, four of which were Insurance players - Al Ahlia Insurance, Vision Insurance, National Life & General Insurance and Oman Qatar Insurance.

The total issuance proceeds in Oman amounted to USD 112 Mn in 2017. In Qatar, the sole deal witnessed was that of Investment Holding Group with proceeds of USD 135 Mn, as corporates remained vary of the market conditions, as the benchmark and sectoral indices plunged during the year amidst regional diplomatic rifts.

Though sectoral participation was broad-based and couple of sectors such as Real Estate and the Energy sector saw large single deals, the most active industry sub-segment in the GCC's IPO market in 2017 was clearly Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), as Saudi Arabia saw six REITs being listed.

UAE also saw one of its exchanges, Nasdaq Dubai, list a REIT - ENBD REIT. Total Issuances from REITs in the GCC

amounted to USD 536 Mn. Moreover, the demand for most of the REITs was strong, as the issues were heavily oversubscribed, which was in particular evident in the IPO of Mulika REIT which was 20 times oversubscribed, while Jadwa REIT Al Haramain Fund and Musharaka REIT were reportedly 12.5 times and 10.2 times oversubscribed respectively.

Most of the corporate IPO activity in the GCC in terms of deal numbers was however dominated by the parallel markets from Saudi Arabia and Oman. This came as a result of Saudi Arabia launching its parallel market iNomu in an initiative to give small and medium enterprises (SMEs) the opportunity to raise capital, as the parallel market listing requirements are lighter than required by the main Tadawul index.

IPO markets globally in 2017 were aided by secondary market conditions as global markets performed well, with the MSCI World index gaining by 21.6% (2016: +5.6%), with both developed markets (+20.1%) and emerging markets (+34.3%) ending the year with strong performances. Nevertheless, higher activity in GCC's IPO markets was held back by volatility and a mixed performance from frontline GCC indices. IPO deal activity in 2018 is expected to start off with Saudi Arabia leading the way with more REIT IPOs, as Al Rajhi Capital is expected to open Al Rajhi REIT for subscription, along with Al Ahli REIT from NCB Capital.

Other IPOs that are expected reportedly include Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Development reportedly listing 30% of its property management unit. In the UAE, Union Properties (DFM) is expected to take the IPO route, as it plans the sale of its facilities management unit. Bahrain is expected to participate in the corporate IPO market in 2018 as well, along with a REIT IPO reportedly expected in HI-18. The growing trend of state owned enterprises and quasi government entities listing their subsidiary businesses is expected to continue in 2018.

Wanda mulls sport unit IPO, sale of overseas assets

HONG KONG: China's Dalian Wanda Group is considering a Hong Kong listing for its sports assets as part of efforts to rationalize its portfolio that could also include other sales, according to five people familiar with the situation. The conglomerate last month tapped investment banks for a potential initial public offering of its sports businesses, three of the sources said. Citic Securities, China's largest brokerage, is one of the banks involved, added one of them. A spokesman for Citic Securities declined to comment.

Wanda's businesses range from real estate to football and cinemas but it has been rattled in the past year by a government-led crackdown on overseas deals and high leverage. The company is owned by Wang Jianlin, one of China's richest men. An IPO of Wanda's sports assets would include Infront Sports & Media AG, a Swiss sports marketing company and World Triathlon Corp, the organizer and promoter of the Ironman race, according to three of the people. The two were acquired in 2015 for \$1.2 billion and \$650 million respectively.

The share offering would also include Wanda's smaller sports assets in China, such as cycling and basketball leagues, one of them said. The public float would not involve Wanda's 20 percent stake in the Spanish football club Atletico Madrid, valued at 67 million euros after a recent capital raise, the source said. The IPO would most likely take place in Hong Kong, but bankers have also pitched for a US listing, according to the people.

Sunseeker's future growth

Wanda is separately looking to sell Sunseeker International, a British yacht maker it bought in 2013 for \$495 million, two other sources said, but this was denied in a subsequent statement on Friday from Sunseeker's CEO Phil Popham. Popham said the company had under Wanda's ownership turned around to record a profit of 6 million pounds (\$8.1 million) in 2016 from losses of more than 30 million pounds previously. The figures are on an earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) basis.

He said Wanda remained totally committed to supporting Sunseeker's future growth but that discussions are taking place with appropriate strategic partners that could assist with the company's future development objectives. Wanda declined to comment. The sources for this story could not be named as the plans are confidential. Wanda's interest in property, sports and entertainment - accounting for more than \$13 billion of its deals in the past five years - ran into official opposition last year when Beijing labelled overseas deals in those areas "irrational". In addition to sports, its holdings also include the cinema chain AMC Entertainment Holdings and movie studio Legendary Entertainment.

The company is also considering the merits of a pre-IPO funding round for the sports unit, according to one of the people. All plans are still at an early stage however as Wanda is seeking a chief financial officer for the sports business to lead the fundraising efforts, said another of the people.

Property forms the basis of the Wanda empire - its mixed use Wanda Plaza developments are common across China - but this too has put pressure on Wang's business. Last year, Chinese regulators told banks to stop providing funding for several of its overseas acquisitions as Beijing looks to curb the conglomerate's offshore buying spree. — Reuters

KFH Group traded sukuk hit USD 16.6 bn

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House Group (KFH-Group) volume traded in the Sukuk market reached USD 16.6 billion for the year 2017 i.e. a growth of 45% over to the same period last year. Such volume is yet another outstanding achievement to be added to KFH record as a pri-

mary dealer and a regional and global Sukuk market maker. This also confirms the efficiency of KFH performance and the confidence of investors, not to mention the key role of the bank in activating the Sukuk market.

Group Chief Treasury Officer at KFH, Abdulwahab Essa Al-Roshood said that KFH occupied a great share of the secondary market Sukuk trading, indicating this volume of trading has contributed significantly to the increase of liquidity and to the support of Islamic financial markets. He added, in a press release, that KFH managed in 2017 to achieve remarkable development in the Sukuk market at the regional and global levels as it motivated and encouraged a number of conventional and Islamic financial institutions to enter the market and take part in the trading.

The surge in KFH-Group traded Sukuk volume in 2017 is considerable owing to the increase in sovereign issuances in the GCC governments.

One of the main issuers is the KSA with Sukuk issues reaching total of USD 9bn in which KFH became a market maker for this Sukuk. Oman Government is another big player which entered the Sukuk market with a USD 2bn issue.

These issues reflected positively on KFH total volume. Al-Roshood reiterated the focus on the Group efforts, indicating that managing KFH Group efforts contributed in reinforcing leadership in the Sukuk market, especially that the Group banks are spread over key regions including Turkey, Malaysia and Bahrain.

Final Najma account draw event at Avenues

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently held a special festivity at the Avenues to conduct the final mega Najma account draw in addition to the final draw on a Mercedes Coupe for participants in the 'Transfer Your Salary' campaign. The draw was conducted with the presence of the representative of the ministry of commerce and industry, Abdul Aziz Ashkanani and aired live on Nabdh Al-Kuwait radio 88.8 FM. The festivity was also attended by CBK's credit manager and acting individual banking services manager, Sahar Al-Rumaih, assistant individual banking services manager, Hameed Suleiman, CBK's assistant manager for PR and media, Amani Al-Wer'a and CBK's assistant IT manager, Bader Qamhiya.



Business

Data machine cranks back into high gear

LONDON: Data in the week ahead will enable investors to gauge the strength of German and British industry, US spending and Chinese trade at the end of last year - and the first hints on the strength of economic activity at the start of 2018.

With interest rates low and the labor market performing well, the economy has so far weathered the political impasse resulting from Chancellor Angela Merkel's failure to form a government since an election in September.

this sector of Europe's biggest economy should gain steam at the start of 2018, although actual output has unexpectedly slipped following a more than six-year high hit in August.

Lost momentum

"We expect the order level to be unchanged in November after having risen in the three consecutive months," they wrote in a note to investors. That would undercut the Reuters consensus forecast for a 0.5 percent rise in orders.

due out today, with output figures to follow tomorrow.

By contrast, British industrial output has been buoyant, expanding in October at its fastest annual pace in almost a year.

"While the economy has lost momentum as sterling's tumble after the June 2016 Brexit vote sent inflation climbing, some exporters have gained from the weaker pound and the rebound in the euro zone economy.

stensus forecast for a 0.3 percent pickup. The data is due out on Wednesday. There are no major central bank decisions due in the coming week.

G2 Friday

The broader outlook for both Germany and Britain depends to some extent on the performance of the world's two behemoth economies, the United States and China, where economic growth has been met with gradually tightening monetary policies.

In November, retail sales across the country increased more than expected. Analysts at HSBC suggested the reading

for December, due out on Friday, may show a slightly less frantic pace of shopping as Christmas approached. Analysts polled by Reuters on average expect sales to have risen 0.5 percent month on month, slowing down from November's 0.8 percent gain.

In November, exports and imports both unexpectedly accelerated, but analysts expect growth to continue cooling amid a government crackdown on financial risks and polluting factories.

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Sunday January 7, 2018. Includes tables for Index (Price Index, Weighted Index, KSEX 15), Trades, and various stock categories like Oil & Gas, Basic Materials, Consumer Goods, etc.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. At 02:00 PM Previous Day. Includes tables for Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities.

Business

Al Mulla Exchange marks another milestone with 75th branch opening



Al Mulla Exchange added another feather to their cap with the opening of their 75th branch in Kuwait. The premier Money Exchange company in Kuwait has always made it a point to be closer to the customer and this new outlet which is their 4th in the Fahabel area is a testimony to that. To mark this momentous occasion, the branch was inaugurated by the Chairman of Al Mulla Exchange, Abdulla Najeeb Almula on 5th January 2018. Addressing the media, customers and staff, Mr. Abdulla had this to say "This is definitely a milestone for Al Mulla Exchange and is truly a result of the support of the customers as well as the dedication of the staff and the management." He also added that the 100th branch of Al Mulla Exchange is not very far away.

Also attending the event was Hormuzda Davar, Managing Director of Trading & Manufacturing and Financial Services. Mr. Davar also explained the journey undertaken by Al Mulla Exchange through the years to reach the top slot. "We are immensely pleased that we have grown from 6 branches to 75 branches in just 12 years. Along with 27 branches in Oman and 17 branches in Bahrain, Al Mulla Exchange is on the growth trajectory. All this is without doubt is because of customers and our existence is due to that only. Our team

believes in one motto and that is to beat customer expectations, not just beat them. So you can expect from all us in the coming days and years to bring out more products and services for our customers"

Free insurance coverage

The new branch location located at the Olive Supermarket building has been selected very carefully keeping in mind the easy access of customers to the area. Al Mulla Exchange offers a lot of value added services to customers including free insurance coverage, Free loyalty points that can be redeemed against commission as well as a lot of engaging entertainment programs throughout the year.

They were also the first to introduce self-serving kiosk machines which enable customers to do transaction on their own and at their convenience. Customers are also fast adapting and adopting the online services, making transfers immediate and from their comfort of home or office. The soon to be introduced Remittance App also promises to be a great addition to their list of already impressive products. With a growth expansion mindset not just in Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain, Al Mulla Exchange is looking to expand into other countries as well in the coming days and years.



HUAWEI Mate 10: Killer features powered by Mobile AI

Is artificial intelligence only a marketing gimmick for smartphones that phone makers use to price up their products or will it truly boost user experience? HUAWEI's latest flagship Mate 10 and Mate 10 Pro, just launched in October, are highlighting two main features—full-view screen and artificial intelligence, two features that all smartphones aim to surmount this year to win the market. For a phone that HUAWEI has been talking its AI capabilities up repeatedly, we put our focus on the review on AI, just to see how intelligent it gets.

1. Scene Identification - Is Mate 10 a foodie?

In auto mode, Mate 10's camera recognized 13 conditions, including Text, Food, Stage, Blue Sky, Snow, Beach, Cat/Dog, Night, Sunrise/Sunset, Plant, Portrait, and Flower. Once a scene is identified, the AI camera will adapt the capture parameters in real time, and also tweak picture post-processing. For example, whenever Mate 10 is shooting a meal it identifies it instantly and launches Food mode in a flicker of a second. The knife and fork icon on the right bottom means the scene is identified as Food. Mate 10 tries to make the food appear more attractive without tuning up the color too much. It pursues a balance between real presentation and visual effects.

2. AI Selfie

With Portrait mode on using the front camera, you can get a bokeh effect similar to the dual lenses in the back, making your face standing out from the background. When taking a selfie with the front camera of Mate 10, the NPU of Kirin 970 accurately highlights the person and naturally bridges the edge of the person to the background, without blurring the edge. With Portrait mode on, the lady stands out from the background with the help of AI, without any unnatural transition or blurred focus between the hair and the background.

3. AI Night: Already top level?

A shot at night is usually a very difficult challenge for smartphone cameras. Of all AI-powered photo-shooting features of Mate 10 Pro, the most impressive one is its photo-taking capabilities at night. Huawei has partnered with Leica to co-engineer a dual lens camera with the world's largest smartphone aperture



AI Battery Management

of f/1.6 for both lenses. This means that the camera is capable of brightening up even the most dimly lit photographs. The large aperture is especially ideal for night photography, most notably for images that do not require artificial lighting or a long exposure. Equipped with AI-powered intelligent photography settings, the HUAWEI Mate 10 series makes it even easier to capture professional night photos.

4. AI Translation

The pre-installed Microsoft Translator app powered by AI on Mate 10 belongs to another field where AI is making a name. HUAWEI claims that it is 300% faster than those without AI, and it supports back and forth translation between 50 languages. With AI's support, Mate 10 is able to translate several paragraphs incredibly fast (within seconds) by aiming the camera at the original text and up to 50 languages.

5. AI Battery Management

Meanwhile, HUAWEI has also developed battery management feature with the AI just to extend the battery life even further, although Mate 10 and Mate 10 Pro already have a gigantic 4000mah battery and 22.5W SuperCharge. AI helps extend battery life by learning user habits, which are categorized into four groups - gaming, business, travelling and taking photos, and under each group, there are 14 labels for different scenarios. After mapping the user habits according to these labels and groups, the phone will generate a customized plan to save power. HUAWEI Mate 10 is demonstrating how mobile devices are evolving along with the overall transition (or integration) from mobile internet era to the era of AI. In the future, end devices will have to get smarter, and be smarter. HUAWEI's Mate 10 is turning a new page for on-device AI.



AI Translation

Joyalukkas donates 2 Crore rupees to Ockhi Relief Funds

Joyalukkas Foundation in the affected areas as instructed by Joy Alukkas, Chairman, Joyalukkas group. The Foundation has also decided to help the victims further if needed.

