



5 Young Kuwaitis build dhow as gift to Amir



30 Plot twist as Pakistani soap operas seek to break taboos



16 Real Madrid downed at home by Villarreal



Trump scrambles as slur fuels universal outrage

Africans condemn 'racist' remarks • Comments leave Norwegians cold

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump sought to quell a global firestorm over his reported denunciation of immigration from "sh**hole countries" - a slur slammed at home and abroad as racist. The reported remarks - which drew unanimous condemnation from African nations at the UN and resulted in at least two US diplomats being called in by their hosts - are just the latest in a series of racially-charged comments by the president.

Trump tweeted a convoluted denial early Friday about the comments allegedly made on Thursday at a White House meeting with lawmakers on immigration reform. "The language used by me at the DACA meeting was tough, but this was not the language used," Trump said, apparently referring to the remarks quoted by The Washington Post and The New York Times.

But Democratic Senator Dick Durbin - who was present at the meeting - publicly pushed back, saying "Trump had repeatedly used 'vile and racist' language. Thursday's White House huddle was held to discuss a bipartisan deal that would limit immigrants from bringing family members into the country, restrict the green card visa lottery and boost border security, in exchange for shielding hundreds of thousands of young people known as 'Dreamers' from deportation.

Trump scrapped an Obama-era program that gave the 800,000 young immigrants legal protection, setting a March deadline for Congress to offer a fix - though it has been reinstated by a court, for now. After lawmakers raised the issue of protections for immigrants from African nations, Haiti and El Salvador, the president reportedly demanded to know why the United States should accept immigrants from "sh**hole countries," rather than - for instance - wealthy and overwhelmingly white Norway.

Durbin said Trump specifically asked, "Do we need more Haitians?" before launching into a diatribe about African immigration. Trump then "said things which were hate-filled, vile and racist", Durbin said, adding that "sh**hole" was "the exact word used by the president, not just once but repeatedly". Trump denied he ever said "anything derogatory" about the people of Haiti. "Made up by Dems," he tweeted. "I have a wonderful relationship with Haitians!"

But the government of Haiti - which Friday marked the eighth anniversary of a devastating earthquake that killed at least 200,000 people - declared itself "outraged and shocked" by the "racist" slur. Trump's reported comments also drew a unanimous condemnation from the African Group of UN ambassadors, which said it was "extremely appalled" at the "racist and xenophobic remarks". The group called for a retraction and apology, and also expressed concern at what it described as the "growing trend from the US administration" to "denigrate the continent and people of color".

Ambassadors unanimously agreed the resolution after an emergency session to weigh Trump's remarks. The comment was "clearly" racist, said Ebba Kalondo, spokeswoman for AU chief Moussa Faki. "This is even more hurtful given the historical reality of just how many Africans arrived in the United States as slaves, and also terribly surprising as the United States remains a massively positive example as just how migration can give birth to a nation," Kalondo said. He stressed the US was "much stronger than the sum total of one man".

The State Department was left scrambling to contain the damage, with a top official saying that - while Trump denies using the language attributed to him, diplomats



MARYLAND: US President Donald Trump gestures as he boards Air Force One at Joint Base Andrews yesterday for a weekend trip to Mar-a-Lago. — AFP

had been briefed to convey Washington's respect if summoned to explain themselves, as they were in Haiti and Botswana. US missions went into damage control mode. The embassy in South Africa said the United States "deeply respects" the people of Africa, and "there has been no change in our dedication to partners & friends across the continent".

Trump's language triggered a barrage of criticism from

both Democrats and Republicans. Congressional Black Caucus Chair Cedric Richmond and House Judiciary top Democrat Jerrold Nadler said they would seek to introduce a censure resolution against Trump next week. "We have to show the world that this president does not represent the feelings of most of the American people," they said in a statement.

Continued on Page 11

Saudi women attend match; women-only car showroom opens

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia allowed women to enter a football stadium for the first time to watch a match Friday, as the ultraconservative kingdom eases strict decades-old rules separating the sexes. The new measure comes after Riyadh, long known for imposing harsh restrictions on women, announced it was lifting a ban prohibiting them from driving, as well as reopening cinemas.

Women supporters, all wearing the traditional black abaya robe, arrived well ahead of Friday's kick-off in the Jeddah stadium, some in sunglasses and others with loose-fitting veils. The Islamic kingdom has announced a series of reforms initiated by powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman since last year. The first football

match women are being allowed to attend is a clash between Saudi Premier League clubs Al-Ahli and Al-Batin in the Red Sea city of Jeddah.

Alone or accompanied by their families, many women sat in reserved seats in Jeddah's Pearl stadium. Glass panels were set up to separate men supporters from the women and family section of the stadium. Saleh Al-Ziadi brought his three daughters to the game. "My daughters still don't believe this is happening. They have not yet realized they will be cheering their favorite team inside the stadium," he said.

Enthusiasm for the historic encounter began well before the scheduled 8:00 pm (1700 GMT) kick-off. Lamya Khaled Nasser, a 32-year-old football fan from Jeddah, said she was proud and looking forward to the match. "This event proves that we are heading for a prosperous future. I am very proud to be a witness of this massive change," she told AFP. Ruwayda Ali Qassem, another Jeddah resident, called Friday a "historic day in the kingdom which culminates (in) ongoing fundamental changes".

Continued on Page 11



JEDDAH: Female Saudi supporters of Al-Ahli attend their team's football match against Al-Batin in the Saudi Pro League at the King Abdullah Sports City on Friday. — AFP

News in brief

UAE jet 'violates' Qatar airspace

DOHA: Qatar said yesterday that a second United Arab Emirates military jet had violated its airspace, prompting a new complaint to the United Nations. The plane was travelling from the UAE to Bahrain on Jan 3 when it flew over Qatar's special economic zone "without prior authorization", the foreign ministry said. On Friday Doha said it had lodged a protest at the UN about a UAE fighter jet violating its airspace on Dec 21. In its new complaint, Qatar said the "repetition of this terrible incident" was evidence of the UAE violating international law. UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash on Friday denied the accusation relating to the first incident and said Abu Dhabi would send an official response.

One separated Gaza twin dies

RIYADH: One of the Palestinian conjoined twins from the Gaza Strip separated last week in surgery in Saudi Arabia has died but her sister is recovering, the kingdom said yesterday. "Haneen is in stable condition and on her way to recovery five days after being surgically separated from her clinically dead sister, Farah," the Saudi information ministry said. "Haneen is breathing normally and is receiving her nutrition intravenously," said Dr Abdullah Al-Rabiah, who led the operation team. Rabiah said that all of the Palestinian infant's vital signs were now stable and that she had been removed from an artificial respirator. The operation was carried out on Monday and involved the separation of multiple organs, including the liver, as well as restoring organs in Haneen.

Harrods to remove statue of Diana, Dodi

LONDON: London luxury department store Harrods said yesterday it was taking down a statue of the late Princess Diana and her boyfriend Dodi Al Fayed and returning it to former owner Mohamed Al-Fayed. Fayed commissioned the bronze statue, which shows his son and Diana holding hands and releasing a bird, after they were killed in a Paris car crash in 1997. It remained there after he sold Harrods to the investment arm of Qatar's sovereign wealth fund in 2010.

But the store's managing director, Michael Ward, said it was now time to return it, noting that Diana's sons Princes

William and Harry were commissioning their own statue to their mother at Kensington Palace. "We are very proud to have played our role in celebrating the lives of Diana, Princess of Wales, and Dodi Al-Fayed at Harrods and to have welcomed people from around the world to visit the memorial for the past 20 years," he said. "With the announcement of the new official memorial statue to Diana, Princess of Wales at Kensington Palace, we feel that the time is right to return this memorial to Mr Al Fayed and for the public to be invited to pay their respects at the palace."

Fayed has accused the royals of masterminding the death of Diana and his son, and as a result Harrods lost its royal warrant in 2000. A spokesman for the Fayed family told The Times newspaper it was "grateful" to Qatar Holdings for preserving the memorial of the couple, adding: "It is now time to bring them home." — AFP



LONDON: This file photo taken on Aug 31, 2006 shows a permanent memorial to Diana, Princess of Wales and Dodi Al-Fayed at Harrods. — AFP

Binladin denies govt takeover after chief held

RIYADH: Saudi construction giant Binladin Group denied yesterday any state takeover after its chairman was detained, but said some shares may have been transferred to the government. The firm, which has been forced to lay off tens of thousands of workers due to financial problems, said it remained a private shareholding company and was undergoing restructuring. International media this week reported Saudi Arabia's

government had taken over the firm after chairman Bakr bin Laden was detained.

The Saudi Binladin Group "would like to confirm that it remains a private sector company owned by its shareholders", it said in a statement. But some company shares may have been transferred to the government in a settlement of "outstanding dues", it added, without providing any details on the size of any such shares. "Based on information available to the management, some of the shareholders may have agreed (to) a settlement that involves transferring some SBG shares to the government of Saudi Arabia against outstanding dues," it said.

The group's chairman was among dozens of high-profile political and business figures arrested two months ago in a crackdown on corruption ordered by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Saudi authorities said

they were negotiating financial settlements with those detained that could earn state coffers about \$100 billion. Some of those jailed at the luxury Ritz-Carlton hotel in Riyadh have been released after agreeing to a settlement with the government.

But the chairman is among several other suspects who are still in detention. These also include Saudi billionaire prince Al-Waleed bin Talal. Established in 1931, the Binladin Group is one of the most powerful companies in the oil-rich kingdom. It belongs to the family of the late Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who was killed in 2011.

The firm has encountered serious difficulties in the past few years. It laid off around 77,000 foreign workers in 2016, after the government delayed payments due to a slump in oil revenues.

Continued on Page 11

Local

Motorist dead, five injured in 3-car collision on 4th Ring Road

Two critically wounded in 7th Ring Road crash



KUWAIT: Firefighters examine the scene of an accident on Fourth Ring Road.



The third vehicle involved in the Fourth Ring Road crash.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: One person was killed and five others were injured when three vehicles collided along the Fourth Ring Road, said security sources. Firemen rushed to the scene where they rescued the injured and rushed them to hospital for treatment. The dead motorist's body was taken to the coroner. An investigation was opened to determine the circumstances behind the accident.

Seventh Ring Road

Separately, two people sustained critical injuries when their vehicle collided into a truck carrying garbage containers along the Seventh Ring Road. On arriving at the scene, firemen found that one of the two passengers was thrown out of the vehicle, while the other was trapped inside it. Special gear had to be used to release him and both were sent to the hospital.

Jahra fire

A fire recently broke out in six-storey building in Jahra. Security sources said firemen from Jahra and

Jahra industrial area were immediately dispatched to the scene, where they found that the fire started in a fifth-floor apartment and that over 100 people, including children, were trapped by flames and smoke. Firemen managed to rescue the trapped people, of whom three were injured and sent to hospital for treatment. No fatalities were reported.

Basement fire

Another fire was reported in the basement of a house in Naem in Jahra, said security sources, noting that on rushing to the scene, firemen evacuated the house and managed to control the flames without reporting any casualties.

Farwaniya blaze

Meanwhile, a fire broke out on the fourth floor of a nine-storey building in Farwaniya, said security sources, noting that firemen immediately evacuated 70 tenants including 29 children and dealt with the blaze. No casualties were amongst the civilians, but four fire-fighters suffered from smoke inhalation - three were treated onsite and one was rushed to hospital for further treatment.



Three hurt in Jahra blaze

India minister visits Kuwait, eyes speedy solution to labor issue

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: India's Minister of State for External Affairs Dr (Gen) V K Singh said that Indian government is keen on finding a solution to a long-pending issue of unpaid salaries involving Indian laborers in Kuwait. Addressing the Indian community, the visiting minister said that he had taken up the matter with the Kuwaiti authorities in his talks on Thursday and they had positively responded to his request, assuring him of a speedy solution to the crisis.

India's new Ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar, Charge d'Affaires and Appellate Authority Raj Gopal Singh, First Secretary K K Pahel, Second Secretary (Labor) Sibi U S and other embassy officials were present during the meeting at the embassy.

Earlier, the minister interacted with a group of Indian laborers who gathered at the embassy to request the intervention of the visiting minister in finding a solution to the crisis. The minister also visited a labor camp to get firsthand information about the condition of the workers in distress. According to the workers, their residencies expired a long time ago and their employers had not renewed them, resulting in a large amount of penalties. They also haven't been receiving salaries for the past several months, making their plight even more miserable.

The minister, while addressing the community members at the embassy, said the embassy and the Indian government will make all necessary arrangements for those who can go back to India and will pay their airfare. The embassy has already issued air tickets to many who were able to leave the country. The minister also called upon the community members to come forward and get in touch with the embassy to help the people in need.



KUWAIT: India's Minister of State for External Affairs Dr V K Singh addresses the Indian community at the Indian embassy. Indian Ambassador K Jeeva Sagar (second left), K K Pahel (first left), Sibi U S (second right), Raj Gopal Singh (right), Charge d' Affaires, and Appellate Authority look on.



Dr Singh interacts with a group of laborers at the Indian embassy.

Panel probes Awqaf secretariat general's violations

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Head of the parliamentary budgets and final statement committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said the committee met the Awqaf secretariat general to discuss the State Audit Bureau's report about violations in using endowment funds, which was made upon the committee's request. Abdulsamad said the committee was skeptical when the secretariat claimed it was not ready to discuss the report on grounds that it had no time to prepare its responses.

He added that the Audit Bureau confirmed that it had faced various obstacles in doing its task, such as the secretariat's abstention from providing some documents

and delay and procrastination in providing some data. The committee confirmed the remarks mentioned in the Audit Bureau report and called for immediate action to set things right, especially since the sums amount to over KD 900 million, and since 200 cases are being heard in courts concerning wastage and squandering of endowment funds.

Abdulsamad said the Audit Bureau report also showed that some secretariat employees had made personal gains despite losses in the endowment funds. The report also had remarks about hiding of information about the gains made through dealing with an Islamic bank. In addition, the report showed that the secretariat had cancelled a previous contract with an auditing office that had detected inaccurate bookkeeping, and that the same office was rehired after omitting this report, although the violation remained.

2040 strategy

Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) CEO Jamal Jaafar said many changes had taken place in both international oil markets and the Kuwaiti oil industry since Kuwait

Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) new strategy was set in 2008. "But some of these strategies are no longer fit and need an update or extension," he underlined. In a letter addressing KOC employees, Jaafar said KPC started renewing its strategic vision for 2040 in 2016 and that a special committee was accordingly established.

He added that six options had been set for these strategic tendencies to be reviewed by KPC and to choose the best according to each option's feasibility. He said the first phase was concluded in Sept 2016 and the second one was launched in April 2017, when all companies and departments were asked to update and develop their plans to help achieve KPC's strategy affectively, including its needs, risk identification and setting basic performance indicators to assess the added value of these initiatives.

Jaafar said special teams were formed under the northern oilfields development managers to develop the strategic initiatives needed to achieve the 2040 goals. "Oil is the most important source of energy and is expected to remain for decades, which gives Kuwaiti

Minister, society discuss nurses' demands

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr Bassel Al-Sabah received Kuwait Nursing Society's board of directors headed by Bader Nashmi Al-Enezi to discuss nursing-related issues. Enezi said the society discussed amending the nursing payroll proposal of 2009 that had been withheld by the Civil Service Commission (CSC). He added that the society asked the minister to make a new position for an assistant undersecretary for nursing affairs, as nursing staff members form half of the health ministry's employees. Enezi added the society asked the minister to give Kuwaiti nurses two days off every week and that the minister promised to study the proposal. Enezi said that the society also discussed reshuffling nursing officials in various health zones and hospitals as well as cancelling admission tests for nurses who graduated in Kuwait.



Health Minister Dr Bassel Al-Sabah

Environmental awareness

The Environment Public Authority (EPA) announced offering for public bidding two tenders on organizing an awareness campaign on the need to protect the environment during the national ceremonies and another on protecting the environment from natural disasters.

officials a great responsibility to maintain Kuwait's share of international markets," he added.

Egyptian gas

Well-informed oil sources were dismissive that Kuwait will follow Saudi Arabia and UAE in importing gas from Egypt, especially after the launch of the first phase of Egypt's Thabar field that will initially pump around 350 million cubic meters of gas daily. The sources added that Kuwait currently focuses on importing gas through Shell oil tankers, in addition to the recent agreement made with Iraq to compensate Kuwait with Iraqi gas. "Importing gas from Egypt might be considered later," the sources remarked.



MP Adnan Abdulsamad

Local

Six graduates start internship under Zain Group's 'Generation Z 2018' program

Initiative brainchild of CEO and Vice-Chairman Bader Al-Kharafi

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa announces the commencement of its 'Generation Z 2018' program for six high-caliber Kuwaiti graduates, who were selected to enter the initiative following a rigorous assessment process.

This year's program builds on two previous year-long graduate programs, which now sees four graduates from the 2017 program offered full-time employment, similarly to the 2016 program.

The six new successful candidates for the 2018 program were judged on their creativity, passion, resilience and initiative.

The aim of this year-long graduate development program is to develop talented Kuwaiti nationals with a focus on enhancing their digital skill sets to the level required to support Zain Group's digital lifestyle strategy.

'Generation Z 2018' will focus on developing soft skills to foster collaboration and foster team effectiveness, develop creati-

ty and enable innovative thinking, thereby preparing graduates to enter the workforce and contribute successfully.

The 'Generation Z' Youth Empowerment initiative is the brainchild of Zain Group CEO and Vice-Chairman, Bader Al-Kharafi, a keen supporter of developing and empowering Kuwaiti youth.

At a ceremony honoring the 'Generation Z 2017' graduates and welcoming the 'Generation Z 2018' interns held in the company's head office, Kharafi commented,

"It is widely accepted that youth development and career guidance are factors that catalyze national and organizational development, and on our part,

we remain committed to identifying the most talented young people in Kuwait and offering them a platform to reach their full potential."

Kharafi added, "It is important for us to support the education system by defining a series of plans aimed at bridging the gap between today's curricular and the future's unpredictable corporate environment. We



KUWAIT: Zain Group CEO and Vice-Chairman Bader Al-Kharafi poses with the six selected 'Generation Z' high caliber Kuwaiti nationals.

have been very satisfied with the performance of the previous in-take of bright, young Kuwaitis into the program and especially their accomplishments to date as full-time Zainers. We believe this third year will build substantially on what we have done previously and be instrumental in supporting the future development of our digital lifestyle strategy."

The latest set of program participants will be helped to cultivate customer-centric

ideas that are relevant and impactful. Developmental areas of interest to Zain include Big Data, digital services, mobile money, data analytics, and innovation.

Participants will be put through their paces, including undertaking extreme sports, international travel and learning more about themselves.

The six selected 'Generation Z 2018' interns are: Zahraa Jamal, Ghalya Al Roumi, Laura Al Watyan, Sabikha Al Zahem, Jasem

Al Nafisi, and Tareq Al Salem.

In November 2017, Zain Group launched a 'Women Empowerment Network' initiative aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering women in the organization to act, lead, develop, and succeed. Regarding its 'Youth Empowerment' strategy, Zain Group has plans to roll-out programs such as 'Generation Z' and other similar youth initiatives across all its Middle East and African operations.



Four interns join Zain Group full-time

Housing Minister: Open door policy with citizens to last

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Services Affairs Dr Jenan Boushehri said that the open door policy with citizens would be permanent in all affiliated bodies. Boushehri met yesterday with a number of citizens at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW). She said in a press release that they seek through these meetings to listen to remarks and proposals from citizens dealing with the PAHW and the Kuwait Credit Bank, with officials from both organizations present.

It is the right of citizens to directly meet with officials to express their problems, the minister stressed. Officials, on the other hand, have to listen, explain the relevant procedures and work on solving problems according to legal frameworks. Boushehri set Saturday for a weekly open meeting with citizens to listen to their complaints and suggestions. — KUNA



Housing Minister Dr Jenan Boushehri

Education Minister urges buttressed scout movement in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Education and Higher Education Hamed Al-Azmi said yesterday that Kuwait's scout movement needs to be propped up by all necessary means in order to safeguard its achievements in Arab and international domains. Speaking to reporters while attending the opening ceremony of the 71st National Scout Camp, Azmi boasted that Kuwaiti scout movement dates back 71 years, saying that his ministry spares no effort to back the country's national scout movement. He added that he was so happy to see sisterly and friendly countries partaking in the annual event, citing this as an unequivocal paradigm of the ministry's relentless interest in the scout movement.

The ministry of education is keen on taking much care of scouts, and answering all their needs, given that scouting, no but, inculcates in students self-dependence and personality

improvement, the minister noted. Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Educational Development and Activities Faisal Al-Meqseed said meanwhile that the camp attracted 1,500 scouts and leaders from different educational directorates, in addition to scouts from Gulf, Arab and friendly countries. He emphasized that scouting is of paramount significance to encouraging young people to capitalize on, and develop, their capabilities and skills in a constructive fashion. — KUNA



Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi

Egypt values relations with Kuwait

CAIRO: Egypt highly values strong and profound relations with the State of Kuwait and its people, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry confirmed late on Friday. This came in a statement issued by the Egyptian Foreign

Ministry spokesman Ahmad Abu Zaid, in response to "negative and false" news perpetuated in media to create strife between Egypt and Kuwait and other GCC countries. He warned of the dangers of falling for "sabotaging attempts to damage Egypt's relations with its Arab brothers." He also noted that despite the foreign ministry's firm policy not to comment on such suspicious acts, which in turn, reflect only the desperation of its instigators, Egypt chose to assert close relationship with Kuwait. — KUNA

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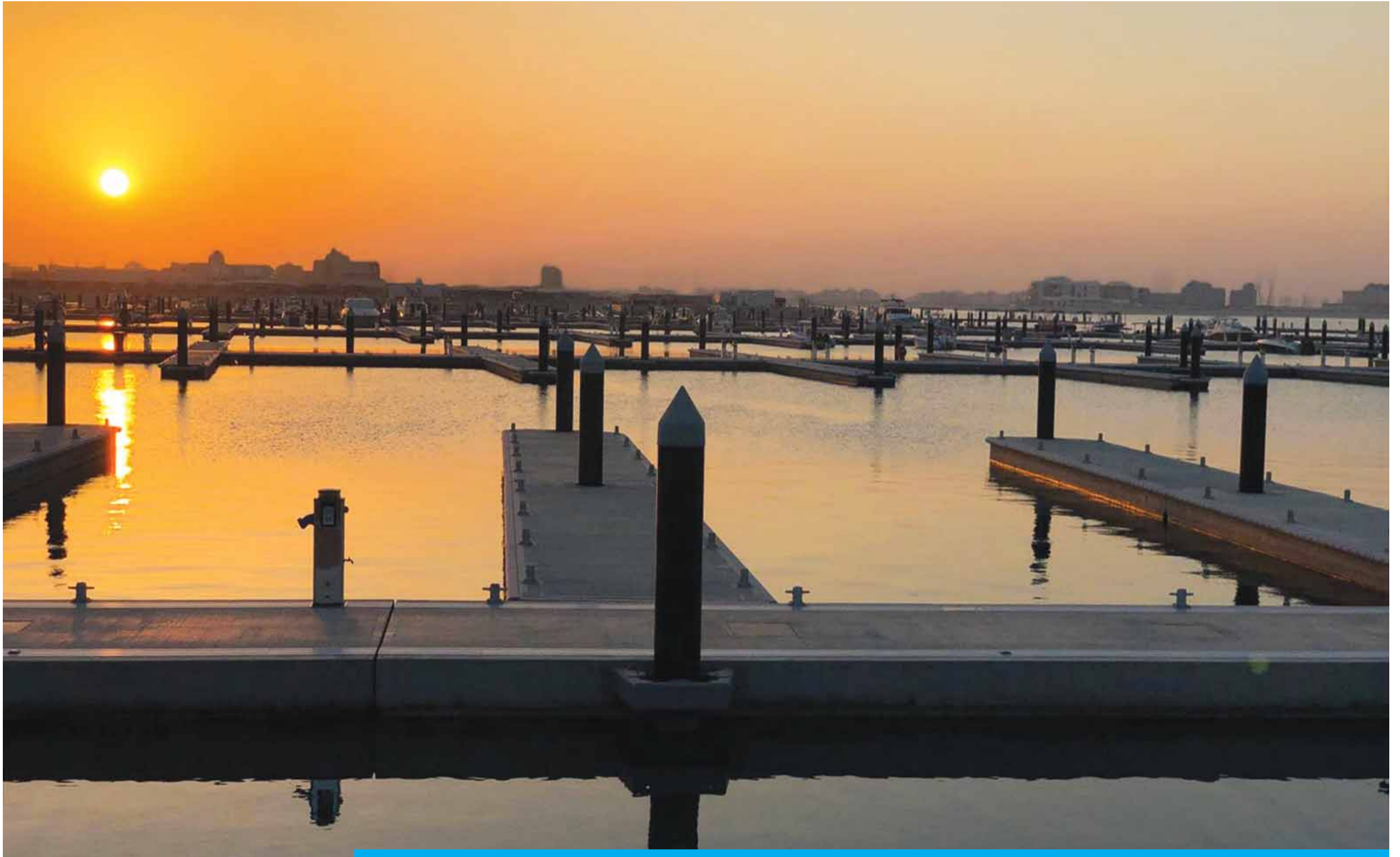
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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The last sunset of 2017. —KUNA

EQUATE continues educating youth in Kuwait on plastics and recycling

As part of its sustainability awareness campaign



KUWAIT: In its endeavors to raise awareness about the importance of plastic and its lifecycle in our everyday lives, EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, continues its Plastic Awareness Campaign by educating the youth in Kuwait at various schools.

The campaign encompasses EQUATE's objectives to achieve sustainable development in every aspect of its business be it operationally, socially and environmentally.

By organizing workshops in ten public schools as part of the second phase of its 2017 campaign, EQUATE has illustrated the lifecycle of plastics, their diverse usage in many industries and recycling process. The workshops included interactive games and competitions held in collaboration with Blank Hunts. The campaign will hold its third phase in 2018 by hosting public events in different venues in Kuwait including malls to interact with many and various individuals

and form a solid awareness of plastics in Kuwait's communities.

EQUATE's Senior Executive of Corporate Communications and Government Affairs, Dr Abeer Al-Omar, said, "Our initiatives at EQUATE are focused on achieving sustainability, ultimately supporting the company's 2025 Sustainability Strategy that supports the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and Kuwait's 2035 Vision. The sustainability of

our environment is one of the most important elements to the growth and progress of communities and economies, in addition to our continued investments in finding effective solutions to better manage resources and reduce waste."

Meanwhile, EQUATE's Sustainability Committee Member, Asrar Mohammad, added, "In modern life, plastics are part of our everyday lives. Their multiple uses and applications highlight the need for proper-

ly using and recycling plastic products to ensure overall sustainability. Ensuring that the students understand the petrochemical industry and the various products such as plastics derived from this industry are critical to creating overall awareness."

To learn more about the initiative, EQUATE provides informative material on its social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook and Twitter) and on the hashtag #weknowplastics.

KIB sponsors engineering students' project

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored a graduation project for students from the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University, as part of its leading social responsibility program. This unique project, entitled 'L&T', is a device that is designed to facilitate the lifting and transportation of vehicles.

The project was spearheaded by three graduate students from the Mechanical

Engineering Department at Kuwait University, namely: Hassan Mahdi Bukhamseen, Yousef Mohammed Bujabaru and Abdulaziz Abdullah Al-Bishr; this project was under the supervision and guidance of Dr Jasim Mohammed Baroun. Led by these three inspirational students, the project worked on developing a mechanical lift which is installed at the bottom of a vehicle.

By installing one part of the device to the front of the car and one at the back, the device lifts the wheels from the bottom without causing any damage to the base of the car. Additionally, the device has been designed to put the ability to lift a car right in the user's hands via a wireless remote control.

Speaking on this occasion, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najja, said: "KIB has always sought to

support a number of student projects that contribute to the development of the local community.

As one of the top pillars of our social responsibility program, we are committed to sponsoring students' projects and adopting their ideas and innovations whenever possible. With our ongoing support of this vital segment, we guarantee that various sectors of our country will continue to thrive and prosper." It is worth noting that KIB remains committed to its role as a banking institution, supporting youth by directly engaging with them through diverse youth and student-related activities. The Bank attaches great importance to supporting their innovative ideas and projects, as it believes they are the most influential drivers of the nation's future.



Local

Young Kuwaitis build dhow as gift to Amir



KUWAIT: A group of Kuwaiti youth have built a wooden dhow naming it 'boom of the Humanitarian Leader,' to be gifted to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Eight young Kuwaitis manufactured the traditional Kuwaiti ship as a tangible gesture of admiration for Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, designated by the United Nations as Humanitarian Leader. The handicraft work was done at Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village. They labored for two and a half months, producing the 16-meter long sea vessel and equipping it with various tools, used in pre-oil times by ancestors who had traveled to remote countries for trade and dived at sea for collecting pearls, braving various life-threatening dangers. — KUNA



KFAED arranges students' trips to Morocco, Albania

KUWAIT: Outstanding female students flew to Morocco yesterday on a week-long trip organized by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED). By so doing, the KFAED wants to make Kuwaiti brilliant students familiar with three KFAED-bankrolled developments projects in Morocco, and to mirror Kuwait's contributions to external development projects, KFAED's Information Section's Deputy Chairperson Amira Al-Kandari said. This is not the first trip to Morocco as outstanding students were previously dispatched to Morocco a couple of years ago, said Kandari, the trip's supervisor. Concurrently, outstanding high-school students from Kuwait left for Albania in a KFAED-funded journey for the same purpose. The annual initiative stems from the



KUWAIT: Members of the female students' delegation pose for a group picture before the trip. — KUNA

KFAED's belief in the significance of stimulating Kuwaiti students to excel more and promote their patriotism by means of informing them about Kuwait's efforts in Arab and world development, KFAED's Press Chief Ahmad Al-Sarraf said. The trip is also meant to develop students' knowledge and research skills and to help them explore their capabilities, primarily self-reliance and sense of responsibility, he added. On an annual basis, the KFAED organizes

trips mainly to showcase Kuwait's role in offering developing aid to Arab and world countries. Launched in 2010, the trip program is part of cooperation between the Ministry of Education and KFAED. Under the program, outstanding high-school students are sent on trips to see firsthand KFAED and Kuwaiti development contributions and efforts. KFAED was established in 1961 upon an initiative by late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Ahli Capital raises disability awareness

KUWAIT: In line with Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait's (ABK) strategy to support and engage the special needs community, Ahli Capital Investment Company (ACIC) partnered with Training Gate International (TGI) earlier this month to raise disability awareness. In addition, ACIC purchased 18 paintings done by special needs students to help them reach their potential, which was permanently displayed at ACIC's Head Quarters. The students were invited to enjoy a morning at ACIC, where the artists were thanked for their hard work and presented with a certificate of appreciation at the event, which was attended by Michel Accad, ABK



KUWAIT: Ahli Capital Investment Company (ACIC) staff pose with Training Gate International (TGI) special needs students.

CEO and Deputy Chairman of Ahli Capital Investment Company, Muhsen Harbi (CEO - ACIC) and Mrs. Kefaya Al Alban, Head of Training Gate International alongside a number of ACIC staff. Muhsen Al Harbi, CEO of Ahli Capital Investment Company said: "It is important to go beyond verbally encouraging people with

disabilities and in fact, encourage them to have similar roles in the society as their peers who do not have a disability. The art display is one way for us to embrace people in our community. We have a display of beautiful art done by some very talented artists. We are extremely proud to be able to display their work at ACIC."

Horeca Kuwait 2018 kicks off tomorrow

KUWAIT: Under auspices of the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan, the Horeca Kuwait 2018 exhibition, organized by the Leaders Group for Consulting and Development in collaboration with the Hospitality Services Company, opens tomorrow

at Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref with participation of companies specialized in hospitality, catering and hotel equipment. In this regard, Leaders Group promoted the three-day event as unique in terms of its type and size in Kuwait. The organizing committee also noted that visitors who had registered online have reached 2,000 so far, which is a record number compared to previous cycles of the exhibition and other similar regional and international fairs. The committee's statement added that all the booths and display spaces were already booked early. The statement also noted that the opening ceremony would include a tour

for officials and guests around the exhibition in order for them to be briefed about various items on display in addition to information about the cooking competition activities. This year's cycle of Horeca will witness symposiums held for the first time, starting with the first day with a symposium discussing cooking bloggers' impact on restaurant projects. The symposium will be moderated by Iqbal Al-Haddad. The second day's symposium will discuss franchise licenses. The organizing committee had previously announced that over 300 participants from Kuwait and other countries would take part in 21 competitions for cooking, bed-making and other activities during the event.