Joyalukkas group donated Rs.2 Cr to the relief funds for the victims of Ockhi cyclone that severely affected the coastal areas of southern Kerala. The group donated Rs.1 Cr each to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund and the Welfare Fund instituted by the Thiruvananthapuram Archbishop. In separate functions held in Thiruvananthapuram, Joy Alukkas, Chairman, Joyalukkas group, handed over the cheques to Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Minister of Kerala and Archbishop Dr. M Soosa Pakiam. The gesture has been the outcome of the visits by the representatives of

Joyalukas Foundation is the CSR arm of Joyalukkas group. The Foundation has been executing various social responsibility projects across India including constructing houses for 36 families affected by Endsosulphan in Kasargod. The prime area of focus for the Foundation is in healthcare sector, which includes conducting mega medical camps in the various districts of Kerala, which has been giving relief to thousands of people in need. The Foundation also donates more than 1000 dialysis kits every month. In addition to these, the Foundation also takes care of many of the special schools, old age homes and financially weak families in the state. The Foundation had also donated Rs.3 Cr to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Relief Fund for the 2015 Chennai flood victims.



Technology

Researchers eye patches to solve Intel chip flaws

CERT backs down on need for mass chip replacement

FRANKFURT: Security issues with Intel Corp microchips are only slowing computers slightly, technology companies said, as researchers played down the need for mass hardware replacements to protect millions of devices from hackers. Google and other security researchers this week disclosed two major chip flaws - one called Meltdown affecting only Intel Corp chips and one called Spectre affecting nearly all computer chips made in the last decade. That raised the prospect of Intel being on the hook for lawsuits claiming that software patches to fix the issue would slow computers and effectively force consumers to buy new hardware, driving the company's shares down. But Intel said in a statement that the performance impact of the recent security updates should not be significant and would be mitigated over time.

It said Apple Inc, Amazon.com Inc, Google and Microsoft Corp had all reported little to no performance impact from security patches. "Intel continues to believe that the performance impact of these updates is highly workload-dependent and, for the average computer user, should not be significant," it said. The company confirmed that the flaws reported by the researchers could allow hackers to steal information from computers, phones and other devices, but insisted that the issue was not a design flaw.

The chipmaker said it would require users to download a patch and update their operating system to fix the issue. Microsoft and Google have said they expect few

performance problems for most of their cloud computing customers. Apple said in a separate statement late on Thursday that its tests showed patches would not significantly affect processing speeds. "Our testing with public benchmarks has shown that the changes in the December 2017 updates resulted in no measurable reduction in the performance of macOS and iOS ... or in common Web browsing benchmarks," the California-based firm said.

What experts say

CERT, the cyber security project at Carnegie Mellon University sponsored by the US government, on Friday withdrew its recommendation for the replacement of the central processing units (CPUs) of affected systems. In the updated guidance, CERT said "operating system and some application updates mitigate these attacks". Daniel Gruss, the 31-year-old information security researcher and post-doctoral fellow at Austria's Graz Technical University who discovered the Meltdown flaw, welcomed Intel's white paper on the issue.

"This looks much more professional now," Gruss said in comments emailed to Reuters. On the change in recommendation from CERT, Gruss said, however, that there were no replacements yet that could address the flaws in processors that he and other researchers have found. "All CPUs are affected, also very recent ones," Gruss said. "Furthermore, software updates can fix most of the prob-

Wi-Fi but no water: Can smart tech help poor people in a city?

BARCELONA: In the picturesque Barcelona district of El Born, residents can get a better night's sleep nowadays because garbage trucks pass only when bins in the street are full, thanks to high-tech sensors that detect when they need to be emptied. Meanwhile, a few streets away, magnetic sensors under the road surface allow drivers to find out in advance if a parking space is free - saving them time and cutting back on vehicle emissions.

Other high-technology solutions for street lamps, traffic lights and parking meters have been deployed in Spain's second-largest city in recent years. One theatre is even decked with a smart vertical garden on its outer wall, which collects its own rainwater via a solar-powered system on the roof. As one of Europe's richest cities, most of Barcelona's inhabitants already have good access to municipal services and a high quality of life. But in poorer parts of the world, urban experts say efforts to improve cities with cutting-edge technology can run into challenges, particularly when applied in slums.

"A 24-hour smart water meter can only be possible if you're connected to the water system in the first place," said Ayona Datta, a reader in urban futures at King's College London. In developing countries, technology may be introduced across a city to make transport or water services more efficient, but will likely only work in its richer areas, she added. The idea of giving the same thing to everyone in both middle-class and low-income neighborhoods can be problematic, she said.

"IT companies will sell (smart technology) as a package without any kind of customization at a grassroots level," she said. Smart technology installed like this is "giving the icing on the cake to people who are already connected". Datta told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. In many cases, those who lack access to electricity or the internet cannot benefit from high-tech infrastructure, she added. "You really need to engage with the social context (and) social issues first," she emphasized.

India controversy

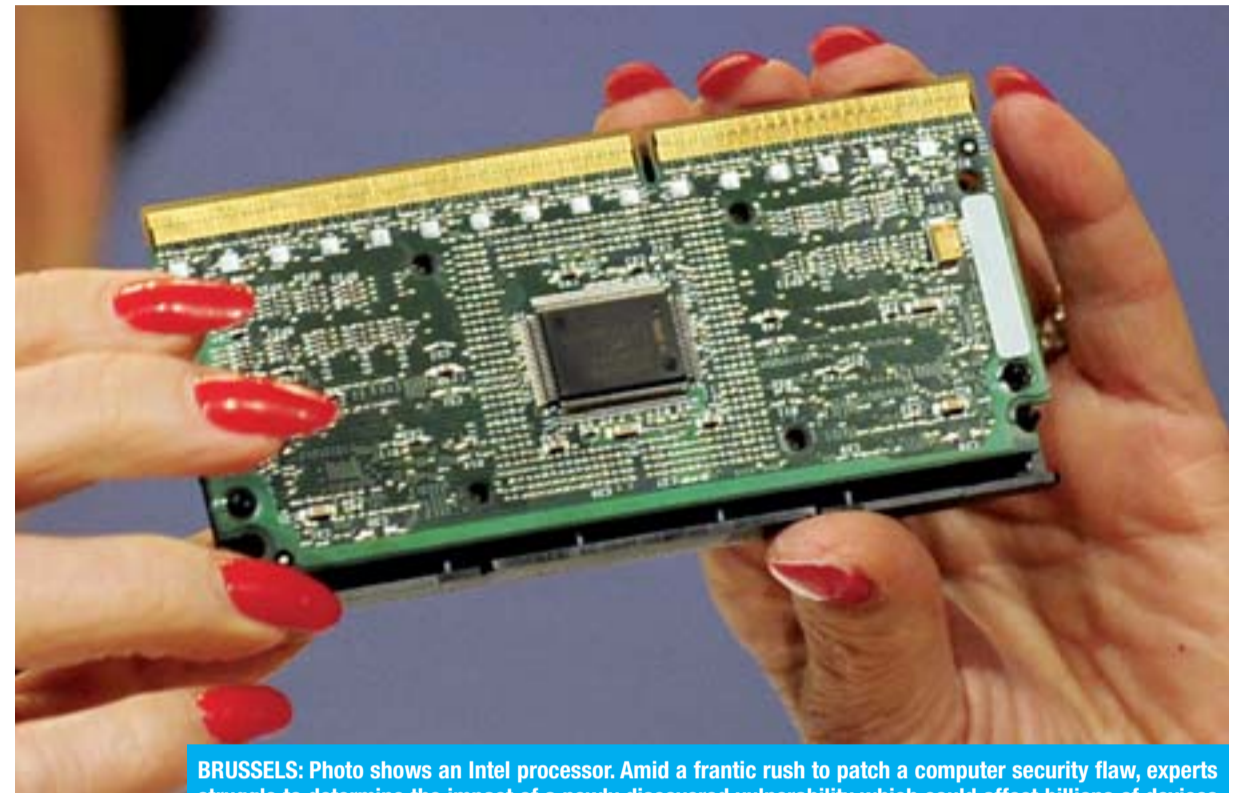
In India, dozens of smart cities are planned as the South Asian nation seeks ways of coping with rapid growth in its urban population. By 2050, India will have an additional 300 million urban residents, according to UN-Habitat, the UN agency that deals with cities. But one high-profile "smart city" strategy for Dholera, in Gujarat state, has sparked opposition.

It involves a new 920-km metropolis on the edge of the ancient port city, set to run mostly on solar power and intended to become a global manufacturing hub. Critics say it will displace subsistence farmers, is at risk of inundation due to being built on a floodplain, and will cost more than planned. "A lot of smart city projects are real estate projects," said Nancy Odendaal, an associate pro-

Au Future Stadium, the KDDI's latest sports technology

TOKYO: Japanese telecom giant KDDI, au mobile phone operator, kicked off au Future Stadium as part of the au Blue Challenge campaign at the EAFF E-1 Football Championships where the Japanese men's national team battled their South Korean counterparts. Leveraging the latest cutting edge technology, au Future Stadium offered au VR seats where supporters can root for their team while viewing VR footage along with the live action, and au/4D Replay, which offers customizable replays from the roughly 100 cameras around the stadium.

Open to all au service subscribers, 100 people



BRUSSELS: Photo shows an Intel processor. Amid a frantic rush to patch a computer security flaw, experts struggle to determine the impact of a newly discovered vulnerability which could affect billions of devices worldwide. —AFP

lems, leaving only a small remaining attack surface."

Browser makers Google, Microsoft Corp and Mozilla Corp's Firefox confirmed to Reuters on Thursday that the patches they currently have in place do not protect iOS users. With Safari and virtually all other popular browsers not patched, hundreds of mil-

lions of iPhone and iPad users may not have secure means of web browsing until Apple issues its patch. Apple said it would release a patch for the Safari web browser on its devices within days. It said that there were no known instances of hackers taking advantage of the flaw to date. —Reuters

Japan to get rid of Asian-style 'squat' toilets



Photo shows an Asian-style squat toilet

TOKYO: Japan has launched a campaign to convert unpopular Asian-style squat toilets into sit-on "western" models, as the nation prepares to welcome tens of millions of foreign tourists in the run-up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. The high-tech country is famous for its toilet technology that can bewilder foreign visitors, with features ranging from seat warming to bidet functions-with variable pressure. But to the surprise of some and the dismay of many caught short, several toilets in public places are traditional "squatting" facilities. About 40 percent of toilets at 4,000 locations in popular tourist spots are "squatters", according to the Japan Tourism Agency.

The government is offering to shoulder one third of the costs to install sit-on types, complete with the bidet function expected of a Japanese toilet, officials said. A survey by major toilet maker TOTO has found more than eight out of 10 foreign tourists prefer sit-on types, said Akihiko Yamakoshi, an official at the government's Japan Tourism Agency. "As we aim to receive 40 million foreign visitors (a year), we want them to enjoy touring Japan with as little stress as possible," he said. Some foreign tourists simply do not know how to use old Japanese-style toilets while others complain they are unsanitary, he said. The number of foreign visitors to Japan has been hitting records in recent years. More than 26 million foreign tourists visited Japan in the 11 months of 2017, already exceeding the annual record of 24 million set in 2016. The government aims to boost the number to 40 million by 2020 when Tokyo hosts the Summer Games. The toilet conversion is mainly designed for foreign tourists but it could also help elderly Japanese who may have difficulty in squatting down, said Yamakoshi. —AFP



BARCELONA: A woman pulls a shopping trolley close to the Sagrada Familia (Holy Family) Basilica in Barcelona. —AFP

fessor of urban planning at the University of Cape Town. "On the African continent this becomes particularly poignant as it is seen as the last frontier for property speculation and development," she added.

Gentrification

In most of Africa, smart cities tend to be "top-down" projects to create satellite cities, like Konza Technopolis in Kenya and Eko Atlantic City in Nigeria, Odendaal noted. Dubbed "Africa's Dubai", Eko Atlantic is being built on Victoria Island next to Lagos. Developers say it will become a new financial headquarters for Nigeria as well as solving chronic housing shortages in Lagos.

Detractors argue that shiny urban centers like Eko Atlantic are designed for a wealthy elite, and do nothing to help poor communities living on their doorstep. Elsewhere, smart city strategies have received a mixed reception. Rwanda's capital Kigali was praised for becoming one of the first cities in Africa to roll out free wireless internet in some areas in 2013. However, it has also been criticized for building new housing ordinary Rwandans cannot afford. In South Africa's Cape Town, some people see smart city projects as an excuse for gentrification - "just another way of turning old neighborhoods into swish, consumer zones", said Odendaal.

'Know your city'

Some of the most effective schemes are those that harness technology but are not marketed by govern-

ments as "smart", she said. They include Map Kibera, which began as a free, open digital map of Africa's largest slum in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. It has grown into an interactive project pinpointing local services and providing information about security in Kibera.

Its developers, Map Kibera Trust, say the initiative gives visibility to marginalized communities, with two other Nairobi slums replicating the idea. Non-governmental groups like Slum Dwellers International (SDI) are also doing useful work at grassroots level, said Odendaal. The network of community-based organizations representing the urban poor in 32 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America runs a "Know Your City" campaign. Slum residents collect data and information about where they live, which is held in a central database and can be used by governments and other decision-makers.

SDI says the data is owned by the community, and gives an "informed and united" voice to the urban poor. "Smart technology has very utopian intentions but it's really about how it's implemented on the ground," said Datta. "It is very universal but has to be rooted in the context of a place in order for it to work." Community-led initiatives can function especially well, as in India where local people have started sharing photos of suspected sex offenders on instant messaging service WhatsApp, she said. "Smart technology has had all sorts of unintended consequences," she added. "What emerges can exist completely outside of state regulation." —Reuters

number of dribbles and tackles, aerial duels won and fouls received). Team duels were also tallied and the captains of the South Korean men's and women's teams were awarded trophies after the match.

About KDDI

KDDI is a Japanese telecommunications corporation that provides au. KDDI views itself as a "Life Design Company," as our goal is to provide various products and services to revolutionize the lives of customers by helping them design their own lifestyles and liberate themselves from inconveniences to obtain greater freedom. Our Business Management Direction is "Transforming into a Business that Provides Customer Experience Value" and brand message is "New Freedom," so we seek to provide "New Freedom" and "provide customer experience value" on a cornerstone of "customer perspective (liberation)" and "innovation (discovery)." —Reuters

Health

John Young, who set records in space with NASA, is dead at 87

‘NASA and the world have lost a pioneer’

‘Hottest’ Ashes Test day on record as Australia swelters

SYDNEY: Sydney sweltered through one of its hottest days on record yesterday as temperatures soared in southern Australia and authorities imposed a fire ban in a sizzling start to summer. Australia's largest city recorded its hottest day since 1939 as the mercury rose to 47.3 degree Celsius in the western suburb of Penrith. More than 200 weather records were broken nationwide during the last summer, with intense heat waves, bushfires and flooding plaguing the December 2016-February 2017 season.

Top tennis players were called off the courts yesterday at the Sydney International, a warm-up tournament for the Australian Open Grand Slam, after ther-

mometers recorded temperatures over 40 degrees Celsius. The heat took its toll on French star Kristina Mladenovic, who retired midway through her match citing heat stress. "43 degrees but probably 50 on court when started. I'm sorry to the fans. I think it's 1st time in my career I retired a match..it says it all," the world number 11 tweeted.

Australian and English cricketers logging through the final Ashes match in Sydney may have also experienced the hottest day on record for a Test match in Australia. The hottest Test day on record appeared to be 43.1 degree Celsius in Adelaide in 1908, the Bureau of Meteorology told the Sydney Morning



SYDNEY: A sun burnt English fan looks to the sun while watching cricket on the fourth day of the fifth Ashes cricket Test match between Australia and England at the SCG in Sydney. — AFP

WASHINGTON: John Young, a legendary US astronaut who went into space six times, orbited the moon and then walked on its craggy surface, has died, NASA announced Saturday. He was 87 and died late Friday of complications from pneumonia, the space agency said. He lived in a Houston suburb just minutes from the NASA Space Center.

"NASA and the world have lost a pioneer," agency administrator Robert Lightfoot said in a statement. "We will stand on his shoulders as we look toward the next human frontier." Young was a man of many firsts: the only astronaut to fly in the Gemini, Apollo and space shuttle programs (and the first to command a shuttle flight); and the first to fly into space six times. He once held the world record for total time spent in space, NASA said.

Boldest flight in history

Young joined Gus Grissom on the Gemini 3 mission, then commanded the first space shuttle mission in what some people called "the boldest test flight in history." He commanded Gemini 10, the first mission to rendezvous with two other spacecraft during a single flight. Young orbited the moon in Apollo 10, and made a lunar landing with Apollo 16. "In an iconic display of test pilot 'cool,' he landed the space shuttle (STS-9) with a fire in the back end," NASA said.

"He was in every way the 'astronaut's astronaut,'" Lightfoot said. But he was also described as a savvy engineer and a "test pilot's test pilot." While in the navy, Young set world records for the fastest ascension from a standing start in an F-4 Phantom II jet. Once, during an air-to-air missile test, Young and another pilot approached each other's aircraft at a potentially calamitous speed of Mach 3 (2,300 miles per hour, or 3,700 kilometers per hour), according to Young's website.

"I got a telegram from the chief of naval operations," Young said in his understated way, "asking me not to do this anymore." Fellow astronaut Charles Bolden called Young and Robert "Hoot" Gibson the two best pilots he had ever known. "Never met two people like them," he said. "Everyone else gets into an airplane; John and Hoot wear their airplane. They're just awesome." — AFP



FLORIDA: This file photo shows US Astronauts Robert Crippen, left, and John Young, right, in the flight deck of Columbia of the space shuttle Columbia before the first shuttle flight at Kennedy Space Center in Florida. — AFP

‘World’s ugliest pig’ spotted in Indonesia

JAKARTA: Rare images of the "world's ugliest pig" have been captured in Indonesia, researchers said Friday, offering a window into a little-known species believed to be on the brink of extinction. The number of endangered Javan warty pigs-males are distinguished by large warts on their faces-has plunged since the early 1980s due to hunting and forest habitat loss, according to the UK-based Chester Zoo.

British and Indonesian researchers laid camera traps in the forests of the Southeast Asian nation's Java island in the hopes of capturing images of the elusive creature. Their goal was to get a clearer

sense of population levels and find ways to boost conservation of a "highly threatened species". "It was even feared that many, if not all, populations had become extinct until their existence was confirmed by the zoo's cameras," the zoo said as it released the images. — AFP



INDONESIA: This handout image from the Chester Zoo shows an endangered Javan warty pig on Indonesia's Java island. — AFP

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What's On

Gulf Bank holds AJYAL graduation ceremony, human resources awards

Bank celebrates AJYAL success, honors high performing employees



Gulf Bank was pleased to celebrate the graduation of its third class of its AJYAL Development Program at an exciting bank-wide ceremony last December at the Arraya Ballroom. During the night, the bank also honored staff who have excelled in their areas of expertise, and welcomed its fourth class of AJYAL participants.

The AJYAL Development Program is an iconic initiative developed by Gulf Bank, which nurtures young Kuwaiti talent early in their career to develop them into 'holistic bankers' and prepare them for future leadership positions at the bank.

Commenting on this special occasion, Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank said: "We are very proud to mark the success of the AJYAL program with our colleagues in the bank as well as our external partners, whose support and mentorship of the program and its participants is part of what makes our program so distinctive. The bank is committed to the development of young Kuwaitis, and this is something that brings us all together and part of what makes Gulf Bank unique."

In the spirit of teamwork and highlighting what it means to be part of the Gulf Bank family, Hajjaj said: "With us all working together to support each other and the AJYAL program, we are creating well-rounded and highly motivated banking professionals for both the future of the bank and for our beloved Kuwait. We are confident that these AJYAL graduates

will be making excellent contributions and will be part of the bank's continued success. Congratulations to the graduates on their successful completion of the program, and we warmly welcome the fourth class of AJYAL." Hajjaj concluded by thanking Gulf Bank staff: "We are proud of the individuals and departments of the bank who have shown remarkable commitment to their work and to the bank. We were happy to recognize their efforts and thank them for their dedication and loyalty to Gulf Bank."

15 trainees

A total of 15 trainees completed the AJYAL 2016-2017 program and are working in various departments in the bank. The program includes six months of intensive training covering every facet of banking from the basic principles of banking; financial economics; banking laws and regulations; corporate and retail finance, to risk management, anti-money-laundering, banking ethics and customer orientation.

As part of the program, the top three best performers from the class were selected to complete a four-week international internship at leading financial insti-

tutions. The internship abroad provided them with an international banking experience to further enrich their knowledge and understanding of global financial markets and the banking industry. This year's internship training took place in Frankfurt, Germany at MISR Bank-Europe, KT Bank AG, and ICF Bank AG. The topics covered throughout the international internship included trading in global markets, financial management, and understanding the stock exchanges. The group also had a lively meeting at the Kuwaiti Consulate in Frankfurt.

During the AJYAL graduation ceremony, class valedictorian Sara Abdulhadi gave remarks to the audience, where she thanked Gulf Bank for the opportunity to expand her skills and described the impact of experiencing the program's international internship. She highlighted the importance of being resilient and goal setting, noting: "If your plan isn't working, don't change your goals, instead adapt your plan to achieve your goals."

'Induction Innovative Project'

A fun part of the night included the selection of the

top 'Induction Innovative Project.' Over the course of the year, the bank welcomed new employees and as part of each induction, groups created an 'Induction Innovative Project.' They pitched these projects to employees of the bank who voted for the project they felt was exceptional. At the beginning of the evening, attendees voted for their favorite of the top three projects of the year and the winners were announced during the evening. The winning team included: Yousef Al-Ali, Jarrah Kankouni, Yousef Al-Saleh and Jenan Haider.

Rounding out the awards for the evening, the bank's top performing branches were announced, which are: Al-Adan, Al-Firdous and Salmiya main branch. In addition, Basel Al-Assad, Assistant General Manager Consumer Banking, was recognized with the '2017 Human Resources Appreciation Award' for his commitment to Gulf Bank and his support for Bank wide CSR initiatives and overall support for the training of retail banking employees. Ziad Dehni was also acknowledged for his outstanding contribution to Gulf Bank with a 'Star Award' the Bank's most prestigious quarterly staff engagement award that rewards staff that go above and beyond their scope in creating value for customers and the bank. Also, a number of employees from across the bank received 'Business Support Awards' for their contribution to the training and development of new bank staff and other learning initiatives.



Iconic initiative that nurtures young talent



AUK Art and Graphic Design Department hosts first alumni reunion

The Art and Graphic Design Department (GDES) organized the GDES alumni reunion to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the program at AUK. The event was held on the 29th of November with activities spread across the university campus that included GDES alumni presentations, exhibitions, and booths promoting alumni business-

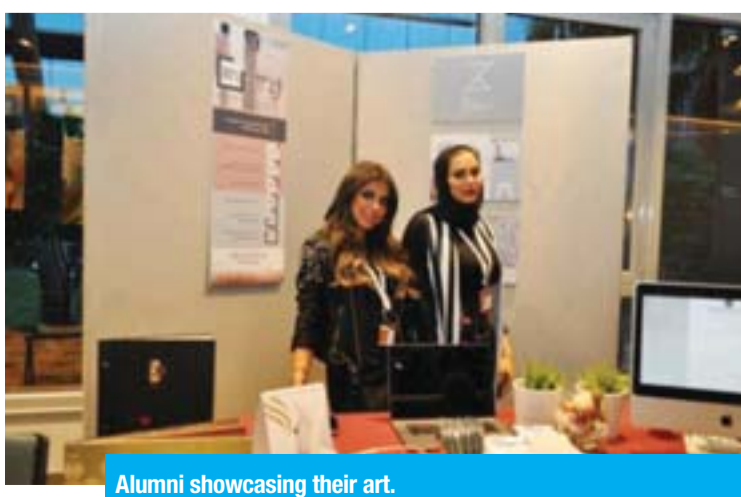
es, all in an effort to inspire, empower and reflect on both the growth of the program and the alumni who have come back to showcase their work.

A packed auditorium housed students, staff and faculty who have gathered to support the alumni presentations. Following the opening remarks by AUK President Dr Tim Sullivan, and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Dr Ali Charara, a number of acclaimed alumni including, Ghaneema Al-Qudmani, Lamees Nijem, Bashayer Al-Zayed and Ahmed Al Terkait relayed particular personal and professional experiences and highlighted their success stories in their respective fields of magazine, motion graphics, environmental conservation, and filmmaking. A prominent theme was how quickly they had to adapt to the demands and opportunities of the real world, all whilst remaining original and authentic to their passion and message.

As the presentations concluded, the audi-

ence was invited to the multipurpose room to visit the alumni exhibition that showcased photographs, paintings and other forms of art endeavors. The event concluded with an open buffet where alumni mingled with current students, and rekindled old friendships with other alumni, faculty and staff. Associate Professor William J Andersen, Chair of the Department of Art and Graphic Design, emphasized how proud AUK was of its graduates for the positive impact they have added to society.

Assistant Professor Rita Merheb, chair of the organizing committee, said that "This event is the program's first attempt to re-establish ties with its Alumni, our Alumni who are the program's and the institution's ambassadors to the outside world. And having them back on campus to share their experiences and accomplishments, served as an inspiration to our current students who also attended the event."



Alumni showcasing their art.



(From left), Professor Rita Merheb; Professor William J Andersen; Dean Ali Charara; Dr Bashar Zogheib.



Pakistan English School hosts carnival

The annual carnival was held in Pakistan English School and College in Jleeb Al Shuyoukh on January 4, 2018. It was a much awaited event for students and their parents. Student were excited and prepared themselves several days

ahead of the carnival. Although the event was supposed to start at 09:00 am, a large number of students already showed to school at 8:00 am.

The school's ground was beautifully decorated with colorful balloons, ribbons and garlands. Teachers were present with their stalls having a variety of mouthwatering delicacies and traditional Pakistani foods and beverages. Team leader Sanobar Farrukh Sultan, Principal, with his team including Muhammad Raza, Vice Principal of Senior Wing, Tanveer Akhtar and Fauzia Sabir, managed the program and received guests.

TV



00:30 Beyond Valkyrie: Dawn Of The Fourth Reich
01:45 The Viral Factor
02:15 Bermuda Tentacles
04:15 The Avengers
05:45 Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope



00:50 Untamed & Uncut
01:45 Treehouse Masters
02:40 Treehouse Masters
03:25 Treehouse Masters
06:02 Bad Dog
06:49 Bad Dog
07:36 Meet The Sloths
08:00 Night
08:25 Swamp Brothers
08:50 Swamp Brothers
09:15 Treehouse Masters
10:10 Bad Dog
11:05 Wildest Indochina
12:00 Swamp Brothers
12:28 Swamp Brothers
12:55 Keeping Up With The Krugers
13:50 Dr. Jeff Mountain Vet
14:45 Bad Dog
15:40 Wildest Indochina
16:35 Untamed & Uncut
17:30 Treehouse Masters
18:25 Shark Feeding Frenzy
19:20 Alaska Monsters
20:15 Bad Dog
21:10 Swamp Brothers
21:38 Swamp Brothers
22:05 Shark Feeding Frenzy
23:00 Alaska Monsters
23:55 Wildest Indochina



00:00 Gunpowder
01:05 New Tricks
02:00 Line Of Duty
03:05 Doctors
03:35 Eastenders
04:05 Gunpowder
05:05 New Tricks
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Doctors
07:00 Eastenders
07:30 Dickensian
08:20 Call The Midwife: Christmas Special 2016
10:00 Doctors
10:30 Eastenders
11:00 New Tricks
11:55 Dickensian
12:40 Call The Midwife: Christmas Special 2016
14:15 Doctors
14:45 Eastenders
15:15 New Tricks
16:15 Dickensian
17:05 Casualty
18:00 Casualty
19:00 New Tricks
20:00 Father Brown
21:00 The Level
22:00 New Tricks
22:55 Casualty



00:00 The Jersey Slayings
01:00 The Eleven
02:00 Homicide Hunter
03:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
04:00 Measuring Evil: Britain's Worst Killers
05:00 The Jersey Slayings
06:00 The Eleven
07:00 The First 48
08:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
09:00 It Takes A Killer
09:30 It Takes A Killer
10:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
11:00 Cold Case Files
12:00 The First 48
13:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
14:00 It Takes A Killer
14:30 It Takes A Killer
15:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
16:00 Cold Case Files
17:00 Homicide Hunter
18:00 It Takes A Killer
18:30 It Takes A Killer
19:00 The First 48
20:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
22:00 Cold Case Files
23:00 The Eleven



00:05 Rachel Feinstein: Only Whores Wear Purple
00:45 Miranda Hart- My What I Call Live Show
01:45 Tosh.0
02:10 Chappelle's Show
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Tosh.0
03:50 Chappelle's Show
04:15 Kroll Show
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Important Things With Demetri Martin
05:30 Impractical Jokers
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:50 Catch A Contractor
07:40 The Jm Gaffigan Show
08:05 Impractical Jokers
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Kroll Show
09:45 Key And Peele
10:10 Important Things With Demetri Martin
10:35 The Jm Gaffigan Show
11:00 Impractical Jokers
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Impractical Jokers
12:40 Friendszone
13:05 Friendszone
13:30 Important Things With Demetri Martin
13:55 Friends
14:20 Friends
14:45 Workaholics
15:10 Key And Peele
15:35 Kroll Show
16:00 Friendszone
16:30 Friendszone
16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 Punk'd (Bet)
19:00 Punk'd (Bet)
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 Teachers
22:00 Lip Sync Battle UK
22:25 Lip Sync Battle UK
22:50 Chappelle's Show
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
00:30 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
01:20 Zoltan The Wolfman
02:10 Zoltan The Wolfman
03:00 Zoltan The Wolfman
03:50 Kids Do The Craziest Things
04:15 Kids Do The Craziest Things
04:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
05:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
05:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
05:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things
06:20 How It's Made
06:40 How It's Made
07:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
07:50 How It's Made
08:15 How It's Made
08:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:30 Tanked
10:20 Zoltan The Wolfman
11:10 Finding Bigfoot
12:00 Somebody's Gotta Do It
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
14:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
14:30 Tanked
15:20 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
16:10 Zoltan The Wolfman
17:00 Finding Bigfoot
17:50 Somebody's Gotta Do It
18:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Tanked
21:10 Finding Bigfoot
22:00 Somebody's Gotta Do It
22:50 Bahama Blue
23:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor



00:50 Evil Online
01:45 Kindred Spirits
02:40 A Haunting
03:35 I Speak For The Dead
04:30 Evil Online
05:25 Murder By Numbers
06:20 Reasonable Doubt
07:10 Who Killed Jane Doe?
08:00 California Investigator
08:25 On The Case With Paula Zahn
09:15 California Investigator
09:40 California Investigator
10:10 Nightmare Next Door
11:05 Betrayed
12:00 The Perfect Murder
12:55 On The Case With Paula Zahn
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 Nightmare Next Door
15:40 Betrayed
16:35 Murder Calls
17:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn
18:25 California Investigator
18:50 California Investigator
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
20:15 Nightmare Next Door
21:10 Betrayed
22:05 American Monster
23:00 Hall
23:55 I Speak For The Dead



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
02:40 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 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
07:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 Elena Of Avalor
08:20 K.C. Undercover
08:45 Bunk'd
09:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
09:35 Tangled: The Series
10:00 Geek Charming
11:35 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
11:40 Austin & Ally
12:05 That's So Raven
12:30 That's So Raven
12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
13:00 Bunk'd
13:25 Tangled: The Series
13:50 Jessie
14:15 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
14:40 K.C. Undercover
15:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
15:30 Bizaardvark
15:55 Elena Of Avalor
16:20 Stuck In The Middle
16:45 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
17:00 Tangled: The Series
17:25 Disney Cookabout
17:50 K.C. Undercover
18:15 Descendants Wicked World
18:20 Bunk'd
18:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
19:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
19:15 Liv And Maddie
19:40 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
20:05 Descendants Wicked World
20:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
20:35 Disney The Lodge
21:00 Alex & Co.
21:25 Alex & Co.
21:50 LoloRock
22:15 LoloRock
22:40 Evermoor Chronicles
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
23:45 LoloRock



00:15 PJ Masks
00:40 Vampirina
01:05 Vampirina
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopdidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopdidoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopdidoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopdidoo
07:00 Calimero
07:15 PJ Masks
07:30 PJ Masks
08:00 P-King Duckling
08:25 Jungle Junction
08:40 Special Agent Oso
09:00 Handy Manny
09:15 PJ Masks
09:30 Puppy Dog Pals
10:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
10:25 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
10:55 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
11:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
11:50 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
16:35 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
17:05 Welcome To McStuffinsville
17:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
18:00 PJ Masks
18:25 Puppy Dog Pals
18:50 Sofia The First
19:20 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:45 Doc McStuffins
20:10 The Lion Guard
20:35 P-King Duckling
21:00 Vampirina
21:30 PJ Masks
22:00 PJ Masks
22:25 Sofia The First
22:50 P-King Duckling
23:20 Puppy Dog Pals
23:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers



00:15 Yukon Men
01:05 Dangerman
01:50 X-Ray Mega Airport
02:35 Abandoned Engineering
03:20 Diesel Brothers
04:05 Misfit Garage
04:50 Deadliest Catch
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Extreme Collectors
06:23 Container Wars
06:45 How Do They Do It?
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Misfit Garage
08:20 Extreme Collectors
08:45 Container Wars
09:10 Deadliest Catch
09:55 Dangerman
10:45 X-Ray Mega Airport
11:30 Abandoned Engineering
12:20 Extreme Collectors
12:43 Container Wars
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 How Do They Do It?
13:55 Deadliest Catch
14:40 Yukon Men
15:30 Dangerman
16:15 X-Ray Mega Airport
17:05 Abandoned Engineering
17:50 Misfit Garage
18:40 Deadliest Catch
19:25 Yukon Men
20:15 Diesel Brothers
21:00 Gold Rush
21:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
22:40 Rebel Gold
23:30 Alaska: The Last Frontier



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



06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
06:55 Celebrity Style Story
07:25 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
10:10 Celebrity Style Story
11:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
12:10 Celebrity Style Story
12:35 My Fabulous Me
14:05 Live From The Red Carpet
16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
19:00 Live From The Red Carpet
21:00 Live From The Red Carpet
23:00 E! News
23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



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



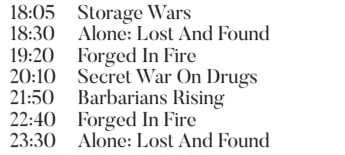
00:10 Chopping Block
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Emmerdale
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Cash Trapped
03:25 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
03:55 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
04:25 5 Star Family Reunion
05:15 Big Star's Little Star
06:10 Chopping Block
07:05 Cash Trapped
08:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
08:25 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
08:50 5 Star Family Reunion
09:35 Royal Stories
10:00 Big Star's Little Star
10:55 Chopping Block
11:50 Cash Trapped
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Chopping Block
15:10 The Voice UK 2018
17:15 Royal Stories
17:50 Surprise Surprise
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Cash Trapped
21:00 The Voice UK 2018
22:15 Royal Stories
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street



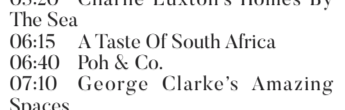
00:00 The Human Calculator
01:00 How 2 Win
02:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
03:00 Hangar I: The UFO Files
03:50 Hangar I: The UFO Files
04:40 Ancient Top 10
05:30 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
06:20 Ancient Impossible
07:10 Cities Of The Underworld
08:00 How 2 Win
09:00 Ancient Top 10
10:00 Ancient Impossible
11:00 Ancient Discoveries
12:00 Ancient Top 10
13:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
14:00 Hangar I: The UFO Files
15:00 How 2 Win
16:00 Ancient Impossible
17:00 Ancient Discoveries
18:00 Cities Of The Underworld
19:00 Ancient Impossible
20:00 Clash Of Warriors
21:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...



00:20 Swamp People
01:10 Swamp People
02:00 Pawn Stars
02:25 Pawn Stars
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 Storage Wars
03:40 American Pickers Best Of
04:30 Swamp People
05:15 Swamp People
06:00 Alone: Lost And Found
06:50 Forged In Fire
07:40 Pawn Stars
08:05 Pawn Stars
08:30 Storage Wars
08:55 Storage Wars
09:20 American Pickers
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Forged In Fire
11:50 Pawn Stars
12:15 Pawn Stars
12:40 Storage Wars
13:05 Storage Wars
13:30 Swamp People
14:20 Swamp People
15:10 Alone: Lost And Found
16:00 Forged In Fire
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Storage Wars



00:15 A Taste Of South Africa
00:45 Maximum Foodie
01:10 What's For Sale?
01:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
02:35 Confucius Was A Foodie
03:30 Miguel's Feasts
04:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
04:50 Eat Street
05:20 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea



06:15 A Taste Of South Africa
06:40 Poh & Co.
07:10 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
08:05 Confucius Was A Foodie
09:00 Miguel's Feasts
09:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
10:20 Eat Street
10:50 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
11:45 A Taste Of South Africa
12:10 Poh & Co.
12:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
13:35 Confucius Was A Foodie
14:30 A Taste Of South Africa
15:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
15:50 Eat Street
16:20 Poh & Co.
17:15 Miguel's Feasts
17:40 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
18:10 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
19:05 Confucius Was A Foodie
20:00 A Taste Of South Africa
20:30 A Taste Of South Africa
21:00 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
21:30 Eat Street
22:00 Poh & Co.
22:25 Poh & Co.
22:55 Miguel's Feasts
23:20 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
23:50 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces



00:10 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
01:00 Mystery Of The Himalayan Mummies
02:00 The 90s: The Decade That Connected Us
04:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
05:00 Don't Tell My Mother
06:00 Born To Ride
07:00 Locked Up Abroad
08:00 Bid & Destroy
09:00 Don't Tell My Mother
10:00 Dian Fossey: Secrets In The Mist
11:00 Live Free Or Die
12:00 Supercar Megabuild
13:00 Born To Ride
14:00 Bid & Destroy
14:30 Ghost Town Gold
16:00 Mystery Of The Himalayan Mummies
17:00 Lawless Island Alaska
18:00 Nazi Megastructures
20:00 Mystery Of The Himalayan Mummies
20:50 Lawless Island Alaska
21:40 Nazi Megastructures
23:20 Bid & Destroy
23:45 Bid & Destroy



00:20 My Dog Ate What?
01:10 Ultimate Predator
02:00 The Lakeshore Killers
02:50 World's Deadliest
03:45 Urban Jungle
04:40 Last Devils
05:35 The Lakeshore Killers
06:30 World's Deadliest
07:25 Urban Jungle
08:20 Last Devils
09:15 Strangest Bird Alive
10:10 My Dog Ate What?
11:05 Safari Brothers
12:00 Humppacks: Cracking The Code
12:55 Man V. Cheetah
13:50 World's Deadliest
14:45 Urban Jungle
15:40 Mission Critical: Animal Avengers
16:35 World's Weirdest
17:30 My Dog Ate What?
18:25 Animal ER
19:20 Urban Jungle
20:10 Mission Critical: Animal Avengers
21:00 World's Weirdest
21:50 My Dog Ate What?
22:40 Animal ER
23:30 Humppacks: Cracking The Code

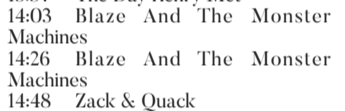


00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig
09:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
09:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
09:48 Henry Danger
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbids Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Harvey Beaks
13:48 Hunter Street
14:12 I Am Frankie
14:36 The Thundermans
15:00 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
15:24 School Of Rock
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Sanjay And Craig
17:24 I Am Frankie
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger

18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky And Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 Ride
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbids Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:15 Shimmer And Shine
01:01 Max & Ruby
01:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:47 The Day Henry Met
01:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:41 Zack & Quack
02:52 Kid-E-Cats
03:04 Shimmer And Shine
03:26 Nella The Princess Knight
03:38 Paw Patrol
04:01 Little Charmers
04:13 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
04:24 Dora The Explorer
04:46 Max & Ruby
05:06 The Day Henry Met
05:12 Nella The Princess Knight
05:35 Shimmer And Shine
05:50 Wallykazam!
06:21 Zack & Quack
06:32 The Day Henry Met
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:00 Rusty Rivets
07:13 Paw Patrol
07:37 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight
08:12 Kid-E-Cats
08:18 Kid-E-Cats
08:24 Bubble Guppies
08:47 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:10 Paw Patrol
09:34 Shimmer And Shine
09:57 Nella The Princess Knight
10:18 The Day Henry Met
10:24 Paw Patrol
10:48 Rusty Rivets
10:59 Rusty Rivets
11:11 Wallykazam!
11:35 Bubble Guppies
11:59 Team Umizoomi
12:22 Shimmer And Shine
12:44 Shimmer And Shine
13:07 Max & Ruby
13:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:41 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:53 The Day Henry Met
13:57 The Day Henry Met
14:03 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:26 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:48 Zack & Quack
14:59 Kid-E-Cats
15:04 Kid-E-Cats
15:10 Shimmer And Shine
15:33 Nella The Princess Knight
15:45 Paw Patrol
16:08 Little Charmers
16:20 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
16:32 Dora The Explorer
16:55 Max & Ruby
17:18 The Day Henry Met
17:23 Nella The Princess Knight
17:45 Shimmer And Shine
18:08 Wallykazam!
18:31 Zack & Quack
18:42 The Day Henry Met
18:48 Blaze And The Monster Machines
19:10 Rusty Rivets
19:23 Paw Patrol
19:46 Dora The Explorer
20:10 Nella The Princess Knight
20:23 Kid-E-Cats
20:28 Kid-E-Cats
20:34 Bubble Guppies
20:58 Blaze And The Monster Machines
21:20 Paw Patrol
21:44 Shimmer And Shine
22:07 Nella And The Princess Knight
22:18 Nella The Princess Knight
22:30 The Day Henry Met
22:35 Paw Patrol
22:59 Rusty Rivets
23:11 Rusty Rivets
23:22 Wallykazam!
23:46 Bubble Guppies



00:00 Black Box
02:00 Cougar Town
03:00 Fashion Star
04:00 Project Runway All Stars
05:00 Project Runway
06:00 Black Box
08:00 Cougar Town
09:00 Fashion Star
10:00 Project Runway All Stars
11:00 Project Runway
12:00 Black Box
14:00 Cougar Town
15:00 Fashion Star
16:00 Project Runway All Stars
17:00 Project Runway
18:00 Devious Maids
20:00 Cougar Town
21:00 Fashion Star
22:00 Project Runway All Stars
23:00 Project Runway



01:00 A Little Game
02:35 Doctor Proctor's Fat Powder
04:05 Alone For Christmas
05:35 Houba! On The Trail Of Marsupialia
07:25 A Little Game
09:00 Bonta
10:25 Doctor Proctor's Fat Powder
11:55 Ratchet And Clank
13:30 Mune
15:00 Lego DC: Justice League Gotham City Breakout
16:30 Big Baby
17:55 A Royal Christmas
19:30 Ratchet And Clank
21:05 Mune
22:35 Big Baby



01:35 Fear Inc
03:15 A.C.O.D.
04:55 A Midsummer's Hawaiian Dream
06:30 Breaking The Bank
08:25 Almost Christmas
10:20 Hearts Of Spring
11:55 Breaking The Bank
13:20 Who Gets The Dog?
17:00 Love The Coopers
18:55 Dad's Army
20:40 Edtv
22:50 Road Trip: Beer Pong



01:30 Bone Tomahawk
03:50 Me Before You
05:40 Yosemite
07:15 Jappeloup
09:30 Me Before You
11:20 Yosemite
12:55 Jappeloup
15:10 Noble
17:00 Meru
18:40 Alex Of Venice
20:25 Wildlife
22:20 Lost River



00:20 Nur And The Dragon's Temple
01:40 Emilie Jolie
03:05 DC Superhero Girls: Hero Of The Year

04:35 Last Wizard
06:00 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter
07:30 DC Superhero Girls: Hero Of The Year
08:50 Legend Of The Sea
10:15 The Emperor's Secret
11:50 Felix The Toy Rabbit And The Time Machine
13:25 Emilie Jolie
14:50 Amila's Secret
16:05 The Emperor's Secret
17:40 Ozzy
19:20 Dimofroz Return To The Past World
21:00 Amila's Secret
22:15 Legend Of The Sea
23:45 Felix The Toy Rabbit And The Time Machine



00:20 Higher Learning
02:35 Beverly Hills Cop 3
04:25 Before We Go
06:10 The Portrait Of A Lady
06:40 Hail, Caesar!
10:35 Beverly Hills Cop 3
12:25 Hudson Hawk
14:15 Alive
16:30 Mr. Popper's Penguins
18:15 Dan In Real Life
20:00 Shanghai Noon
22:00 Shanghai Knights



00:40 Strangest Weather On Earth
04:00 Mythbusters
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 The Future Of...
09:14 Mythbusters
10:02 Strangest Weather On Earth
10:50 How Do They Do It?
11:14 Food Factory USA
11:38 Gamechangers: Inventing The World
12:26 The Future Of...
13:14 Mythbusters
14:02 How Do They Do It?
14:26 Food Factory USA
14:50 Strangest Weather On Earth
15:38 The Future Of...
16:26 Gamechangers: Inventing The World
17:14 Mythbusters
18:02 Strangest Weather On Earth
18:50 The Future Of...
19:40 Mythbusters
20:30 Invent It Rich
21:20 How Do They Do It?
21:45 Food Factory USA
22:10 Strangest Weather On Earth
23:00 Invent It Rich
23:50 The Future Of...