Kuwaiti envoy hails defense minister's fruitful Bahrain visit

MANAMA: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's visit to Bahrain was "produc-

ive and successful," the Kuwaiti ambassador to Bahrain said yesterday. Sheikh Azam Al-Sabah said that the Kuwaiti defense minister's visit was met with much fanfare and "further cemented the historic ties" shared between the two Gulf neighbors. Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad's talks with the Bahraini leadership "highlight the need for more cooperation given the mounting challenges facing the region," he said. During his visit to Manama on Wednesday, the Kuwaiti defense minister met with Bahraini monarch Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa, along with other senior officials. — KUNA



MANAMA: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Bahraini King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa. — KUNA

Kuwait continues helping needy people in Yemen, Syria, Sudan

KUWAIT: Living up to its UN-bestowed status as an International Humanitarian Center, Kuwait continued providing humanitarian aid to people in need. Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced Wednesday that it has dispatched 90 tons of food aid to the Yemeni people. KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said that the food shipment would be distributed on those affected in the areas where the Yemeni people are present. Sayer explained that this batch of aid was provided by the Kuwaiti people and is part of the assistance provided by the KRCS since the outbreak of the Yemeni crisis. He added that the affected and needy people of Yemen require great support from the Gulf and Arab Red Crescent Societies, stressing the importance of interaction and response of international organizations with the needy Yemeni people, especially the displaced from their areas where they live. The International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) also on Wednesday announced launching a humanitarian campaign aimed at relieving Syrian and Palestinian refugees with onset of winter cold. The organization is seeking donations to secure food parcels, each worth

KD 30 (approximately \$100) and sufficient for a five-member family for a month, in addition to clothes, heating fuel for each family valued at KD 35 as well as blankets. It appealed to citizens and private companies to contribute to the campaign for aiding the refugees, namely children. Kuwait By Your Side campaign distributed solar-powered water pumps for the local administration in the Yemeni governorate of Jof. The campaign works in five sectors: water, health, shelter, education and food. Meanwhile, Islamic Heritage Revival society distributed 8,000 bank cards to orphans in Sudan. Ahmad Tuhami, Secretary General of Ansar Al-Sunna group, which collaborated with the society in distributing the cards, said the cards would facilitate transfer of five million Sudanese Pounds (\$713,095) to around 5,008 orphans every month in a safe and secured manner. — KUNA



Dr Hilal Al-Sayer



Chinese authorities demolish megachurch

Hope turns to despair 7 years after Tunisian revolt

Page 7

Page 9



PARIS: French homeless man Christian Page poses for a photograph at the Sainte-Marthe square in Paris. —AFP

Homeless man takes Twitter by storm

An account of life on the mean streets of Paris

PARIS: A French homeless man has become a social media sensation, chalking up nearly 20,000 followers on Twitter with his account of life on the mean streets of Paris. Christian Page was the head waiter in a ritzy restaurant in the posh Madeleine district of the French capital before becoming homeless after a divorce that tipped him into depression. The 45-year-old, born in the western Paris suburb of Versailles, the former seat of French kings, recalls serving the likes of former Paris Saint-Germain striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic and tennis champion Rafael Nadal.

But one day, he found he "couldn't smile at people anymore" and handed in his notice. Struggling to live on 545 euros (\$650) a month in benefit payments, he soon found himself unable to pay rent and was evicted in April 2015. Nowadays, home is the street, where armed with an old smartphone with a cracked screen he punches out tweets slamming politicians' empty promises and appealing for help for those without a roof over their heads.

His phone has also been a stick to call out the

authorities over anti-vagrancy measures. On Christmas Day, he tweeted a picture of the metal barriers erected by the city around a warm air vent in northeast Paris used by some homeless people to keep warm. The message was shared over 2,000 times, prompting the authorities to remove the grilles—a small victory for the homeless that made the front pages, boosting Page's Twitter following to over 19,500 and landing him with a list of interview requests.

His first social media coup dates back over a year, when he tweeted about being woken at dawn by a municipal cleaning worker who hosed him with cold water. Despite having only

six Twitter followers at the time his message came to the attention of Socialist Mayor Anne Hidalgo, who apologized and provided him

with a new sleeping bag. "Twitter is not a weapon, but it's powerful," the self-described "vagrant 2.0" who dresses rocker-style in head-to-toe black with a ponytail and red bandana, said in an interview with AFP on a bench in northeast Paris.

'Begging 2.0'

Apart from highlighting conditions on the street Page also uses Twitter to request a helping hand, preferring "begging 2.0" to what he calls the "despondency" of traditional panhandling. And it works. Over Christmas and New

Year, a generous benefactor left him the keys to his Paris apartment, and he has also received donations of clothes and shoes, which he shares with others. Above all, he said, tweeting gives him "the feeling of existing." "In the morning, I get a 'Hello Christian', and in the evening a 'Goodnight'. It sounds silly but these little messages move me," said the soft-spoken father of a 15-year-old son, whose ruddy face testifies to the ravages of the cold.

Despite his growing fame, Page, who has kept a phone contract with internet access, has no ambition of becoming a spokesman for France's estimated 143,000 homeless. "I'm glad if my messages find an audience. It might mean a sandwich for a homeless person at the other end of France," said Page, who is scathing of the work of charities, calling them "supermarkets of misery" which he says fail to do enough for the homeless. On a personal level, he is optimistic about getting off the street. "Anything can happen. With my current run of luck, I should play the lottery!" — AFP



Down but not out: Homeless man makes headlines

Deadly 'long-lost disease' rages through Rohingya camps

UKHIA: In a makeshift bamboo clinic, small children struggle to draw breath through surgical masks, victims of a forgotten but deadly disease that has torn through the teeming Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh. Diphtheria had been all but eradicated in Bangladesh until last year, when more than 650,000 Rohingya poured across the border fleeing a bloody military crackdown in neighboring Myanmar.

Packed into an area meant for a much smaller number of refugees and with little sanitation or healthcare, the new arrivals provided fertile ground for the highly contagious respiratory disease to take hold. It quickly spread through the camps, with the World Health Organization reporting more than 3,600 cases. The outbreak has already claimed the lives of at least 30 refugees, mostly children, while a handful of Bangladeshis living near the camps have also contracted the disease.

Carla Pla, head nurse at the specialist diphtheria unit run by medical charity MSF (Doctors Without Borders), said children were arriving with "severe" symptoms. "This is a very challenging situation, because everyday there are coming more children, and the challenge to get the vaccine is also something that is very difficult," she told AFP at the unit. Nearly 600 refugees have been referred there since it opened in December,



UKHIA, Bangladesh: Rohingya Muslim refugees wait for food aid at Thankhali refugee camp in Bangladesh's Ukhia district. — AFP

putting enormous pressure on doctors also struggle to treat rampant malnutrition, water-borne disease and other diseases in the camps. When AFP visited this week most of the patients were small children, some of them clearly struggling to breathe.

Caught off guard

Bangladesh authorities were prepared for other diseases and moved quickly to inoculate the new arrivals against cholera and measles to prevent a health disaster. But the emergence of diphtheria, which causes difficulty breathing and can lead to heart failure, paralysis and death if left untreated, caught aid workers off guard.

"We were taken aback when tests confirmed diphtheria in the camps. It was a long-lost disease in our country," said Abdus Salam, the chief medical officer for Cox's

Bazar district, where the camps are located. "Immediately, we acquired vaccines from abroad for an emergency response." In December, they launched a huge vaccination push. Nearly 320,000 children aged under 15 have now been inoculated and another 160,000 children are expected to receive the vaccine this month. High rates of vaccination mean diphtheria has become increasingly rare in much of the world, although Yemen is currently suffering an outbreak. But the Rohingya come from impoverished Rakhine state, where state-imposed restrictions have ensured abysmal living standards for the persecuted Muslim community, and many children are not vaccinated. Pla said it was challenging for staff treating a disease that "only existed in the textbooks for all these years", with many doctors seeing live cases for the first time in their careers. — AFP

Profane Trump horrifies experts, delights backers

BOSTON: From Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon through Barack Obama, Americans have gotten used to the idea of their presidents using profanity, but Donald Trump's use of the word "sh**hole" to describe Haiti and Africa this week sparked a storm of protest. The countries offended condemned the outburst and human rights groups labeled the comment racist, given that Trump described people from largely white Norway as more desirable immigrants. But supporters of the former businessman and reality TV star erupted in applause. "Finally a president that says what we all think! You go @POTUS! #Sh**holeCountries #sh**hole #America1st," tweeted Marco Gutierrez, a Trump supporter and Congressional candidate from California.

Conservative blogger Stacy Rush dismissed criticism of Trump's language as pitiful and a distraction from the bigger picture: "It is pathetic our country and particularly the MSM (mainstream media) is wasting time on the word #sh**hole when we have real issues that need to be addressed." But many from the worlds of diplomacy, academia and even etiquette

experts cringed. "The reality is that when you have to resort to it, it does send a message of insecurity," said Diane Gottsman, author of *Modern Etiquette for a Better Life*, who advises against using profanity in either professional or social settings.

Trump's remarks during a meeting on immigration policy that was held at the White House on Thursday were reported by a US senator at the gathering, who said on Friday that the president had used "vile, vulgar" language, including repeatedly saying "sh**hole." Trump denied on Friday that he had used such derogatory language. But he was condemned nonetheless in many African nations, as well as in Haiti and El Salvador, and by international human rights organizations.

During the 1960s Lyndon Johnson raised eyebrows by saying that, in politics, "chicken sh** can turn to chicken salad." Experts said the public were shocked by the profanity-laced Nixon tapes from the Oval office in the 1970s Watergate political crisis, and that people are less sensitive now. "People have become accustomed to the idea that presidents swear," said Julian Zelizer, a Princeton University history professor who studies the presidency. "But even with that, I think people still expect a certain amount of formality in public." Some academic research suggests there could be benefits to swearing in some contexts, from dulling pain to suggesting trust in social situations. — Reuters

International

Hope turns to despair seven years after Tunisian revolt

Tunisian revolution ignited the Arab Spring uprisings

TUNIS: Seven years since the Tunisian revolution that ignited the Arab Spring uprisings, 38-year-old Walid has no job and says people are even more hungry than they were under dictatorship. Anger over poverty and unemployment erupted into protests and clashes this week that have led to hundreds of arrests ahead of Sunday's anniversary of the overthrow of dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. "It's been seven years and we've seen nothing happen. We've had freedom, it's true, but we're more hungry than before," Walid said in Tebourba near the capital Tunis.

Desperation over police harassment and unemployment drove a Tunisian street vendor to set himself on fire on December 17, 2010 in a town in the country's neglected interior. Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old university graduate who eked out a living selling fruit, died weeks later, fuelling social unrest that spread across much of the Arab world. Following a wave of protests, Ben Ali resigned on January 14, 2011 after 23 years in power.

He fled to Saudi Arabia, becoming the first leader to stand down in the Arab Spring. Compared to other countries rocked by uprisings such as Libya and Yemen which are still deep in turmoil, Tunisia has been praised for its steps towards democracy. A new constitution was adopted and legislative and presidential polls held in 2014. But disillusion remains rife. The country has "the same economic model, with the same problems" as before, the president of the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights, Messaoud Romdhani said. "So the situation keeps getting worse."



Anger over poverty, unemployment erupt into protests, clashes

In a report released last month, the group warned that despite democratic advances, "unemployment, misery and social and regional inequalities have worsened". Tunisia has been convulsed by sometimes-violent demonstrations since Monday in which youths throwing stones and Molotov cocktails have clashed with security forces who responded with tear gas. Dozens of people have been injured and more than 800 arrested on charges including theft, looting and arson. One protester died on Monday night in Tebourba though police have insisted they did not kill him.

'Potential for resistance'

In the latest protest, hundreds of Tunisians took to the streets of Tunis and the coastal city of Sfax on Friday, waving yellow cards and demanding that the government reverse austerity measures. The demonstrations "reveal an anger carried by the same people who mobilized in 2011 and obtained nothing in terms of economic and social rights," said political scientist Olfa Lamoum. The trigger of the new protests was a finance law imposing tax hikes after a year of rising prices. The Tunisian economy has never recovered from the instability that followed the revolution.

The key tourism sector was dealt another crushing blow by jihadist attacks that shook the country in 2015 including the beachside massacre of 38 foreign holidaymakers. The government was forced to turn to the International Monetary Fund which lent Tunisia \$2.9 billion in 2016 on condition that it



TUNIS: Tunisian protesters confront security forces blocking access to the governorate's offices in Tunis during a demonstration over price hikes and austerity measures on January 12, 2018. —AFP

reduced its budget and trade deficits. Youth unemployment remains above 35 percent according to the International Labor Organization. Every year since 2011, 10,000 children have dropped out of primary school and 100,000 young people have left college or high school without diplomas, says the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights.

In a sign of growing disenchantment, illegal emigration reached the highest level since 2011 in the

autumn. Municipal polls seen as the final stage in Tunisia's transition to democracy have been delayed until May, while fresh legislative and presidential elections are planned for 2019. But the democratic steps have not extinguished the revolutionary fervor altogether. "The potential for resistance is still there," Lamoum said. "Young people still have the same dream for Tunisia even if it will take time." —AFP

ANC leader vows to 'restore credibility' after Zuma scandals

EAST LONDON: The new head of South Africa's ruling ANC, Cyril Ramaphosa, pledged yesterday to "restore the credibility" of the party after a spate of graft scandals involving President Jacob Zuma. Zuma was replaced as party chief by his deputy Cyril Ramaphosa in December with the new leader facing an uphill task to recover public support for Africa's oldest liberation movement ahead of the 2019 elections. "We must restore the integrity and credibility of the ANC," said the 65-year-old in his first major address to the party at a rally for the African National Congress's 106th anniversary celebrations.

"The movement has become deeply divided through factionalism, patronage, corruption and competition for resources," said the former trade unionist who led talks to end white-minority rule in the early 1990s and then became a multi-millionaire businessman before returning to politics. "We are going to confront corruption," he said, pledging that "the investigation and prosecution of those responsible (for manipulating the state machinery for their own ends) will be given top priority."

This week, Zuma—who was also at yesterday's meeting in East London—announced a probe into top-level corruption after parliament said it would deliberate procedures for impeachment. Corruption allegations have tarnished Zuma's image and eroded his support base, with the beleaguered leader facing growing pressure to resign before his presidential term ends in



EAST LONDON: African National Congress President Cyril Ramaphosa addresses supporters at the ANC's 106th anniversary celebrations at Absa Stadium in East London, South Africa yesterday. —AFP

2019. Back in 2014, Zuma failed to abide by recommendations made by the anti-corruption watchdog over \$15 million (12.5 million euros) of taxpayer-funded refurbishments at his home in the eastern KwaZulu-Natal province.

After the Constitutional Court found against him, he eventually reimbursed the equivalent of around \$500,000 for non-security-related work at his home-

stead, a sum set by the treasury. In 2016, a damning report questioned Zuma's dealings with the Guptas, a wealthy family of Indian origin, who were allegedly granted influence over his cabinet appointments. Last month, Zuma suffered another blow when Ramaphosa, who campaigned on an anti-corruption ticket, was elected ANC president beating the president's former wife Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. —AFP

US' ultimatum, new sanctions draw Iran threat

MOSCOW: Iran said yesterday it would retaliate against new sanctions imposed by the United States after President Donald Trump set an ultimatum to fix "disastrous flaws" in a deal curbing Tehran's nuclear program. Trump said on Friday he would waive nuclear sanctions on Iran for the last time to give the United States and European allies a final chance to amend the pact. Washington also imposed sanctions on the head of Iran's judiciary and others.

Russia - one of the parties to the Iran pact alongside the United States, China, France, Britain, Germany and the European Union - called Trump's comments "extremely negative." The ultimatum puts pressure on Europeans, key backers of the 2015 nuclear deal, to satisfy Trump, who wants the pact strengthened with a separate agreement within 120 days.

While approving the waiver on US sanctions related to the nuclear deal, Washington announced other sanctions against 14 Iranian entities and people, including judiciary head Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani, a close ally of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Describing sanctions against Larijani as "hostile action", Iran's Foreign Ministry said the move "crossed all red lines of conduct in the international community and is a violation of international

law and will surely be answered by a serious reaction of the Islamic Republic," state media reported. It did not specify what any retaliation might involve. Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had earlier said on Twitter that the deal was "not renegotiable" and that Trump's move "amounts to desperate attempts to undermine a solid multilateral agreement." Iran says its nuclear program has only peaceful aims and says it will stick to the accord as long as others respect it. But it has said it would "shred" the deal if Washington quit.

'Last chance'

Trump, who has sharply criticized the deal reached in Barack Obama's presidency, had chafed at having to once again waive sanctions on a country he sees as a threat in the Middle East. "Despite my strong inclination, I have not yet withdrawn the United States from the Iran nuclear deal," Trump said in a statement, saying the options were to fix "the deal's disastrous flaws, or the United States will withdraw."

"This is a last chance," Trump said, pushing for a separate agreement and saying the United States would not waive sanctions again to keep Iran in the pact without such an agreement. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov called Trump's remarks "extremely negative", RIA state news agency reported. "Our worst fears are being confirmed," he said. The EU said in a statement it had taken note of Trump's decision and would assess its implications. "It's going to be complicated to save the deal after this," said one European diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity.



TEHRAN: Iranian motorists drive in Sadeqiyeh Square in the capital Tehran yesterday. Iran rejected any modification of its nuclear deal with world powers after US President Donald Trump demanded tough new measures to keep the agreement alive. —AFP

Britain, France and Germany had called on Trump on Thursday to uphold the pact. Senior US administration officials told reporters Trump would work with Europeans on a follow-on deal to enshrine triggers that the Iranian government could not exceed related to ballistic missiles. Republican Senator Bob Corker said "significant progress" had been made on bipartisan congressional legislation to address "flaws in the agreement without violating US commitments."

Trump laid out conditions to keep Washington in the deal. Iran must allow "immediate inspections at all sites requested by international inspectors," he said, and "sunset" pro-

visions imposing limits on Iran's nuclear program must not expire. Trump said US law must tie long-range missile and nuclear weapons programs together, making any missile testing by Iran subject to "severe sanctions."

The president wants US Congress to modify a law that reviews US participation in the nuclear deal to include "trigger points" that, if violated, would lead to the United States reimposing its sanctions, the official said. This would not entail negotiations with Iran but would be the result of talks with European allies, the official said. A decision to withhold a waiver would have effectively ended the deal between Iran and the other international signatories. —Reuters

News in brief

Fisherman shot dead

GAZA: A fisherman from the Gaza Strip was shot dead by the Egyptian army overnight for unclear reasons, Palestinian officials said yesterday, calling for an immediate investigation into the incident. Medical sources in Gaza said that Abdullah Zeidan, 33, from the Shati refugee camp, was shot in the chest by Egyptian forces near the naval border with Egypt in the south of the coastal enclave. He was taken to hospital but died yesterday morning. Gaza's interior ministry said an initial investigation indicated "the Palestinian fishing boat did not cross the Egyptian (maritime) border". "We call on the Egyptian authorities to open an urgent investigation into this incident," spokesman Iyad Al-Bozum said in a statement.

California mudslides

LOS ANGELES: Authorities in southern California said Friday they had discovered the body of an elderly man killed by mudslides that battered the region earlier this week, lifting the overall death toll to 18. The 87-year-old man was "located by a search and rescue team in his residence," said Bill Brown, the sheriff of Santa Barbara county. Rescuers are continuing their search operations, with the missing now numbering seven, including a two-year-old girl, according to the Santa Barbara sheriff's office. Heavy rain on Tuesday, which followed 10 months of drought, sent sticky mud and debris flowing from the hills into Montecito. In addition to the dead and injured, 65 houses have been destroyed while another 462 sustained damage.

IS-linked jihadist attacks

NOUAKCHOTT: A jihadist group linked to Islamic State has claimed responsibility for attacks on US and French troops in west Africa, in a statement published Friday by Mauritania's ANI news agency. The group, led by Adnan Abu Walid Sahraoui, said it was behind "an attack against an American commando unit in Niger in October." On October 4, four US and four Niger troops were killed in an ambush at Tongo Tongo, a village close to the Mali border. That attack had been blamed on the jihadists but it is only now that the group claimed responsibility. The Islamists also claimed responsibility for an attack in Mali's restive northeast on Thursday in which three French troops were injured, one seriously, in a suicide bomb attack, said the ANI news agency, which closely tracks jihadist groups operating in the Sahel region south of the Sahara.

Jailed 'slap video' teen

NABI SALEH: Clashes broke out after dozens of Palestinian and Arab Israeli supporters of jailed teenager Ahd Tamimi protested near her home in the occupied West Bank yesterday, AFP correspondents said. Tamimi, 16, was arrested on December 19, days after a video went viral showing her slapping Israeli soldiers near her home in the village of Nabi Saleh in an apparent attempt to provoke them. She was charged in a military court on January 1 with 12 counts, including assault. The army kept her in custody. Tamimi's mother and another relative were also charged over the same incident, with the latter released on bail until her trial in February. Around 100 Palestinians from across the West Bank arrived to protest against Ahd Tamimi's arrest, chanting for her release and against Israel's occupation of the West Bank.

International

East-west clash as Czechs vote for a new president

Pro-Russia incumbent, pro-Europe rivals face off

PRAGUE: Czech President Milos Zeman appeared yesterday to be heading for a run-off as voters cast their ballots on day two of a presidential election pitting the pro-Russian incumbent against a flock of more liberal pro-European rivals. Opinion surveys show the divisive 73-year-old ex-communist, who is also staunchly anti-Muslim and pro-China, leading the pack of nine candidates ahead of Jiri Drahos, 68-year-old pro-European former head of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Although Zeman was in pole position yesterday, the outspoken head of state was unlikely to win an outright majority, with a run-off expected on January 26-27. And a recent poll for Czech Television showed the tide could yet turn, with a possible win for Drahos with 48.5 percent of votes predicted for the second round against 44 percent for Zeman.

As he voted in Prague on Friday, Zeman was targeted by a bare-breasted anti-Kremlin protester from the Femen movement who called him "Putin's slut", referring to Russia's president. Ironically, experts say the move might boost Zeman's chances, judging by an outpouring of sympathy for him on social media. Headlines like "Attack on Zeman" and "A scandalous incident" were splashed across the front pages of Saturday newspapers. The topless activist from Ukraine's Femen chapter was overpowered by bodyguards and then arrested by police. Security personnel also had to help a visibly rattled Zeman, who walks with a cane, to leave the room.



Czech leader Zeman blasts as 'Putin's slut'

were "impossible to integrate". The country of 10.6 million people has received only 12 migrants under the EU quota system. Drahos could not be more different. A mild-mannered liberal centrist whom critics have dubbed "wishy-washy", he has called for Prague to "play a more active role in the EU" and has backed the adoption of the euro. After voting in Prague on Friday, Drahos said the future president "should work in the interest of the pro-Western orientation of the Czech Republic" in a clear dig at Zeman.

"The president should work to unite society. It's clear that not everyone can agree, but the current president doesn't unite people, he divides them," Drahos added. After casting his ballot in Prague yesterday, Lubos Seidl told AFP that for him the election boils down to "a clash between the people who think the old way and those who think the new way." Independent analyst Jiri Pehe said the vote highlights a "polarized" society. "It is a clash between... the post-communist part of society represented by Zeman and the other part, say, modern, pro-Western, which simply doesn't want this president any more," he said.

Unite or divide?

Zeman has the backing of embattled billionaire Prime Minister Andrej Babis, who said the incumbent "fights for our national interests" but called on him to "unite, not divide" Czechs. Babis's populist ANO movement won last October's general elections with its anti-corruption and anti-euro campaign, but the Slovak-born tycoon who is facing police charges over EU funding fraud has failed to woo coalition partners. Tapped by Zeman for prime minister in December, Babis was forced to form a minority government which appears set to lose a parliamentary confidence vote on January 16. Pehe said a victory for Zeman might "pave the way for a deeper alliance with Andrej Babis, which could lead



Combo photo shows incumbent Czech President Milos Zeman (left) and his main challengers for 2018 presidential elections: Pavel Fischer (top left), Mirek Topolánek (top right), Michal Horáček (bottom left) and Jiri Drahos (bottom right). An academic, a gambler-turned-entrepreneur and songwriter, an ex-prime minister and a diplomat are among rivals taking on incumbent Milos Zeman in the Czech presidential vote. —AFP

to a change in some basic parameters of liberal democracy in the country." But things could change dramatically if Drahos wins. "Drahos has made it very clear that a prosecuted man should not be prime minister," Pehe said. Zeman's other rivals include ex-gambler and songwriter Michal Horáček, and former

rightwing premier Mirek Topolánek. The CTK news agency pegged turnout at 40 percent after day one of voting. Polling stations will close at 1300 GMT. Soon after that, initial results will indicate which two candidates are likely to contest the expected run-off. —AFP

Berlin woman revives Red Army ghosts in Reichstag graffiti

BERLIN: Berlin has preserved countless traces of its World War II destruction as chilling reminders of its militaristic past—few are more striking than Red Army graffiti left at the iconic Reichstag. When the parliament building was restored by British architect Norman Foster after national reunification in 1990, German leaders opted not to sandblast away the taunts, insults and notes for posterity inscribed by the Soviet troops who fought Adolf Hitler's armies into the heart of the capital.

Still today, deputies heading into the light-flooded Bundestag chamber under Foster's glass dome pass by hundreds of the often sentimental, sometimes raunchy Cyrillic messages that cover the interior walls. "You got what was coming to you, you sons of dogs," reads one. "You reap what you sow," says another, outside Chancellor Angela Merkel's parliamentary office. An obscene sexual threat against Hitler remains in a spidery scrawl high on a wall in the main eastern corridor.

Most of the inscriptions, made with charcoal from the Reichstag's charred rubble and chalk used on military maps, simply feature names, dates and march routes leading soldiers to the decisive battle of Berlin in 1945. One German woman, 68-year-old Karin Felix, has made it her life's work to trace the people and stories behind those hasty scribbles, in a surprising and deeply personal mission of reconciliation at a time of heightened tensions between Russia and the West. She has systematically documented and translated the graffiti and collected around 30 soldiers' stories in a book she hopes to have published in German, Russian and English.

'All the rage and joy'

"You have to think about what war does to people. They were almost children when they went to battle - 15, 16, 17," Felix said on a walk around the building's plenary level, where most of the around 100 meters of marked wall space can be found. "Through my work I've come to learn what the soldiers went through and when they got here, all the rage and the joy that that dark time was over came out in the graffiti." The long-hidden messages inside came to light in 1995 as renovation work began, with all the "I was here" drama of cave paintings. Foster, along with German officials and representatives from the Russian embassy, decided to restore as many of the tags as possible, while obliterating some of the most offensive.

Felix, now a great-grandmother, is neither an academic nor a diplomat. She learned fluent Russian growing up in communist East Germany and met several of the old soldiers and their children leading tours through the Reichstag, where she worked for a quarter century before retiring in 2014. One, Boris Zolotarevsky, was also just a teenager when he began the long march to Germany, culminating in the storming of the Reichstag. Before his death a few years ago, he told her of his fear during the nightmarish final battle, in which 2,000 Russians and several hundred German soldiers are believed to have died, and how he saw leaving the victors' traces today as a sign of national strength.

"He said he was pleased how lovingly the graffiti were preserved, and that Germany seemed to be the country that had learned the most from the war," Felix said. Walking down the hallway, she pointed to a heart pierced with an arrow with two names inside. "Anatoly never forgot his Galina and probably would have preferred to smooch her on a park bench than to join the stupid war," she said with a smile. "They had other dreams, just like our soldiers. But orders were orders."

Although the Reichstag's strategic importance was minimal as it had been home to the parliament that Hitler neutralized, Joseph Stalin targeted the imposing monument as standing for the Nazis' might. —AFP

Merkel risks leading weak 'losers' coalition for Germany

BERLIN: Germany's veteran chancellor Angela Merkel, often called the world's most powerful woman, will embark on a fourth term with diminished influence and little vision for shaping Europe's future, analysts say. After wrapping up more than 24 hours of talks Friday between her conservatives and the Social Democrats on forming a new "grand coalition" government, Merkel insisted the preliminary deal would break the deadlock in Germany and pave the way to a "fresh start" for Europe.

But before the ink was even dry on the roadmap for her new administration, observers branded Merkel and the team she's likely to lead a "losers" coalition with little ambition or power to tackle the major challenges facing the country and the continent. "In fact this 'grand coalition' is only a mini-coalition with just 53 percent" of seats in parliament following the September election that saw both parties cede millions of voters to the far-right, anti-immigration AfD party, political scientist Karl-Rudolf Korte of Duisburg-Essen University said. This compares with the lavish, nearly 80-percent majority the parties enjoyed during Merkel's previous term, he told public broadcaster ZDF.

'Paleo-coalition'

Merkel insisted the accord with the Social Democrats, which still must be approved by the party's rank and file, would ensure Germany's enduring stability and prosperity. "We will work earnestly, today and during the next term, to create the conditions so that we can also live well in Germany in the next 10 years and 15 years," she told reporters, flanked by SPD leader Martin Schulz and the head of Bavaria's Christian Social Union, Horst Seehofer. However influential news magazine Der Spiegel branded the alliance led by Merkel, who has been in power since 2005, a "paleo-coalition" of political dinosaurs bereft of fresh blood to propel renewal. While France's young president Emmanuel Macron said he was "happy" about progress in ending Germany's four-month-long political limbo, critics at

Pope's S American visit casts light on region's indigenous

SANTIAGO: When Pope Francis steps off his Alitalia plane at the start of a visit to South America next week, he will cast a rare global spotlight on the plight of the region's indigenous people. Francis begins his week-long trip in Chile's capital Santiago on Monday, but will also visit Temuco, 800 kilometers to the south, for a meeting with representatives of the indigenous Mapuche community. The Mapuche, Chile's largest ethnic group, are locked in a sometimes bloody conflict with a government it has long accused of discrimination and abuse, and are also demanding the restitution of traditional tribal lands in private ownership.

"The program of the Holy Father's visit reflects his concern for an area that has experienced major tensions, with whom he wants to share a message of peace and where he seeks to bring some words of hope," said the national coordinator for the visit, Fernando Ramos. Nearly 400,000 people are expected at Tumuco's Maquehue airbase where the pope will preside over a special "mass for the integration of the peoples" on Wednesday. The mass will feature a

Mapuche prayer to honor the first inhabitants of Chile and Argentina.

Conflict zone

The 80-year-old pontiff's arrival in Temuco, the capital of the region of Chile inhabited by the Mapuche, comes shortly after recent commemorations of two events that underscore the conflict with the government. One is the murder a decade ago of a Mapuche activist, Matias Catrileo, at the hands of the police. The other is the January 2013 arson attack by Mapuche activists on a remote farm, in which a couple were killed as they tried to defend their property.

Eleven Mapuche activists, among them a "machi" or spiritual leader, are awaiting trial in the case, after the state appealed their acquittal by a lower court. Catrileo was a member of the CAM, a radical group dedicated to the recovery of former Mapuche lands. The group have admitted firebombing landowners as part of a campaign to reclaim ancestral lands seized by the state at the end of the 19th century and sold to logging companies. After a two decade campaign, the group has managed to recover several hectares after forcibly evicting foresters. Ramon Llanquileo, one of the CAM's leaders, lives today in lands taken from a logging company.

"More than waiting for something, what one expects in the end are certain gestures, that the pope comes and says: 'the



BERLIN: German chancellor Angela Merkel and German Chief of Staff and Interim Finance Minister Peter Altmaier arrive for a parliamentary group meeting of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) and the Christian Social Union (CSU) faction at the Reichstag parliament building in Berlin. —AFP

home savaged the tired-looking troupe. "The losers of the September election have come together again and you have to say that this program blueprint doesn't even begin to address the problems in our society," charged Dietmar Bartsch, a leading figure with the far-left Linke opposition party. Nicola Beer of the pro-business Free Democrats said the deal showed little imagination or "future-oriented pragmatism" and would thus feed disillusionment and support "for the extreme right and left" of the political spectrum.

Twilight of her reign

The 28-page joint policy outlines included pledges to join France in a push to "strengthen and reform" the eurozone, to limit the influx of asylum seekers to Germany to around 200,000 a year, and to refrain from tax hikes given the healthy state coffers. But the absence of grand new initiatives led political scientist Werner Patzelt of Dresden's

Technical Institute to conclude that more-of-the-same from Berlin could boost the AfD in particular. "It will hand them success in upcoming state elections and they'll step up calls for Merkel to resign," he said, attributing her relative weakness to the record refugee influx in 2015 that undermined her standing with many voters.

Although Merkel stunned many observers abroad by winning re-election despite her controversial open-border stance, her struggle to form a viable coalition has revived speculation about the twilight of her reign. "Angela Merkel is past her zenith," Oskar Niedermayer of Berlin's Free University told business daily Handelsblatt. "In the interest of her party's electoral strength, she should not stay in office for the entire legislative term" running until 2021. A majority of Germans now share this view according to a poll published this week, with 56 percent calling for her to leave the stage before the next scheduled elections. —AFP



LIMA: An inmate at the Virgen de Fatima Women's prison in Lima shows handmade wooden rosaries made by the prisoners. A total of 72 inmates in the prison have produced 33,000 rosaries to be sold at stores in Lima, to donate the proceeds to Pope Francis, who will visit Peru January 18-21. —AFP

struggle of the Mapuche people is just.' It is a step forward but here the transformations are being brought about through our own personal efforts," Llanquileo told AFP. According to analyst and historian Pedro

Canales of the Institute for Advanced Studies, Francis is arriving "at a rather complex stage....some more radical groups" have hardened their attitude against the government. —AFP

International

Chinese authorities demolish megachurch amid criticisms

Rights group denounces 'Taleban-style persecution'

BEIJING: Authorities in northern China have demolished a Christian megachurch in a move denounced by a religious rights group as "Taleban-style persecution". China's officially atheist Communist authorities are wary of any organized movements outside their control, including religious ones. The huge evangelical Jindengtai ("Golden Lampstand") Church, painted grey and surmounted by turrets and a large red cross, was located in Linfen, Shanxi province.