00:45 Terri
02:30 Edmond
03:15 Laws Of Attraction
05:15 Runaway Bride
07:15 An American Rhapsody
09:05 The Legend Of Bagdad Vance
11:15 Henry's Crime
13:00 The Gift
15:00 Terri
16:45 Whale Rider
18:30 Mescalda
20:00 The Congress
22:00 Ask The Dust



00:00 Black Box
02:00 Cougar Town
03:00 Fashion Star
04:00 Project Runway All Stars
05:00 Project Runway
06:00 Black Box
08:00 Cougar Town
09:00 Fashion Star
10:00 Project Runway All Stars
11:00 Project Runway
12:00 Black Box
14:00 Cougar Town
15:00 Fashion Star
16:00 Project Runway All Stars
17:00 Project Runway
18:00 Devious Maids
20:00 Cougar Town
21:00 Fashion Star
22:00 Project Runway All Stars
23:00 Project Runway



00:20 Meet The Putmans
01:05 Separated At Birth
01:50 Kid Tycoons
02:35 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
03:20 Kate Plus 8
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 Randy To The Rescue
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress
06:00 Extreme Cheapskates
06:22 Extreme Cheapskates
06:45 Meet The Putmans
07:30 Baby Bodybuilders
08:15 Kate Plus 8
09:00 Cake Boss
09:25 Toddlers & Tiaras
10:10 Extreme Cheapskates
10:32 Extreme Cheapskates
10:55 Hair Goddess
11:40 Meet The Putmans
12:25 This Is Life With Carissa Cupido

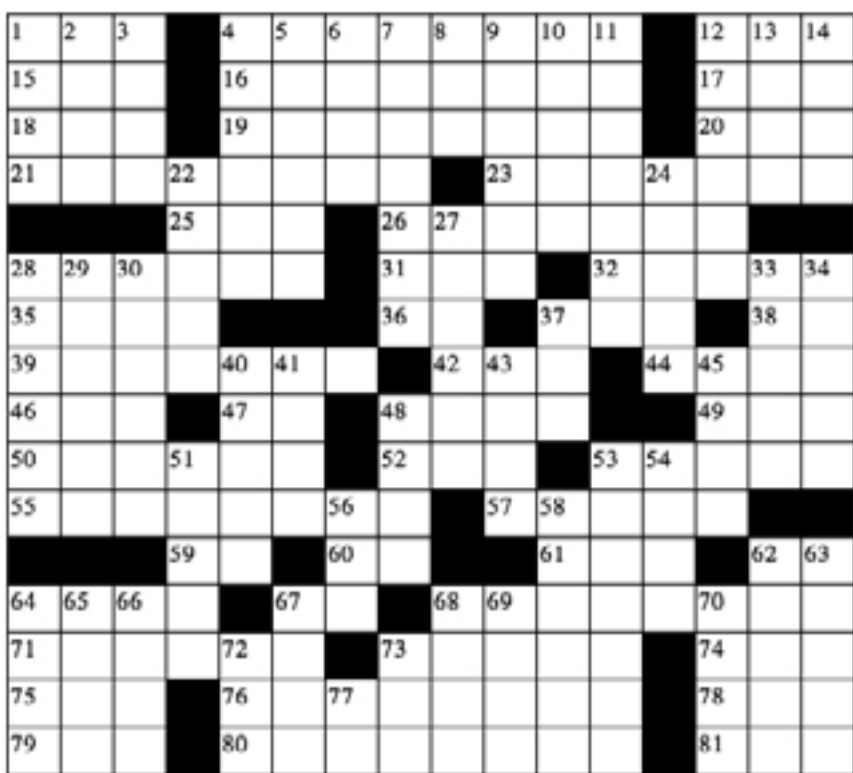
13:10 Finding My Twin Stranger
13:55 Toddlers & Tiaras
14:40 Kate Plus 8
15:25 Hair Goddess
16:10 Love At First Swipe
16:35 Cake Boss
17:00 Say Yes To The Dress UK
17:25 Say Yes To The Dress UK
17:50 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
18:50 Randy To The Rescue
19:40 Say Yes To The Dress
20:10 Cake Boss
20:35 Cake Boss
21:00 Hodges Half Dozen
21:50 Married By Mum And Dad
22:40 Return To Amish
23:30 90 Days To Wed



00:00 Ghost Hunters International
02:00 Expedition Unknown
03:00 Titanic: Mysteries At The Museum
04:00 Top Secret Swimming Holes
05:00 Ghost Hunters International
06:00 Mysteries At The Castle
0

Stars

CROSSWORD 1803



ACROSS

1. An artifact designed to be played with.
4. Joyful and proud especially because of triumph or success.
12. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
15. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
16. Taxonomic kingdom comprising all living or extinct animals.
17. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
18. Seed of a pea plant.
19. A demonstration of approval by clapping the hands together.
20. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
21. An informal conversation.
23. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
25. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
26. A person who takes long walks in the country.
28. Of or resembling algae.
31. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
32. A port city of south central Ukraine on an arm of the Black Sea.
35. A person who has lied or who lies repeatedly.
36. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
38. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
39. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
42. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
44. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
46. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
47. A public promotion of some product or service.
49. The compass point that is one point north of due west.
50. A small tent used as a dressing room beside the sea or a swimming pool.
52. (informal) Uncomplimentary terms for a policeman.
55. A resident of Alabama.
57. (biology) Rough to the touch.
59. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
60. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
61. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
64. By bad luck.
71. Roman statesman and philosopher who was and advisor to Nero (circa 4 BC - 65 AD).
74. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
75. A member of the Shoshonean people of Utah and Colorado and New Mexico.
76. Be around.
78. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
79. An arrangement of objects or people side by side in a line.
80. Giant tree-like plant having edible nuts and leafstalks that yield a refreshing drink of clear watery sap.
81. The sign language used in the United States.

DOWN

1. (military) Signal to turn the lights out.
2. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
3. Not only so, but.
4. German mathematician (1804-1851).
5. Leave or unload, esp. of passengers or cargo.
6. Slanting diagonally across the grain of a fabric.
7. Pose a threat to.
8. The upper side of the thighs of a seated person.
9. Small genus of aquatic or semiaquatic plants.
10. (Sumerian and Babylonian) A solar deity.
11. A member of a people native to the Philippines chiefly inhabiting central Luzon around and including Manila.
12. Be compatible or in accordance with.
13. Type genus of the Anatidae.
14. A feeling of intense anger.
22. The Oceanic language spoken by the Maori people in New Zealand.
24. An award for winning a championship or commemorating some other event.
27. (of tempo) Leisurely n.
29. Of or relating to the spleen.
30. A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.
33. Large west African tree having large palmately lobed leaves and axillary cymose panicles of small white flowers and one-winged seeds.
34. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
37. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
40. (astronomy) An indistinct surface feature of Mars once thought to be a system of channels.
41. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
43. A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
45. Having awns i.e. bristle- or hair-like appendages on the flowering parts of some cereals and grasses.
48. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
51. Lower in esteem.
53. Small genus of deciduous West Indian trees or shrubs.
54. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
56. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
58. United States writer of satirical novels (1879-1958).
62. (Greek mythology) The god of the underworld in ancient mythology.
63. Of or relating to the feet.
65. Wife or mistress of Zeus and mother of Apollo and Artemis in ancient mythology.
66. Again but in a new or different way.
67. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
68. Pitiably in circumstances especially through abandonment.
69. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
70. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
72. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
73. A statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.
77. Being five more than one hundred.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, graciousness and associations are where you find comfort now. Without peace and being surrounded by lovely things you may become unsettled and irritable. Intimacy could play a large role in your thoughts and emotions, there may be some confusion involved here. A getaway would be the perfect solution now, but career pressure is high regarding a project nearing its end. Friends will participate in a fun outing while you are tied to the office; smile, your turn will come. You will be curious about how things work and why. Calm thoughts are front and center in your mind with mystic ponderings a close second. Looking to your future now is wise; continue to look for creative ways to add to your savings, aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, others could be drawn to your humor and entertaining personality today. Your quirks will be respected for the positive outcomes they create. Answers could be revealed regarding an important condition in your life; accept them and figure out how to work with them. Your opinions are held in high esteem by those around you today. Intuition is very strong now and you could reveal this to others in some way; this will meet with approval. You are at your happiest when surrounded by lovely things and a harmonic energy; without these you become restless and possibly angry. Joining with others, perhaps in matrimony, courtship or business, is a focal point of this cycle. Take note of your blessings so that you can see the full picture, taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, evolving and sharpening your mental and spiritual perceptions are prominent now. You are unhappy when your world is without peace and lovely things. Bonding and joining with intimate friends or a lover is important. People will be drawn to your vivacious, spunky energy and will listen to anything you have to say. Someone will need your assistance on a certain project, this person will also help you with an important situation. You could feel yourself being pulled out to enjoy the nightlife with friends; be careful of having too much to drink, you could find yourself being disapproved of. You could find yourself irritating someone by saying something about your beliefs. Do what you feel will make your evening wonderful, gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, you seek evolution and romance this new year. This cycle brings with it a sense of ease when you speak of your hopes and values things you've kept inside can now comfortably be released. Your private goals will be manifested for all to see. Your self-discipline is strong, so this is a time to tackle activities requiring focus. Friends will call on you for advice and guidance; this will meet with success. Someone is completely on your side and supports your quirks and moods. You enjoy lovely things and have a tendency to surround yourself with pleasure and the niceties of life. Home is where your heart is and always has been; you will focus on bettering your life and those of your loved ones by entering into a new agreement to love yourself, cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, in this new cycle you will find intense interest in evolving and bonding with special people. Matrimony or living together could be something you move toward after careful consideration. You frown on trivial pursuits and are not shy about saying so; you appear to be very deep in an impressive way. You could entertain thoughts of going into business for yourself. You seek to surround yourself with peace and beauty; without these elements you become dissatisfied and gloomy. Someone will comment on your physical and inner beauty; this will be pleasing and will make your day. You embrace new beginnings and starting from scratch much as when you buy a new car with zero mileage. Try not to have high expectations when you shop this evening, leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, you are entering a phase of curiosity regarding important facts you've wondered about for some time. You could find answers as you go through the things of a deceased person; look carefully through pockets, shoes and clothing/lingerie drawers. You pull positive energies and gain insight as you meditate; a deep breath to ask for guidance may be all you need. Peaceful interaction with others creates a deep sense of fulfillment later when you join a conversation requiring honesty. You surround yourself with beauty and balanced energy in your home and work environments giving your energy a lift. You will respect no boundaries regarding your artistic/creative pursuits; your path should not include detours in this area, virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, the new cycle you have entered brings relationships and their value to the fore in your life. You have a sense of ease when it comes to reaching out to others and expressing your thoughts and feelings. You could feel overwhelmed with memories of days gone by; secret melancholy and tears of joy could be prevalent. Inward dialogue would be best today as you remain outwardly cheerful and involved but quiet; so things are for your eyes and ears only. Someone who is like-minded could share a few moments with you today that will lift your spirits. Your thoughts on trying something using a new method will be met with much opposition. This evening will bring good times with loved ones and perhaps a new friend, libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, you could find that you will take someone younger under your wing by giving them an opportunity to work with your business. A new approach to your personal life may make itself known to you today. A project gets away from you and you will have to figure out how to regain control. You gain strength from your associations in both work and personal environments. You may consider joining your efforts with those of another to make money. You will offer a conservative point of view when asked for input later today; this could mean the difference between failure and success; success is indicated strongly! Work achievement and ambition are what energizes and motivates you—as well as a few sweet words from your beloved, scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, this is the time you should keep your eyes open regarding a very good opportunity to better your income and job position. There will be a boost in confidence from an elder or superior; You may run into a former professor or boss this would be a man. Approaching changes in a positive way and slow manner works well for you. There could be those in your circle of friends or family that disagree with the new direction you have chosen. It sometimes seems easier to focus on others than yourself but this is not one of those times, be true to your dreams. You may want to escape some duties or obligations your dread. If you make mistakes you will reap the consequences just as you will prosper from correct choices, sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, career choices are strongly indicated; move forward or stay put, it's up to you. Others command much of your attention as you entertain thoughts of partnerships and teams. You are looking at yourself less and more at others at this time. This will not go unnoticed. Ambition and the energy to push it are present now; it's up to you to direct it in the most abundant direction. The abilities and attitudes of those around you demand your attention. Obstacles and roadblocks may present themselves but you will climb over them as always. Sifting through old, outmoded thinking; discarding what is no longer useful will nourish emotional satisfaction! Friendship, family or romantic ties are your focus now, capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Aquarius, sharpening your focus on your interactions with people, places and things is your ultimate goal today. Peace of mind lovely energy brings balance and without them you feel lost. This cycle ushers in likely opportunities for joining with others in business relationship and could possibly bring engagement or marriage. Take your time! You may make some decisions you shouldn't specifically on the home front. Communication is desperately needed on several delicate topics you feel you should not yet mention; it would be wise to wait for the right time. Seeking refuge by calling someone that has been on your mind might cause more harm than good. Stick to yourself tonight if you think it will help, aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, the vibration of change surrounds you today as you make improvements to your home by painting or the purchase of new furniture. You are committed to making positive moves in your surroundings and attitudes. Try to keep your energy level so that you don't cause problems with younger people by appearing too demanding. Your advice on a sticky situation may be sought; remember that fairness and honesty are called for. Your words will find accepting ears as they come easily today. Someone may ask you to join the weight loss challenge; at work don't take offense because this person admires you a great deal. Enjoy the vibrant air as you take a brisk walk before dinner. Plans have a way of falling into place for a spontaneous dinner party with friends, pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Geometry