Its demolition began on Tuesday under "a city-wide campaign to remove illegal buildings", the Global Times newspaper reported, quoting a local government official who wished to remain anonymous. "A Christian offered his farmland to a local Christian association and they secretly built a church using the cover of building a warehouse," the official said. The local housing department had stopped construction of the church in 2009 when it was almost complete, he added.

Several members of the Christian group were then jailed, according to the official. A

"multitude of military police were mobilized and engaged (in) the destruction by burying a large amount of explosives under the church," Bob Fu, president of the US-based religious rights group ChinaAid Association said yesterday. "It is like Taleban/ISIS style of persecution against a peaceful church."

as part of a broader effort to put religious practice under the direct supervision of the state. Beijing has stepped up its crackdown on civil society since President Xi Jinping took power in 2012, tightening restrictions on freedom of speech and jailing hundreds of activists and lawyers.

Chinese citizens officially have freedom of belief under the constitution but the authorities tightly control religious groups and churches, which have to swear allegiance to state-controlled "patriotic" associations to avoid any foreign influence through religion. In an annual report last year, the US State Department said that in 2016, China "physically abused, detained, arrested, tortured, sentenced to prison, or harassed adherents of both registered and unregistered religious groups". China has 5.7 million Catholics and 23 million Protestants, according to official statistics from 2014.

But the figures exclude a similar number of Catholics who adhere to the unofficial "underground" church loyal to the Vatican and tens of millions of members of unrecognized churches, mainly Protestant. Unofficial Christian organizations are generally tolerated if their members remain discreet. Authorities however routinely crack down on construction of unauthorized places of worship and dozens of churches have been demolished in recent years.—AFP



Authorities to implement new, stricter rules on religion

he said, adding that it had around 50,000 members.

The house of worship was "primarily destroyed because it refused to register" with the Communist authorities, Fu said. Linfen police and city officials did not answer telephone calls by AFP. Demolition of the church comes as authorities prepare to implement new, stricter regulations on religion which come into force on February 1



LINFEN, China: This undated video frame grab shows the remains of the Jindengtai Christian Church after it was demolished by authorities in Linfen city, in China's northern Shanxi province. —AFP

Anguish in Mexico over murdered 'girl in red socks'

MEXICO CITY: Kneeling at four-year-old Lupita's grave, Mexican activist Veronica Villalvazo spoke to the murdered girl as if she had known her all her short life. "Hey girl," she said, laying flowers on the earth. In reality, Villalvazo never met the child long known only as "the little girl in the red socks." But she was determined not to let her be just another anonymous statistic in the wave of violence against women and girls in Mexico.

Lupita's semi-naked body, beaten and sexually assaulted, was found in a Mexico City suburb on March 18. No one came forward to claim her, and for months, she was known only by the clothing she had on when locals found her in a vacant lot: a pair of bright red socks. Villalvazo, a 47-year-old journalist and women's rights activist, first read about the case in the local newspapers she monitors every day in an attempt to document Mexico's epidemic of violence against women.

The problem, which has lingered for years, exploded into the headlines again in 2017, when 7.5 women were murdered per day, according to statistics from the United Nations and the government—a new high after three years of decline. Villalvazo, who goes by the pseudonym "Frida Guerrero" (Frida the Warrior), did not want the girl's case to end as just another unsolved homicide in a country where 99 percent of violent crimes are never punished. She asked authorities for a picture that could help identify the girl. But she never received an answer. "The authorities' silence is a touchy subject. The message they send is, 'We don't care. We're not going to do anything,'" Villalvazo said.

"In Mexico, it's no big deal—you can kill a woman, a girl, rape her, torture her, kidnap her, and absolutely nothing will happen to you, because they don't investigate. Because it doesn't concern them." Finally, a confidential source passed Villalvazo a bloody crime scene photo, which she was able to use to create a composite sketch of the girl. It was the first step toward identifying her and finding her killers—a long journey that took a decisive turn Wednesday when prosecutors finally announced the girl's



NAUCALPAN, Mexico: Mexican activist Daniel Atilano places flowers on the grave of a little girl - still unidentified at the time - who was found murdered in the state of Mexico, at a cemetery in Naucalpan, northwest of Mexico City. — AFP

identity at a press conference, shortly after arresting her mother and stepfather and charging them with her murder.

Searching for Lupita

Villalvazo published the sketch of Lupita everywhere she could. That ultimately led two of the girl's aunts to get in touch with her last November. They had not had any news on Lupita for months, and got murky responses whenever they asked her mother—their sister—about her. In interviews with AFP, they described the girl's short life as one of abuse and abandonment. "She didn't deserve this," said one aunt, Marina Concepcion Medina, 39. Lupita's parents never registered her for a birth certificate, and she was bounced around from home to home—at one point living with garbage pickers. Marina and her sister Luz Maria Medina, 33, asked to take her in after noticing bruises on her and other signs of abuse. "I told (my sister), 'Leave her here.' Lupita grabbed my hand and told me she didn't want

to leave with her mom," Luz Maria said. But her mother refused.

'They did nothing'

Mexico has a law setting out harsher sentences for "femicide," or the killing of a woman when gender plays a part in the crime. It was passed in 2007, amid an explosion of women's murders—notably in Ciudad Juarez, on the US border, where hundreds of women were raped, killed and dumped in the desert or simply disappeared without a trace. Despite the law, violence against women rages on with near-total impunity. "The state has been incapable of reversing the years-long trend of high rates of violence against women. These cases have not been adequately investigated," admitted Pablo Navarrete, legal coordinator for the government-run National Women's Institute. Lupita's aunts had scathing criticism of the official investigation. "They did nothing," said Marina.—AFP

Trump's 'madman' rhetoric may have scared North Korea

SEOUL: US President Donald Trump's notoriously threatening rhetoric towards nuclear-armed North Korea—which has drawn comparisons with Richard Nixon's "madman theory" of diplomacy—may deserve some credit for bringing Pyongyang to talks, analysts have said. The two Koreas held their first official dialogue in more than two years this week, agreeing the North would send its athletes to next month's Winter Olympics in the South and paving the way for further discussions.

The meeting represented a significant improvement after months of confrontation, during which Pyongyang carried out multiple missile tests and by far its biggest nuclear detonation to date. At the same time Trump was blamed for heightening tensions with his threats to rain "fire and fury" on the North—now the title of an incendiary book on his presidency—and assertions that its leader Kim Jong-Un was on a "suicide mission".

Since Kim inherited power in 2011, North Korea has made rapid progress towards its goal of developing a missile that can deliver an atomic warhead to the United States, which significantly strengthens its negotiating position. In his New Year speech Kim said Pyongyang had accomplished "the great, historic cause of

perfecting the national nuclear forces". But some analysts now say that despite the hermit state's achievements and the defiance of its propaganda, Trump's chest-thumping provoked real fears within the North's elites, pushing them to seek ways to dial down tension.

Alexander Vorontsov, head of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, was in Pyongyang for meetings towards the end of last year. While there, he spoke to officials who "feared that the US was already trying to shape the battlefield for a military operation against the North", he wrote Wednesday on the website 38North. They seemed "truly baffled" that the South was unaware Trump was inching closer to war. Vorontsov said, while "Pyongyang, they maintained, is under no such illusions".

Trump administration officials have repeatedly said that military action is an option on the table. Washington has held several joint exercises with allies South Korea and Japan this year, and deployed three aircraft carriers to the area at the same time. There was "growing concern" in Pyongyang, Vorontsov said, that "different elements of a combined arms operation against North Korea are being methodically rehearsed and that 'zero hour', as they put it, is not too far away".

'Professional wrestling match'

The unpredictable US president is believed by some to be employing the playbook of his predecessor Richard Nixon, whose "madman theory" aimed to scare opponents into concessions by cultivating an image of recklessness. It was Nixon himself who coined the term,



WASHINGTON: US Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson (left), US Vice President Mike Pence (second right) and Isaac Newton Farris Jr (right) listen while US President Donald Trump speaks during an event about Martin Luther King Jr in the Roosevelt Room of the White House on Friday. —AFP

according to his chief of staff H.R. Haldeman, whose autobiography quotes the disgraced president describing his intended message as: "We can't restrain him when he is angry—and he has his hand on the nuclear button."

At times, Trump has appeared to echo the approach wholeheartedly. As his top diplomat sought an opening with Pyongyang in October, the president tweeted: "I told Rex Tillerson, our wonderful Secretary of State, that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man"—his nickname for Kim. "Save your energy Rex, we'll

do what needs to be done!" he added. At the UN General Assembly he raised the prospect the US would "totally destroy" North Korea, prompting Kim to respond with a personal pledge to "surely and definitely tame the mentally deranged US dotard with fire". "Never before have two leaders in command of nuclear arsenals more closely evoked a professional wrestling match," wrote a New Yorker columnist at the time. Go Myong-Hyun, an analyst at the Asian Institute of Policy Studies, said US actions had "instilled considerable fear in Pyongyang unlike in South Korea". —AFP

News in brief

Indian chopper crashes

NEW DELHI: India's navy said four bodies had been recovered yesterday after search teams located the wreckage of a helicopter that went missing earlier in the day. The aircraft, carrying five employees of India's state-run oil exploration arm ONGC and two pilots, lost contact with air traffic control 15 minutes after taking off from the western city at around 10:30 am yesterday. "Four bodies recovered till now," the Indian navy said on Twitter, adding that a search for the remaining three was underway. "Crash position indicator of ill-fated @ONGC_helicopter recovered." The navy posted photos of boat crews in helmets and life jackets scouring the waters where the debris was found. The Indian Coast Guard said two of the four victims had been identified by the cards in their wallets, posting photos of an ONGC work ID and a driver's license. The chopper was supposed to land at offshore oil rig Bombay High at 11:00 am, the Press Trust of India reported citing unnamed sources.

Venezuela resumes talks

SANTO DOMINGO: Members of Venezuela's leftist government and opposition leaders resumed talks in the Dominican Republic on Friday, seeking to reach an agreement to ease a deep political and economic crisis in the OPEC member. The two sides failed to come to terms in a prior round of talks last December, when they concluded by saying they had made progress but needed more time. Expectations among Venezuelans for a deal this time around are low. Opposition coalition Democratic Unity "is attending the meeting in good faith, to seek a way of allowing Venezuelans to build a route to the future," tweeted party lawmaker Luis Florido on Thursday. The opposition leaders are demanding that Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro accept humanitarian assistance from abroad to ease a crisis that has led to shortages of food and basic goods for millions of people. They are also calling for the release of several hundred jailed political activists.

Bodies, black box recovered

BEIJING: Chinese rescuers yesterday recovered two bodies and the "black box" from a stricken Iranian oil tanker which has been ablaze for the past week off the east coast of China, the transport ministry said. The Sanchi, carrying 136,000 tons of light crude oil from Iran, has been in flames since colliding with the CF Crystal, a Hong Kong-registered bulk freighter, 160 nautical miles east of Shanghai last Saturday. It had a crew of 32 - 30 Iranians and two Bangladeshis. With the latest find a total of three bodies have now been recovered. The remaining sailors are still missing. "At 0837, four rescuers equipped with masks and bottles of oxygen were placed at the deck at the back of the Sanchi with the help of a crane," the Chinese transport ministry said in a statement. "They discovered the bodies of two sailors in a lifeboat." A video released by the ministry shows rescuers wearing white helmets and orange jumpsuits walking on the tanker, whose grey metallic structure appears to have been devastated by fire.

Singapore charges 3

SINGAPORE: A Singapore court yesterday charged three men suspected of involvement in large-scale oil theft at Shell's biggest refinery, days after bringing charges against 11 under an extensive probe by authorities in the city state. The Singapore subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell Plc first contacted the authorities in August 2017 about theft at its Pulau Bukom industrial site, just south of the country's main island. Police have seized millions of dollars in cash and a small tanker in the sting operation involving simultaneous raids across Singapore, one of the world's most important oil trading centers and a major refinery hub. Earlier this week, a Singapore court charged 11 men including eight Shell employees and two Vietnamese nationals related to the theft following a weekend raid arresting 17 people. But the charges leveled against three additional suspects on Saturday have entangled Sentek Marine & Trading Pte, one of Singapore's biggest marine fuel suppliers, and the investigation found that one of two vessels used to transport the stolen oil products was managed by the firm.

Analysis

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Washington Watch

The immigration debate we must not lose

By Dr James J Zogby

The debate over US immigration policy is a very personal one for me. It's about my family's history and the hardships they faced coming to America. It is also about who we are and who we aspire to be as an American people. In the waning days of the Ottoman Empire, my father's family, like many others in the mountains of Lebanon, facing economic hardship, sent their oldest son, Habib, then only 14 years old, to America to start a new life, plant roots, and pave the way for the rest of the family to join him.

A few years after Habib left, facing increased pressures from the raging World War, the family was forced to leave their village seeking safety in the Bekaa Valley. Conditions were not good and my grandfather became ill and died in exile leaving my grandmother with six children, the oldest being my father, Joseph, who was then 20. The war ended, the family returned to their village, and after a time learned that Habib had opened a small business and was asking that they join him in America. They secured visas and embarked on the arduous journey to the New World.

My father was waylaid in Marseille where in an act of great kindness he gave his visa to a Lebanese woman who was visa-less and desperate to join her family in the US. While he thought he could apply and receive another visa, he was shocked to discover that visas had been frozen for Syrians (which is what the Lebanese were called then). In the 1920s, the US Congress was in the grips of a nativist xenophobic fervor. Congressional debates termed Syrians as "parasites" with one Senator saying, "we don't need any more Syrian trash coming here". Visas for Syrians and other "undesirable countries" were to remain frozen for almost three decades.

Facing an uncertain and lonely future in France, my father secured a position on a ship leaving for Canada. On arrival, he disembarked and eventually made his way across the border into the US to find his family in Upstate New York. Undocumented, he lived in fear for a decade, sometimes forced into hiding, until in the mid-1930s he benefited from an amnesty program. He finally became a proud naturalized American citizen in 1942.

My family's trajectory in the New World is like that of many immigrants. I often look at the picture of my grandmother and her seven children when they were first united on my father's arrival. They looked gaunt and a bit haggard, but with the proud smiles of a family that after a decade of war, loss, and the hardship they had to endure, knew they were beginning a new life together.

From that little band of eight, great things were to follow. Collectively, three generations of Zogbys are an extended family that has founded dozens of businesses creating employment for hundreds of our fellow Americans. Among us are doctors, lawyers, professors and teachers, elected and appointed officials, members of the military and law enforcement, and others who have distinguished themselves in other forms of public and social service. All of them, are proud contributing members of American life.

American story

In short, this is my story. I am the son of an undocumented immigrant from a once reviled country and a member of a family that benefited from provisions that allowed for families to be unified. What, to me, is remarkable about our story is that it is not remarkable, at all. Millions of Americans can tell the same story because it is the American story. It is who we are.

Given this personal history, I recoil in disgust at the way some Republicans and President Trump have attempted to reframe the terms of the immigration discussion and, in the process, have denigrated our American story. "Family unification" has come to be termed as "chain migration". The "diversity lottery" that has provided opportunities for immigrants from countries once excluded from the old quota system that favored northwest Europe, is now spoken of with a snarl (or, more recently, by our President, as immigrants from "sh*hole" countries). Immigrants and refugees from the country from which my family fled, escaping war and hardship, are now banned. My father would be described as an "illegal". "Compassionate Amnesty" that allowed my father to stay and become a citizen is now a taboo term. And, if it were not for amnesty, my sister, brother, and I would be seen as "anchor babies" or as "Dreamers".

And so, this is a very personal issue for me and should be for all Americans. As I look at the Republicans who are leading the charge against immigration and those working to reframe the debate casting immigrants and refugees in disgraceful and racist terms, I see descendants of Germans, Irish, Italians, and Jews - all of whom were once reviled, locked out, and victims of bigotry. Tragically, this inclination to forget our history, to succeed in America and then try to close the door and exclude those seeking to take advantage of the same opportunities that benefited our ancestors, is also part of our American story. In every generation, these two threads of our national narrative - the one that advocated for openness and the other that was exclusionary - have been in competition.

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

100 FRENCH WOMEN DENOUNCE #METOO IN OPEN LETTER "RAPE IS A CRIME BUT INSISTENT OR CLUMSY FLIRTING IS NOT AN OFFENSE"



UN diplomats watching Candidate Haley

One year into the job, Nikki Haley stands out as the star of President Donald Trump's administration, and diplomats say the UN ambassador is directing some of that star power into a likely White House bid. Speculation about Haley's presidential ambitions has picked up since she defended Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, staring down friends and foes alike at the world body.

The 45-year-old Republican resorted to a veto to block criticism from the UN Security Council and threatened reprisals against those who voted against Washington at the General Assembly. The clash gave UN ambassadors a reality check: Haley, they say, is a politician, not a diplomat, and at the United Nations, she is playing to a domestic audience. "She is not trying to win votes at the General Assembly. She is trying to win votes for 2020 or 2024," a council diplomat said. "She is clearly using this position to run for something, that's obvious." The former South Carolina governor arrived at the United Nations last year, promising a "new day" under Trump's America First policy and vowing to "take names" of countries that don't toe the line. Seen at the outset as a foreign policy lightweight, Haley was quickly taken seriously because of her close ties to the unpredictable Trump.

Over the past year, she has pushed through three new sets of sanctions against North Korea, bringing China and Russia on side to tackle what Trump sees as his administration's number one security threat. Those sanctions won the unanimous backing of the council, where finding common ground with Haley is testing diplomatic skills. The daughter of Indian immigrants, Haley is hawkish on Iran, fiercely pro-Israel and a strong advocate of cost-cutting at the United Nations.

Signature issues

That those three signature issues play well with the US Republican voter base is not lost on most diplomats. "What matters above all are perceptions internally, in the US," said another council diplomat, who like many declined to be quoted. Haley was among the first administration officials to take a hard line on Russia, declaring that sanctions over Crimea would remain in place until Moscow gave the territory back to Ukraine. Ukrainian Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko, who just wrapped up a two-year stint at the Security Council, says Haley is doing an "excellent job". "She may be less diplomatic sometimes than some could expect, but this is more an asset than a shortcoming," he



This photo taken on Jan 2, 2018 shows US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley speaking during a brief press availability at United Nations headquarters in New York. —AFP

said. For months, Haley had been tipped as a possible replacement to US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, whom she has upstaged with her media appearances and statements that at times appear to break new ground.

In October, she put that speculation to rest, telling reporters that she wasn't interested. "I would not take it," Haley told reporters on a trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo. "I want to be where I'm most effective." She is seen as a possible vice president to Mike Pence, should he take over the presidency.

Author Michael Wolff, whose book "Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House" has become a national sensation, claims Haley has set her sights higher and is eyeing the presidency.

According to published excerpts, Haley began positioning herself as Trump's heir after concluding in October that he was a one-term president. Wolff quoted a senior White House staffer who described her "as ambitious as Lucifer" and another who offered the view that while being groomed by Trump, "she is so much smarter than him". Haley has brushed aside questions about her political ambitions, saying she is focused on the job at hand as she remains firmly in the limelight as the UN's most-watched ambassador. —AFP

“As ambitious as Lucifer...so much smarter than (Trump)”

Ballot box key to bridging Latam's stark social divide

Elections across Latin America could help clean up rampant corruption fuelling the region's deep social and economic divide as millions vote this year, while Venezuela's crisis poses the biggest humanitarian threat, analysts and aid workers said. "Corruption is the scourge of Latin America. The average person might see corruption as something elites do," said Jason Marczak, director of the Atlantic Council's Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center. "More dramatically, it affects those who are less well off. Pilfering of state resources for corrupt reasons means less money is available for public schools or for transportation."

A report by anti-corruption group Transparency International last October showed roughly one-in-three Latin Americans paid a bribe in the previous year to a public employee, from police officers to teachers and hospital workers. Despite a brightening economic picture, many countries need to do more to reduce the huge gap between rich and poor in the world's most unequal region while ramping up spending on critical infrastructure,

health and education, experts said. With poverty levels expected to remain broadly stable, they urged governments to increase longer-term investment in skills development to make sure Latin Americans can maintain their livelihoods and improve living standards. "There is a big challenge in terms of human capital formation in Latin America," said Hugo Nopo, research economist at GRADE, a Lima-based development analysis organisation. "The problem now is that every single additional reduction in poverty is going to be harder to get."

Six Elections

This year's six main polls could see more anti-establishment leaders coming to office, and socio-economic policies in countries including Mexico more targeted at those who have been "left behind", said the Atlantic Council's Marczak. Leftist front-runner Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has vowed to tackle corruption and boost social spending in Mexico if he wins the July vote to govern the country, where cartel violence has pushed murder rates to a record high.

Brazilians will cast their vote in October as unemployment starts to fall and harsh recession ends in the country shaken by the "Car Wash" bribery case that nearly toppled its president and ensnared politicians and elites across Latin America. Colombians will vote for the first time since a 2016 peace deal with the Marxist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which is fielding a candidate for the May poll. Votes are also scheduled for Costa Rica, Paraguay and Venezuela.

"It's kind of 50/50 at this point, some (countries)... are really moving forward - people's lives are improving greatly - and then you have these other countries that are of real concern," said Kate Schecter, chief executive of World Neighbors, a non-profit group working with poor communities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Many fear the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela could deepen even further this year as sanctions grip and its oil-based economy continues to crumble after years of painful recession. Thousands have left the country where crippling food shortages, the world's highest inflation rate and a near-collapse of the health system are compounded by violence, which has made Caracas the world's most dangerous city. "The prognosis for 2018 is further deterioration, humanitarian emergency, and an increased exodus of Venezuelans," Robert Malley, chief executive of International Crisis Group, said in a report. "Sustained domestic and international pressure - as well as guarantees of future immunity - will be required to push the government toward credible presidential elections."

Resilience Required

In Central America, the gang violence and migrant crisis plaguing the disaster-prone region, together with the growing impacts of climate change, are making it harder to keep people safe, aid workers said. Violence, corruption, hunger and water shortages in the "Northern Triangle" of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala are expected to continue forcing people to

migrate north, despite increasing deportations from the United States.

Walter Cotte, Americas director for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), warned that US President Donald Trump's decision to end temporary protected status for 200,000 Salvadorans in 2019 could create a "dangerous situation" as remittances dry up and returnees put pressure on El Salvador. More widely, as shown by last year's string of disasters - from earthquakes, hurricanes and fires to floods and droughts - the majority of Latin American nations still lack effective plans for disaster risk reduction and recovery, he said.

While the Caribbean has vowed to become the world's first "climate-resilient region" in 2018 after last year's devastating hurricanes, only about 10 countries in the region have robust disaster prevention and management capacities, said Cotte. Ecuador is making strides but Peru and Brazil both need more systemic approaches to managing disaster risks, he said.

Some 15 countries "are really in the nursery", lacking the resources, systems and experience to cope with a predicted rise in disasters, he added. "Resilience isn't happening if you don't have better leadership in policies," said Cotte.

With Latin America increasingly "at the end of the queue" for aid and investment dollars, more money for projects to boost resilience needs to come from within the region and be better coordinated to help vulnerable communities, he noted. —Reuters

News

Trump scrambles as slur fuels...

Continued from Page 1

The resolution could be embarrassing for Trump if Republican leaders of the lower house allow a vote on it. Hillary Clinton, Trump's 2016 Democratic presidential rival, took to Twitter to blast his "ignorant, racist views of anyone who doesn't look like him".

Some Republicans were also plainly unhappy, with House Speaker Paul Ryan describing the reported comments as "very unfortunate" and "unhelpful". Mia Love, a Utah congresswoman of Haitian descent, called them "unkind" and "divisive" while South Carolina's Tim Scott, the only black Republican senator, said if Trump really did use those words, it would be "disappointing".

In an oddly-timed coincidence, the US president on Friday signed a declaration honoring slain civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr, three days before the federal holiday celebrated in his honor. Ignoring shouted questions about the mounting firestorm over race, the president paid tribute during a ceremony to the reverend's "peaceful crusade for justice and equality".

Nevertheless, the uproar has revived attention on previous remarks by Trump that have ignited accusations of racism. Trump earned national political prominence by promoting the falsehood that Barack Obama, America's first African-American president, was not born in the United States. He has characterized Mexican immigrants as "rapists", repeatedly questioned the loyalty of Muslim immigrants, denounced NFL players for kneeling during the national anthem in protest at police brutality against African Americans, and made questionable comments about a violent white supremacist rally.

Trump's remarks had a particularly glacial reception from Norwegians, whom he reportedly upheld as shining examples of the immigrants he wants to come to America. Norwegians reacting on social media were in no hurry to relocate. Last year the Nordic nation was named the happiest country in the world. "I'm a Norwegian who enjoyed studying and working in the US. The only thing that would attract me to emigrate to the US is your vibrant multicultural society. Don't take that away," declared Jan Egeland, a former UN Under Secretary General and the current head of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Another Norwegian tweeter, riismeister, said "why would I trade very affordable healthcare (including mental health), very affordable higher education, 49 weeks parental leave (combined for mom+dad), and minimum 25 vacation days per year for a maniac with a big button who wants to take away even more of my rights?" For influential Norwegian commentator Andreas Wiese, Trump's comments were "proof of his racism". According to the Norwegian statistics institute SSB, 502 Norwegians left the country to relocate to the United States in 2016, 59 fewer than the previous year.

The United Nations slammed the reported remarks as "shocking and shameful" and "racist". "You cannot dismiss entire countries and continents as 'sh**holes' whose

entire populations, who are not white, are therefore not welcome," Rupert Colville, spokesman for the UN human rights office, told reporters in Geneva.

Botswana summoned the US ambassador to the country to "clarify if Botswana is regarded as a 'sh**hole' country", according to a foreign ministry statement, calling Trump's comments "irresponsible, reprehensible and racist". Senegal followed suit with Foreign Minister Sidiki Kaba saying the government "firmly condemned the unacceptable remarks which undermine human dignity, especially of Africa and her diaspora". Trump was widely derided last year after twice referring to Namibia as "Nambia".

Social media users across the continent posted images of modern skylines and beautiful nature from their countries with the hashtag "sh**hole". Many Africans reminded the US of its historic role in the continent's woes. "President Trump, One day, I'll take you to a 'sh**hole' country called Ghana," wrote Ghanaian Edmond Prime Sarpong on Facebook. "First stop would be Osu Castle, Elmina Castle, and the over 40 Forts that detained about 30 million slaves, beaten and shipped out like sardine cans and then I will tell you the history of Africa and why people like you made that a 'sh**hole' continent."

Prominent Kenyan commentator Patrick Gathara told AFP that Trump's words were nothing new. "This is no different from what Hollywood and Western media have been saying about Africa for decades. We have consistently been portrayed as sh**ty people from sh**ty countries." Some acknowledged problems in their countries, but blamed this on their poor leaders as well as Western nations. "Please don't confuse the #sh**hole leaders we Africans elect with our beautiful continent... Our motherland is the most blessed continent that has been raped by imperialists in collaboration with our sh**ty misleaders for generations," wrote Kenyan activist Boniface Mwangi on Twitter.

In South Africa, the ruling African National Congress party declared "ours is not a sh**hole country" and described Trump as "extremely offensive". Some Nigerians did not hold back, with many on Twitter saying their country was a "sh**hole", but that it was "our sh**hole" to criticize. In Senegal's capital Dakar, administrator Idrissa Fall said "we cannot really say that he (Trump) is wrong". "African countries, and sometimes our leaders, do not exactly deal with the problems of the worst-off, that's what makes people immigrate".

Even war-torn South Sudan weighed in, with President Salva Kiir's spokesman Ateny Wek Ateny slamming the comments as "outrageous". However Juba businesswoman Jenny Jore, 31, told AFP that Trump's remarks were "on point". "It is thanks to our African leaders that we are insulted that way," she said.

The 54-nation UN African Group, which does not include Western Sahara, demanded a "retraction and an apology" from Trump, while thanking Americans "from all walks of life who have condemned the remarks". Trump's latest comments provided ample fodder for talk-show hosts. South African comedian Trevor Noah, star of "The Daily Show", described himself as an offended citizen of "South Sh**hole" and also criticized Trump's preferred choice of Norway for immigrants. "He didn't just name a white country, he named the whitest - so white they wear moon-screen," he said. — Agencies



JEDDAH: Saudi women tour a car showroom for women on Thursday in this Saudi Red Sea port city. — AFP

Saudi women attend match; women-only...

Continued from Page 1

"I am proud and extremely happy for this development and for the kingdom's moves to catch up with civilized measures adopted by many countries," she said.

The Saudi government said last week women would be allowed to attend a second match yesterday and a third on Thursday. The kingdom, which has some of the world's tightest restrictions on women, has long barred them from sports arenas through strict rules that keep the sexes apart in public. But in September, hundreds of women were allowed to enter a sports stadium in the capital Riyadh, used mostly for football matches, for the first time to attend celebrations marking the country's national day.

The easing of social controls comes as Prince Mohammed looks to repackaging the oil-rich nation as more moderate and welcoming. The powerful crown prince's "Vision 2030" program for a post-oil era stems partly from an economic motive to boost domestic spending on entertainment as the kingdom reels from an energy slump.

Noura Bakharji, another Jeddah resident, said she always felt bitter when her brothers came back from stadiums to tell her about the excitement of watching football matches in person. "I always watched games on TV while my brothers went to the stadiums... I asked myself repeatedly 'Why I can't go?'" she told

AFP. "Today, things have changed. It's a day of happiness and joy."

Hours before the game, Saudi clubs were encouraging women to attend through tweets on social media. Some clubs are offering special abayas - traditional head-to-toe robes for Saudi women - in team colors. State-owned Saudi Airlines announced prizes of free tickets for five families who want to travel between cities to watch games. And a spokeswoman for the Saudi embassy in the United States tweeted her delight at the development. "This is more than women's rights: today's match between Al-Ahli and Al-Batin, and the ones to follow, are opportunities for families to come together and enjoy KSA's national sport - soccer!" Fatimah Baeshen wrote on Twitter. "I'm rooting for the ladies - enjoy!" And the result of Friday's game? A 5-0 defeat for Al-Batin - and a victory for women in Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, a Saudi private company on Thursday opened the first car showroom for women only just five months before a decision allowing females to drive takes effect. The showroom was opened in a shopping mall in the western Red Sea port city of Jeddah to allow women the freedom to choose their own cars before they hit the road. In a historic decision late last year, King Salman gave Saudi women the right to drive, abolishing an almost three-decade ban based on religious reasons.

The showroom offers a wide selection of vehicles from various makes and is staffed by women only. It also provides women with solutions to finance their purchase provided by leading banks and financial companies. The company plans to open more automobiles showrooms for women in the oil-rich kingdom. — Agencies



Relatives mourn during the funeral of Abdullah Zeidan, a 33-year-old fisherman, in Gaza City yesterday. The fisherman was shot dead by the Egyptian army overnight for unclear reasons, Palestinian officials said yesterday, calling for an immediate investigation into the incident. — AFP

Binladin denies govt takeover...

Continued from Page 1

It also faced unprecedented scrutiny after one of its cranes working on a major expansion of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, Islam's holiest site, collapsed in 2015, killing at least 107 people.

The firm had been working for years on the multibillion-dollar project to accommodate the increasing num-

bers of Muslim pilgrims to the site. A Saudi court in October cleared the company of responsibility for the accident. Yesterday, the group said that its contracted work with the government would continue, especially at the Grand Mosque in Makkah and another mosque in the holy city of Madinah. It also said it had formed a committee to oversee its restructuring towards the firm "being profitable again".

Saudi Arabia has posted large budget deficits in the past four fiscal years and is projected to remain in the red until 2023 due to low oil prices. The drop in oil revenues also led to the demise of Saudi Oger, a once-mighty construction firm linked to Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri. — AFP

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Sports

Pacers rally past Cavaliers as Warriors extend streak

Nets down Hawks 110-105

LOS ANGELES: Darren Collison scored 22 points and Victor Oladipo tallied 19 as the Indiana Pacers rallied from a 22-point deficit to edge the struggling Cleveland Cavaliers 97-95 on Friday. Lance Stephenson finished with 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Pacers who improved to 22-20 on the season in front of a crowd of 17,900 at the Bankers Life Fieldhouse arena. The loss was the third straight for the three-time defending Eastern Conference champion Cavaliers. Cleveland would need a monumental effort from LeBron James in order to halt their losing streak. But it wasn't enough as the four-time MVP finished with 27 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds while Kevin Love had 21 points and 10 rebounds in the loss.

Oladipo gave the Pacers the lead for good on a three pointer with just over two minutes to play. James then had two opportunities in the final two seconds to win it but failed on both. James stepped out of bounds with 1.7 seconds to go, a call that was confirmed by video replay. Then, after Collison made a free throw to give the Pacers a 97-95 lead, James' desperation shot from beyond the arc rattled off the rim at the buzzer. Following the game, James said the out-of-bounds call was correct but he also made mention of a prior no-call that allowed Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo to score the winning basket over the Oklahoma City Thunder.

"Definitely stepped out by a tiny bit after seeing it over again! Great call. Needed to be in OKC on that drive. Lol. Live and you Learn," James wrote on Twitter. James was also slapped with a technical foul after losing his cool and retaliating against Stephenson with 7:53 left in the game. James made the mistake of shoving Stephenson in the chest after the two made contact with each other. After the game, James described Stephenson as a "dirty" player. "I should have known, I've known since school, it's not the guy who tells the

joke that gets caught it's the guy who laughs," James said. Cleveland, which lost its previous two games by a combined 62 points, was outscored 84-61 over the final three quarters.