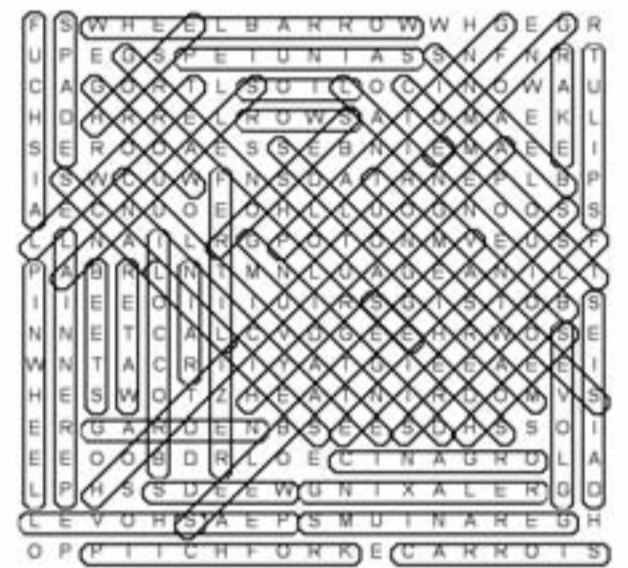
Find and circle all of the Geometry words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| ACUTE | EQUATION | PERIMETER | SIDE |
| APOTHEM | EQUILATERAL | PERPENDICULAR | SLANT |
| AREA | EQUILATERAL | POLYGON | SLOPE |
| BASE | FACE | POLYHEDRON | SOLIDS |
| BISECT | FORMULA | PYRAMID | SPHERE |
| CHORD | HEIGHT | PYTHAGORAS | SQUARE |
| CIRCLE | HYPOTENUSE | QUADRILATERAL | THEOREM |
| CIRCUMFERENCE | INTERSECT | RADIUS | TRANSVERSAL |
| CONE | ISOSCELES | RHOMBUS | TRAPEZOID |
| CONGRUENT | LEGS | SCALENE | TRIANGLE |
| COORDINATES | MIDPOINT | SECANT | VERTEX |
| CYLINDER | OBTUSE | SEGMENT | VOLUME |
| DIAMETER | PARALLELOGRAM | | |

Yesterday's Solution

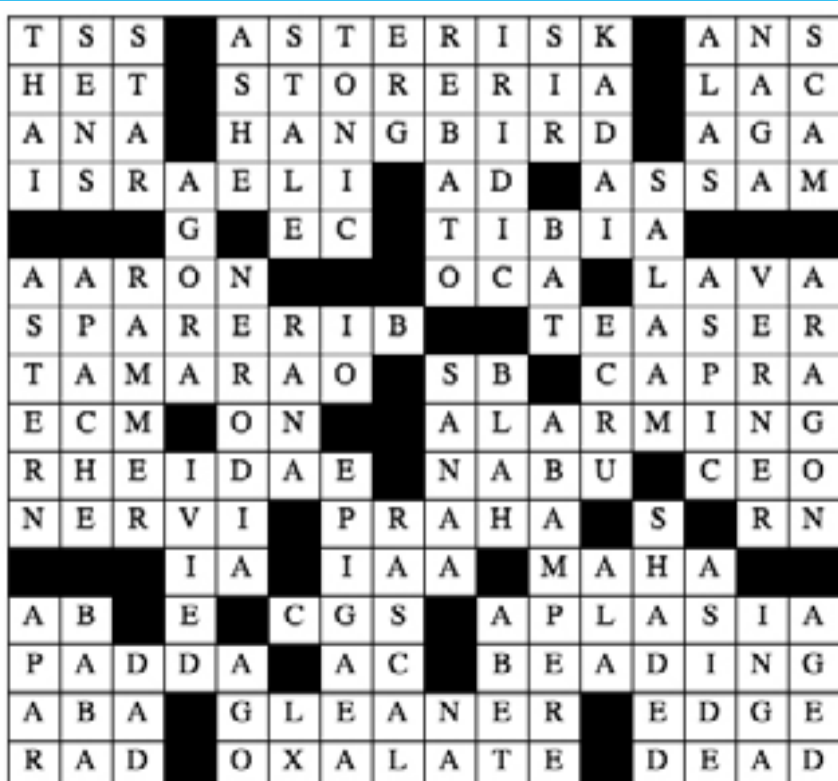
Gardening



- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| ANNUALS | GARDEN | ORGANIC | SEEDS |
| BEANS | GERANUMS | PEAS | SHOVEL |
| BEETS | GLOVES | PERENNIAL | SOIL |
| BENJAL | GRAPES | PETUNIAS | SPADE |
| BROCCOLI | GREENHOUSE | PINWHEEL | SUNSHINE |
| CARROTS | GROW | PITCH FORK | TOMATOES |
| COMPOST | HOBES | PLANTING | TROWEL |
| CULTIVATE | HORTICULTURE | RAIN | TULIPS |
| DASSES | HOSE | RAKE | VEGETABLES |
| DIGGING | HYDRANGEA | RELAXING | WATER |
| FERTILIZER | LILACS | ROSES | WEEDS |
| FLOWERS | LILIES | ROWS | WHEELBARROW |
| FUCHSIA | MARIGOLDS | | |

The hidden message is: WHERE FLOWERS BLOOM SO DOES HOPE

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Classifieds

Monday, January 8, 2018

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

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for scattered light rain.

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 07/01/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	24 °C	16 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	10 °C		
ABDALY	22 °C	12 °C		
BUBYAN	24 °C	08 °C		
JAHRA	24 °C	12 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	21 °C	12 °C		
SALMIYAH	21 °C	16 °C		
AHMADI	20 °C	14 °C		
NUWAISIB	22 °C	11 °C		
WAFRA	24 °C	09 °C		
SALMY	20 °C	10 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	01/08	Fair causing rising dust over open areas	21 °C	08 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Tuesday	01/09	Fair	21 °C	07 °C	NW	10 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	01/10	Fair	20 °C	07 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Thursday	01/11	Clouds will increase gradually	20 °C	06 °C	VRB	06 - 20 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:18
Sunrise	06:43
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	14:46
Sunset	17:05
Isha	18:27

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	23 °C
MIN. Temp.	06 °C
MAX. RH	64 %
MIN. RH	24 %
MAX. Wind	NW 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Airline

American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
Jet Airways	177
FlyDubai	22924455
Qatar Airways	22414400
KLM	22423888
Royal Jordanian	22425747
British Airways	22418064/5/6
Air France	22425635
Emirates	22430224
Air India	22921555
Sri Lanka Airlines	22438184
Egypt Air	22424444
Swiss Air	22421578
Saudia	22421516
Middle East Airlines	22426306
Lufthansa	22423073
PIA	22422493
Bangladesh Airlines	22421044
Indian Airlines	22452977/8
Oman Air	22456700
Turkish Airlines	22958787
Aeroflot	22453820/1
	22404838/9

URGENTLY REQUIRED

A reputed Medical Company has urgent requirement of Nursing staff (B.Sc. / Diploma) who have experience in following departments / specialties:

- Dental
- Dermatology
- I.C.U.
- Ophthalmology
- Operation Theatre
- In-patient Treatment
- I.V.F.
- Endocrinology
- Medical O.P.D.
- OBG & Gynaecology
- Pediatric O.P.D.
- Orthopedic O.P.D.

M.O.H. license holders with minimum three years experience and transferable residency may send their C.V. / profile immediately to hr@img-kw.net

SITUATION WANTED

Available immediately.
 Call: 90073251 Email: abdulnasirvt@gmail.com
 (C 5373) 8-1-2018

Indian male 34 yrs, B.Com., MBA (Finance) with 12 years of excellent experience in Accounts/Finance in Kuwait is looking for better opportunities in MNCs/Corporates. Capable of handling A/Cs Dept. Tally & independently up to finalization.

EMERGENCY

112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 8/1/2018											
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:01	KAC	692	Muscat	14:15	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:15
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	KAC	618	Doha	14:15	MSC	405	Sohag	23:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KAC	206	Islamabad	14:20	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	MSC	411	Asyut	23:55
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	QTR	1078	Doha	14:20				
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC	672	Dubai	14:25				
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:35				
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	352	Kochi	14:35				
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	KAC	412	Bangkok	14:35				
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40				
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	364	Colombo	14:40				
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45				
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:50				
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	14:55				
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	IAW	157C	Al Najaf	14:55				
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55				
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10				
WAN	548	KTM	02:40	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15				
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	JZR	787	Riyadh	15:30				
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	502	Beirut	15:30				
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	562	Amman	15:30				
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35				
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45				
QTR	1090	Doha	04:05	QTR	1072	Doha	15:55				
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	JZR	535	Cairo	16:00				
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00				
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	ABY	127	Sharjah	16:00				
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	KAC	118	New York	16:00				
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	JZR	779	Jeddah	16:25				
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	FDB	051	Dubai	16:40				
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	RJA	640	Amman	16:55				
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	KAC	542	Cairo	17:05				
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	WAN	954	Baku	17:15				
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15				
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30				
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:40				
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00				
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	FDB	063	Dubai	18:10				
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	JZR	177	Dubai	18:15				
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30				
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	QTR	1080	Doha	18:50				
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	744	Dammam	19:10				
KAC	332	Trivandrum	07:15	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:20				
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25				
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:30				
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30				
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	08:00	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45				
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50				
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:55				
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KNE	381	Taif	20:00				
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	620	Doha	20:15				
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20				
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	QTR	1088	Doha	20:45				
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:45				
WAN	342	Sohag	10:15	KAC	162	Geneva	21:00				
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	168	Paris	21:20				
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20				
AXB	890	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20				
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	ALK	229	Colombo	21:20				
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KAC	786	Jeddah	21:25				
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	UAE	859	Dubai	21:35				
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45				
IAW	157B	Al Najaf	12:00	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:50				
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:15	KAC	564	Amman	22:00				
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05				
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15				
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25				
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:40	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:30				
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	JZR	241	Amman	22:40				
				SVA	502	Jeddah	22:45				
				JZR	185	Dubai	23:10				



Hip hop and R&B surpass rock as biggest US music genre

Hip hop and R&B surpassed rock for the first time in 2017 as the biggest music genre in the United States, but British artist Ed Sheeran's romantic pop album "Divide" was the year's biggest single draw, according to a Nielsen Music report. Powered by a 72 percent increase in on-demand audio streaming, eight of the top 10 albums came from the world of rap or R&B, including Kendrick Lamar's "DAMN," Drake's "More Life" and "24K Magic" by Bruno Mars, according to Nielsen Music's 2017 year-end report, released on Wednesday.

Rap and R&B also dominate the Grammy awards later in January, with rapper Jay-Z and Lamar leading nominations. In

a reflection of the demise of rock among young people, the Coachella music festival line-up announced earlier this week featured no rock headliner for the first time in the 19-year history of the three-day Southern California event. Pop star Taylor Swift had the biggest album of 2017 in terms of sales with "Reputation," with 1.9 million units sold, Nielsen said. The album, Swift's first in three years, was kept off streaming for the first three weeks after its release in November.

But it was Sheeran whose music dominated radio, digital and streaming in 2017. "Divide" notched up 2.7 million units, including sales and streaming activity, and the 26-year-old singer-songwriter's single "Shape of You" spent 33 weeks on

Billboard's Hot 100 chart and was streamed one billion times. Billboard charts tally units from album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

Vinyl sales surged for a 12th year in a row - up 9 percent in 2017 - especially among older fans. The top selling vinyl albums were The Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," powered by a 50th anniversary reissue, and the British band's 1969 release, "Abbey Road." — Reuters

Check those tickets, Mega Millions numbers drawn, Powerball Saturday

Numbers were drawn on Friday in the Mega Millions lottery, with a jackpot of an estimated \$450 million, the fourth largest in the game's history, up for grabs. The numbers drawn were 28, 30, 39, 59, 70 and 10. It was not immediately clear if there were any winners. The Mega Millions drawing has a \$281-million payout if the winner or winners select a lump-sum payment.



Powerball and Mega Millions lottery tickets are displayed in San Anselmo, California. — AFP

US lottery players will get another shot at becoming super rich on Saturday night, when numbers are drawn for the Powerball jackpot of an estimated \$570 million, the fifth largest in the game's history. The two jackpots together topped \$1 billion after going months without a winner. Saturday's 10:59 pm EST Powerball drawing has an estimated \$358.5-million lump-sum payment, according to organizers.

The total of the two lotteries is the third largest in the history of the games. Long odds have not halted the spread of "lottery fever", with people lining up to buy the \$2-tickets at retailers, said Jeff Lenard, spokesman for the National Association of Convenience Stores, whose members sell about 60 percent of the nation's lottery tickets. "There's definitely more traffic," Lenard said. Americans spent \$80.5 billion on lottery games last year, according to the North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries.

Powerball tickets are sold in 44 states, and Washington, DC, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Mega Millions tickets are offered in the same locations, excluding Puerto Rico. The largest Powerball jackpot was a \$1.6-billion payout split among winners in California, Florida and Tennessee in January 2016, the association said. The largest Mega Millions jackpot of \$656 million was won in 2012.

The totals have ballooned as no one has hit either jackpot since October. On Wednesday, there was no winner of the Powerball jackpot, worth an estimated \$460 million. A day earlier, no one had matched all six numbers in a Mega Millions drawing, lottery officials said. The estimated totals are before tax. The odds of a single ticket hitting all six numbers in the

Powerball are 292 million to 1, the Multi-State Lottery Association says. The odds of picking the right six numbers for the Mega Millions jackpot are 303 million to 1, the game said. "When the jackpots reach these levels, everyone starts to daydream about what they would do if they won," Gordon Medenica, Mega Millions lead director, said in a statement. — Reuters

GEORGE MICHAEL: PRINCESS DIANA WAS ATTRACTED TO ME

George Michael once claimed Princess Diana was "very attracted" to him. The late musical icon - who passed away on Christmas Day in 2016 - is having old interviews unearthed as part of a new book entitled 'George Michael: Freedom. The Ultimate Tribute 1963-2016', and in one excerpt obtained by DailyMailTV, the 'Careless Whisper' hitmaker talks about his bond with the late Princess. George identified as gay but insisted women were still attracted to him as they found him "non-threatening", and he believes Diana - who died in a car crash in Paris, France, in 1997 - was no exception.

In the interview excerpt, George is quoted as saying: "She was like a lot of women who have been attracted to me in my life. They see something non-threatening. There were certain things that happened that made it very clear that she was very attracted to me. There was no question." The pair became good friends after meeting backstage at an AIDS charity concert, and in one interview quoted in the upcoming book, George said they had "clicked in way that was a little bit intangible, and it probably had more to do with our upbringing than anything else." — Bang Showbiz



Princess Diana



Jane Birkin

Jane Birkin to publish her diaries - in French

British actress and singer Jane Birkin, whose voice accompanied French crooner Serge Gainsbourg on some of his biggest hits, will publish in September the diaries she has kept since she was 12, she said in an interview published Friday. "It will certainly not be an autobiography. I'm in the process of translating them myself," Birkin told the French daily Le Populaire du Centre. She said she had written the diaries until 2013 and the death at 46 years old of Kate, her daughter with English composer and then husband John Barry.

"In these notebooks I don't mention my professional life, my films or my songs at all," said Birkin, 71. "When Kate died, I lost all my self-confidence as a mother. I

didn't know what to do afterwards." She said that while most of the anecdotes she relates have already been related to journalists over the past 50 years. "In re-reading them I realized a lack of self-confidence, the terrible shame of my own body, the terror that people I loved would leave me for someone else. I hope these diaries can comfort people, by discovering someone completely unstable." Birkin is remembered by many for her collaboration with Gainsbourg on his 1967 song "Je t'aime... moi non plus" ("I love you... me neither") which was banned in several countries due to its overtly sexual content. — AFP



A picture shows inscriptions in two languages, Ukrainian and Hungarian, on a local pharmacy in Beregove, a small town in western Ukraine.



Local residents next to advertising poster on Hungarian language in Beregove, a small town in western Ukraine.



A car near a road sign of Bene village with inscriptions in two languages, Ukrainian and Hungarian and village emblem not far from Beregove, a small town in western Ukraine. óAFP photos

Ukraine language reform fuels identity fears among ethnic Hungarians

The central street in a small town in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains in western Ukraine is buzzing with life. Crowds pack the pavements and commerce is in full swing, with vendors hawking everything from apples to old plates to knitted socks. Nearly everyone here speaks Hungarian. Welcome to Beregove-or Beregszasz, as it is also known by its Hungarian name-with a population of 24,000. Located in Transcarpathia and within walking distance to the Hungarian border, this quaint town, famous for its scenic vistas, hot springs and vineyards, is the center of Ukraine's Hungarian culture.

Numbering around 100,000, ethnic Hungarians constitute the largest minority group in Transcarpathia, a western Ukrainian region behind the Carpathian Mountains that was once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Over the past few months the region has been at the heart of tensions between Ukraine and Hungary following the adoption by Kiev of a controversial law that seeks to oblige schools to teach in the Ukrainian language.

'Stupid things'

Representatives of the country's ethnic minorities fear the ambiguously-worded law will upset the region's deli-

cate social balance and limit their rights. "The Kiev establishment started doing stupid things," Fedir Shandor, a sociologist and university lecturer in Uzhgorod, the regional center of Transcarpathia, told AFP. The adoption of the law in September rattled nearly all of Kiev's neighbors to the west that see the legislation

'MORE BALANCED AND MORE CLEARLY WORDED'

as a threat to their national minorities in the ex-Soviet country. Hungary went as far as threatening to block Kiev's rapprochement with the European Union.

The Venice Commission, an independent panel of con-

stitutional law experts who advise the Council of Europe, has recommended that Ukraine amend the disputed law, making it "more balanced and more clearly worded". In addition to ethnic Hungarians, Ukraine has sizeable communities of Russians, Romanians, Poles and other groups with roots in neighboring countries. The language law states that starting from September 2020, pupils will be taught exclusively in Ukrainian from the fifth grade, when children are aged 10 to 11, although they can still learn their native languages as a separate subject. Kiev says the move will help minorities better integrate into society and will give them new opportunities including access to higher education. But critics of the law are not convinced.

'This will end badly'

Oleksandr Shpenyk, head of the Ukrainian-Hungarian Educational Institute at Uzhgorod National University, fears the new legislation could lead to the closure of all Hungarian schools in the region. "Here in Uzhgorod you can use any language you want now, but if they continue this way," he said, referring to the Ukrainian authorities, "this will end badly". Shpenyk's institute prepares teachers for Hungarian schools so his students were also "under threat", he said.

"Even after Transcarpathia became part of the Soviet Union, even under Stalin in 1949, Hungarian schools were open," he added. There are more than 280 schools in the region. Of them, over 70 schools, teaching more than 16,000 pupils, are Hungarian. During last year's country-wide Ukrainian language tests-whose results are key for admission to universities-pupils from Transcarpathia were the worst performers.

In some villages every pupil failed the test. While admitting that Ukrainian language proficiency is indispensable, many ethnic Hungarians are afraid that Kiev will force them to learn the state language without consulting them or taking into account their way of life. "We want to be sure that the transition will be done properly, with our interests taken into account," Stella Kesler, director of a Hungarian school in Uzhgorod, told AFP. Most of her pupils opt to continue family businesses instead of going to universities. Those who want to pursue higher education have to study with tutors on their own.—AFP



This file photo taken on March 01, 1965 shows French singer France Gall (bottom left) performing during the Eurovision show. — AFP photos



This file photo taken on April 18, 1968 shows French singers Joe Dassin (left) and France Gall posing with horses.



This file photo taken on March 21, 1965 shows French singer France Gall (right) flanked by French singer and musician Serge Gainsbourg, greeting the public upon her arrival at the Orly airport outside Paris.

French star singer **France Gall** dies aged 70



This file photo taken on January 17, 1968 shows French singer France Gall posing at the Center of New Industries and Technologies (CNIT) in La Defense, near Paris, during the Boat Show.

French singer France Gall, who shot to fame in the 1960s with a series of hits and a sexually suggestive song about lollipops written by Serge Gainsbourg, died yesterday aged 70, her spokeswoman announced. Gall, who became a star in 1965 when she won the Eurovision song contest as a strikingly blonde and slightly awkward teenager, had been battling cancer for two years and died in a hospital west of Paris. During the peak of her career in the 1960s and 70s she formed partnerships with some of the most famed French musicians of the era, notably Gainsbourg, but also Claude Francois and Michel Berger.

She was the original inspiration behind the 1968 hit "Comme d'Habitude" made famous in its English rendition as "My Way" by American crooner Frank Sinatra. Glam-rockers Francois wrote "Comme d'Habitude" about his split-up with Gall. Later reworked as "My Way" by English performer Paul Anka, the song went on to become the Sinatra classic. After Gall's first breakthrough at Eurovision with "Poupee de Cire, Poupee de Son", (Wax Doll, Rag Doll), Gainsbourg wrote her 1966 follow-up, the scandalous "Les Sucettes" (The Lollipops).

As a 19-year-old, Gall said she hadn't understood that the lyrics could be interpreted as referring to oral sex and later said she would never have performed the song if she'd known. After collaborating with Gainsbourg, she began a hugely successful partnership with Berger in 1974 and would go on to marry the songwriter two years



In this file photo taken on October 30, 2012 French singer France Gall takes part in the TV show iLe grand journal on a set of French TV Canal+ in Paris.

later in a relationship that would be marked by tragedy. He died of a heart attack aged 44 in 1992 and the eldest of their two children, daughter Pauline, who was born with cystic fibrosis, passed away five years later. Gall disappeared from the public eye after Pauline's death in 1997, only to reappear in 2015 for a musical stage show featuring her numerous hits with her late husband.—AFP



This file photo taken on September 12, 1993 shows French singer, France Gall, performing one of her successes on stage at the Palais Omnisports of Paris-Bercy, in Paris.

Five Golden moments: Shocking behavior at the Globes



(From left) Directors Sebastian Lelio, Angelina Jolie and Ruben Ostlund attend The Golden Globe Foreign-Language Nominees Series 2018 Symposium presented by The Hollywood Foreign Press Association & The American Cinematheque at the Egyptian Theatre.

The Golden Globes is the most lively, attention-grabbing and just plain fun gala ceremony in Hollywood's awards merry-go-round—primarily because it's the only one where drinks is served. Tinseltown's elite are allowed to kick back in relaxed seating with a glass of champagne—or seven—and reflect on a year's achievements, and tongues can loosen as the rich and famous get tired and emotional. Here are five memorable moments from past ceremonies—when adrenaline, various other hormones or the open bar have brought out the best and worst in the stars.

Jeremy Renner on J-Lo's 'globes'

"Hurt Locker" actor Jeremy Renner found himself at the center of a Twitterstorm after an off-color joke as he gave out the award for best actor in a mini-series or TV movie alongside Jennifer Lopez in 2015. After the nominees were announced, the "Let's Get Loud" singer asked her co-presenter if she should open the envelope, telling him: "I have the nails." "You've got the globes, too," he retorted, prompting a wave of complaints on social media that he had sexually harassed her on live TV.

Jack Nicholson high on Valium

When he accepted his 2003 best actor in a drama award for "About Schmidt," everyone's favorite Tinseltown charmer readily admitted during a meandering speech that he had popped a Valium before the show. He poked fun at his co-stars and presenter Nicole Kidman—"Doesn't Nicole look lovely with her old nose?"—before expressing shock at win-

ning since he thought the film was, in fact, a comedy.

Emma Thompson ditches her shoes

Who needs footwear to present an award? Certainly not Emma Thompson, who sauntered up to the podium, Christian Louboutins and a stiff martini in hand, to present the Globe for best screenplay in 2014. After paying lip service to the craft of script-writing, the two-time Oscar winner launched into a one-woman campaign against the cruelty of high heels. "I just want you to know, this red, it's my blood," she said, gesturing to her crimson-soled heels before lobbing the offending footwear over her shoulder.

Jodie Foster comes out... sort of

Nothing to do with bad behavior, but actress and director Jodie Foster's moving soliloquy in 2013 remains one of the highlights. At the time, the notoriously private Foster was still in what Out magazine wittingly called a "glass closet"—hiding deliberately in plain sight—as she prepared to accept a lifetime achievement award.

It sounded like she was finally going to put the issue of her sexuality to rest when she spluttered: "I guess I have a sudden urge to say something that I've never really been able to air in public... But I'm just going to put it out there, right? Loud and proud, right? So I'm going to need your support on this." In the end, she stops short, merely declaring, "I am single. Yes I am. I am single," to laughter and applause, before offering a sweet tribute to former long-time partner Cydney Bernard.

The biggest shock of all

It's one thing to behave badly at a party but it's a worse offense to spoil everyone's fun by canceling the event in its entirety. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association shelved the Golden Globes during the Writers Guild of America strike in 2008 after the Screen Actors Guild said its members wouldn't cross picket lines outside the ceremony. With the threat of an empty red carpet, the awards were replaced with a dull televised press conference announcing the winners. — AFP



William H Macy arrives for the Showtime Golden Globe Nominees Celebration at Sunset Tower.



This file photo taken on January 14, 2012 shows Actress Emma Stone arriving at the 69th Annual Golden Globe Awards held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on January 15, 2012 in Beverly Hills, California.



Actors Malin Akerman and Damian Lewis attend the Showtime Golden Globe Nominees Celebration at Sunset Tower.

British Vogue features first transgender woman

Paris Lees became the first openly transgender woman to feature in British Vogue fashion magazine on Friday, marking a step towards a "more tolerant society", said the broadcaster and model. Lees dons a sleek, black dress designed by Yang Li and strikes a pose among a group of women ranging from politicians to online bloggers, hailed by the magazine as a new kind of suffragist.

"When I was growing up you rarely saw trans people in the media and only then as objects of pity, ridicule or disgust," Lees told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "We are in the middle of a global movement where trans people are asking to be treated with the same respect as everyone else in society," she

said. Inside the avant-garde magazine's February issue, Lees is profiled in a story entitled "Meet the New Suffragettes," celebrating 100 years since women in Britain gained the right to vote.

Britain granted women aged over 30 who met a property qualification the right to vote in 1918, but it wasn't until 1928 that all women had the same voting rights as men. This is not the first time transgender women have featured in international fashion magazines. In November, men's magazine Playboy had its first transgender 'playmate' centerfold, while in March the French edition of Vogue featured a transgender model on its cover, as did Marie Claire Spain in 2016.

The February edition of Vogue is the

third by Edward Enniful, who promised to celebrate diversity when he was appointed the magazine's first black and male editor in the publication's 100-year history in April last year. Lees, who was subjected to bullying in childhood and has faced criticism and backlash on social media, said she hoped her inclusion would offer inspiration to others.

"I know that there are many trans women who are still, in our supposedly tolerant society, too scared to come out and live their lives freely," said Lees. "To those people I would say, if and when you feel ready to come out we'll be here to support you." — Reuters



Paris Lees (third left) appears with Gal-DEM magazine founder Liv Little (first left), Women's Equality Party leader Sophie Walker (second left), blogger Dina Tokio (fourth left), artist Gillian Wearing (third right), writer Reni Eddo-Lodge (first back right) and Labor MP Stella Creasy (second right).



SHORT ON STARS, LONDON AIMS TO STAY IN FASHION WITH YOUTH

Grappling with the digital revolution upsetting all corners of the industry, Men's Fashion Week kicked off in London on Saturday with fewer shows and star names. But this fixture in the British fashion calendar is attempting to stay relevant by going back to its roots, and promoting a more youthful image. Burberry deserted the event last year and now unveils its men's wardrobe at Women's Fashion Week, riding the trend towards less rigidity around gender.

JW Anderson, the label of Jonathan Anderson, who is artistic director of the Spanish luxury leather goods line Loewe, has followed suit, choosing to present only two runway shows per year instead of four. Punk icon Vivienne Westwood has now said she will be presenting her autumn-winter 2018-19 collection not in a catwalk but "through the form of film and imagery", according to a statement from her company. Designers have embraced a digital transformation of the industry in recent years, including the use of websites and social networking platforms for advertising and selling their latest collections.

"Not only are digital and combined menswear and womenswear shows often more cost-efficient, but such strategies also present the brand in a cohesive manner, whilst reaching new audiences," Samantha Dover, of the analysis firm Mintel, told AFP. Kristabel Plummer, editor of the fashion blog I Want You To Know, said designers are now more practical when it comes to catwalks and called the changes "sensible business decisions". "There's no point doing things in the way they've always been done, if that's not right for the brand. Increased flexibility and innovation can only be a positive thing, in this challenging consumer landscape," she said.

THROUGH THE FORM OF FILM AND IMAGERY

'Era of content'

"Brands need to move at the speed the world does, and today that is fast," Anderson told The Guardian in a recent interview. "We live in the era of content. We put something on Instagram and it gets reposted and it's everywhere and a minute later it's gone, over," he added. The drift away from London Men's Fashion Week by established designers has seen the number of parades drop by a dozen this year. It has led to questions over whether the British event, the younger of the annual fashion weeks, can still compete with Paris, Milan and New York.

Organizer The British Fashion Council hopes it can still flourish by allowing young and upcoming local designers to showcase their talents. Caroline Rush, its chief executive, said the 2018 edition will be "a celebration of discovery and the creative diversity that has made London an international hub for menswear." A raft of emerging names in British fashion will feature their clothes during the schedule, including the luxury streetwear of Edward Crutchley—dubbed a "rising star" by Vogue—and the bold neo-punk hip-hop wardrobe of Liam Hodges. They are joined by Christopher Raeburn, a pioneer in ethical fashion and recycling materials, and Astrid Andersen, who designs sportswear. "There's a variety of brands on the schedule," said Plummer, pushing back on notions London Men's Fashion Week is petering out. "Perhaps a new gem will emerge, thanks to the extra attention," she added. — AFP



Models present creations at Stefan Cooke, as part of the MAN collection, during a catwalk show on the third day of the Autumn/Winter 2018 London Fashion Week Men's.