WARRIORS 108, BUCKS 94

Kevin Durant scored 26 points, and Draymond Green contributed 21 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists to lead visiting Golden State over Milwaukee. Klay Thompson added 12 points for Golden State, which recorded its 11th consecutive road victory. The Warriors, who played without point guard Stephen Curry (ankle) for the second straight game, have won six of their past seven games overall. Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 23 points and Eric Bledsoe added 21 points and four steals for the Bucks. Malcolm Brogdon tallied 17 points for Milwaukee, which scored just 12 points on 5-of-20 shooting in the final quarter and shot 42.9 percent overall.

Third straight for Cavaliers

TIMBERWOLVES 118, KNICKS 108

Nemanja Bjelica ignited a fourth-quarter burst with a 3-pointer as Minnesota broke open a tight game en route to a victory over New York in Minneapolis. Karl-Anthony Towns recorded game highs with 23 points, 15 rebounds and nine assists, helping the Timberwolves win a fourth straight game to begin a five-game homestand. The Knicks took their 10th loss in 13 games. Seven New York players scored in double figures, led by Jarrett Jack with 18 points.

PELICANS 119, TRAIL BLAZERS 113

Anthony Davis and DeMarcus Cousins had monster games in leading New Orleans past visiting Portland. Davis poured in 36 points to go with nine rebounds, and Cousins collected 24 points, 19 rebounds and eight assists. Jrue Holiday chipped in 25 points, six assists,



ATLANTA: Malcolm Delaney #5 of the Atlanta Hawks tries to defend against Caris LeVert #22 of the Brooklyn Nets at Philips Arena on January 12, 2018 in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

five rebounds and four steals for the Pelicans, who shot 53.4 percent from the field. Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum each scored 23 points for Portland. Al-Farouq Aminu contributed 19 points and 11 rebounds for the Blazers, who also got 19 points from Jusuf Nurkic and 17 from Shabazz Napier.

NETS 110, HAWKS 105

Spencer Dinwiddie hit the go-ahead layup with 11 seconds remaining and scored seven of his 20 points in the final 2 1/2 minutes of the fourth quarter as Brooklyn beat host Atlanta. Dinwiddie nearly recorded his first career triple-double, totaling 10 assists and matching a career best with nine rebounds. He posted his first career game with 20 points and 10 assists, helping the Nets break a three-game losing streak. Atlanta's Dennis Schroder led all scorers with a career-high 34

points on 14-of-26 shooting. He scored 11 of his points in the fourth quarter and added seven assists.

NUGGETS 87, GRIZZLIES 78

Locked in a tight game early in the fourth quarter, Denver used a 12-2 run to break it open and went on to beat visiting Memphis. Will Barton led the way for the Nuggets with 17 points, while Trey Lyles came off the bench to net 16. Nikola Jokic added 14 points and Jamal Murray was good for 11 as Denver, which lost at home Wednesday night to the lowly Atlanta Hawks, avoided another defeat to one of the NBA's worst teams. Marc Gasol scored a game-high 22 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for Memphis, but he didn't get a lot of help. Only two other teammates managed to join him in double figures, as Tyreke Evans and James Ennis each tallied 12. — Agencies

Haunted by Sochi, Patrick Chan fights overthinking

TORONTO: Patrick Chan is hoping the acknowledgement that his biggest enemy may well be himself could propel him to figure skating gold at the Pyeongchang Olympics at the third time of asking. Chan, who finished fifth in Vancouver in 2010, clinched silver behind Japan's Yuzuru Hanyu in Sochi, where he had been favored to win. The result made the now 27-year-old the latest in a long line of Canadian male skaters who just missed the top podium place at the Olympics, capping an experience he remembers overall as a painful "whirlwind".

"I lived those Olympic two weeks both times and I don't remember much," Chan told Reuters in an interview of his previous Games experiences. "I don't think I remember much because I was so living in fear every single moment. After the competition I had to live with the disappointment of not winning gold, but before I remember clearly over-analyzing every situation. "The minute you step into the (Olympic) village you start analyzing and (your) brain is on overdrive. "Is eating this or touching this going to affect my program? To that point, to the -Nth degree. That ruined, absolutely ruined, the experience for me."

Despite taking an additional silver in Sochi for the team competition, Chan subsequently sat out the next season before a comeback in 2015-2016. A three-time world champion, Chan is known for his artistry in an era of ever-increasing quad jumps, a trend he has regarded with caution amid concerns about skater safety. In the 2017 world championships in Helsinki, Chan landed three quadruple jumps in his free program for the first time, but still only finished fourth, with each of the podium finishers. Japanese duo Yuzuru Hanyu and Shoma Uno, and China's Jin Boyang, landing four. — Reuters

Alpine skiing: Swiss star Feuz shines on home snow

WENGEN: Home star Beat Feuz, the reigning world champion in the discipline, won the World Cup downhill at Wengen in Switzerland yesterday. On a sunny morning under a perfect blue sky, Feuz went first and flew down the Lauberhorn, the longest downhill on the circuit at 4.42km, in 2min 26.50sec, leaving his rivals with little chance. It briefly looked as if Aksel Lund Svindal might threaten as he passed the final checkpoint with a faster time. But to the great satisfaction of a record crowd of 35,000 fans, the Norwegian lost time in the last few hundred metres and finished 0.18sec back. The Austrian Olympic champion Matthias Mayer was third, 0.67sec behind Feuz. Feuz's ninth World Cup victory continues his habit of racing well on Swiss snow.

He was first at Wengen in 2012 and was second in 2015. The race was cancelled last year because of heavy snow. He won his world title last year in St Moritz, where he had already won the World Cup downhill and Super-G in 2016. The other favorites could not tame one of the most demanding and grueling tracks on the circuit. Austrian Hannes Reichelt, who won in Wengen in 2015 and had the best time in the first training run this year, was fourth 0.10sec off a podium place. Dominik Paris, an Italian who won the Bormio downhill in December, was eighth, 1.22sec behind Feuz. Frenchman Adrien Theaux, who had the best time in the second training run but is suffering from a back problem, was 11th, at 1.84sec. — AFP



WENGEN: Switzerland's Beat Feuz celebrates on the podium after winning the Downhill race at the FIS Alpine Skiing World Cup in Wengen, yesterday. — AFP

Searching for the next Asada, Japan rebuilds

TOKYO: Japanese figure-skating fans head into next month's Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in an unusual position with no-one in their once powerhouse women's team assuming the mantle of the retired Mao Asada. Olympic 2010 silver medalist and three-time world champion Asada, known in Japan by the affectionate nickname "Mao-chan," retired in 2017, leaving the country's legions of fervent fans, as well as the media, at a loss.

"There are a lot of skaters, but nobody really comes to mind as Mao's successor," said Hiroko Yamaguchi, a 41-year-old secretary watching December's Grand Prix Final in Japan. "There was just something about her. I got so much energy watching her skate." The problem is not a lack of candidates. Six women fought to top the podium at December's nationals and claim one of the two Olympic team spots, a prize ultimately won by Satoko Miyahara, 19.

The second spot went to Kaori Sakamoto, 17 and relatively unknown even in Japan, who finished second in the nationals in her first full senior season. "The Japan Skating Foundation (JSF) only cares about skill," said Hirokata Matsuoka, a professor of sports marketing at

Tokyo's Waseda University. "But TV and so on, they appear to be wavering over who to focus on and promote." Asada was a household name for so long, she began attracting attention as a junior, that her retirement produced banner headlines and television stations broadcast her retirement media conference live.

"I think it boils down to these three overlapping factors: her tremendous success in a relatively long career, her tender age and cute and youthful looks, and her carefully curated public persona and frequent appearances in the media," Michelle Cho, a visiting gender studies scholar at MIT who has studied sports in Japan, told Reuters in an email interview. "Asada has a 'good girl' or 'girl next door' kind of image that draws from Japanese feminine stereotypes of being chaste, humble, dutiful and a good homemaker."

Probable successor

Miyahara was long seen as Asada's probable successor, but suffered a stress hip fracture in 2016 that kept her out of competition, and the public eye, for roughly a year, dimming her popularity. Still, her dogged efforts at rehabilitation, covered extensively by the media, touched a chord in a culture that values perseverance. Her lyrical, floating routines to "Memoirs of a Geisha" and "Madama Butterfly" also "speak to Japanese feelings," according to a viewer at the Grand Prix Final, where she finished fifth. Sakamoto remains an unknown quantity, but her attitude and perky character, shown by her grin when her Japan nationals results came up, could make her appealing. — Reuters

NFL: Big Ben not thinking about future; Jags loom

LOS ANGELES: Ben Roethlisberger is putting thoughts of his future to one side as he prepares to lead the Pittsburgh Steelers into an NFL playoff battle against the Jacksonville Jaguars today. The 35-year-old quarterback could conceivably be making his farewell appearance at Heinz Field in the AFC divisional round contest, with a likely trip to the New England Patriots awaiting the Steelers in the event of a victory. Two-time Super Bowl winner Roethlisberger has yet to confirm whether or not he intends to return for the Steelers next season, but hinted this week he was not ready to call time on his career.

"I don't think it is my last, but I'm not thinking about that right now," Roethlisberger said when asked if he believed today's game with the Jaguars would be his last before Pittsburgh's fans. "I'm going out and play this one and give everything I have," he added. Roethlisberger flirted with retirement at the end of last season, only deciding to return after discussions with his family. The veteran gunslinger also questioned whether he still had the ability to deliver at the

highest level earlier this season following a disastrous display in a 30-9 loss to the Jaguars on October 8. "Maybe I don't have it anymore," Roethlisberger said after the loss, which included five interceptions and two pick sixes.

Since that loss, however, Roethlisberger has rediscovered the sureness of touch that has made him one of the NFL's elite quarterbacks for more than a decade. In the final six games of the season, Roethlisberger threw for 16 touchdowns and only five interceptions. "You have to treat every game like it could be your last because you never know when it is," Roethlisberger said. The Steelers, who went 13-3 in the regular season, will start as favorites to progress past the Jaguars, who finished 11-6 for the year before edging the Buffalo Bills 10-3 in last weekend's wild-card game.

Experience edge for Saints?

Elsewhere today, another veteran quarterback will be aiming to extend his career when Drew Brees and the New Orleans Saints travel to Minneapolis to face the Minnesota Vikings in the NFC divisional round. Brees is the only quarterback in the NFC playoffs to have a Super Bowl victory next to his name, and his big-game temperament was pivotal in the Saints 31-26 win over the Carolina Panthers last weekend. The Saints hope Brees will be able to summon a repeat performance against the Vikings after making 23-of-33 passes for 376 yards last weekend, including two touchdowns. — AFP

Sports

Kerber issues Australian Open warning with Sydney triumph

Medvedev fights off De Minaur to win first ATP Tour title



SYDNEY: Angelique Kerber of Germany holds up the trophy after beating Ashley Barty of Australia in the women's singles final at the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney yesterday. — AFP



SYDNEY: Daniil Medvedev of Russia kisses the trophy after beating Alex De Minaur of Australia in the men's singles final at the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

SYDNEY: Former world number one Angelique Kerber continued her 2018 resurgence with a 6-4 6-4 win over Ashleigh Barty in the Sydney International final yesterday, giving herself a welcome boost ahead of next week's Australian Open. The German two-time grand slam champion, currently ranked 22nd in the world after a disappointing 2017 campaign, registered her ninth win in as many matches this year with another clinical performance against the local favorite.

It was the first individual final since Monterrey in April last year for the 29-year-old left-hander, who won the Australian and US Open titles in 2016. "Thanks to my team for believing in me and supporting me, we had an excellent week. I am really looking forward to the rest of the year," Kerber said in a court-side interview after claiming a first title since her US Open triumph. "I am playing amazing tennis again and I am just feeling great."

After some tight early service games, Barty double-faulted to hand Kerber the first break and a 3-2 lead, and the German served out the opening set with little trouble.

The second set witnessed an early exchange of breaks before Kerber broke the Australian to love to move 4-3 ahead and picked up her 11th career title when Barty found the net after yet another powerful Kerber forehand.

In the men's draw, Russian qualifier Daniil Medvedev fought off tigerish Australian youngster Alex de Minaur to win his first ATP Tour title at the Sydney International yesterday. Medvedev completed a all-conquering week to hit back from losing the opening set to extinguish de Minaur, 1-6, 6-4, 7-5. It was the 21-year-old Medvedev's seventh win this week, giving him solid preparation for next week's Australian Open in Melbourne where he faces another Australian Thanasi Kokkinakis in the first round.

"I'm the kind of person, the more emotions I feel, the less I show them, actually, especially if they are good ones," Medvedev said. "After the match, I didn't fall down or anything, but I'm really happy. I mean, to make it through the qualifiers, there were so many circumstances." Looking ahead to the Australian Open he added: "I need to be humble with this, because to win this tournament is

good, but I want to win some rounds in Australia. "And it's going to be very tough to get back again on the court, especially against Thanasi. I'm sure the crowd will be crazy in Melbourne for him. "It's a five-set match, so I just need to do my best at recovery to be good on Tuesday."

Medvedev struggled in the opening set as the 167th-ranked de Minaur grew in confidence and was willed on by a supportive home crowd. The longer he rallies the more dangerous de Minaur became and he claimed the opening set after winning six games on the trot. But Medvedev found his way back in the second set,

breaking serve in the seventh game to take a 4-3 lead and went on to level the match at a set apiece. Winners flowed from the Russian's racquet with a running backhand crosscourt passing shot he played for a 3-0 lead an outstanding moment.

Down 4-1, the young Aussie appeared well out of the contest, but two double-faults handed de Minaur a break point and Medvedev surrendered serve when he sprayed a forehand long. Fired up young de Minaur worked away at Medvedev's lead amid the din inside Ken Rosewall Arena. Medvedev held a match point in the ninth game, but when serving for the title at 5-4, de Minaur broke serve to send the crowd roaring. But with the match beyond two hours, the 18-year-old Aussie began to show signs of fatigue and it was his errors that handed Medvedev another chance to serve out for the title at 6-5.

The 84th-ranked Medvedev also came back from a set down to upset Italian fourth seed Fabio Fognini 2-6, 6-4, 6-1 in the semi-finals of the tournament. It has been a sensational fortnight for 18-year-old de Minaur. He beat Frenchman Benoit Paire to reach the Sydney final after upsetting Milos Raonic to advance to the Brisbane International semi-finals last week before losing to American Ryan Harrison. "It's been a roller coaster, and I honestly wouldn't have it any other way," de Minaur said. "I have enjoyed every second of it. It's been a thrill, and I just want it to keep on going. "I'm tremendously proud. I put in all the hard yards, and it's great to see the results coming through." —Agencies



Former world number one continues her 2018 resurgence

Novak Djokovic can't wait to relight the 'fire'

MELBOURNE: Six-time Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic says he's excited to be back after a long injury-enforced break, admitting he has missed the "fire and passion" of competitive tennis. The Serbian former world number one has been out of action for six months, and while he enjoyed having his first real break since turning professional, he is ready to get back to business. "I'm just glad to be back playing tennis, having an opportunity to compete yet again in the big tournaments. I've missed it," he said yesterday at Melbourne Park. Djokovic has been sidelined with an elbow injury that had been progressively getting worse over the past few years. He said it got to the point where the pain on his serve was becoming unbearable, with a sustained period of rest the only cure. "It hasn't been 100 percent yet healed. But right now it's at the level where I can compete, and every day is getting better," he said. "Throughout the tournament, I don't know how it's going to behave. Even if it's 100 percent healed, after six months of no competition, you never know how you're going to react."

But despite slipping down the rankings and only seeded 14 at the opening Grand Slam of the year, his confidence is high and he warned he could still go far. "I still know what I'm capable of, and I believe in my own abilities to win against the best players in the world," he said ahead of his opening round clash against American Donald Young. "I know that if I get myself to the desired level of performance-mental and physical—that I can actually have a good chance to go far in the tournament. "Now, whether my approach is different to this year's Australian Open to other previous years, probably yes. It's different circumstances. But it is exciting. Honestly, it's a good place to be."

Young inside

The 12-time Grand Slam winner is taking inspiration from his old rival Roger Federer, who at 36 and after an injury



MELBOURNE: Serbia's Novak Djokovic hits a return during a practice session ahead of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

absence in 2016 came back with all guns blazing last year, winning another two Grand Slams, including Australia. "Roger and Rafa's year last year has shown age is just a number, especially in Roger's case," said Djokovic, 30. "I mean, he's (Federer's) a great example of someone that manages to take care of himself, knows how to prepare well and peak at the right time. "He won a couple more Grand Slams. Who would predict that after his six months of absence, so everything is possible really. "I don't know how my body's going to behave this year or any other year. Right now all I

can think about and where I can sort of, say, direct my energy is in the present moment." Djokovic suggested recently that might still be playing at 40, and he said anything was possible so long as he still enjoyed what he was doing. "I love this sport, I really do. As I said, I've been quite content with my body, mind, spirit so far throughout my career," he said. "The fire, passion, and love for the sport still burns inside. I have great support from my family and close ones and people around the world. I do feel young inside, you know." —AFP

Olympics: Canadian coach impressed by North Korean duo

VANCOUVER: North Korean figure skaters Ryom Tae-Ok and Kim Ju-Sik may need a helping hand from the International Olympic Committee if they are to realize their dream of competing in the Winter Olympics next month. But experienced Canadian coach Bruno Marcotte is in no doubt that if the promising duo do end up taking part in the February 9-25 Games in Pyeongchang, they will be fully deserving of their place. Marcotte was granted a rare glimpse of Stalinist North Korea's sporting culture last year after coaching Ryom and Kim during eight weeks between June and August in Canada. The 43-year-old had first

noticed the duo during an appearance at the Asian Winter Games in Japan last year, where they placed third. Marcotte made contact with the North Korean delegation to offer encouragement to the pair.

"They have very classical lines while skating to modern music, so it's a nice mix," Marcotte told AFP this week. "They're very charismatic in the way they skate—a lot of emotion and a great connection with each other, so my eyes were drawn to them right away." That initial contact prompted further talks a few weeks later, following a 15th place finish at the World Championships in Helsinki, when a North Korean federation representative and the skaters' coach tapped Marcotte about the possibility of the pair travelling to Canada to train.

The couple had trained in Canada before, having spent time in Toronto when they first began to skate as a pair three years ago. The North Koreans—who train for around four hours a day in Pyongyang—requested coaching and choreography assistance from Marcotte during the camp. Marcotte was required to find lodging

for the athletes as well as their coach and a federation official, a former skater who would also act as translator since neither the skaters nor their coach spoke English.

'Really good energy'

As coach of South Koreans Kim Kyueun and Alex Kam, as well as competitors from several other countries, Marcotte was happy to take on the challenge. Ryom, 18, and Kim, 25, gleaned insights from Canada's two-time world champions Eric Radford and Meagan Duhamel—who is married to Marcotte—during their stay. "I brought them to the off-ice classes I do since they were very interested in that. They wanted to be stronger, so I took them to my pilates class," Duhamel said. "They look up to us, but it was really fun for us to train with them. They had a really good energy every day and they worked really, really hard. "The same as us, they wake up and they want to train every day. They want to be the best athletes in the world and represent their country at the Olympics." —AFP

Asia fight back to lead Europe in EurAsia Cup

KUALA LUMPUR: Asia staged a dramatic comeback against defending champions Europe to hang on to a one-point lead yesterday in the second day of the EurAsia Cup in Malaysia. The result in the four-some matches sets up a tense showdown for today's singles, with Indian captain Arjun Atwal's team fighting for Asia's first ever victory in the Ryder Cup-style match play tournament. Europe were firmly in control in the early stages yesterday and Asia, who started the day a point ahead, saw their lead vanish as skipper Thomas Bjorn's side won the first three matches. But victory for Yuta Ikeda of Japan and Malaysia's Gavin Green proved the turning point for Asia, and they went on to win the final two games and end the day on 6 1/2 to Europe's 5 1/2.

Atwal praised his team, saying they had "hung in there" in the face of an onslaught from Team Europe. "If you asked me if I'm surprised or shocked, I'm not. My guys are all champions," he said. But he insisted his 12-man team were not cruising towards an easy win in the \$4.8 million tournament: "It's almost anybody's game tomorrow." Europe thrashed Asia at the last EurAsia Cup in 2016 while the inaugural edition in 2014 ended in a tie. Bjorn—who is also Europe's Ryder Cup captain—conceded the day's play had "turned on its head in the end".

"But we live to fight another day," he added. Race to Dubai champion Tommy Fleetwood and Sweden's Henrik Stenson gave the Europeans a strong start by beating Indian duo Anirban Lahiri and SSP Chawrasia 3-2. Paul Casey and Tyrrell Hatton, both from England, put Team Europe ahead with a 2-1 victory over Thailand's Kiradech Aphibarnrat and South Korea's An Byeong-Hun. A 3-2 victory for England's Matthew Fitzpatrick and Belgium's Thomas Pieters against Thailand's Poom Saksansin and South Korea's Kang Sung-hoon extended Team Europe's lead to two points.

But the tide turned in favor of the Asians with a dramatic victory for Green and Ikeda at the Glenmarie Golf and Country Club near Kuala Lumpur. The pair notched up three birdies on the final four holes for a one-hole victory over Spaniard Rafa Cabrera Bello and Alexander Levy of France. Thailand's Phachara Khongwatmai and Japan's Hideto Tanihara beat Ireland's Paul Dunne and Alex Noren of Sweden, and Asia's comeback was complete with a 3-1 victory for China's Li Haotong and Malaysian Nicholas Fung. The pair's impressive win featured six birdies. —AFP

Sports

Boult destroys Pakistan, New Zealand take series

Boult rocks Pakistan with three wickets in five balls

DUNEDIN: A withering spell by Trent Boult saw New Zealand destroy Pakistan by 183 runs in the third one-day international in Dunedin yesterday to comfortably wrap up the series in Dunedin. New Zealand have won all three matches so far and captain Kane Williamson said the target is a clean sweep of all five ODIs. Boult rocked Pakistan with three wickets in five balls to take out the cream of their top order on his way to figures of five for 17. After New Zealand made 257 batting first, boosted by 11 in the final over before Boult was dismissed on the last ball, Pakistan were all out for 74 in the 28th. "It was a big game for us. We wanted to get the series done," said man of the match Boult. "To score only 250 on the board we knew we had to fight hard and to come out like that was very satisfying."

Williamson said the target now was to remain unbeaten. "That's the focus. The focus is trying to win each game. The guys were smart today and that's something we pride ourselves on," he said. "It was a fantastic performance all round. Trent was outstanding getting five. Pakistan had slumped to eight for 32 in the 19th over and threatened two unwanted records—the lowest ODI score of 35, held by Zimbabwe, and Pakistan's own lowest score of 43. Sarfraz Ahmed (14 not out), Mohammad Amir (14) and Rumman Raees (16) added 42 for the last two wickets but Sarfraz saw serious problems with the top order batting. "It was very disappointing, a tough loss," he said.



New Zealand win all three matches

Williamson (73) and Ross Taylor (52) plus 45 for Martin Guptill set New Zealand up.

It was Taylor 57th ODI half-century to equal the New Zealand record held by Stephen Fleming and Nathan Astle. But his dismissal sparked a Pakistan revival in the field in which they took seven for 48 in the last eight overs.—AFP

"Our bowlers bowled very well but the problems continue with the batting which again flopped. The problem is (facing) the new ball." Boult removed Azhar Ali, Fakhar Zaman and Mohammad Hafeez in the space of five balls to put Pakistan in a hole they were never going to get out of. After 10 overs, the tourists were three down for just nine runs and while they struggled to stay afloat, Babar Azam was unnecessarily run out. Part-time bowler Colin Munro, with career figures of one for 203 before this match bowled Shadab Khan without scoring and had Hasan Ali spectacularly caught by Williamson for one to return figures of two for 10 off seven overs.

Pakistan came to New Zealand on a nine-match winning streak and the promise of providing a more formidable opposition for New Zealand who had just swept a series against the West Indies. After losing the first two matches they needed to win in Dunedin and had their tails up when Munro went for eight in the second over. But half-centuries to Kane



DUNEDIN: Pakistan's Babar Azam bats during the third one day international cricket match between New Zealand and Pakistan at University Oval in Dunedin yesterday. — AFP

India ruin South Africa's progress with run outs

CENTURION: Two run-outs and the bowling of Ravichandran Ashwin gave India the edge on the first day of the second Test against South Africa at SuperSport Park yesterday. South Africa finished on 269 for six. They had been cruising at 246 for three and seemed set for a big total after winning the toss and batting on an easy-paced pitch. Aiden Markram (94) and Hashim Amla (82) were mainly responsible for getting South Africa into a strong position despite some good bowling by off-spinner Ashwin, who took three for 90 in 31 overs.

The day changed dramatically with an outstanding piece of fielding by Hardik Pandya, who ran out Amla for 82. Two more wickets fell in the next 14 balls. Amla, who looked set for a century to end a poor run of form which had brought scores of 5, 3 and 4 in his previous three Test innings, played a ball from Pandya to the on-side and was called for a sharp single by South African captain Faf du Plessis.

Amla, on his back foot, was slow to start and Pandya raced to pick up the ball, turned and threw down the stumps at the bowler's end. The second new ball was due but Indian captain Virat Kohli persisted with Ashwin and was rewarded when De Kock edged Ashwin to Kohli at slip to be out first ball. It got worse for South Africa when Vernon Philander set off for a suicidal run and found himself at the same end as Du Plessis to be run out without scoring. Contrary to expectations, there was no assistance for the fast bowlers and Ashwin carried the bowling attack, taking two for 53 in an unchanged 17-over first spell before coming back to bowl another lengthy spell.

Markram, playing in his fifth Test, looked set for a third century to go with hundreds he made against the modest opposition of Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. He struck the ball with authority, particularly off the back foot, before he tried to guide a ball from Ashwin towards third man and was caught behind by Parthiv Patel. Markram made 94 off 150 balls and hit 15 fours. Markram and a struggling Dean Elgar (31) put on 85 for the first wicket before Elgar went down the wicket and was caught by Murali Vijay at silly mid-off, checking a

drive when Ashwin bowled the ball a bit shorter so that Elgar could not reach the pitch of the ball.

Hashim Amla made his 82 off 153 balls with 14 fours. He survived a half-chance to Hardik Pandya at short midwicket off Ashwin on 14 and a diving catch to Patel when he glanced Ishant Sharma to the wicketkeeper's left with his score on 30, but then played with authority. Patel was playing in place of Wriddhiman Saha, who had a hamstring injury. India made two other changes. Lokesh Rahul replaced Shikhar Dhawan as an opening batsman and fast bowler Ishant Sharma came in for Bhuvneshwar Kumar. South Africa again opted for a four-pronged pace attack, picking new cap Lungi Ngidi in place of the injured Dale Steyn. Ngidi, 21, played in three Twenty20 internationals last season but has played in only nine first-class matches, taking 31 wickets at an average of 20.45.—AFP

SCOREBOARD

CENTURION, South Africa: Scores at close of play on the first day of the second Test between South Africa and India at SuperSport Park yesterday:

South Africa, first innings

D. Elgar c Vijay b Ashwin	31
A. Markram c Patel b Ashwin	94
H. Amla run out (Pandya)	82
A. de Villiers b I. Sharma	20
F. du Plessis not out	24
Q. de Kock c Kohli b Ashwin	0
V. Philander run out (Patel)	0
K. Maharaj not out	10
Extras (lb7, nb1)	8
Total (6 wks, 90 overs)	269

Fall of wickets: 1-85 (Elgar), 2-148 (Markram), 3-199 (De Villiers), 4-246 (Amla), 5-250 (De Kock), 6-251 (Philander)

Bowling: Bumrah 18-4-57-0 (1nb), Mohammed Shami 11-2-46-0, I. Sharma 16-3-32-1, Pandya 14-4-37-0, Ashwin 31-8-90-3.

To bat: K. Rabada, M. Morkel, L. Ngidi
India: V. Kohli, M. Vijay, L. Rahul, C. Pujara, R. Sharma, P. Patel, H. Pandya, R. Ashwin, I. Sharma, Mohammed Shami, J. Bumrah.

Match situation: South Africa are 269 for six in the first innings

SCOREBOARD

DUNEDIN, New Zealand: Completed scoreboard in the third one-day international between New Zealand and Pakistan at University Oval in Dunedin yesterday:

New Zealand	Pakistan	
M. Guptill run out (Sarfraz/Shadab)	Azhar Ali c Taylor b Boult	0
C. Munro c Sarfraz b Faheem	Fakhar Zaman b Boult	2
K. Williamson c Hafeez b Rumman	Babar Azam run out (Santner/Latham)	8
R. Taylor lbw Shadab	Mohammad Hafeez c Taylor b Boult	0
T. Latham c Shoaib b Rumman	Shoaib Malik c Taylor b Ferguson	3
H. Nicholls c&b Shadab	Sarfraz Ahmed not out	14
M. Santner b Hasan	Shadab Khan b Munro	0
T. Astle c Fakhar b Rumman	Faheem Ashraf c Astle b Ferguson	10
T. Southee b Hasan	Hasan Ali c Williamson b Munro	1
L. Ferguson not out	Mohammad Amir b Boult	14
T. Boult b Hasan	Rumman Raees b Boult	16
Extras: (lb2, w4, nb2)	Extras: (w6)	6
Total: (all out; 50 overs)	Total: (all out; 27.2 overs)	74

Fall of wickets: 1-15 (Munro), 2-84 (Guptill), 3-158 (Williamson), 4-209 (Taylor), 5-209 (Nicholls), 6-226 (Santner), 7-226 (Latham), 8-233 (Astle), 9-239 (Southee), 10-257 (Boult)

Bowling: Amir 8-1-34-0 (2w, 1nb), Faheem 6-1-29-1, Rumman 10-0-51-3 (1w, 1nb), Hasan 10-0-59-3 (1w), Shadab 10-0-51-2, Shoaib 6-0-31-0.

Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Azhar), 2-2 (Fakhar), 3-2 (Hafeez), 4-13 (Babar), 5-15 (Shoaib), 6-16 (Shadab), 7-30 (Faheem Ashraf), 8-32 (Hasan), 9-52 (Amir), 10-74 (Rumman)

Bowling: Southee 7-3-19-0 (1w), Boult 7.2-1-17-5 (1w), Munro 7-1-10-2, Ferguson 6-0-28-2 (3w).

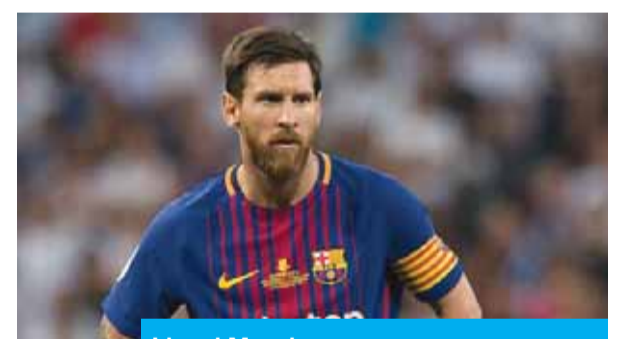
Result: New Zealand won by 183 runs.
Series: New Zealand lead 3-0

Spain investigating Messi's foundation

MADRID: Spanish tax authorities are investigating whether payments from FC Barcelona to Lionel Messi's foundation were used to help the player evade taxes, Spanish daily El Mundo reported yesterday. The newspaper, which has acquired Football Leaks documents, reported that the club gave the foundation "at least 12.7 million euros (\$15.5 million) between 2010 and 2016".

The paper said that the payments from Barca represented 71.5 percent of the foundation's revenue between 2013 and 2016. The foundation says on its website that it "was created in 2007 with the wish that all children should have the same opportunities to make their dreams come true, and to promote equality in education and health." Between 2010 and the official registration of the foundation in June 2013, the club reduced the corporate tax they paid on the money by 35 percent, in line with rules on donations to charities.

Those payments raised the suspicions of the authorities which, in January 2016, began to investigate whether the money had been "remunerative" and evaded corporate and income tax. In April 2016, tax investigators visited the Barcelona offices—not for the first time in recent years. After the official scrutiny began, the club stopped making the deductions from their donations and started withholding 45 per cent for taxes suggesting, the newspaper said,



Lionel Messi

that the payments "were considered part of the salary" of the Argentine star. El Mundo said that the club had urged Messi, already being investigated for a 4.1 million-euro tax fraud relating to his image rights, to "regularize the donations to his foundation". In the image rights case, Messi and his father, Jorge, were found guilty in 2016. El Mundo said that, by law, 70 percent of a charity's revenue should be spent on the aims for which it was created but a report in another Spanish newspaper, ABC, found the foundation's accounts were full of gaps but included large sums spent on external consultants, rent and refurbishing its offices or transferred to its branch in Argentina. According to documents examined by El Mundo, a tax settlement was paid to the Spanish treasury, in theory by Messi but ultimately by Barca, which made up the amount in a complex transaction days before the player signed a new contract last November.—AFP

Olympic flame stops in Seoul on journey to Pyeongchang

SEOUL: Cheering crowds welcomed the Olympic flame to a freezing Seoul yesterday, where the torch will be paraded for four days before making its way to Pyeongchang for the start of the Winter Games. The outlook for next month's sporting extravaganza has brightened since North Korea confirmed its participation, lifting security concerns over the South's nuclear-armed neighbour. The North has agreed to send an unknown number of athletes to the Games, expected to be accompanied by a high-level

delegation, supporters, observers and an art troupe. South Korean freestyle figure skater Park Hee-Jin raised the flame high before a crowd of hundreds who were gathered in the capital's Sangam district in a ceremony held just weeks before the event on February 9-25.

Fans unfurled banners wishing the Olympics success accompanied by the rousing sound of traditional Korean drummers, while others took pictures with their phones.

"I am happy to become the first torchbearer in Seoul", Park, wearing a white and yellow ski suit and a bobble hat, told reporters. The skater, who took part in the Sochi Winter Olympics' qualifying rounds, then passed the flame to the next of more than 600 torchbearers who will lead it on a 103 km (64 mile) journey around the capital until Tuesday.

It will arrive at the main entrance to

Gyeongbokgung Palace, the grandest of Seoul's historic sites, and will be carried in a sedan chair as hundreds of participants in traditional court costumes reenact a royal outing.

The torch was relayed by 16 runners to Korean football star Cha Bum-Kun near the Sangam World Cup Stadium, a venue for the 2002 FIFA World Cup. "Go Pyeongchang, Go Korea football", former Bundesliga player Cha said as he set off, with fans chanting his name.

The flame arrived in South Korea on November 1, 100 days ahead of the opening ceremony for the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Games.

It has travelled throughout the country, relayed by a who's who of Korean sports and entertainment stars including Kim Yuna, who won the ladies singles figure skating at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics and the silver in the same discipline at the 2014 Sochi Olympics.—AFP



CENTURION: South African batsman Hashim Amla is run out during the first day of the second Test cricket match between South Africa and India at Supersport cricket ground yesterday in Centurion, South Africa. —AFP

Sports

Conte frustrated as 10-man Leicester hold Chelsea

Chelsea 15 points behind Premier League leaders Man City

LONDON: Antonio Conte's problems mounted as spluttering Chelsea were held to a dour 0-0 draw by 10-man Leicester City at Stamford Bridge yesterday. Conte's side produced a limp display that could easily have seen them beaten by a Leicester team who missed a host of first-half chances. Even when Leicester left-back Ben Chilwell was sent off midway through the second half for two bookings, the champions were unable to snatch a winner. Chelsea remain third — 15 points behind Premier League leaders Manchester City—and have now drawn their last four matches in all competitions.

It capped a difficult week for Chelsea boss Conte, who could be in the final months of his turbulent reign despite last season's title triumph. Responding to a report claiming he will leave at the end of the season, Conte this week said "everything is possible" regarding his future. Conte has been linked with a move to Paris Saint-Germain as the Italian's relationship with the Chelsea board grows increasingly fractious following disagreements over transfers and his feud with Diego Costa, which led to the striker joining Atletico Madrid.

Chelsea are reported to be considering Juventus boss Massimiliano Allegri and former Barcelona coach Luis Enrique as potential replacements for the 48-year-old. Given the speculation surrounding their manager, it was intriguing to note the response of Chelsea fans. Having grown used to big-name managers coming and going in the era of owner Roman Abramovich, they

hardly seemed heartbroken at the possibility of another change on the bench. When a chant of Conte's name emanated from the stands soon after kick-off, it quickly petered out and the Italian responded with only a bashful clap towards the supporters.

Shinji Okazaki had a chance to further dampen the muted atmosphere in the eighth minute when the Leicester striker slid in to meet Chilwell's cross, but he couldn't control a close-range shot that ballooned over the bar. Conte has reportedly frustrated some of his players with his intense personality and demanding training sessions and their inconsistent performances this season have added fuel to that fire.

LETHARGIC CHELSEA

When Jamie Vardy fired narrowly wide from a tight angle moments later, Conte wore a thunderous expression on the touchline as he contemplated Chelsea's lethargic start. It took a superb save from Thibaut Courtois to prevent Leicester taking the lead their pressure deserved as the Belgian plunged to his right to claw away a Wilfred Ndidi header.

Conte wore a thunderous expression on the touchline



Chelsea threatened when Eden Hazard teed up Cesc Fabregas for a powerful drive that Kasper Schmeichel palmed away. But misplaced passes and lapses of concentration littered Chelsea's play. Vardy was a constant menace and Conte's defence again failed to corral the England international, who found space to shoot just wide. An injury that forced Chelsea captain Gary Cahill off late in the first half added to Conte's problems.



LONDON: Chelsea's Spanish defender Cesar Azpilicueta (CR) goes up against Leicester City's Nigerian midfielder Wilfred Ndidi (CL) during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Leicester City at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. — AFP

Fabregas nearly put Chelsea ahead against the run of play, but the midfielder's drive was tipped over by Schmeichel. But a key cause of Chelsea's erratic form has been Alvaro Morata's struggles and the lacklustre Spain striker has now gone five games without a goal.

Chelsea were still in disarray after the interval and Riyad Mahrez's deflected effort almost crept in, prompting Conte to send on Willian and Pedro for Hazard and Fabregas. The decision to remove Hazard

drew jeers from the frustrated Chelsea faithful.

Conte's men were gifted an unexpected lift when Chilwell, booked moments earlier, lunged into a studs-up tackle on Victor Moses in the 68th minute, earning a red card from referee Michael Jones.

However, the best Chelsea could manage were harmless long-range strikes from N'Golo Kante and Marcos Alonso as Leicester held firm to leave Conte grumbling his way down the tunnel at full-time. — AFP

West Ham's Lanzini, Arnautovic run riot at Huddersfield

HUDDERSFIELD: Manuel Lanzini struck twice as an impressive West Ham United romped to a 4-1 win at Huddersfield Town yesterday, underlining their improvement under David Moyes in emphatic fashion. Lanzini, in tandem with Marko Arnautovic, caused Huddersfield's defence constant trouble throughout the game with the Hammers looking a totally different team from the demoralised outfit that Moyes inherited when he took over from Slaven Bilic in November.

Neither the Argentine Lanzini nor Austrian international Arnautovic are out-and-out strikers but with Andy Carroll injured, Moyes paired them up-front and they played like they had been a partnership for years.

Arnaudovic's strength, skill and pace showed the talent that prompted West Ham to sign him from Stoke in July for a club record fee of around 25 million pounds. The win was the 200th in the Premier League for Moyes, making him just the fourth to reach that milestone following Alex Ferguson, Arsene Wenger and Harry Redknapp.

West Ham are now five games unbeaten in all competitions. The Hammers took the lead in the 25th minute, taking advantage of sloppy play when after a pass from keeper Jonas Llossl, Town's Joe Lolley was robbed near the edge of his area and Mark Noble burst goalwards and fired home.



HUDDERSFIELD: Huddersfield Town's English defender Tommy Smith (L) tangles West Ham United's French defender Arthur Masuaku (R) during the English Premier League football match between Huddersfield Town and West Ham United at the John Smith's stadium in Huddersfield, northern England yesterday. — AFP

Lolley made amends in great style five minutes before the break, beating West Ham keeper Adrian with a fine curling left-foot shot to send the teams in level at the interval. That suggested a tight battle in the 45 minutes to follow but West Ham came out and put the game beyond Huddersfield within 15 minutes.

Just seconds after the break, Arnautovic restored West Ham's lead, showcasing his technique as he hooked the ball past Tommy Smith and then drilled the ball home. Arnautovic then sent Lanzini through with a smart through ball with the outside of his foot and the Argentine slotted home confidently to make it 3-1 in the 56th.

The second half blitz was completed five minutes later when Arnautovic broke from the halfway line and found Lanzini who blasted past Llossl from the centre of the area. The win moved West Ham above Huddersfield and up to 11th in the table and Moyes was delighted with the continued improvement from his team.

"We have a long way to go but the players have done brilliantly well since we came in and they did very well today," he said. "I'm really pleased with Marko Arnautovic. Everybody knew how good he was at Stoke City and maybe giving him a freer role up front has given him a chance to express himself." — Reuters

Brawl breaks out as Turan arrives in Turkey

ISTANBUL: Turkish league leaders Istanbul Basaksehir yesterday announced they had reached an agreement to sign midfielder Arda Turan on loan from Barcelona before the player's homecoming sparked an embarrassing airport brawl.

"Arda Turan is returning to his country wearing the orange kit (of Basaksehir). This is not just a transfer for Basaksehir, but a transfer for all of Turkey," club president Goksel Gumusdag said in a statement. In a tweet, the club shared a video of a crossword being filled in with the key answers being "Arda Turan." Barcelona also confirmed the deal in a statement.

"FC Barcelona and Istanbul Basaksehir FK agree on a loan deal for the Turkish player for the remainder of the season and two more," said the Spanish league leaders. Turan was welcomed by around a hundred supporters wearing orange scarves at Istanbul Ataturk airport on Saturday evening and holding "Welcome Arda Turan" signs.

However, a brawl erupted at one point between fans and the police as Turan arrived while one fan fainted.

The crowd shouted angry slogans at the police: "We are not terrorists but supporters!"

Turan was in high spirits, smiling and waving at the crowd, telling reporters he was "very happy" with the move. "I'm here not just for short-term goals, but for long-term success," he was quoted as saying by Hurriyet daily.

One fan was excited about the transfer and what it meant for the Basaksehir's future. "Arda is an experienced player who can help us do big things in European competitions in the coming years," 33-year-old Veyssel told AFP. Basaksehir have risen rapidly over the last two seasons to rival the established Istanbul triumvirate of Besiktas, Fenerbahce and Galatasaray. Turan issued a heartfelt farewell message on Twitter, explaining that playing for Barcelona was a "wildest dream" and he was "proud" to make it happen.

The 30-year-old joined Barcelona in 2015 after four successful seasons with Atletico Madrid but has been unable to hold down a first team place. Turan receives an annual salary of around eight million euros at the Catalan club, according to Spanish media.

He quit international football last June after former coach Fatih Terim threw him out of a training camp following a fracas with a reporter on a plane. Turan then declared two months later he was ready for a recall. Turan has also expressed open support for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, attending rallies to back "my commander-in-chief" following the July 2016 attempted coup. — AFP

Watford earn late draw with a seeming handball goal

WATFORD: Watford came from 2-0 down to earn a draw with Southampton but the Saints felt they had been robbed of the victory by what they saw as a clear late handball goal from Abdoulaye Doucoure.

The Southampton players ended up surrounding the referee after Doucoure's 90th minute leveller. The Frenchman had stooped to meet Troy Deeney's headed pass but appeared to use his hand to divert the ball past Southampton goalkeeper Alex McCarthy.

James Ward-Prowse had earlier struck twice in the first half, in the 20th and 44th minutes, as Southampton looked set to end their dismal nine-match winless streak. Yet lacklustre

Watford brought on their totem Deeney at halftime and roused themselves after the break, Andre Gray heading home in the 58th minute before the late drama surrounding the home side's equaliser.

In the week that VAR was trialled in English football in FA Cup and League Cup ties, Doucoure's goal looked set to reignite the debate about the need for the technology to be used in the league to prevent similar incidents.

Southampton manager Mauricio Pellegrino was dismayed by what he felt was an "injustice." "I am sad," the Argentine told the BBC. "I never see this type of mistake in the Premier League before. To live this injustice is really hard.

"I think we have to try (VAR) and analyse if it's possible to help the sport to make better decisions, even for the referee." Before the Southampton protests, Doucoure had appeared to take a quick look at the assistant referee to check that the goal had stood before wheeling away to celebrate.

"They'll feel like it's a loss. VAR comes in we probably wouldn't get that but today we got it. It's the luck of the draw," Deeney told Sky Sports. — Reuters

EPL Table						
LONDON: English Premier League table after yesterday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):						
Man City	22	20	2	0	64	13 62
Man Utd	22	14	5	3	45	16 47
Chelsea	23	14	5	4	41	16 47
Liverpool	22	12	8	2	50	25 44
Tottenham Hotspur	22	12	5	5	42	21 41
Arsenal	22	11	6	5	40	28 39
Burnley	23	9	7	7	19	20 34
Leicester	23	8	7	8	34	32 31
Everton	22	7	6	9	25	34 27
Watford	23	7	5	11	33	42 26
West Ham	23	6	7	10	29	41 25
Crystal Palace	23	6	7	10	21	33 25
Huddersfield	23	6	6	11	19	39 24
Newcastle	23	6	5	12	21	31 23
Brighton	23	5	8	10	17	29 23
Southampton	23	4	9	10	23	34 21
Bournemouth	22	5	6	11	22	34 21
Stoke	22	5	5	12	23	47 20
West Brom	23	3	10	10	18	30 19
Swansea	23	4	5	14	14	35 17

Live		Matches on TV	
		(Local Timings)	
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE			
Bournemouth v Arsenal	16:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2	
SPANISH LEAGUE			
Levante v Celta de Vigo	14:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Deportivo Alaves v Sevilla	18:15	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Espanyol v Athletic de Bilbao	20:30	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Real Sociedad v Barcelona	22:45	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
GERMAN LEAGUE			
Koln v B Monchengladbach	17:30	beIN SPORTS HD 5	
Dortmund v Wolfsburg	20:00	beIN SPORTS HD 5	
FRENCH LEAGUE			
Saint Etienne v Toulouse	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Lyon v Angers	19:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Nantes v PSG	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6	

12 Pacers rally past Cavaliers as Warriors extend streak



13 Kerber issues Australian Open warning with Sydney triumph



14 Boulton destroys Pakistan, New Zealand take series



Madrid misery after Villarreal win

Villarreal's first ever victory at the Santiago Bernabeu



MADRID: Villarreal's Spanish defender Alvaro Gonzalez heads the ball during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid and Villarreal at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid yesterday. — AFP

MADRID: Struggling Real Madrid risk falling further behind in La Liga after a cheeky late chip from Pablo Fornals saw Villarreal escape with a 1-0 win yesterday, their first ever victory at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Fornals struck with three minutes left to leave Zinedine Zidane's wasteful side fourth and a whopping 16 points behind runaway league leaders Barcelona, a deficit which will turn into 19 should Barca win at Real Sociedad today.

"We didn't deserve to lose. We had the better chances but the ball did not want to go in," said under-fire Zidane

after Real's second straight home league defeat. Villarreal meanwhile move up to fifth on 31 points thanks to midfielder Fornals' stunning goal, which puts Javier Calleja's side just a point behind off-form Madrid.

Real fired off nearly 30 shots but their accuracy was wayward, with Cristiano Ronaldo among the worst culprits in front of goal. "We did everything we could and there is no explanation for why the ball didn't go in," added Zidane, who signed a new contract to keep him at Real until 2020 earlier this week.

"I can't criticise my players for anything. This is a bad

spell, nothing more." So often Real's saviour, Ronaldo had a bad day at the office, with his worst miss coming just before half-time, when the five-time Ballon d'Or winner managed to shoot straight at Sergio Asenjo after being laid on by Isco in front of a practically open goal just yards out. The Portuguese was livid with the referee, as he thought that he was tripped by Daniele Bonera just before he shot. Real carried on where they left off in the second period, but after failing to break down the resolute visitors, Fornals stepped up to make history and pile the pressure on Zidane.

Fornals clipped home his 87th-minute winner just after it looked like Enes Unal had fluffed his team's chance to snatch the three points after a blistering counter-attack following a Real Madrid corner.

Turk Unal shot straight at Keylor Navas when put through by Denis Cheryshev, but with Navas still recovering from making the save Fornals lifted the ball over the flailing Madrid stopper. "You're always happy when you get three points at such a difficult ground," said Calleja afterwards. "We knew we could make history today, we believed." —AFP

Sako hands lively Palace victory over Burnley

LONDON: Crystal Palace continued their rise up the Premier League table by beating Burnley 1-0 with a first-half goal from Bakary Sako at Selhurst Park yesterday. Sako's angled left-foot drive in the 21st minute was enough to take Palace to 12th on 25 points, five above the relegation zone after they made the worst start to a top-flight English league campaign with no points or goals after seven matches. "It was a massive three points," said Palace manager Roy Hodgson. "We knew it would be very, very tough. In the first half we created chances to make life more comfortable for us in the second half."

Burnley have gone six league matches without a win but remain seventh in the standings on 34 points from 23 games. "Second half, we were at least decent and I thought we deserved to scratch a draw," said Burnley manager Sean Dyche. "The margins were tight when we were winning games and the margins are tight now. Second half, we really took it on today."

Palace were the superior side throughout the first half and deservedly took the lead when Sako side-stepped Phil Bardley in the left channel and drilled a powerful shot past keeper Nick Pope for his seventh goal of the season in all

competitions. The hosts almost doubled the advantage two minutes later after Wilfried Zaha pounced on a sloppy back-pass and hooked past Pope, but Burnley defender Ben Mee scampers superbly to beat James McArthur to the loose ball and clear.

WASTEFUL BENTEKE

Palace's unmarked Christian Benteke then headed over from a corner, and Burnley almost punished his profligacy when Sam Vokes headed wide and Ashley Barnes half-volleyed over in quick succession on a brief foray forward for the visitors. But Palace were soon back on the front foot and spurned two more chances before the interval, Benteke flicking Patrick van Aanholt's scuffed left-foot shot straight at Pope and Sako volleying narrowly wide from a Timothy Fosu-Mensah cross.

Burnley started the second half far better and could have equalised through headers from Vokes and then Barnes, but both strikers steered their efforts wide. Sako also wasted a fine headed chance and Zaha had a close-range shot blocked as both teams traded attacks and a second goal began to look increasingly inevitable.

Benteke looked certain to score when he rose to meet Sako's left-wing cross in the 69th but again he proved why he only has one goal to his name this season by floating his header wide. Burnley piled forward in the last five minutes and almost snatched an equaliser in the 87th when Vokes only just failed to connect with James Tarkowski's low cross. Benteke hit the side-netting on a counter-attack as another chance went begging for the Belgium striker, but Palace saw out added time to seal their second successive league win. — Reuters

Thauvin on target as Marseille sink Rennes

PARIS: Florian Thauvin scored his team-leading ninth goal of the season but also missed a penalty as Marseille cruised to a 3-0 victory at Rennes yesterday that kept them firmly in the Champions League race.

The former Newcastle winger saw a first-half spot-kick saved by Rennes goalkeeper Tomas Koubek but redeemed himself by setting up Valere Germain for the opening goal on 35 minutes. Thauvin's ninth assist of the season drew him level alongside Neymar, with Ligue 1 leaders Paris Saint-Germain away to Claudio Ranieri's fifth-place Nantes today.

Hiroki Sakai produced a brilliant goal-line block to deny Ismaila Sarr an equaliser, and minutes later Germain teed up Morgan Sanson to rifle in Marseille's second just before half-time.

Thauvin completed the scoring at Roazhon Park eight minutes from the end when he nodded in a cross from Brazilian midfielder Luiz Gustavo. Marseille avenged a 3-1 defeat by Rennes at the Velodrome in September—one of just three losses for Rudi Garcia's team this season—to move level on 41 points with second-place Monaco and Lyon.

Monaco, who trail PSG by nine points, visit Montpellier later while Lyon will also go in search of a fifth straight league win when they host second-from-bottom Angers today. — AFP



RENNES: Olympique de Marseille's French forward Dimitri Payet (L) vies with Rennes' French forward Thomas Brandon during the French L1 football match Rennes vs Marseille yesterday at the Roazhon park stadium in Rennes. — AFP

Business

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2018

18 Kuwait real estate sales eased in November; outlook improves

19 Jadeite Group announces its first private residential building 'Jade'

21 Ooredoo partners with AISouq Muruj for second year in a row



TEHRAN: Iranian motorists drive in Sadeqiyeh Square in the capital Tehran yesterday. Iran rejected any modification of its nuclear deal with world powers after US President Donald Trump demanded tough new measures to keep the agreement alive. —AFP

Ray of hope in Iran economy despite Trump

Iran's economy remains hobbled by US restrictions

TEHRAN: Even with President Donald Trump continuing to waive nuclear sanctions, Iran's economy remains hobbled by US restrictions but some diplomats in Tehran remain quietly confident for the future.

The real problem in Iran right now, everyone in the international business community agrees, is uncertainty. That was not helped by Trump's announcement on Friday that he would waive nuclear-related sanctions, but only once more and that Europe must work with Washington to "fix the deal's disastrous flaws, or the United States will withdraw".

"No one has any idea what's going on. Trump has introduced so many layers of uncertainty," a Western trade official in Tehran told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"That's not necessarily negative. Things could actually improve if Trump pulls out of the deal. The Europeans could stay and the EU could provide protections for its industries against US sanctions," he said. "Or things could get even worse. We just don't know." On the surface, Trump's vitriolic stance appears disastrous for the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, which lifted many sanctions in exchange for curbs to the country's nuclear program.

Even as he confirmed the waiver of nuclear sanctions on Friday, Trump added yet more sanctions related to human rights and Iran's missile program, adding to a

vast web of restrictions that have scared off many Western companies. Major foreign banks have been particularly cautious of re-entering Iran, dreading a repeat of the record-breaking \$8.9 billion penalty levied on France's BNP Paribas for breaching US sanctions on Iran and other countries.

There seems little hope of hitting the government target of \$50 billion in foreign investment per year, with the government saying less than \$3.4 billion was achieved in 2016.

But European diplomats say a lot is happening behind the scenes. Deals for things like industrial equipment, solar parks and dairy farms have been quietly building over the past two years.

"I'm still cautiously optimistic," said a European diplomat. "Many firms have invested so much they can't pull out. They will find a way to make it work whatever Trump does."

The big difference under Trump is secrecy. "Deals are going on in complete silence. There's no advantage to discussing it. Many have interests in the US or an

American investor. They don't want to make themselves a target," said the Western trade official.

Some bigger firms—particularly the French—have been less coy. French energy giant Total signed a \$5 billion gas deal in June, while carmakers Peugeot and Renault have already reopened production lines. Italy pointedly announced a \$6 billion credit line for development projects just days before Trump's latest attack on the deal.

"The divide between Europe and the US is widening. It's been more than a year that President Trump is trying to undermine this deal but he's basically failing," said Farid Dehdilani, international affairs advisor for the Iranian Privatization

Organization.

'Nothing is happening'

Nonetheless, the initial excitement that accompanied the nuclear deal has evaporated. "I was working in the stock market when the deal was signed, and we were so excited and hopeful, but when I check with friends in

brokerages now, nothing is happening," said Tehran-based economic analyst Navid Kalhor.

"The only sectors that get any interest are commodities: oil, mining, petrochemicals. But oil money cannot solve all our problems," he said. Iran's return to international oil markets helped propel its economic growth rate to more than 12 percent last year, but unemployment remains huge and the energy sector can only create a few jobs at a time.

"Look at the protests—ordinary people are not optimistic about the future," said Kalhor, referring to the deadly unrest that rocked dozens of Iranian cities over the new year, sparked by anger over unemployment and poor governance. "We need better and more reliable trade partners, and more access to international markets. We are mostly borrowing money rather than attracting investment. This can cause more problems in the future when we have to service our debts. It's a vicious circle," he added. The problem, many Iranians are quick to emphasize, does not lie just with Trump. Years of mismanagement and corruption would make Iran a tricky investment destination even without US antagonism. "We have to facilitate foreign investment by eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy: the three or four months needed to get permits, for instance," said Dehdilani. "In the end, the success of the nuclear deal relies on Iranians." —AFP

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Deals in complete silence

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Canada hopes G7 summit serves as springboard for new ideas

OTTAWA: Canada hopes the upcoming G7 summit it is hosting will serve as a springboard for fresh ideas on key issues including climate change, the global economy and security, the lead organizer told AFP. "The G7 serves well as a proving or testing ground for discussions that could eventually go into the G20 or the United Nations or international financial institutions," Peter Boehm, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's G7 representative, said in an interview with AFP. "The beauty of these summits is that there is informal dialogue between leaders," said Boehm, who has participated

in several past summits. Canada assumed the G7 presidency at the start of January and will host the leaders of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States in the picturesque resort village of La Malbaie on the shores of the Saint Lawrence River from June 8-9.

The agenda for the 44th Group of Seven industrialized nations summit includes advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, the implementation of the Paris climate agreement, and the global economy. Boehm said the discussion on climate change will "inevitably include energy and renewable forms of energy" and "more broadly the resilience of coastal communities."

"We've seen a very bad hurricane season," he noted. "Many of the islands affected by these terrible hurricanes have lost their tourism economies."

Protectionism and trade tensions between the major powers will also be a hot topic, Boehm said.

Protests expected

US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement and his insistence on renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) are likely to come up again, after fueling tensions at the last summit in Italy.

And the topic of gender equality will thread through the entire summit, after allegations of sexual harassment and abuse against now-disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein prompted hundreds of women to speak out on sexual misconduct by powerful men.

Under the Italian presidency, the G7 established a "road map" for gender equality. "The issue of gender equality is one of the key themes of our presidency and in fact it is an overarching or transversal theme that we will be looking at when we discuss economic and financial issues, peace security issues, environmental issues and the

like," Boehm said. "We will be looking at everything through the gender equality lens."

G7 summits—and those of the G8 before Russia was kicked out of the group

over its annexation of Crimea—are routinely decried as increasingly irrelevant and have been marred by violent protests. But Boehm rejects such criticism, saying: "There is value in (the meetings) and I think the leaders see that." The G7 nations' "shared basic values" are often crucial in finding common ground, he said, noting that "decisions are taken by consensus."

Organizers are bracing for angry protests after the "rather violent protests for the G20 last August" in Germany, Boehm said. Federal and Quebec provincial police as well as the military will provide security. "Peaceful protests will be allowed as close as possible to where the leaders are," Boehm said. —AFP



OTTAWA: The G7 summit logo is shown on a wall of a government building in Ottawa. —AFP

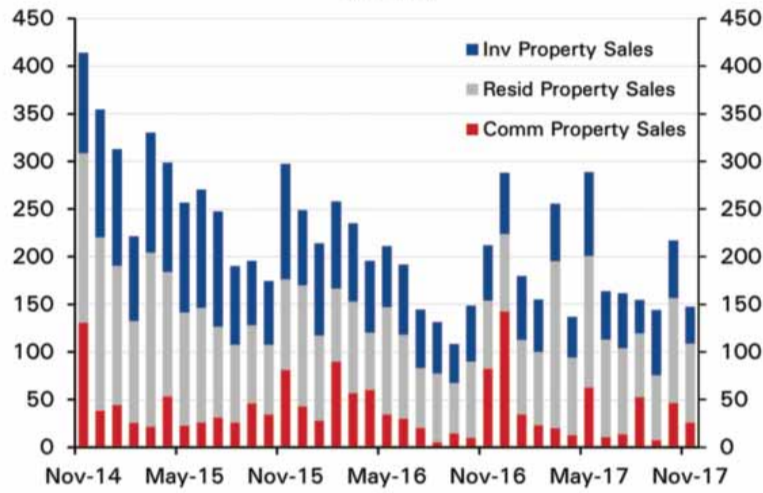
KAMCO Monthly Report

Kuwait real estate sales eased in November; outlook improves

Investment building price index breaks into positive territory

Chart 1: Real estate sales

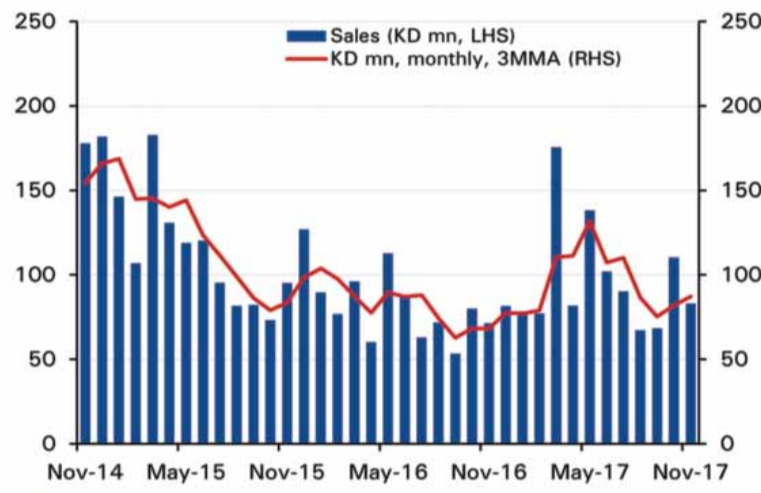
(KD mn)



Source: Ministry of Justice

Chart 2: Residential real estate sales

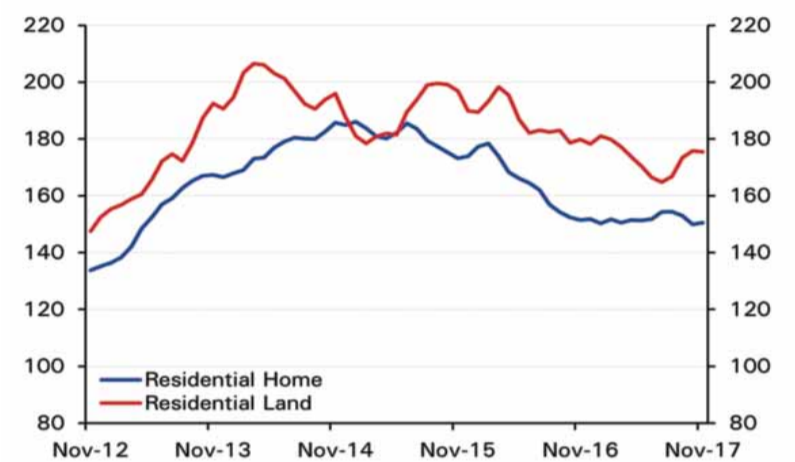
(KD mn)



Source: Ministry of Justice, NBK estimates

Chart 3: Residential real estate price indices

(index, 3-month moving average, 2010=100)



Source: Ministry of Justice, NBK estimates

KUWAIT: Total November real estate sales fell shy of KD 150 million following a strong performance in October; nevertheless, the price trend across all sectors still indicated stabilization. Real estate sales totaled KD 147.3 million in November across all sectors on 301 transactions. The figure looks lackluster compared to the prior month's impressive KD 216.9 million. Meanwhile, the contraction in prices across the sectors moderated further in November, with the NBK investment building price index breaking into positive territory for the first time in a year and a half.

The residential sector remained buoyant, supporting overall sales activity in November. Sales totaled KD 83 million, up 16 percent year-on-year (y/y). The number of transactions totaled 236, making up 78 percent of all real estate activity for the month. Land purchases made up 28 percent of the 67 transactions. Regionally, residential plot sales were in line with previous trends,

with heavy activity in the Sabah Al-Ahmad coastal area, Funaitees, and Abu Ftaira.

Continued price stabilization in the residential sector reflects steady sales activity. The NBK residential home price index improved to 150.6 in November, up from October's 150.0. NBK's residential land price index dipped slightly to 175.5 from October's 175.9. The contraction from a year before eased in the home prices to just -0.6 percent y/y; while it widened slightly for residential land prices to -2.4 percent y/y, prices remain better than levels witnessed in the first half of 2017.

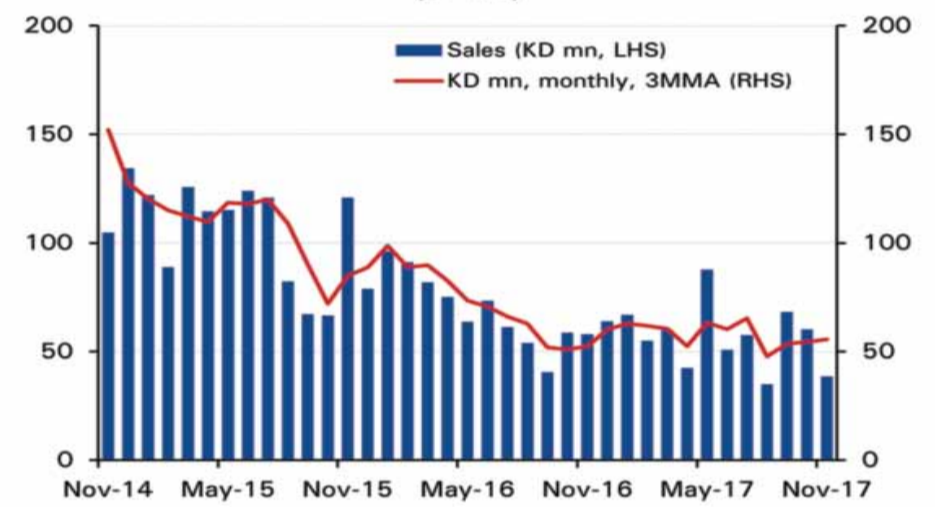
Investment property sales slipped after a surge in activity in October. Sales in the sector fell 33.6 percent y/y to KD 38.5 million in November. The investment property sector continues to underperform: in the first eleven months of 2017, average monthly performance was KD 56.5 million, down 18 percent compared to the same period in 2016. The outlook for the sector remains positive, how-

ever, as oil prices remain elevated and development project awards show positive momentum.

The NBK investment building index breaks into positive annual growth territory for the first time in over a year. The recovery in the index reflects strong gains in September and October; the index rose to 182 in November 2017, up 0.1 percent y/y. The index has been on a recovery trend since it bottomed in September 2017. Commercial sector activity eased after a surge in October, falling below 2017's monthly average (to November) of KD 28 million. Five transactions took place in November, worth a combined KD 25.8 million. The volatile sector is down almost 70 percent y/y, but November 2016 had witnessed a surge in activity that was preceded but a period of quiet. The largest sale for November 2017 was a commercial building in Al-Qibla that sold for KD 17.6 million.