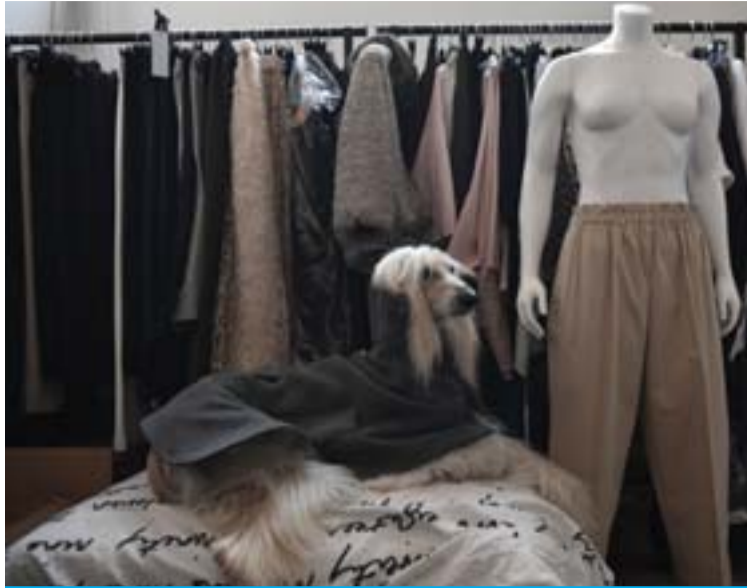


Models present creations from the designers at Rottingdean Bazaar, as part of the MAN collection, during a catwalk show.



Models present creations at Stefan Cooke, as part of the MAN collection, during a catwalk show on the third day of the Autumn/Winter 2018 London Fashion Week Men's.

Lifestyle | Fashion



This file photo shows a greyhound dog wearing an outfit of Italian designer Temellini Milano in the workshop of the fashion house, in Milan. — AFP photos



A tailor working on outfits for dogs in the workshop Temellini Milano in Milan.



An employee working on an outfit for a greyhound dog in the workshop Temellini Milano in Milan.

Canine couture cuts a dash in Italy's fashion capital

Elegant, tailored outfits are not reserved just for fashionistas in Italy—couture for dogs is proving a hit with some Milan pet owners. Man's best friend should not be overlooked when it comes to cashmere sweaters and woollen coats, according to designer Giovanna Temellini, who enables the fashion conscious to match their style with that of their pooch. "Everything is born out of love," says the 57-year-old, who has been in the fashion industry for 25 years working for labels such as Bottega Veneta and Armani and is an active supporter of animal welfare groups. One evening just under a year ago in her workshop, Temellini recalled, her daughter said to her: "You do so many little things for all the dogs..." referring to her animal protection voluntary work. "But when it rains, mine gets his ears all wet," her daughter continued.

The following evening a member of her design team set to work making a hooded coat for the pet, to match the winter jacket of Temellini's daughter. From there sprung her made-to-measure fashion line just for dogs entitled Temellini Dog A Porter, with its first shop opening this month. Her staff use a dog-shaped mannequin to create a range of sizes for different breeds, including dobermans, basset hounds and greyhounds. But for each commission, the canine customer has its measurements taken to ensure a snug fit.

Because you're worth it

One dark grey jacket from her dogs' range sports a high collar with buttons down the front, with the fabric matching a woman's over-sized coat from Temellini's main collection, for women, which she began 15 years ago. But the focus on high-quality fabrics and stylish cuts means a cashmere T-shirt costs 142 euros (\$171), a merino wool bomber jacket 212 euros and a coat with small pockets

252 euros. One customer snapped up an entire wardrobe for his dog, adopted from a shelter, because after what she had been through, "she deserved it".



A dog wearing an outfit "Dog A Porter" in the workshop of fashion house Temellini Milano.

Twenty-four year-old student, Beatrice Gerevini, who likes to coordinate her dog's outfit with her own, said it helps the pair to "create a connection". It is also "a sort of game, a way of being noticed—people smile when they see us". Temellini, who continues to do some work for other labels too, says she wants to create a collection suitable for all dogs, including those with disabilities. "I am very respectful and attentive to all the requirements of dogs which are to be able to move, run, get dirty and socialize. I refuse to do something that would restrict or ridicule a dog, because they'll be aware of it." — AFP



Fashion designer Giovanna Temellini (left) adjusting an outfit on a greyhound dog.



A greyhound dog wearing an outfit of Italian designer Temellini Milano.



A woman posing with a greyhound dog wearing a matching outfit in the workshop of fashion house Temellini Milano.

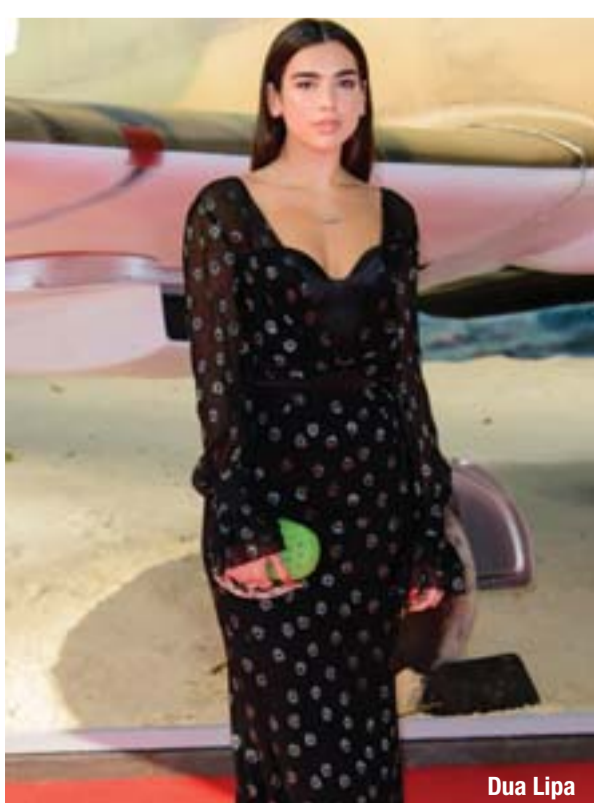


A tailor taking measurements of a greyhound dog.



An employee working in the workshop of Italian fashion house Temellini Milano.

Dua Lipa stresses the importance of fashion freedoms



Dua Lipa

Dua Lipa thinks it's important people feel free to wear "whatever they want". The style-conscious musician has stressed the need for people to feel uninhibited with their fashion choices, saying she's against putting any trends in a "box". She reflected: "Everyone is allowed to wear whatever they want, and it's so important that they do. This is the way we move forward in the world. We have to break the norms. If women wearing menswear is deemed normal, women wearing menswear should be normal, too. But normality is a tricky one. It's putting things in a box, and it shouldn't be like that. Because what is normal, anyway?"

Dua is particularly fond of her own Vetements boots, which feature flames from their broad platform. The boots have been a hit with her ever-increasing Instagram following, but she admits that they're not always practical. Dua told Refinery29: "Obviously, I can't wear them every day, or as much as I want to. But my dream boots are always something I could never wear every day; just something I want to put in a glass box and keep forever." Despite this, Dua revealed she's always keen to "explore and try new things". She explained: "I always try to find designers that are up and coming, especially when I'm in a certain city. If I was in Berlin, for example, I'd try to wear designers from there. It's important to explore and try new things, and grow with those designers that are up and coming since I'm an up-and-coming artist, too. This way, we can grow and change together." — Bang Showbiz



Ashley Olsen

Trainer reveals Ashley Olsen's fitness regime

Ashley Olsen does pilates almost daily in order to stay in shape. The 31-year-old fashion designer employs trainer Jessica Schatz in Los Angeles, and she's revealed the secret to her slim figure. Jessica explained: "She is extremely strong and works incredibly hard." Jessica focuses her fitness program on core work, and has revealed that Ashley's workouts are a mix of pilates and yoga. Jessica told PEOPLE: "While the work is rooted in pilates, I combine all of my expertise to offer her an incredibly strong workout based on core strength, core stability, and core control. I also combine my expertise in yoga and biomechanics to keep things tailored to her specific body."

Jessica also revealed the specific exercises she runs through with her celebrity client. She shared: "We do a lot of planks and variations of planks, like reverse planks, and side body core and leg work." What's more, Jessica paid tribute to Ashley's self-discipline, which helps her to stay in good shape. The trainer explained: "Ashley is extremely disciplined, hard working and open to trying anything new."

Meanwhile, Hollywood actress Elizabeth Olsen previously hailed her sisters Ashley and Mary-Kate as "brilliant women" who have achieved everything they dreamt of and more. The 'Avengers: Age of Ultron' star said: "I just think they're brilliant women. [On their shops they're like,] 'I like this, I like this world. I like art, I like architecture, I like photography, I like fashion,' and they've made it into a company." — Bang Showbiz

Lifestyle

MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2018



A reveler takes part in the "White Day" parade, on January 6, 2018, during the Carnival of Blacks and Whites in Pasto, Colombia, the largest festivity in the south-western region of the country. More than 10,000 people among artists, craftsmen and revelers take part in the Blacks and Whites Carnival, which has its origins in the mix of the multiple Andean, Amazonian and Pacific cultural expressions. It is celebrated every year from January 2 to 6 in the city of Pasto and is part of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity since 2009. — AFP

Koi story: Priceless Japanese fish make a splash



Photo shows breeder Yasuyuki Tanaka transporting a customer's nishikigoi koi carp to a water tank in Kazo, Saitama prefecture.

BEAUTY PARADES

Hand-reared for their color and beauty, koi carp have become an iconic symbol of Japan that can sell for hundreds of thousands of dollars and even participate in fishy beauty contests. The nation's koi carp were brought to the world's attention when visiting US President Donald Trump was snapped unceremoniously dumping the last of a box of feed into a palace pond in Tokyo. But the fish have for decades been popular in Japan, where top breeders take their most prized specimens (known as "nishikigoi") to highly competitive "beauty parades."

At one such competition in Tokyo, judges in sharp suits, notebooks in hand, stride around tanks lined up along a pedestrian street where the valuable koi strut their stuff. They come in all the colors of the rainbow: pearly white, bright red, cloudy-grey, dark blue, gleaming golden yellow. But it is the curvature of the fish that accounts for 60 percent of the final score, explained competition organizer Isamu Hattori, who runs Japan's main association for breeders of koi carp. Color and contrast make up another 30 percent, he told AFP. And the final 10 percent? "Hinkaku"—a concept that is tricky to define and even harder to judge, best translated as the "presence" or "aura" of the fish.



Baby nishikigoi koi carp being bred in a water tank at the Kurihara Fish Farm in Kazo, Saitama prefecture. — AFP photos

'Everything matters'

"Hinkaku". It's either there in the genes at birth, or it's not," mused Mikinori Kurikara, a koi breeder in Saitama, north of Tokyo, who says he can spot it in fish when they reach eight or nine months old. "Put it this way, it's like looking after your own children every day. You care for your kids and want them to grow healthy. In the same way, you take care of these fish, appreciate them and adore them," he told AFP. At his farm, thousands of tiny "nishikigoi" (coloured carp) dart around deep basins of carefully purified water, meticulously divided by age and color.

A less glorious fate awaits the other koi who have not been fortunate enough to catch the eye of the breeder: they are sold off as feed for tropical fish. "It's a really delicate job, really difficult. Everything matters: the ground, the water quality, the food," explained the 48-year-old, who took over the farm from his father and is training his son, half his age, in the subtle arts of koi breeding. "We have many secrets," he adds mischievously. "But even if we let them slip, it wouldn't work. You have to be able to feel it."

'Social ladder'

These days, any self-respecting traditional Japanese garden has plenty of colorful koi gracing its ponds, but it is a relatively recent tradition. Around 200 years ago, villagers in the mountainous region around Niigata (in the north-west of Japan) started to practice genetic engineering without knowing what they were doing. For the first time, they began to cross-breed rare colorful carp, not for food but for pure aesthetic value. The craze for nishikigoi gradually took over the whole of Japan and then spread into other parts of Asia. They are especially popular in China, where carp swimming against the tide symbolizes the idea of perseverance leading to riches—rather like people climbing the social ladder, said Yutaka Suga, professor at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at Tokyo University.

Today, koi is big business and Japanese exports are booming — 90 percent of domestic production is exported and sold at auction. In 2016, Japan exported a record 295 tons of koi carp, generating turnover of 3.5 billion yen (\$31 million), an increase of almost 50 percent from 2007, according to Japan's agriculture ministry. As for individual carp, "the prices have become insane," said carp association boss Hattori. "Today, a two-year-old carp can sell for 30 million yen each (\$265,000) whereas 10 years ago, two million yen was already a very good price," he told AFP. Like

racehorse owners, many foreign owners leave their prized possessions in their home Japanese farms so they can compete in the most prestigious fishy pageants, which are only open to domestic rearers.

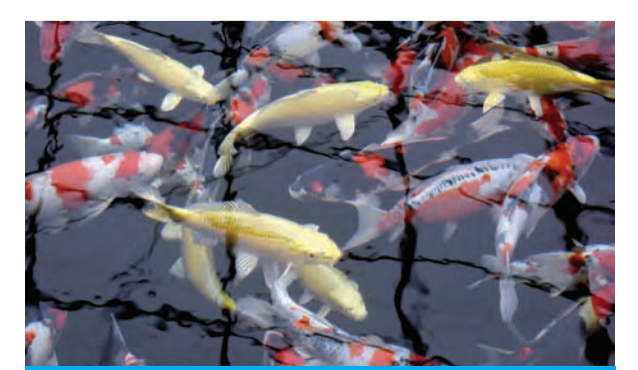
One such owner, Chinese koi collector Yuan Jiandong, was in Tokyo to cheer on some of his own carp. "It's not a way of making money. It's a way of spending it for fun," laughed the pharmaceutical boss from Shanghai. But owning koi is so much more than a vulgar display of wealth, he said. "When you see these beautiful fish gliding around in your pond, you forget the stresses of daily life and you find peace of mind." And you can't put a price on that. —AFP



This photo shows breeder Mikinori Kurihara (front), Yasuyuki Tanaka (top left) and Ryuichiro Kurihara (top right) transferring a customer's nishikigoi koi carp to a water tank in Kurihara Fish Farm in Kazo, Saitama prefecture.



Nishikigoi koi carp swimming in a water tank at the Kurihara Fish Farm in Kazo, Saitama prefecture.



Nishikigoi koi carp being bred for future contests at the Kurihara Fish Farm in Kazo, Saitama prefecture.