Chart 4: Investment real estate sales

(KD mn)



Source: Ministry of Justice, NBK estimates

Bayt.com weekly report

Full-time employee and job seeker? Here is how to manage that

KUWAIT: Finding time and motivation to look for a job is challenging enough when you are unemployed. It is equally difficult for those who are seeking jobs while balancing their current career simultaneously. When moving to the beat of the nine-to-six, daily grind, it is easy to become complacent and allow active job seeking to fall to the side. After all, once you get home you might be so fatigued that the mere thought of spending a few hours looking for work is daunting. However, before you throw in the towel, let us commit to giving job hunting one more shot. It's time to give your job search priority and manage your time effectively.

To simplify things, Bayt.com, the Middle East's #1 job site, has put together a seven-day schedule for the employed job seeker.

Sunday: Search

On Sundays, you should set aside time during your evening to look for jobs. This should be an hour, minimum, spent exclusively on going through job postings and finding jobs that match your criteria. List anything that interests you in a document and include the job description as well as a web link.

On Bayt.com for instance, you can find many jobs, save them for later, email them to yourself, print them and request that similar jobs be sent directly to you. This should make it more straight-forward to compile a list as time goes on. It will also give you some time to evaluate all your options more thoroughly and research companies in an organized manner. You can file these jobs however you prefer. Whatever you do, creating an organized

list will help you keep track of all the jobs you are interested in and will make sure you do not overlook or forget anything when you start applying.

Monday: Maintenance

Monday could be a break from simply looking through countless pages of job postings. Instead, you could spend your time conducting some crucial maintenance. Take another look at your CV and look over your cover letters and profile once more. After reading the job descriptions the day before, you should have some idea of what the employers are looking for. Using this knowledge, you should add certain buzzwords to your CV to improve your chances.

Additionally, if your CV has not been updated for a while, now might be a good time to freshen it up. You might think that the fact your CV has been collecting dust since your last update is negligible, but employers find job seekers with fresh CVs more attractive as candidates. In fact, employers can filter out old CVs with one click, so ensure your CV is always up-to-date and crosses the velvet rope into the fresh pile.

Tuesday: Training

While you tipped your graduation cap some time ago, you should not stop learning. You should dedicate some time every week to doing so. Spend a few hours every Tuesday taking online tests and courses. Working on your soft and technical skills will only increase your attractiveness as a candidate for a job. You should also use this time to learn more about the companies you are interested in and familiarize yourself with their culture, products and values. This will prepare you increasingly for your interview, or if you choose to write a cover letter. Even after you find your job, you should make it a habit to continually find new areas that you can improve as well as new subjects you can become educated in. Remain a student for life and new doors will continuously open for you.

Alitalia, struggling to compete with low-cost European rivals, went into administration last May at the request of its shareholders after staff rejected job and salary cuts as part of a two-billion-euro (\$2.4 billion) rescue plan. "Air France-KLM denies making an offer to buy Alitalia," a statement said adding that the group "had not taken part in the process launched by Italian authorities."

On Friday, Economic Development Minister Carlo Calenda said on the La7 tel-

Wednesday: Wearing thin?

At this point in the week, you're probably feeling a little tired. That's why it's important to give yourself a break. Make sure you have time to pursue your other interests and prop up your legs.

Thursday: Tick tock! It's Time to Network

During the final day of the work week, you should focus your time on networking. Building a network of professional contacts is critical for business success. You should keep this practice even after you have gotten your desired job. Not sure where to start? All you need is a public profile on Bayt.com and you will be connected to millions of professionals all across the MENA region.

Friday: Family and Friends

Overworking yourself can lead to negative outcomes. Just like your mid-week break, you need to give yourself some time off on the weekends to regroup and relax. See your family or your friends or spend your time doing something you enjoy. Catch a movie, read a book, or try your hand at a new hobby. Just like your week should not be all play, only working 24/7 is detrimental to both your health and your job search success.

Saturday: Sending Applications

You should dedicate at least two hours on Saturday for applying for jobs. You should have ample time to send out applications. Pull out that list you've been compiling and begin. Make sure to write customized cover letters to improve your chances. Review your CV, cover letter, and anything else you might be sending for embarrassing typos and grammatical mistakes. You don't want a misspelled word to be the thing that kept you from getting the job of your dreams. Remember that where there is a will there is a way. By dividing your job search into easier, more manageable tasks you can work on throughout the week, you should be able to keep your rhythm with grace. If you don't know where to start, take a look at the 10,000+ jobs available daily on Bayt.com.

vision channel that there were three offers: one from German airline giant Lufthansa, another from US private equity group Cerberus, and a joint EasyJet-Air France bid. "The presence of Air France is not sure and I will verify tomorrow with the Alitalia administrators," Calenda however said. According to local media reports, Lufthansa wants to lay off 2,000 employees-almost a quarter of the total on the aviation side-if its offer for Alitalia is accepted. Alitalia has 11,500 workers in total. — AFP

Salmonella scandal casts harsh light on dairy giant

PARIS: Emmanuel Besnier, scion of the secretive family behind one of the world's biggest dairy groups, is often called "the invisible billionaire", unknown to the French public and even to his own employees.

But an outcry over claims the company hid a salmonella outbreak at a plant making powdered baby milk earned him a summons to the French finance ministry on Friday, a rare test for a CEO who rarely shows his face in public. Created in 1933 by Besnier's grandfather, Lactalis has become an industry behemoth with annual sales of some 17 billion euros (\$20.6 billion), making twarog, or quark, in eastern Europe, kaymak in Serbia and Galbani ricotta and mozzarella in Italy.

With 246 production sites in 47 countries, its list of products stretches as long as a supermarket aisle, including household names like President butter and Societe roquefort.

Two of those brands, Picot and Milumel baby milk, were the subject of chaotic international recalls issued in mid-December after dozens of children fell sick. A total of 35 children in France have fallen ill from the salmonella contamination, prompting a company spokesman, Michel Nalet, to "apologise once again to parents" on Thursday.

French health authorities said Friday that a child in Spain had also fallen ill after drinking Lactalis baby milk, while another case is being investigated in Greece. Nalet also said that Lactalis was working "in perfect collaboration" with French officials to contain the outbreak, a claim that was rebuffed by France's increasingly exasperated economy minister, Bruno Le Maire, on Friday.

"If there had been perfect collaboration, I wouldn't have had to sign an order on December 9 demanding the recall of more than 600 shipments of baby milk," Le Maire told French television.

Agriculture minister Stephane Travert told RTL radio that he hoped Besnier would address the contamination publicly after his meeting with finance ministry officials. "I think that is what our

fellow citizens expect," he said.

The fact that Besnier was named head of the group when he was just 29 years old may have reinforced his desire to stay out of the media spotlight. Now aged 47, even the few media photos of him that exist date from more than 10 years ago. But anger over the salmonella scandal and claims that Lactalis poorly handled the subsequent recalls may force him to address the mistrust personally. The scandal deepened this month when French investigative weekly Le Canard Enchaîné reported that state inspectors had given a clean bill of health to the Lactalis site in Craon, northwest France, in early September. They failed to find the salmonella bacteria that had been detected by Lactalis's own tests in August and November, which were not reported to the authorities. The company said it was not legally bound to report the contamination, and it was only after children started falling sick that inspectors descended on the Craon plant.

It could now face charges of causing involuntary injuries and endangering people's lives. "Lactalis should understand that transparency is the best security these days, and it should have taken the necessary decisions" sooner, Le Maire said Friday. But it seems unlikely that Besnier, whose group has paid fines for failing to publish detailed financial data in the past, will change its ways anytime soon.

"His grandfather went to each farm, knew every producer. Him, nobody ever sees him!" said Philippe Jehan, president of the FDSEA agriculture union for the Mayenne region, home of Lactalis's headquarters. "Personally, in over 20 years of working in the department, I've never once met him."

Growing mistrust

Media investigations over the years have uncovered employees who "don't even know what he looks like", while government officials are also hard pressed to secure a meeting with the head of the company that employs 15,000 people. Stephane Le Foll, agriculture minister in ex-president Francois Hollande's government, said he "never" met with Emmanuel Besnier during his five-year term.

Even when attending matches for the Stade Lavallois football club in the company's hometown of Laval, financed largely by Lactalis, Besnier arrives after the start and leaves before the end-and watches from behind the darkened glass of a private skybox.—AFP

Air France-KLM denies bidding for troubled Alitalia

PARIS: The Air France-KLM group yesterday denied it had made an offer for ailing airline Alitalia, a day after Italy's industry minister listed it among three bidders.

Business

Jadeite Group announces its first private residential building 'Jade'

Group strives to leave a mark on Kuwait's real estate landscape



KUWAIT: The Jadeite Group signs a contract for the construction of its first private residential building under the name Jade at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Salmiya on Thursday. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: The Jadeite Group announced the signing of a contract for the construction of its first private residential building under the name Jade. The decision was announced at a press conference held at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Salmiya on Thursday.

The Jadeite Group is a closed shareholding company established on November 16, 2016 that aims to raise the level of residential and commercial real estate in Kuwait. Through Jade, the real estate developer seeks to implement design excellence, execute distinctive construction mechanisms, as well as redirect the market's focus from developing structures solely for the purpose of profitable gain, but instead emphasize on providing superior standards of living.

As a prestigious property developer, The Jadeite Group strives to leave a mark on Kuwait's real estate landscape and aims to elevate Kuwait's infrastructure. The Jadeite Group are confident that the clients of Jade will have a strong appeal to the project.

"The Jadeite Group intends to develop properties that are masterpieces throughout the region, while helping to establish visionary business concepts. With a primary focus on real estate development and ownership, The Jadeite Group has a specific interest in residential and commercial towers. The Group places secondary focus on assisting, partnering with, and estab-

lishing truly outstanding businesses and startups. With a passion for quality, commitment to ethics, and a resolute of long-term professional relationships, The Jadeite Group is a world-class business you can trust," said Mohammed Al-Matrouk, Chairman. Jadeite Group.

Between the 1960s and 1970s when Kuwait's infrastructure was on the brink of development, buildings erected during this period were characterized with distinct designs and unique quality. "Unfortunately, those standards are rarely applied today. Property developers have prioritized their strategy on financial returns, consequently overlooking design and quality features. It is evident throughout the country's residential areas that there's a lack of originality coupled with poor construction practices. As a result, the majority of structures lack uniqueness as well as a sense of safety," he added.

"It is also clear that car parks have become a major

problem, especially in residential zone areas, where tenants often struggle to park their vehicles. In addition to scarcity of car park space, landlords have resorted to renting out their building's basement for storage purposes in return for not providing parking services to tenants," stressed Al-Matrouk.

"Furthermore, small-size apartments have now become the standard, averaging 60 square meters for a two-bedroom space, which is not ideal for comfortable living. Another common problem is the hegemony of the guards that look after the residential towers and often exploit tenants in numerous ways, which is a dissatisfaction in the market," he further said.

The Jadeite Group derives its name from the precious jewel that's characterized for its clarity, quality, and high-value properties. Similar to the eponym gemstone, the company's philosophies are based on superior quality, ethics, and integrity. In addition to the

principle that honesty establishes long-term trust between the organization and their clients, Jadeite's properties are built with the highest quality materials and the best construction practices. Each property owned by Jadeite Group is an icon: elevating the design and quality standards in its surrounding areas.

The Jade building is designed by award-winning architecture firm Studio Toggle and will be constructed by reputable local contractor Back Combined Co. The three organizations share a common goal: Building a uniquely-designed housing project in Kuwait.

Jade is a unique building that will appeal to its clients. "It's equipped with a vast car park that covers the lower two basement floors that provides convenience to tenants. It also offers spacious and comfortable apartments, which are flooded with a great deal of natural lighting. The management of the building will be entrusted to professionals who are well-versed with technology and are quick to respond to maintenance services through the modern application and automation aspect of the property," he explained.

"Jadeite Group is confident that Jade will mark the beginning of change in the local real estate development market and strongly believes in the positive impact of this modern state-of-the-art building," concluded Al-Matrouk.



New project expected to raise real estate standard

Hope for Mauritanian desert economy as tourists return

ATAR, Mauritania: Sitting by a tent in the vast, sun-bleached Mauritanian desert, 71-year-old Elisabeth Godin smiles, unconcerned about her safety despite warnings from her friends and family. For most of the last decade, the spectacular dunes, barren canyons and oases of the Adrar region have been a no-go zone for European nationals. The danger of terrorist attacks and kidnappings is still real, reflected by Mauritania's decision to join four other countries in fighting jihadism in the Sahel. But after France eased its assessment of the security risk for the Adrar, a tiny number of French visitors are now returning, stirring hopes for the blighted local economy. "I missed the Sahara. The colors of the dunes, the wind on the sand, the starry skies," Godin, a retiree from La Rochelle in western France, told AFP. "When I sleep under the stars in the middle of the camp, I feel like I'm in a cocoon," she said, on a rocky plateau surrounded by acacia trees. Centuries ago the ancient Mauritanian towns of Chinguetti, Oualata, Tichitt and Wadan were key hubs for the camel caravan trade, which would snake across the Sahara selling gold and salt. "Ever since I was a kid I was fascinated by the legends of the great caravans," said an awestruck visitor, Guillaume Jordan.

Jihadist blow

Adrar, a region 400 kilometers (250 miles) northeast of the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott, once had had a small but thriving excursion business, offering the extremes and the beauty of the desert to European travellers with a taste for adventure.

In the 2000s, the region drew up to 14,000 visitors a year, mainly from France—which, as the former colonial power, has a deep affinity with Mauritania—but also the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Japan and Britain. But the activity was dealt a crippling blow when four French tourists were shot dead in 2007, an attack claimed by an Al-Qaeda affiliate. The following year, another local money-spinner,



People walk in the village of Tergit, near Atar during a one-week hiking trip in the Mauritanian region of Adrar. For most of the last decade, the dunes, canyons and oases of this region were a no-go zone for French nationals, who were warned of travelling to the area. — AFP

the celebrated Paris-Dakar off-road auto rally, was cancelled because of security concerns. The race was later relocated to South America.

The tour business staggered on before all but drying up in 2011 after further jihadist attacks. The first seeds of hope were sown last March, when the French foreign ministry gave a cautious downgrade of the region's security risk. It rated the risk as "orange," meaning that travel there is "not advised except for essential reasons." Encouraged by the change, the French tour company Point-Afrique Voyages, relaunched chartered flights between Paris and Atar, the main regional city, at Christmas—the first to fly this route since 2011. A total of 14 flights—supported by some 350,000 euros (\$422,000) in subsidies by the Mauritanian government—have been scheduled until March 24. The flights are already half-filled, with more than 1,000 visitors signed up, says Point-Afrique Voyages. "Since the flights to Atar resumed, the figures for people coming by land have also risen," said Mohammed Baould Ne, head of Mauritania's National Tourism Office. Kadi Mehdi, director of Mauritanides Voyages, described 2018 as "a test sea-

son" for a revival of European visitors. The tourism industry's big challenge is to prove the country is safe, he said. "Dozens of police are constantly patrolling the area. We do not see them, but they are there," said Mehdi.

'Benefits of tourism'

The flights and growing trickle of visitors provide hope to the many guides, camel owners and hoteliers who have been unemployed, many of whom are the economic victims of terrorism. "We have been at a near standstill for almost a decade. Now that planes are arriving, the city (Chinguetti) is starting to live again," said hostel owner Lemine Bahan. The trickle-down benefits of tourism should not be under-estimated, said Point-Afrique Voyages director, Maurice Freund. Mauritania is part of the so-called G5 Sahel group, which also includes Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger. These countries are setting up a five-nation force to combat extremists. "Mauritania has made enormous efforts to secure its territory," Freund said. But "military force will never solve the problems alone," he said. "Tourism is a tool for peace." — AFP

There has been widespread speculation that Ramaphosa and his allies are lobbying ANC members to oust Zuma as head of state in the coming weeks, but he made no mention of Zuma's future.

Zuma sat alongside Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta to hear Ramaphosa speak and was booed by some sections of the crowd when he entered the stadium.

Zuma's second presidential term doesn't officially end until 2019 when national elections will be held, but he could be removed early through a motion of no confidence in parliament or at a meeting of the ANC's national executive committee. Ramaphosa said yesterday that a judicial inquiry into allegations of influence-peddling in Zuma's government was a top priority and that those responsible should be prosecuted.

Zuma has denied allegations that he has allowed his friends to influence the appointment of cabinet ministers. Ramaphosa's message resonated with ANC member Vanita Kok, 49, from the Khoi San royal house. She said: "Corruption is rife and I hope he sorts it out." — Reuters

South Africa to target investment, graft under new ANC leader

EAST LONDON, South Africa: South Africa wants to attract foreign investors to help it kick-start economic growth and eradicate poverty and will crack down on corruption, the new leader of the ruling African National Congress said yesterday.

Cyril Ramaphosa, who won the tight race to succeed President Jacob Zuma as ANC leader last month, also said that he would make fighting corruption a priority in a speech

JPMorgan says tax changes will spur more profits

NEW YORK: JPMorgan Chase & Co beat Wall Street's fourth-quarter earnings expectations on Friday and said tax law changes will help future profits by not only reducing the amount it pays the federal government but also by stimulating more business.

JPMorgan, the biggest US bank by assets, recorded \$2.4 billion in one-time charges in the fourth quarter related to the tax law changes. However, it expects its effective tax rate to drop to 19 percent this year from 32 percent last year, which will save it billions of dollars. The sweeping tax changes President Donald Trump signed into law in December, designed to kick-start economic growth, slashed the US corporate rate to 21 percent from 35 percent.

As a result, JPMorgan said it expects corporations to borrow more, offer more stock and pursue more mergers and acquisitions, all of which would boost revenue. Although the bank plans to use some of that money for compensation, business investments, helping rural communities and other uses, it will mostly boost profits, executives said on a call with analysts.

"Much of it will fall to our bottom line in 2018 and beyond," Chief Financial Officer Marianne Lake said on a call with analysts. The bank's shareholders should benefit as JPMorgan returns more capital to them through dividends and stock buybacks, she said.

Several financial companies, including Citigroup Inc and Morgan Stanley, have warned investors that they will face short-term pain over some of the tax changes. However, over the longer term, the changes are widely expected to generate gains for large US corporations.

Some of the benefits will likely be lost as banks vie to offer better deals to customers, starting with businesses where prices change more quickly, Chief Executive Jamie Dimon said. JPMorgan's charges related to a one-time repatriation tax on income it has kept abroad and adjusting the value of its deferred tax assets and liabilities. The bank said it does not expect to bring any substantive amount of the foreign cash home, because it has capital and liquidity requirements abroad. JPMorgan's shares were up 1.3 percent at \$112.18.

Excluding one-time items, JPMorgan's fourth-quarter profit was higher than analysts had expected. Rising interest rates produced gains in net interest income that offset a slowdown in trading revenue.

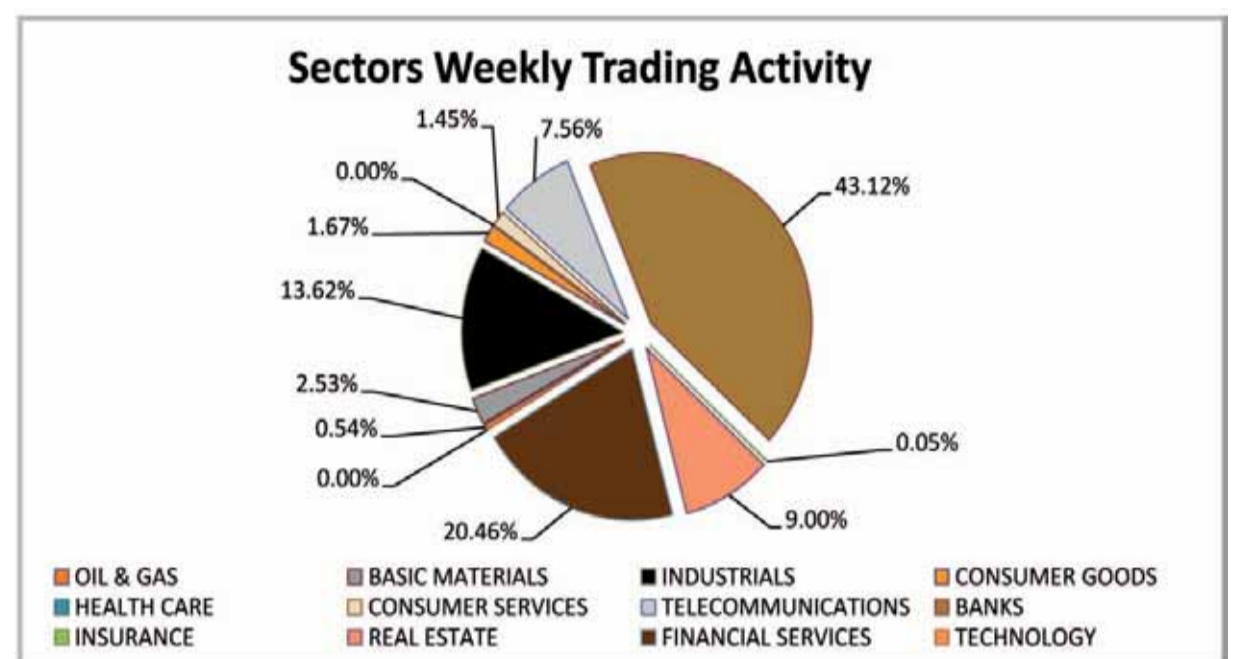
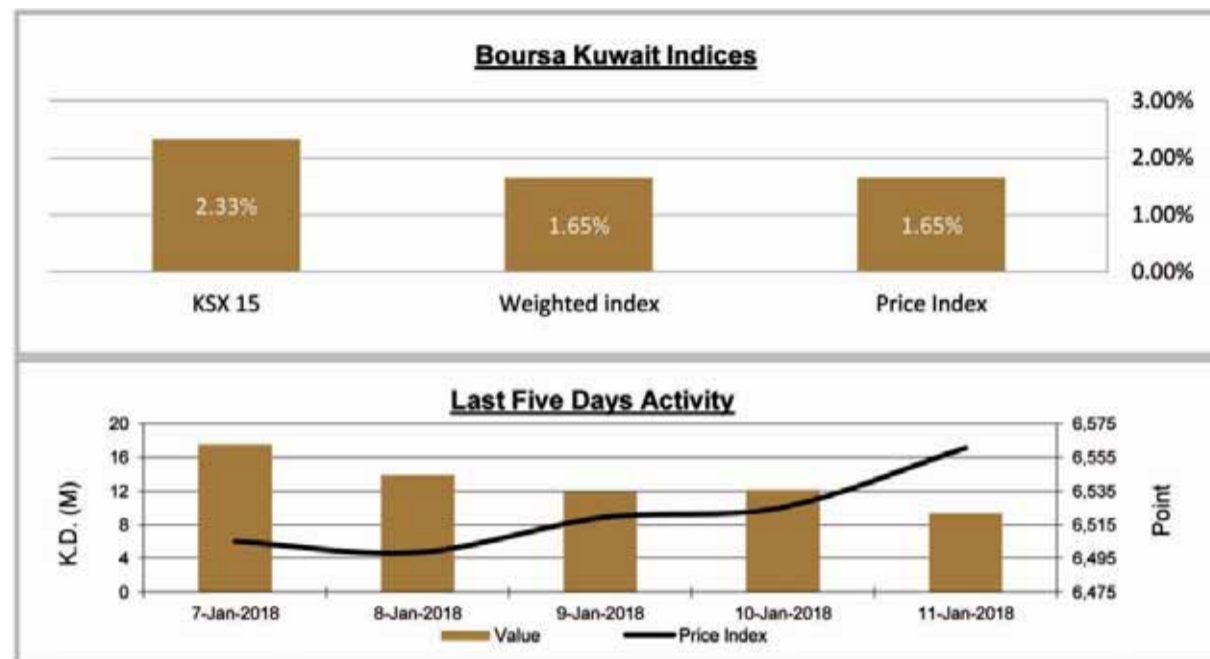
The bank's adjusted net profit was \$6.7 billion, or \$1.76 per share, compared with the average estimate of \$1.69 per share. Net revenue rose 4.6 percent to \$25.45 billion and beat the estimate of \$25.15 billion. Including the tax charge, its net profit fell to \$4.23 billion, or \$1.07 per share, from \$6.73 billion, or \$1.71 per share, a year earlier. Analysts were generally positive about the results, although some asked for more detail on how the bank will use its expected tax savings and expressed concern about the benefits fading quickly in a competitive environment.—Reuters

Business

Bayan weekly market report

Boursa Kuwait rebounds on renewed market confidence

Market continues rally since New Year



Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %
OIL & GAS	9,461,907	1.81%	349,546	0.54%
BASIC MATERIALS	3,571,582	0.68%	1,632,964	2.53%
INDUSTRIALS	19,102,795	3.66%	8,805,716	13.62%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,512,247	0.29%	1,080,473	1.67%
HEALTH CARE	0	0.00%	0	0.0000%
CONSUMER SERVICES	8,325,400	1.59%	937,571	1.45%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	22,440,025	4.29%	4,887,641	7.56%
BANKS	119,126,510	22.80%	27,874,893	43.12%
INSURANCE	187,902	0.04%	30,773	0.05%
REAL ESTATE	170,915,468	32.71%	5,816,245	9.00%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	167,862,423	32.13%	13,223,923	20.46%
TECHNOLOGY	5,587	0.00%	481	0.00%

Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	972.81	972.35	0.05%	0.96%
BASIC MATERIALS	1,302.10	1,269.04	2.61%	3.80%
INDUSTRIALS	1,871.12	1,851.16	1.08%	1.73%
CONSUMER GOODS	817.27	851.31	-4.00%	-0.62%
HEALTH CARE	1,510.51	1,510.51	0.00%	0.00%
CONSUMER SERVICES	903.27	887.04	1.83%	0.24%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	572.11	570.97	0.20%	2.46%
BANKS	955.74	937.18	1.98%	4.72%
INSURANCE	1,026.19	1,093.61	-6.16%	-7.22%
REAL ESTATE	977.14	943.34	3.58%	4.72%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	640.06	622.55	2.81%	3.42%
TECHNOLOGY	495.83	471.04	5.26%	3.61%

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week in the green zone. The Price Index closed at 6,560.63 points, up by 1.65 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index increased by 1.65 percent after closing at 415.80 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 958.66 points up by 2.33 percent. Furthermore, the week's average daily turnover decreased by 14.84 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 12.93 million, whereas trading volume average was 104.50 million shares, recording a decrease of 3.46 percent.

The Boursa continued its outstanding performance that it initiated the new year with, and was able to realize relatively good increases for the second consecutive week, supported by the noticeable purchasing activity on many listed stocks headed by the leading and heavy ones, to over perform the profit collection operations that were present during some daily sessions of the week, and could not drag the market indices to the red zone, however lightened its weekly gains slightly.

The Boursa recorded market gains of around KD. 450 million due to the good performance it witnessed during the last week, whereas the total market capitalization for the listed companies in the Regular Market reached about KD 27.89 billion, against KD 27.44 billion in the previous week, up by 1.64 percent. The market capitalization gains since the beginning of the new year reached more than KD 950 billion, with a growth of 3.53 percent compared to its value at last trading day of the previous year, where it was KD 26.94 billion. (Note: The market cap for the listed companies in the Regular Market is calculated based on the average number of the outstanding shares as per the latest available official financial statements).

Moreover, the Kuwaiti Market gains appears in light of the watch state of the most investors for the listed companies results for

the financial year 2017, especially the Banks' results, expected to start flowing in the few coming weeks, which pushed many traders to execute heavy purchasing operations on some Banks' stocks, and lead to have the Banks sector the biggest portion of the cash liquidity traded during the last week.

Furthermore, the Boursa started its first session of the week with good increases to its three indices, affected by the strong purchasing operations that included many listed stocks in the market of both leading and small-cap ones, despite the decreased trading activity of the cash liquidity or the number of traded stocks, as the trading value dropped by the end of the session by 14 percent approximately, while the volume declined by about 12 percent. The second session of the week witnessed profit collection operations including some stocks of different increases in the previous sessions, which pushed the three indices to meet in the red closing area, amid a continued decline in the trading indicators on both levels, the cash liquidity or the traded volume.

The Market was able in the mid-week session to return to the green zone once again, as its indices ended the session with a grouped increase supported by the increased purchasing operations on the leading stocks in particular, in addition to the quick speculative operations that concentrated on some small-cap stocks, which came amid a continued drop in the cash liquidity and the volume for the third consecutive session.

Wednesday's and Thursday's sessions witnessed an overtaking by the green colour on the trading activity in the Boursa, which was apparent on its three indices' performance and clearly enhanced its gains, to end the week's trading with good gains compared to the previous week's closing.

On the other hand, last week witnessed a price increase of 87 stock out of 157 listed stock in the Regular Market, compared to the

previous week, while 47 stocks dropped, and 23 stock remained with no change.

Sectors' Indices

Nine of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the green zone, two recorded declines, whereas the Health Care sector's index closed with no change from the week before. Last week's highest gainer was the Technology sector, achieving 5.26 percent growth rate as its index closed at 495.83 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Real Estate sector's index closed at 977.14 points recording 3.58 percent increase. The Financial Services sector came in third as its index achieved 2.81 percent growth, ending the week at 640.06 points.

On the other hand, the Insurance sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 6.16 percent to end the week's activity at 1,026.19 points. The Consumer Goods sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 4 percent, closing at 817.27 points.

Sectors' Activity

The Real Estate sector dominated a total trade volume of around 170.92 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 32.71 percent of the total market trading volume. The Financial Services sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 32.13 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 167.86 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 27.87 million or 43.12 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 13.22 million representing 20.46 percent of the total market trading value. —Prepared by: Studies & Research Department - Bayan Investment Co.

Boursa Kuwait Indices				
		Price Index	Weighted index	KSX 15
Weekly	Last week	6,560.63	415.80	958.66
	Previous week	6,454.16	409.07	936.86
	Change (Point)	106.47	6.73	21.80
	Change (%)	1.65%	1.65%	2.33%
Annual	Last year	6,408.01	401.42	914.87
	Change (Point)	152.62	14.38	43.79
	Change (%)	2.38%	3.58%	4.79%

MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	522,511,846	324,752,637	60.90%
Value (K.D.)	64,640,225	45,544,835	41.93%
Deals	18,447	10,641	73.36%

MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)				
	Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
	27,891,120,063	27,441,948,932	1.64%	3.53%

TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
AMWAL	45.70	33.00	12.7	38.48%
CABLETV	23.00	18.00	5.0	27.78%
MENA	20.30	15.90	4.4	27.67%
REAM	590.00	496.00	94.0	18.95%
ABK	340.00	288.00	52.0	18.06%

TOP LOOSERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
GINS	650.00	824.00	-174.0	-21.12%
AMAR	46.00	55.00	-9.0	-16.36%
AGHC	69.90	80.00	-10.1	-12.63%
ABAR	70.00	80.00	-10.0	-12.50%
RKWC	75.00	82.00	-7.0	-8.54%

Stocks hit new highs on earnings optimism, data

NEW YORK: Wall Street continued its rally on Friday with record closing highs as the fourth-quarter earnings season kicked off with solid results from banks and robust retail sales drove investor optimism about economic growth. The S&P 500 and Nasdaq both registered their eight record closing highs out of the first nine trading days of 2018, while the Dow boasted its sixth closing high of the year.

JPMorgan, the biggest US lender by assets, said a US tax overhaul would help future profits by reducing its tax bill and stimulating more business. The bank's shares rose 1.7 percent. "The fact all the big money center banks beat on the bottom line is a good omen for the rest of the earnings season," said William Lynch, director of investments at Hinsdale Associates, in

Hinsdale, Illinois. Investors were also hopeful 2018 financial forecasts from US companies would beat Wall Street estimates as many analysts may not have tax savings fully reflected in their models as the tax bill was signed into law so late in December. "I don't know how much of that is priced in right now," said Stephen Massocca, senior vice president at Wedbush Securities in San Francisco. "It seems like the economy is going OK, inflation is kind of nonexistent right now, wage growth is not an issue for most income statements, so what's not to like here."

Earnings for S&P 500 companies are expected to increase on an average by 12.1 percent in the quarter, with profit for financial services companies likely to increase 13.2 percent, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S. VBlackRock rose 3.3 percent. The world's largest asset manager reported profit that beat estimates as investors flooded into the relatively low-cost funds.

While Wells Fargo earnings beat expectations, its shares slipped 0.7 percent after it set aside \$3.25 billion in the fourth quarter to cover legal expenses related to probes into its mortgage and sales practices. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 228.46 points, or 0.89 percent, to 25,803.19, the S&P 500 gained 18.68 points, or 0.67 percent, to 2,786.24 and the Nasdaq Composite added 49.29 points, or 0.68 percent, to

7,261.06. For the week, the S&P rose 1.6 percent, compared with the Dow's 2-percent rise and a 1.8-percent advance in the Nasdaq. The S&P consumer discretionary index jumped 1.3 percent after retail sales data showed households bought more goods, suggesting the economy exited 2017 with strong momentum.

Amazon rose 2.2 percent to breach \$1,300 for the first time. It closed at \$1,305.20. The sector was also helped by a late-afternoon Bloomberg report that activist D.E. Shaw built a position in Lowe's Companies, sending its shares up 5.3 percent. Bank stocks were helped by a rise in Treasury yields after underlying US consumer prices for December posted the biggest gain in 11 months, signaling a pickup in inflation. The Treasury move helped push the utilities sector down 0.6 percent, making it the weakest performer of the S&P 500's 11 sectors.

Advancing issues outnumbered declining ones on the NYSE by a 1.17-to-1 ratio; on Nasdaq, a 1.54-to-1 ratio favored advancers. The S&P 500 posted 164 new 52-week highs and 12 new lows; the Nasdaq Composite recorded 222 new highs and 14 new lows. Volume so far on US exchanges was 6.88 billion shares, above the 6.39 billion average for the full session over the last 20 trading days. —Reuters



NEW YORK: Traders and financial professional work ahead of the closing bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), on Friday. The Dow was up over 200 points on Friday, off to its best start to begin a year since 2003. —AFP

Business

Ooredoo partners with AlSouq Murouj for second year in a row

Partnership to support entrepreneurs, local businesses at Murouj Market



KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait is proudly continuing its strategic partnership with AlSouq Murouj for the second consecutive year to bring to you Murouj Market, a monthly weekend market for local entrepreneurs and businesses. The market, which is held at Murouj Complex, includes an ooredoo dedicated booth, local farm produce, artisanal food products and crafts, with a 'street food' section aimed at highlighting the culinary diversity of Kuwait's local food community. The market also offers a section dedicated for children's activities. The market is held once a month on weekends, until March 2018. The next market will take place on Friday 19th January.

Commenting on this sponsorship, Ooredoo Kuwait

Senior Director of Corporate Communications Mijbil Alayoub said: "We're happy to be supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs through this engaging project. This sponsorship comes in tandem with our social responsibility strategy, which in turn is based on our core values of Ooredoo, of caring, connecting and



challenging. We look forward to meeting those young enthusiastic small business owners as well as our val-

ued customers at the market".

Ooredoo is a strategic partner of this event. Updates about the market can be found on Murouj's official Instagram account @muroujkw as well as our Instagram account @OoredooKuwait.

Ooredoo's operations in Kuwait date back to December 1999 when it launched wireless services as the second operator. The company today provides mobile, broadband internet and corporate managed services tailored to the needs of customers and businesses. Ooredoo is guided by its vision of enriching people's lives and its belief that it can stimulate human growth by leveraging communications to help people achieve their full potential.



Mijbil Alayoub

Al-Sayer renews commitment to customer care

KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons (MNSS) one of the Al-Sayer Holding Companies has announced exclusive solutions for B2B customers appreciating their exceptional support towards the success of fleet business.

According to Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer Chief Executive Officer Al-Sayer Holding "Since inception Al-Sayer Group has strived hard to always provide best quality products and services in our showrooms - This defines our heritage. Our 63 year old partnership with Toyota Motor Corporation is a strong example of our willingness to strive for Leadership. The automotive industry has and is transforming at rapid pace and Toyota continues to reinforce its leadership position with the introduction of a range of new and exciting models to strengthen its market leadership position."

Toyota ALOSTOUL - new brand promise

With Toyota ALOSTOUL you can aim to drive your business to higher profits. Whether a large business or small unit, ALOSTOUL will help you provide the most affordable solutions, tailor-made for you. ALOSTOUL



redefines low cost of ownership backed by Toyota quality, durability and reliability. Al-Sayer is enhancing customer convenience through exceptional trained and dedicated account executive at your doorstep or office. Trade-in offers, customized service contracts and leasing services are USP's of ALOSTOUL.

Appreciating the support from customers Bengt Schultz Chief Operating Officer Al-Sayer Holding said "We are very grateful to you for your support all these years - Toyota's sales has seen a balanced growth across its diverse portfolio of sedans, SUVs and pickups. Now we have launched 2018 Prado the best mid-size 4x4 SUV in the world. Our recent research show that Prado is the highest preferred in regular 4x4 segment: it's the best choice for the Gulf conditions, a name they trust, great interiors, superb driver comfort with most of the options available inside and it offers the great value for money."

Strategic focus on customer service excellence

Toyota is committed to making ever better cars offering our customers the peace of mind of Toyota ownership and ALSAYER is keen on the strategic expansion plans with new Toyota facilities opening soon in Fahaheel, Jahra and Abu Futeirah. With Toyota and ALSAYER Be Reassured - with guaranteed best products, services and facilities.



British Airways launches sale across all cabins for travel until Dec 12, 2018

KUWAIT: Post the festive season, there's nothing quite like planning your next holiday to chase away the holiday blues! British Airways has just announced the perfect way for residents across the Kuwait to brighten up their January with the launch of their massive global special fares campaign.

In addition, the UK carrier has revealed some of its top travel predictions for travellers from the Middle East, selecting a mix of must-see places from its network of over 200 destinations. Robert Williams, Head of Sales - Asia Pacific and the Middle East, said: "The Middle East is home to savvy holiday makers who want to explore new destinations, challenge themselves with exciting experiences and visit loved ones. We want our customers to be able to experience their greatest holiday adventure yet without having to worry about splurging on that extra holiday for the year. Our current special fares campaign helps residents to visit traditionally popular cities, experience exotic places through our new routes and book in their annual visit home."

Special fares across all routes and cabins

British Airways' special fares offer runs across all its cabins through to January 24 with travel valid until December 12, 2018. The UK's national carrier is offering return flights to

London starting from as little as KD 132 in its World Traveller cabins and from KD 543 in its Club World cabins.

Highly-anticipated sporting events, new routes and TV programs all influence the top travel predictions! Here is a shortlist of destinations that made it to the top of British Airways' 2018 holiday suggestions:

NEW YORK

Wake up in the city that never sleeps by treating yourself to a long weekend in New York in 2018. With an iconic skyline, energetic nightlife, bounty of museums and endless shops, a trip to the Big Apple is guaranteed to leave you dazzled, and you'll find it easy to see why it's been voted The Best City in the World.

Flights: Return flights in World Traveller from to New York via London Heathrow start from KD 223 and Club World from KD 991.

TORONTO

The ever-evolving and constantly innovative Toronto also features as a hotspot to watch. Canada celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2017 and, with Toronto leading the celebrations, more people are thinking of the city as one of Canada's best destinations. Time your visit during the star-studded Toronto Film Festival, which draws global crowds and is one of the largest publicly attended film festivals in the world attracting over 480,000 people annually. With direct flights from London to Toronto year-round, find your way to a vibrant city which is perfect during sunny summer days or snowy winter evenings. Flights: Return flights in World Traveller to Toronto via London Heathrow start from KD 271 and Club World from KD 959.

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

A brand-new route to Music City will be music to travellers' ears, as from May 2018 British Airways will be travelling directly from Europe to the home of country music and good

living. Discover Nashville through its streets, stories, and the stars on its pavements. Must sees include the famous Bluebird Café and The Country Music Hall of Fame, whilst must do's for food lovers include a huge traditional Southern meal of delicious crispy fried chicken and shrimp. Flights: Return flights in World Traveller to Nashville via London Heathrow start from KD 291 and Club World from KD 1,157.

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

It has never been easier to get to New Orleans; the birthplace of jazz, rock 'n' roll and R&B. Famous for its Mardi Gras, make the most of the city by visiting during the historical celebrations to catch the popular parades and electric atmosphere. Plan a visit to the architecturally fascinating French Quarter, followed by an evening out on the monumental Bourbon Street.

Flights: Return flights in World Traveller from to New Orleans via London Heathrow start from KWT 274 and Club World from KD 1137.

Investment

British Airways is investing £4.5 billion for our customers over the next five years with a focus on excellence in the premium cabins and more choice and quality for all. The airline is investing 600 million pounds in Club World, including outstanding catering and luxurious White Company bedding - plus, from 2019, a new seat with direct aisle access. At Heathrow, a First Wing check-in area with direct security and lounge access has launched, and lounges around the airline's network are being revamped and improved. Long-haul World Traveller customers will also receive an exciting and expanded new menu, which provides more quantity and quality to both meals and great snacking options throughout the flight. Customers can also look forward to the latest generation Wi-Fi across British Airways' long-haul and short-haul fleets over the next two years, as well as access to power in every seat.



Technology

Gadgets for kids still big at tech show despite concerns

The dangers of too much technology for young children

LAS VEGAS: The children's section at the giant Consumer Electronics Show this week touted "innovations that enable 21st century kids to learn and play smarter than ever." The timing may have been unfortunate following revived concerns of the dangers of too much technology for young children. But as the debate swirled, exhibitors at the Las Vegas extravaganza sought to showcase devices aimed at health, education and entertainment for youngsters, including educational robots.

Pai Technology introduced its interactive storybooks for children, which use virtual reality and according to its website "encourages a love of reading" and offers "thoughtful stories." Amy Braun, marketing director for the group, acknowledged concerns about kids and technology but said these devices still have value.

"Technology is here to stay, and it's important to expose our children to technology but in beneficial ways," she said. "We really focus on making sure that the time that we put it in front of our children is all about learning and development. And it's not either or."

Braun said parents must decide on appropriate limits for screen exposure and other technology usage. Chinese startup Dragon Touch unveiled its colorful tablet computer aimed at kids between three and six years old, with educational apps and parental controls. Dragon Touch's Lei Guo said the tablets may be valuable but also suggested parents supervise their use. "I really don't want my kids to spend too much time on the internet," he said. "So that's why we also have the parent control mode, so that the parents can set a time, for example maybe 30 minutes per day."

“Parents must decide on appropriate limits”

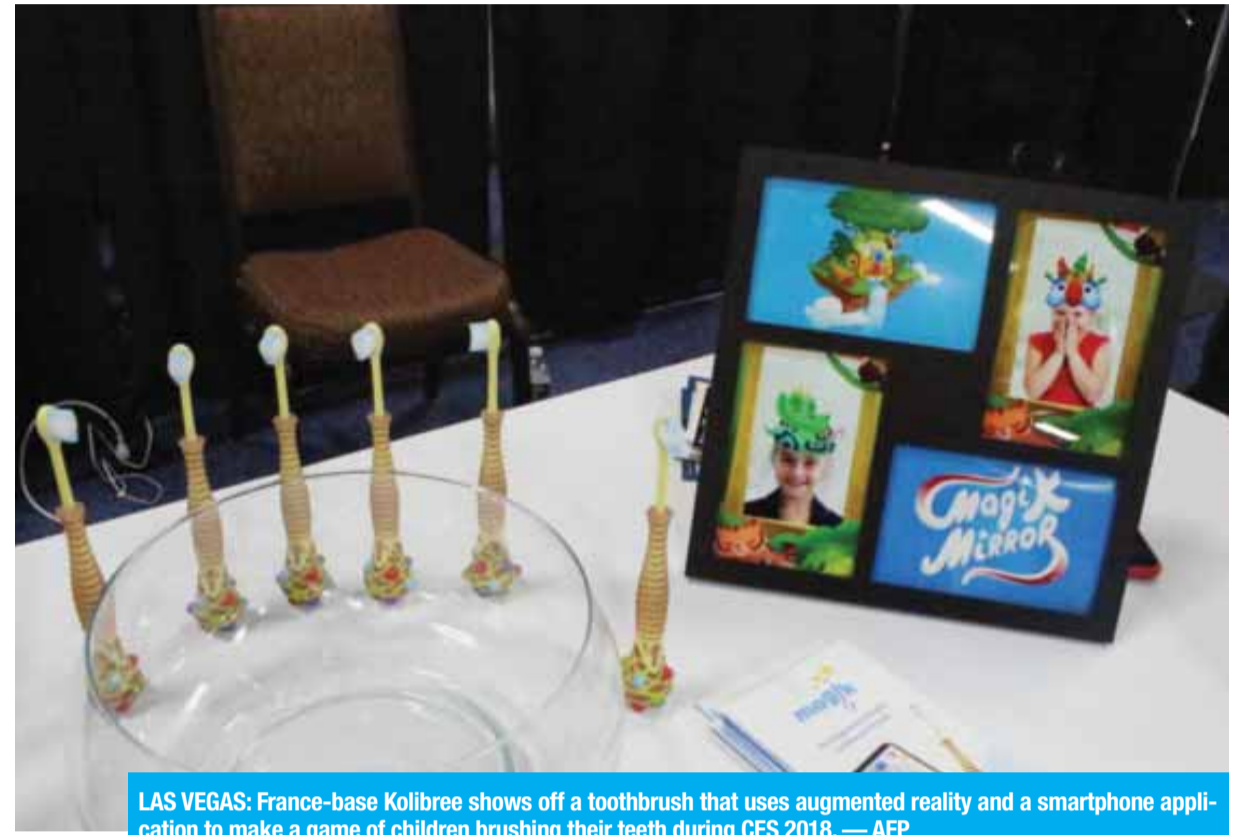
Augmented reality toothbrush

An augmented reality toothbrush meanwhile introduced by French startup Kolibree allows children to look at a smartphone or tablet screen to motivate and educate them about oral hygiene. "With image analysis, the application detects the brushing motion," Kolibree's Leonie Williamson. The device makes brushing a game, enabling kids to earn points by holding and using the toothbrush correctly.

Williamson said the toothbrush would not be a big contributor to too much screen time for kids: "It's just three brushings of two minutes each day." The electronics show has long featured devices for children, and exhibitors typically plan their displays and products many months in advance. But the show opened just amid fresh fears that too much technology may be harmful for children.

In the United States, the nonprofit group Common Sense Media found 95 percent of US households have a mobile device in the home. Screen time has been shifting, the group said, from television to mobile devices. Earlier this week, two large shareholders urged Apple to study whether iPhones are proving addictive for children and if intensive use of the smartphones may be bad for their mental health.

The investors cited a recent study suggesting children are negatively distracted by digital technologies in the classroom. Apple, which is not present at CES but whose system is used by many app developers, said in a statement it "has always looked out for kids, and we work hard to create powerful products that inspire,



LAS VEGAS: France-based Kolibree shows off a toothbrush that uses augmented reality and a smartphone application to make a game of children brushing their teeth during CES 2018. — AFP

entertain, and educate children while also helping parents protect them online."

At CES, Ahren Hoffmann of the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association, said determining how much technology to use for kids is "all about balance." "We want to make sure that our kids

today are both getting outside and play, and that they are playing with traditional toys, that they're playing board games, but they're also using iPads and tech toys, and learning about coding and other things that are happening in the world around us today," she told AFP at the show. —AFP

Uber security cast doubt on spying claims

SAN FRANCISCO: The former security chief of Uber Technologies Inc swore in a closed legal proceeding that he knew of no attempts to steal trade secrets from anyone, including Alphabet Inc's self-driving unit Waymo, and would be "shocked" if that had occurred. In a deposition taken in mid-December near San Francisco, Joe Sullivan, Uber's security chief from 2015 to 2017, said that the most explosive claims made by another former Uber employee of unethical and illegal behavior by members of his security team were false.

The testimony, described to Reuters by people familiar with it, came in connection with a lawsuit brought by Waymo which accuses arch rival Uber of stealing trade secrets. Sullivan's testimony has not been made public. He has not spoken in open court or spoken publicly since leaving Uber in November, when he was fired following an investigation. The previously unreported testimony from the onetime senior Uber official, as well as interviews conducted by Reuters with five current and former Uber employees, rebuts statements made in an explosive 37-page letter last year that triggered the internal probe and drew the attention of federal prosecutors, who are still investigating.

The letter was written by an attorney for Richard Jacobs, a security analyst who worked at Uber from 2016 to 2017 and was about to be fired. Jacobs has acknowledged. Jacobs' lawyer wrote that Uber's security apparatus was engaged in stealing trade secrets, spying on rival executives and wiretapping, among other questionable behavior. Uber's internal probe of Jacobs' claims also uncovered something new, which was not mentioned in Jacobs' letter: an undisclosed 2016 data breach and a \$100,000 payout to a hacker in Florida. This discovery led to Uber firing Sullivan and legal deputy Craig Clark for failing to have the company disclose the breach to customers and regulators.

Waymo seized on the claims made by Jacobs because they explicitly mentioned that Uber had stolen Waymo trade secrets, and Waymo was already suing Uber in a federal court for theft of trade secrets. Sullivan's testimony and the Reuters interviews put into question Uber's decision to pay Jacobs a \$7.5 million settlement and offer him a consulting contract in connection with his threats to expose Uber's alleged wrongdoing.

An Uber spokesman did not comment on the implication of Sullivan's testimony, but said that Uber had already substantiated some of Jacobs' claims, although nothing related to Waymo. He added that the company is "changing the way we do business, putting integrity at the core of everything we do." A spokeswoman for Waymo declined to comment. Jacobs' attorney in the Waymo case, Martha Boersch, who did not write the 37-page letter, did not respond to requests for comment. Jacobs did not respond to a request for comment.

Attorneys for Waymo have said in court that over the nearly year-long case they have amassed a file of evidence against Uber and were ready to go to trial before the revelation of the Jacobs letter, which came days before the original trial date. —Reuters

'Emotional' robots aim to read human feelings

LAS VEGAS: The robot called Forpheus does more than play a mean game of table tennis. It can read body language to gauge its opponent's ability, and offer advice and encouragement. "It will try to understand your mood and your playing ability and predict a bit about your next shot," said Keith Kersten of Japan-based Omron Automation, which developed Forpheus to showcase its technology. "We don't sell ping pong robots but we are using Forpheus to show how technology works with people," said Kersten.

Forpheus is among several devices shown at this week's Consumer Electronics Show which highlight how robots can become more humanlike by acquiring "emotional intelligence" and empathy. Although this specialization is still emerging, the notion of robotic empathy appeared to be a strong theme at the huge gathering of technology professionals in Las Vegas. Honda, the Japanese auto giant, launched a new robotics program called Empower, Experience, Empathy including its new 3E-A18 robot which "shows compassion to humans with a variety of facial expressions," according to a statement.

Although empathy and emotional intelligence do not necessarily require a humanoid form, some robot makers have been working on form as well as function. "We're been working very hard to have an emotional robot," said Jean-Michel Mourier of French-based Blue Frog Robotics, which makes the companion and social robot called Buddy, set to be released later this year. "He has a complex brain," Mourier said at a CES event. "It will ask for a caress or it will get mad if you poke him in the eye."

Other robots such as Qihan Technology's Sanbot and SoftBank Robotics' Pepper, are being "humanized" by teaching them to read and react to people's emotional states. Pepper is "capable of interpreting a smile, a frown, your tone of voice, as well as the lexical field you use and non-verbal language such as the angle of your head," according to SoftBank.

Robot in human shoes

Developing emotional intelligence in robots is a difficult task, melding the use of computer "vision" to interpret

Forget cars, meet the self-driving suitcase

LAS VEGAS: Self-driving cars may take a while to arrive, but the self-driving suitcase is here now. Some of the technologies used in autonomous cars have been adapted in products unveiled at the 2018 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, to help travelers with the weighty problem of dealing with baggage.

The "robot suitcase" from California-based startup Travelmate can be controlled with a smartphone app and can roll alongside its owner at speeds up to 11 kilometers (6.8 miles) per hour, navigating around obstacles. "This is really a robot which follows you around," said Travelmate founder and president Maximilian Kovtun. Travelmate designed the device—which integrates elements of artificial intelligence—to roll at a pace that matches that of the user, or it can be directed with the smartphone app in the



LAS VEGAS: The Omron Forpheus robot plays table tennis against a human at CES. — AFP

objects and people and creating software that can respond accordingly. "Empathy is the goal: the robot is putting itself in the shoes of the human, and that's about as hard as it gets," said Patrick Moorhead, a technology analyst with Moor Insights & Strategy. "It's not just about technology, it's about psychology and trust."

Moorhead said this technology is still in the early stages but holds promise in some areas, noting that there is strong interest in Japan amid a lack of caretakers for the elderly population. "In some ways it can be a bit creepy if you're crying and the robot is trying to console you," he said. "If you have no friends, the next best thing is a friend robot, and introverts might feel more comfortable talking to a robot."

'Emotion chip'

One CES exhibitor offered a promise of going further than the current devices by developing an "emotion chip"

same manner as a drone.

Priced at around \$1,100, it is slated to roll out in February for the US market, and later in Europe and Japan. A competing offering from ForwardX, a Chinese startup with offices in California, is designed to be used with facial recognition, without need for a smartphone application. "It uses computer vision and a driving algorithm to have a clear path," said founder Nicholas Chee, who showed a prototype at CES. The ForwardX suitcase also has gesture control technology and can be immobilized to protect against theft. Chee said he expects the launch in mid-2018 at a price under \$1,000.

Both Travelmate and ForwardX say their devices comply with US safety regulations because their lithium-ion batteries, banned in checked luggage, can be removed. Also shown at CES was an auto-following suitcase from China-based 90FUN, which has been available in the Chinese market and is soon coming to America. It uses self-balancing technology from the personal transport maker Segway. And finally for the weariest of travelers, a luggage product called the Modobag, which lacks artificial intelligence but offers a sizeable perk instead: as a ride-on suitcase which can carry its owner along with their clothes. — AFP



LAS VEGAS: The ForwardX Robotics self-driving CX-1 suitcase is seen during the CES Unveiled event on the sidelines of CES 2018. — AFP

Health

Headbands, sensor socks and sensors: Wearable tech seeks medical inroads

Gaming, car tech been brought to medicine

LAS VEGAS: Want to manage your stress? A “neuro-feedback” headband could help. Need to be sure your elderly father is taking his medication? Attach a sensor to his sock. With virtual reality and motion-tracking sensors, the tech world is borrowing some of the gadgetry from self-driving cars, gaming and fitness applications and bringing them to medicine. The 2018 Consumer Electronics Show, a high-tech showcase this week in Las Vegas, included the latest advances in digital health, suggesting promising avenues for treatment, even if many lack full-fledged medical approval.

Tech firms are looking to cash in on a digital health industry estimated at about \$200 billion annually in areas ranging from app-based diagnoses, to pain management and telemedicine. A growing number of startups focused on the brain-capturing or “hacking” brainwaves with the goal of improving sports performance, enabling relaxation, aiding sleep, and potentially treating pain, anxiety or other ills.

“Brain technologies can help people learn and practise meditation,” said Chris Simone, founder of Interaxon, a Canadian startup which exhibited its Muse headband aimed at using “neurofeedback” to manage stress and improve athletic performance. South Korea-based Looxid Labs featured a brain-wave-monitoring headset which is now in the research phase but could be used for treatment of ailments like post-traumatic stress syndrome. “We can use these brain sensors to analyze emotions and stress level,” said Looxid’s Honggu Lee. Neurofeedback, which teaches self-control of brain functions, has been around for decades, but the arrival of low-cost sensors has made it easier to produce affordable consumer devices. While some exhibitors said their claims are backed by research, a 2016 study said long-term results were still inconclusive.

“**Tech firms are looking to cash in**”

Tracking the elderly

Some of the same sensor technology being used to help runners track performance or golfers perfect swings is now being adapted for medical applications, notably for the elderly. Sensoria Fitness, a Washington state startup which has produced wearable tech for runners and soccer players, unveiled a system to use sensors to keep track of seniors and persons in rehabilitation. By attaching sensors to socks, the system can detect if a patient is taking medication, doing exercises or is in distress.

“If a patient is in distress it affects their gait,” explained Sensoria founder Davide Vigano. France-based Helite was at CES with hip airbags designed to deploy when someone falls, protecting him or her from shattering bones. A Japanese firm, Xenoma, also aimed to help those at risk of falls, as well as people with dementia, by adapting its wearable clothing designed initially for golfers. “We track their movements and if they go too far we can find them,” said Xenoma engineer Yihan Qian. Other firms offered tools for gauging the risk of disease. Maryland-based startup RightEye announced an eye-tracking assessment in a gaming application to screen for concussions and other brain health problems, with the possibility of early detection indicators for autism and Parkinson’s disease.

Virtual reality therapy

Virtual and augmented reality developed for gaming is being adapted to therapies such as rehabilitation and pain management, potentially offering hopes for treating opioid addiction. Brennan Spiegel, research director at the Cedars-Sinai medical center in Los Angeles, told a CES conference the hospital has seen benefits of VR treatment for pain, which could help in dealing with the opioid addiction crisis ravaging the United States with



LAS VEGAS: An exhibitor (R) demonstrates the ICAROS virtual reality exercise machine at the Sands convention hall during CES 2018. — AFP

tens of thousands of deaths annually.

“Over the next three years we will be testing this to see if we can make some inroads in opioid overprescribing,” Spiegel said. Amid optimism, some medical professionals say regulations or standards are needed to manage the explosion of new medical technologies. “The consumer is going to get blindsided sooner or later

from a mobile health app that either spews its data out inappropriately or will create a harmful outcome from a clinician,” said James Mault, chief medical officer at Qualcomm Life, the digital health division of the chipmaking giant. Mault said the tech sector needs to “take ownership and leadership” in ensuring integrity of medical apps. —AFP

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What's On

Skyzone opens in Kuwait



— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

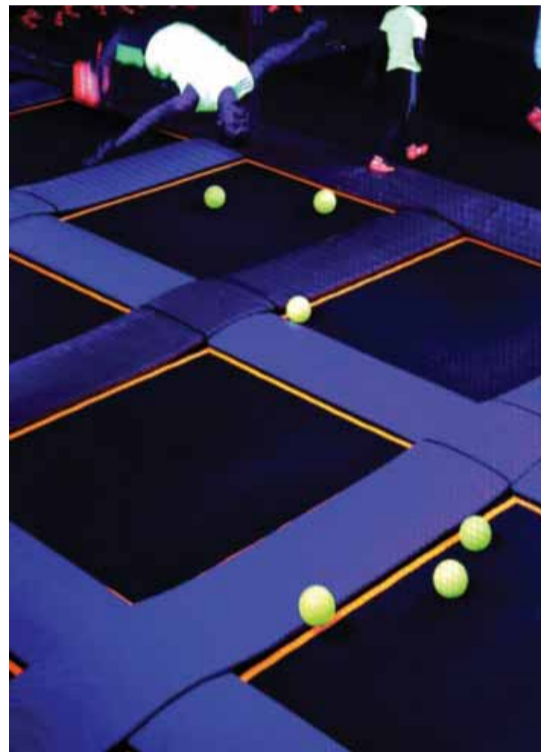
By Faten Omar

Tamdeen Entertainment project launched Skyzone in Al-Rai, Kuwait on Tuesday. Many unique trampoline activities, accompanied by glow in the dark lighting were introduced to increase the thrill of the activities. Other activities include wall climbing, Sky slam basketball, dodge ball and many more. In addition to having various developed games that suits all age groups, Skyzone offers a designated area for toddlers with high safety standards.

Skyzone is the largest trampoline park in Kuwait with high international safety standards and the ideal destination for families to enjoy a combination of fun and workout. Skyzone has three party rooms for birthdays and special events with full program and set up. It is an international franchise from US, located in more than 140 countries around the world.

Skyzone introduced the first wall to wall trampoline courts, suitable for all ages and safe at the same time. The entry fee includes all the activities. The opening event was attended by the American Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Lawrence R. Silverman who praised the work and safety standards of Skyzone.

Tamdeen Entertainment Company is a leader in the field of entertainment in Kuwait awarded with IAAPA (Best Family Entertainment Center) international award in the year 2011. Tamdeen owns many local and international brands, and Skyzone Kuwait is one of the international franchises, which was established in USA in the year 2004. The franchise's track records includes minimal injuries / accidents, with the presence of well-trained instructors and highly qualified supervisors to ensure full security and safety.



Wendy's introduces the new Pulled Range

Wendy's is celebrating the start of the New Year with the launch of the Pulled Range. Customers will have the chance to experience the new Pulled Beef, Chicken Sandwich and Pulled Fries all with a choice of four different sauces: Smokey BBQ, Spicy Chipotle, Japanese Teriyaki and Sweet Chili. These new menu items will be avail-

able starting 9th of January across all UAE and Kuwait restaurants for dine-in, drive-thru, take-away and delivery. The Pulled Beef and Chicken Sandwiches are priced at KD1,200. Customers can also enjoy the full meal option which includes fries and a soft drink priced at KD1,900, and the Pulled Fries ordered separately for KD 1,000.

Operated by Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately-owned companies in the region, Wendy's Middle East has consistently made its mark with its 'deliciously different' attitude in the F&B market. Wendy's lettuce and fresh tomatoes are locally sourced and freshly prepared daily in the restaurants. Its burgers are made of 100% Halal Australian Angus Beef and are served hot off the grill, because they don't cut corners.



Indian Embassy hosts reception to honor visiting minister Singh

Indian Ambassador K Jeeva Sagar hosted a dinner reception at the India House, Indian Embassy in honor of India's Minister of State for External Affairs Dr (Gen) V K Singh, who paid a visit to Kuwait on Thursday. Top embassy officials Raj Gopal Singh, Charge d' Affaires and Appellate Authority, K K Pahel — First Secretary, Sanjeev Saklani - Attache (Consular/Education), Sibi U S - Second Secretary (Labor), P P Narayanan-Second Secretary (Community Welfare) and Yashwant Chatpalliwar -Second Secretary (PIC) were among the others who attended the reception. The minister interacted with the Indian community members that consisted of businessmen, association representatives and media persons.



TV



- 01:25 The Blood Lands
03:00 Beyond Redemption
04:40 The Mask Of Zorro
07:05 The Legend Of Zorro
09:20 Street Fighter
11:10 Standoff
12:45 Jurassic World
14:55 Rampage: President Down
16:45 Road Wars
18:20 The Rock
20:40 Terminator Genisys
22:50 Best Seller



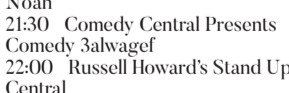
- 00:50 Untamed & Uncut
01:45 Swamp Brothers
02:13 Swamp Brothers
02:40 Swamp Brothers
03:08 Swamp Brothers
03:35 Swamp Brothers
04:00 Swamp Brothers
04:25 Swamp Brothers
04:50 Swamp Brothers
05:15 Swamp Brothers
05:39 Swamp Brothers
06:02 Bad Dog
06:49 Biggest And Baddest
07:36 Night
08:00 Night
08:25 Whale Wars
09:15 Wildest Indochina
10:10 Wildest Indochina
10:45 Wildest Indochina
12:00 Wildest Indochina
12:55 Wildest Indochina
13:50 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
14:45 Keeping Up With The Kruger
15:40 The Lion Queen
16:35 Swamp Brothers
17:03 Swamp Brothers
17:30 Swamp Brothers
17:58 Swamp Brothers
18:25 Swamp Brothers
18:53 Swamp Brothers
19:20 Shark Feeding Frenzy
20:15 Shark After Dark
21:10 Man-Eating Super Croc
22:05 Man-Eating Super Snake
23:00 Man-Eating Super Squid
23:55 Untamed & Uncut



- 00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Homicide Hunter
02:00 My Haunted House
03:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
04:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
05:00 Homicide Hunter
06:00 Homicide Hunter
07:00 The First 48
08:00 The First 48
09:00 Live Pd: Police Patrol
09:30 Live Pd: Police Patrol
10:00 Live Pd: Police Patrol
10:30 Live Pd: Police Patrol
11:00 It Takes A Killer
11:30 It Takes A Killer
12:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
13:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
14:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
15:00 Cold Case Files
16:00 Cold Case Files
17:00 Homicide Hunter
18:00 Cold Case Files
19:00 The Eleven
20:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
21:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
22:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
23:00 Measuring Evil: Britain's Worst Killers



- 00:05 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
00:55 Lip Sync Battle UK
01:20 Lip Sync Battle UK
01:45 Broad City
02:10 Tosh.0
02:35 Tosh.0
03:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
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 Lip Sync Battle
07:15 Lip Sync Battle
07:40 The Jim Gaffigan Show
08:05 Impractical Jokers
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Kroll Show
09:45 Key And Peele
10:10 Important Things With Demetri Martin
10:35 The Jim Gaffigan Show
11:00 Impractical Jokers
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Impractical Jokers
12:40 Friendszone
13:05 Friendszone
13:20 Important Things With Demetri Martin
13:55 Friends
14:15 Friends
14:40 Friends
14:55 Friends
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 Lip Sync Battle
19:00 Lip Sync Battle
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 Comedy Central Presents
22:00 Russell Howard's Stand Up Central
22:25 The Half Hour
22:50 The Half Hour
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



- 00:30 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
01:20 Bahama Blue
02:10 Bahama Blue
03:00 Bahama Blue
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 Serious Explorers
07:25 Serious Explorers
07:50 Serious Explorers
08:15 Serious Explorers
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 How It's Made
09:55 How It's Made
10:20 How It's Made
10:45 How It's Made
11:10 How It's Made
11:35 How It's Made
12:00 How It's Made
12:25 How It's Made
12:50 Tanked
13:40 Tanked
14:30 Tanked
15:20 Tanked
16:10 Tanked
17:00 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?



- 00:50 The Murder Castle
01:45 A Haunting
02:40 The Murder Castle
03:35 The Murder Castle
04:30 The Murder Castle
05:25 Village Of The Damned
06:20 Murder By Numbers
07:10 Forbidden: Dying For Love
08:00 California Investigator
08:25 On The Case With Paula Zahn
09:15 On The Case With Paula Zahn
10:10 On The Case With Paula Zahn
11:05 On The Case With Paula Zahn
12:00 On The Case With Paula Zahn
12:55 I Almost Got Away With It
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 I Almost Got Away With It
15:40 I Almost Got Away With It
16:35 I Almost Got Away With It
17:30 Betrayed
18:25 Betrayed
19:20 Lauryn Is Lost: A Disappeared Special
20:15 Lone Star Mystery: A Disappeared Special
21:10 Grave Secrets
22:05 Who Killed Jane Doe?
23:00 Casey Anthony: Killer Mom?
23:55 Village Of The Damned



- 00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:20 Hank Zipzer
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:10 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

- 06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
07:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
07:50 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
08:55 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 Pixel Perfect
11:25 The Zucchini
11:40 Austin & Ally
12:05 That's So Raven
12:30 That's So Raven
12:55 Frozen: Magic Of The Northern Lights
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 Cookbook
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
20:15 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
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
00:30 Vampirina
01:00 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
04:30 Loopdidoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack

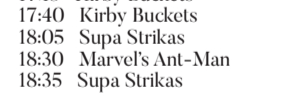
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopdidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 PJ Masks
08:00 P-King Duckling
08:25 Puppy Dog Pals
08:50 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:15 Goldie & Bear
09:30 Doc McStuffins
10:00 PJ Masks
10:30 Sofia The First
11:00 Vampirina
11:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
12:00 The Lion Guard
12:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
12:55 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
13:20 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
13:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
14:10 Vampirina
14:35 Vampirina
15:00 Vampirina
15:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
15:55 Goldie & Bear
16:20 Doc McStuffins
16:50 Vampirina
17:15 Puppy Dog Pals
17:40 The Lion Guard
18:10 The Lion Guard
18:35 Sofia The First
19:00 Sofia The First
19:30 Vampirina
20:00 PJ Masks
20:20 P-King Duckling
20:45 The Lion Guard
21:15 Goldie & Bear
21:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
22:00 Doc McStuffins
22:30 PJ Masks
23:45 PJ Masks



- 00:15 X-Ray Mega Airport
01:05 Abandoned Engineering
01:50 Yukon Men
02:35 Yukon Men
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
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 Alaska: The Last Frontier
08:20 Extreme Collectors
08:45 Container Wars
09:10 Deadliest Catch
09:55 Strip The City
10:45 Deadliest Job Interview
11:30 Ed Stafford: Left For Dead
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 Strip The City
16:15 Deadliest Job Interview
17:05 Ed Stafford: Left For Dead
17:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
18:40 Deadliest Catch
19:25 Yukon Men
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Diesel Brothers
21:50 Supertruckers
22:40 Fast N' Loud
23:30 Alaska: The Last Frontier



- 06:00 Disney11
06:45 Supa Strikas
06:50 Guardians Of The Galaxy
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Walk The Prank
08:10 Phineas 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 Life Is Ruff
13:45 Phineas And Ferb
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Phineas 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 Mighty Med
16:50 Mighty Med
17:15 Kirby Buckets
17:40 Kirby Buckets
18:30 Supa Strikas
18:35 Marvel's Ant-Man
18:35 Supa Strikas
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
22:40 Lab Rats
22:40 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



- 00:45 Sara's Australia Unveiled
00:45 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
01:40 Croatia's Finest
01:40 Eat Street
02:05 Eat Street
02:35 The Food Files
03:00 The Food Files
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16:20 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
16:45 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
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18:10 City Chase Marrakech
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20:00 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
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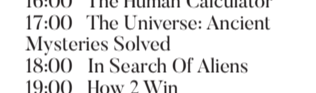
- Basics
15:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
16:00 The Pioneer Woman
16:30 The Pioneer Woman
17:00 Siba's Table
17:30 Siba's Table
18:00 Bake With Anna Olson
18:30 Bake With Anna Olson
19:00 Man Fire Food
19:30 Man Fire Food
20:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
20:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
21:00 Tia Mowry At Home
21:30 Tia Mowry At Home
22:00 The Big Eat - Middle East
22:30 The Big Eat - Middle East
23:00 Chopped



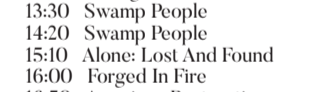
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00:35 Coronation Street
01:00 Big Star's Little Star
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Coronation Street
03:00 Coronation Street
03:30 Coronation Street
03:55 5 Star Family Reunion
04:40 Vera
06:15 The Voice UK 2018
07:40 Catchphrase
08:30 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
09:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
09:30 Royal Stories
09:55 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
11:00 Vera
12:45 The Voice UK 2018
14:00 The Voice UK 2018
15:25 Catchphrase
16:15 Cash Trapped
17:15 Cash Trapped
18:10 Martin Clunes & A Lion Called Mugie
19:00 The Voice UK 2018
20:30 Vera
22:15 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
23:20 Big Star's Little Star



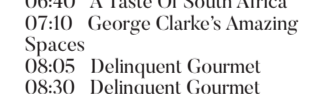
- 00:00 Ancient Discoveries
01:00 The Colour Of War
02:00 Bible Secrets Revealed
03:00 Ancient Aliens
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 Ancient Discoveries
05:30 Ancient Aliens
06:20 Bible Secrets Revealed
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Ancient Impossible
09:00 Ancient Impossible
10:00 The Human Calculator
11:00 The Human Calculator
12:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
13:00 Ancient Impossible
14:00 Ancient Impossible
15:00 The Human Calculator
16:00 The Human Calculator
17:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
18:00 In Search Of Aliens
19:00 How 2 Win
20:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
21:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
22:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
23:00 Ancient Top 10



- 00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
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09:48 Henry Danger
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- 00:14 Shimmer And Shine
00:38 Shimmer And Shine
01:00 Max & Ruby
01:23 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:34 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:45 The Day Henry Met
01:50 The Day Henry Met
02:51 The Day Henry Met
02:51 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:23 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:45 Team Umizoomi
03:08 Team Umizoomi
03:30 Paw Patrol
03:54 Paw Patrol
04:19 Shimmer And Shine
04:41 Shimmer And Shine
05:04 Nella The Princess Knight
05:26 Nella The Princess Knight
05:49 Rusty Rivets
06:13 Rusty Rivets
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
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08:17 Kid-E-Cats

- 21:00 The Food Files
21:30 The Food Files
22:00 Eat Street
22:25 Eat Street
22:55 Eat Street
23:20 Eat Street
23:50 A Taste Of South Africa



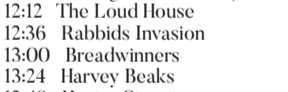
- 00:10 Crash Science
01:00 Yukon Gold
02:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
03:00 Fish Tank Kings
04:00 Titanic: The Final Word
05:00 Kung Fu Motion
06:00 Lowest Island Alaska
07:00 Ghost Town Gold
08:00 Comet Catcher: The Rosetta Landing
09:00 Explorer XL
10:00 To Catch A Smuggler
11:00 Drain Alcatraz
12:00 Seconds From Disaster
13:00 Dog Whisperer
14:00 Dog Whisperer
15:00 Yukon Gold
16:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
17:00 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
18:00 The 90s: The Decade That Connected Us
20:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
20:50 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
21:40 The 90s: The Decade That Connected Us
23:20 Brave New World



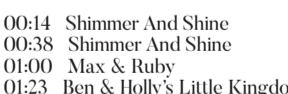
- 00:20 Mission Critical: Animal Avengers
01:10 Animal ER
02:00 My Dog Ate What?
02:50 Ultimate Predator
03:45 Man V. Monster
04:40 Urban Jungle
05:35 Battle Of The Swamp Dragons
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 Monster Fish
08:20 Secret Life Of Predators -2016
09:15 Search For King Cobra
10:10 Animal ER
11:05 Safari Brothers
12:00 World's Weirdest
12:55 My Dog Ate What?
13:50 Jobs That Bite!
14:45 Man V. Monster
15:40 Urban Jungle
16:35 Extreme Animal Babies
17:30 Monster Fish
18:25 Wild Scotland S2 Compilations
19:20 Man V. Monster
20:10 Urban Jungle
21:00 Extreme Animal Babies
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22:40 Wild Scotland S2 Compilations
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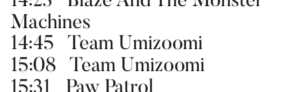


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08:00 Nella The Princess Knight
08:12 Kid-E-Cats
08:17 Kid-E-Cats

- 08:21 Bubble Guppies
08:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:06 Shimmer And Shine
09:51 Nella The Princess Knight
10:14 The Day Henry Met
10:19 Paw Patrol
10:43 Rusty Rivets
10:54 Rusty Rivets
11:05 Wallykazam!
11:28 Bubble Guppies
11:51 Team Umizoomi
12:15 Shimmer And Shine
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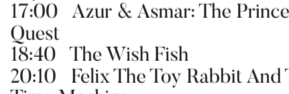
- 01:05 Molly Moon And The Incredible Book Of Hypnotism
02:45 Storm Rider
04:30 We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story
05:50 A Simple Wish
07:25 Molly Moon And The Incredible Book Of Hypnotism
09:05 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
10:50 Storm Rider
12:35 Shelby: The Dog Who Saved Christmas
14:10 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked
15:40 Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip
17:15 Mostly Ghostly: One Night In Doom House
18:45 Get Santa
20:30 Shelby: The Dog Who Saved Christmas
22:05 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked
23:35 Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip



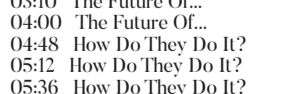
- 01:45 Rush
03:45 Dead Poets Society
06:00 Coming Through The Rye
07:45 The Age Of Innocence
10:10 New York Stories
12:15 Coming Through The Rye
13:55 Dead Poets Society
16:10 Fort McCoys
18:00 Goal!
20:05 The Beat Beneath My Feet
21:50 Meadowland
23:35 A Late Quartet



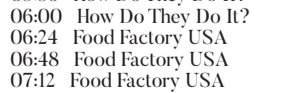
- 00:30 An American Tail: Fievel Goes West
02:00 Rh+ The Vampire Of Seville
03:30 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
04:50 Funny Little Cars
06:00 Micropols
07:30 The Apple & The Worm
08:55 Dinofroz Return To The Past World
10:30 The Wish Fish
12:00 Simba The King Lion
14:10 Rh+ The Vampire Of Seville
15:40 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
17:00 Azur & Asmar: The Prince's Quest
18:40 The Wish Fish
20:10 Felix The Toy Rabbit And The Time Machine
21:40 Scooby-Doo! And WWE: Curse Of Speedy Demon
23:10 Azur & Asmar: The Prince's Quest



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- 01:25 Alfie
03:15 East & Furious 7
05:35 We Bought A Zoo
07:40 Everest
09:45 The Man Who Wasn't There
11:45 Janis Jones
13:35 East & Furious 7
15:55 B Going On 30
17:35 Rocky
19:35 The Count Of Monte Cristo
21:45 Cocktail
23:30 This Boy's Life

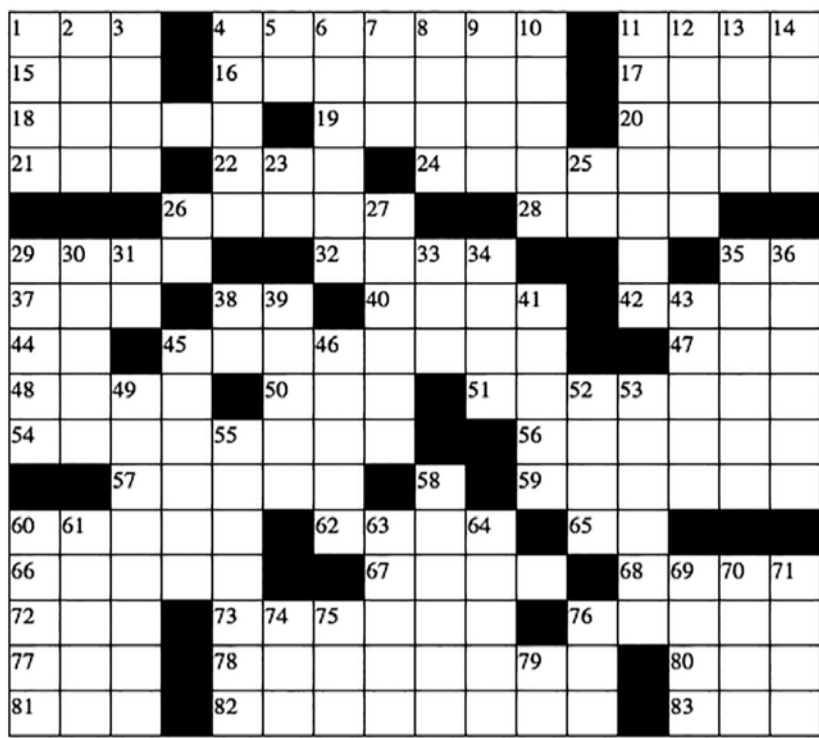


- 00:40 The Future Of...
01:30 The Future Of...
02:20 The Future Of...
03:10 The Future Of...
04:00 The Future Of...
04:48 How Do They Do It?
05:12 How Do They Do It?
05:36 How Do They Do It?
06:00 How Do They Do It?
06:24 Food Factory USA
06:48 Food Factory USA
07:12 Food Factory USA
07:36 Food Factory USA
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 The Future Of...
09:14 The Future Of...
10:02 The Future Of...
10:50 The Future Of...
11:38 The Future Of...

- 12:26 Mythbusters
13:14 Mythbusters
14:02 Mythbusters
14:5

Stars

CROSSWORD 1808



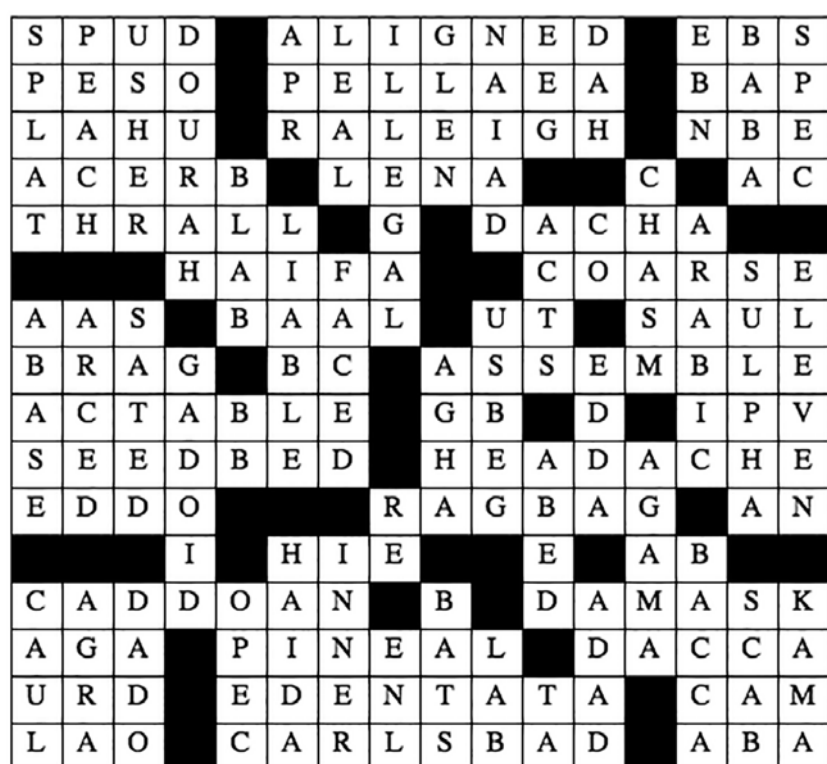
ACROSS

1. A light touch or stroke.
4. Aimlessly drifting.
11. In a murderous frenzy as if possessed by a demon.
15. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
16. A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
17. Decrease gradually or bit by bit.
18. Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus *Draba* having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
19. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
20. An edge tool used to cut and shape wood.
21. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
22. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
24. The process of exposing to air (so as to purify).
28. English essayist (1775-1834).
29. Any loose flowing garment.
32. A monocotyledonous genus of the family Iridaceae.
37. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
40. A South American shrub whose leaves are chewed by natives of the Andes.
42. The persistence of a sound after its source has stopped.
44. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
47. Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
48. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
50. An overwhelming feeling of wonder or admiration.
51. (British) Liable to payment of rates or taxes.
54. Presumed to be true in the absence of proof to the contrary.
56. Small tree of dry open parts of southern Africa having erect angled branches suggesting candelabra.
57. In or of a state of physical or nervous tension.
59. English novelist noted for her insightful portrayals of middle-class families (1775-1817).
60. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
62. Greenish-yellow pear.
65. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.
66. An island consisting of a circular coral reef surrounding a lagoon.
67. A major god.
68. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
72. The month following February and preceding April.
73. In a state of sleep.
77. Thickening of tissue in the motor tracts of the lateral columns and anterior horns of the spinal cord.
78. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
80. Of or relating to a member of the Buddhist people inhabiting the Mekong river in Laos and Thailand.
81. The seed of the cereal grass.
82. Low stinging nettle of Central and South America having velvety brownish-green toothed leaves and clusters of small green flowers.
83. A doctor's degree in theology.

DOWN

1. An informal term for a father.
2. An association of people to promote the welfare of senior citizens.
3. (Scotland) A slope or hillside.
4. Jordan's port.
5. Not out.
6. Aristocratic Italian family of powerful merchants and bankers who ruled Florence in the 15th century.
7. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
8. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
9. A reason for wanting something done.
10. Something (often something deceptively attractive) that catches you unawares.
11. A common complex mineral consisting of calcium fluoride phosphate or calcium chloride phosphate.
12. Genus of sticky herbs with yellow flowers open in morning or evening but closed in bright light.
13. Pasta shaped like pearls of barley.
14. Having or demonstrating ability to recognize or draw fine distinctions.
23. An associate degree in nursing.
25. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
26. A Mid-Atlantic state.
27. Go beyond.
30. An annual award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for achievements in motion picture production and performance.
31. A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
33. An electrically charged particle.
34. Type genus of the Aceraceae.
35. The largest Chilean island and the only one to be settled.
36. Dignified and somber in manner or character and committed to keeping promises.
38. A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.
39. American Revolutionary patriot.
41. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
43. Son of John Cabot who was born in Italy and who led an English expedition in search of the Northwest Passage and a Spanish expedition that explored the La Plata region of Brazil.
45. Seal again.
46. A person of unquestioning obedience.
49. (biology) Bent or curved backward or downward.
52. Pulled or drawn tight.
53. A descent down a nearly vertical surface by using a doubled rope that is coiled around the body and attached to some higher point.
55. Release from a clasp.
58. The condition of being honored (esteemed or respected or well regarded).
61. A republic in southern Europe on the Italian Peninsula.
63. A drama set to music.
64. An island (part of Campania) in the Bay of Naples in southern Italy.
69. A milkshake made with malt powder.
70. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
71. A characteristic (habitual or relatively temporary) state of feeling.
74. A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
75. A local computer network for communication between computers.
76. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
79. Being nine more than ninety.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you may need to figure out how to navigate sensitive personalities in the workplace in order to manage a successful project. Your intuition and drive will lead you straight to the answers that will work for everyone. A superior could have opposing opinions as you enter into a quick meeting; your silence could be golden in this situation. While you may not agree with someone's methods, you will see the positive results they achieved. Take a snack break this afternoon and clear your mind. Someone could invite you for dinner this evening. Consider escaping into a good fictional or biographical read before retiring tonight. You will discover a unique method of working with others that will surprise even you, aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, you will have no choice but to step into the role of leadership. You are able to get your thoughts and plans through to others with ease. You will be seen as progressive, productive and in charge. Your urge to watch your health and vitality will pay off richly; you feel this as you rise to any occasion that could materialize today. The abilities you were born with are sharp and right on: superiors will take notice of your focus and dynamic efforts. You are beginning to become aware of the changes in yourself you have worked so hard to make happen. A friend from long ago will call or stop by; this could mean planning for a class reunion or other get together. Tonight do anything that improves your state of mind and sense of being recharged, taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, now is the time for evaluations and resolutions at home and work. The stars are aligned for explaining your goals and how to achieve them; words come easily to you now. You may find yourself on a lucky streak! Entering a new year gives you the chance for a clean slate; fill it with your progressive ideas and productive energy. Try not to become overconfident and take on more than you should. Your attitude is good and you have every chance to accomplish what you set out to do this year. Someone could create a few short-term delays for you with regard to money, so get into the habit of saving and you will be better off than last year. Remain grounded and positive; you will share good times with those you love tonight, gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, you could have a confrontation with an elder or authoritative figure regarding something they strongly think you should do. You could feel trapped and unappreciated for your views or morals. Slaying quiet today will serve you well when you encounter someone irritating; perhaps in a group setting. Your practical approach to things will be treasured when you help someone avoid a serious pitfall. Your diplomatic side comes to the fore at the perfect time: an elder could question your choices and attitudes as they have done for a long time. A timeout this weekend may be just what the universe has ordered: a soothing massage, a fun weekend trip and good company are strongly indicated for this time, so smile and enjoy, cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, your mind will be full of new ideas and strategies. This is an open window for your thoughts to be told in such a manner that people understand. There is a lot of energy and drive available for whatever you want to do—not just today, but all year. Something going on near where you live will cause you some upset. You may decide a new community or area is in order! Too many thoughts running through your head could kick you off track; focus, focus, focus! If you are thinking of a new job, now could be the perfect time. You are at your most attractive and you will hold the attention of someone new; this could mean work or personal. Later tonight you will be invited out where you will seek the limelight, your favorite place, leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, the new year brings exciting opportunities and good fortune. You could come to see that obstacles and set backs are actually teachers of truth and survival. You are most comfortable with simplicity and down to earth morals without any polished up versions. You are not in the mood for new theories or futuristic type musings. Perhaps instead of a good book or Hollywood production you should stick to sewing, gardening, sports or cooking. Something will come up today that represents a major slowdown of some progress you were making; this is temporary just hang in there. Slow down for a bit and take stock of what lies at the reason for your dissatisfaction. Focus on the positives in your life and those who encourage and love you, virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, the new directions you are going may cause someone to object; there are those who cannot accept change. You will have a strong desire to attend a party given by someone controversial; be careful here as trouble could lurk around the corner. You could be disappointed with a younger person you counseled a while back that has gotten in trouble or caused some serious problems. Let experience guide you to the right project or volunteer opportunity. There is talk of theories and their possible meanings this evening. A problem that has gone unchecked will manifest in an important assignment this afternoon. You will see where you went wrong in time to change plans using the same strategy. You could enjoy having dinner with old friends, libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, your passions may run high today; you will speak with conviction and confidence regarding something you truly believe in. Your mind is set on certain goals and there will be no backing down once you commit. Try not to let jealousy creep into what is fast becoming a long term relationship or perhaps you are uncomfortable with someone paying attention to your mate. Someone could make an off the cuff comment meaning no harm but causing a misunderstanding; remember, we all make mistakes and put our foot in our mouth! You could have a tendency to separate yourself from the crowd and self-analyze. Remember to take care of some domestic chore this evening you have put off, then enjoy a good snack watching t.v., scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, your chart indicates a new cycle that brings fresh awareness to first impressions and making a special effort with your appearance. Your work ethic is strong, and you will want that to be clearly seen now. You are not as concerned with the real meaning of things, just more about how they look. There are opportunities today to use your imagination to improve your living environment or beautify your surroundings. You could overhear a new acquaintance say in describing you, personality plus. You have a good chance to check everything off your to do list and then some. Follow your heart and indulge in a play, movie or new popular book. Put your feet up and relax with a nice warm cup of something and enjoy some peace, sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, your best qualities will sparkle as you go through your daily tasks, especially among friends. This is a perfect time to take a look at yourself, positive and negative, and your choices. Are you happy with your life? You make the same decision; think carefully because you are very near a turn of events that could make a complete change of direction for an important part of your life. Pay attention to the energy flow directed to your home life; you want change and the time could be now. Look forward, not back; what is past is passed and you should let it remain there. Trust yourself, you know what's right. Tonight will be nice when you share it with someone dear, capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Aquarius, you meet someone you would like to know more about; you may find yourself wondering about them and thinking you would like to know more. Your heart and mind will feel more grounded by spending more time with family and close friends. You go to great lengths to let someone know how you feel. The stars are aligned for speaking to large groups and audiences. Your life is going where you want it, the way you want it; let the universe know you are grateful! Someone will praise your accomplishments and choices. You will have an important realization a bit later today. You will realize how to make one of theories work in the real world; innovation and common sense is likely to come together and produce, aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, someone will give you advice on travel or income and it would be worth your time to listen; this could be fun, rewarding and educational. You will need to create new files and start new lists regarding keep up with funding. You may feel that you are going to clear up an old misunderstanding, however your sharp tongue and resentment could make things much, much worse; bite your tongue you are not the one who has been wronged. Keep your emotions in check, you have been put in a bad position. You could know for sure that you have made the correct career move. Along with dinner prepare a cheerful environment for your meal. It is best not to discuss sticky situations until a better time arrives; instead enjoy the evening, pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Hawaii

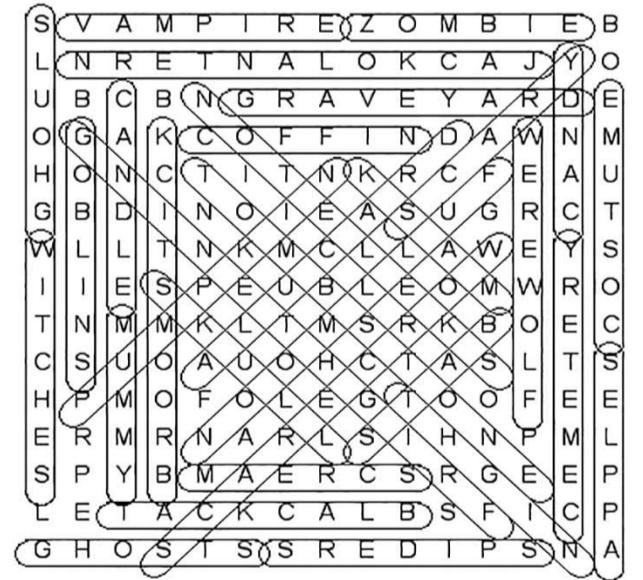
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 48 letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| ALOHA | KAHOLAWE | NIIHAU | SUGARCANE |
| ARCHIPELAGO | KAUAI | NORTH SHORE | SURFING |
| BEACHES | KAYAKING | OAHU | TOURISTS |
| CANOEING | KONA COAST | PACIFIC OCEAN | TROPICAL |
| COFFEE | LANA'I | PEARL HARBOR | UKULELE |
| GRASS SKIRT | LIJAU | PINEAPPLES | VACATION |
| HAWAIIAN | MACADAMIA NUTS | RESORTS | VOLCANOES |
| HONOLULU | MANTA RAYS | SAND | WAIKIKI |
| HULA | MAUI | SCUBA DIVING | WAIHEA BAY |
| HUMPBACK WHALES | MOLOKAI | SNORKELING | WARM |
| ISLANDS | NAPALI COAST | STATE | WHALE WATCHING |

Friday's Solution

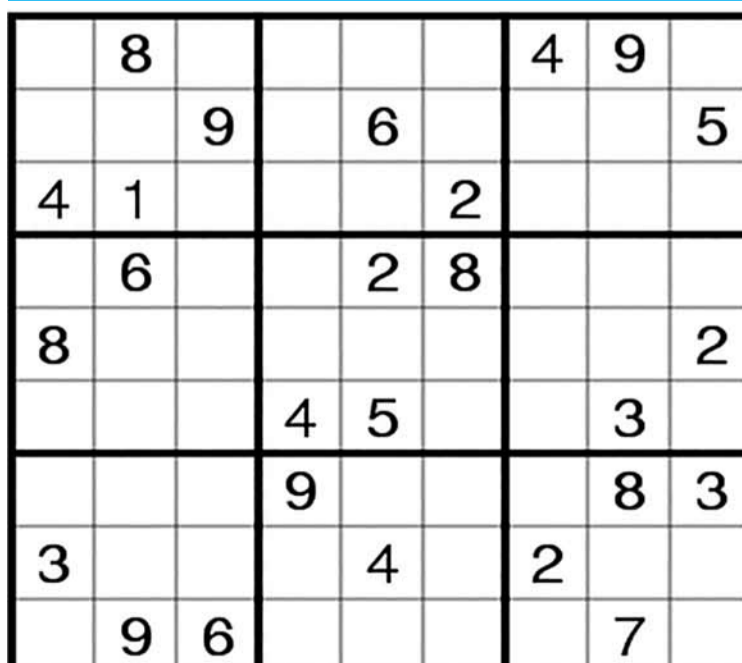
Halloween



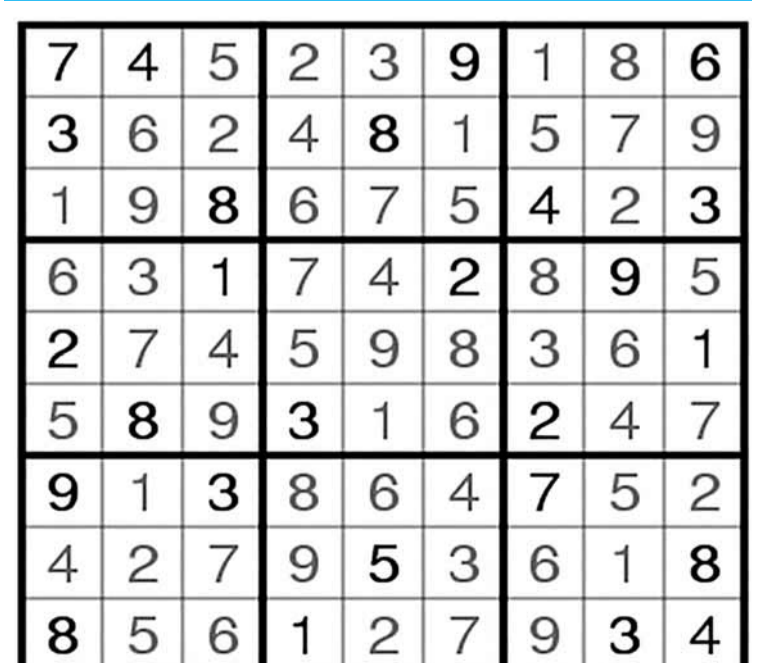
- | | | | |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|
| APPLES | COSTUME | JACK O LANTERN | SKELETON |
| BATS | DRACULA | MASK | SKULL |
| BLACK CAT | FRIGHTENING | MUMMY | SPIDERS |
| BROOMSTICK | FULL MOON | NIGHT | TOMBSTONE |
| CANDLE | GHOSTS | PUMPKIN | VAMPIRE |
| CANDY | GHOULS | SCARECROW | WEREWOLF |
| CEMETERY | GOBLINS | SCARY | WITCHES |
| COFFIN | GRAVEYARD | SCREAM | ZOMBIE |

The hidden message is: BOBBING FOR APPLES

Daily SuDoku



Friday's Solution



Classifieds

Sunday, January 14, 2018

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

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate south easterly wind to variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY DAY: Warm with light to moderate variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 13/01/2018 1200 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	22 °C	13 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	25 °C	07 °C		
ABDALY	25 °C	05 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	24 °C	08 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	22 °C	11 °C		
SALMIYAH	18 °C	14 °C		
AHMADI	19 °C	15 °C		
NUWAISSIB	23 °C	10 °C		
WAFRA	28 °C	07 °C		
SALMY	25 °C	06 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	01/14	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	27 °C	07 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Monday	01/15	Warm	24 °C	08 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Tuesday	01/16	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	22 °C	06 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	01/17	Partly cloudy	20 °C	05 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 24 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:20
Sunrise	06:44
Zuhr	11:57
Asr	14:51
Sunset	17:11
Isha	18:32

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	03 °C
MAX. RH	89 %
MIN. RH	14 %
MAX. Wind	S 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Airline

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Maria Angelina Anju Saldanha w/o Lancy D Souza holder of Indian Passport No. M4639675, hereby declare that I have changed my name to Maria Angelina Saldanha. Hereafter, at all times in all records and dealings and documents. (C 5374) 14-1-2018

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088

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

Flight Schedule

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 14/1/2018					Departure Flights on Sunday 14/1/2018				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AXB 393	Kozhikode	13:15			
JZR	125	Bahrain	00:10	KAC 792	Madinah	13:20			
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KAC 774	Riyadh	13:40			
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	PAL 668	Manila	14:00			
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC 204	Lahore	14:10			
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	KAC 692	Muscat	14:15			
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC 618	Doha	14:15			
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC 516	Tehran	14:20			
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	FDB 059	Dubai	14:20			
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	QTR 1078	Doha	14:20			
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	KAC 672	Dubai	14:25			
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	GFA 221	Bahrain	14:40			
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	SVA 500	Jeddah	14:45			
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	KAC 304	Mumbai	14:50			
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KNE 529	Jeddah	14:55			
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC 788	Jeddah	15:10			
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC 303	Abu Dhabi	15:15			
WAN	548	KTM	02:40	JZR 787	Riyadh	15:30			
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC 562	Amman	15:30			
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KAC 502	Beirut	15:30			
KAC	414	Bangkok	03:05	OMA 645	Muscat	15:35			
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:05	FEG 937	Sohag	15:45			
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	UAE 857	Dubai	15:45			
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	QTR 1072	Doha	15:55			
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	JZR 535	Cairo	16:00			
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC 118	New York	16:00			
QTR	1090	Doha	04:05	ABY 127	Sharjah	16:00			
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	JZR 779	Jeddah	16:25			
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	FDB 051	Dubai	16:40			
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	RJA 640	Amman	16:55			
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	KAC 542	Cairo	17:05			
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	SVA 510	Riyadh	17:15			
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	GFA 215	Bahrain	17:30			
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05	JZR 125	Bahrain	17:35			
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR 777	Jeddah	17:40			
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	WAN 984	Tbilisi	17:50			
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	UAE 875	Dubai	18:00			
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	FDB 063	Dubai	18:10			
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR 483	Istanbul	18:15			
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	JZR 177	Dubai	18:15			
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	MSR 620	Cairo	18:30			
KAC	678	Dubai	06:00	QTR 1080	Doha	18:50			
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC 744	Dammam	19:10			
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	KAC 776	Riyadh	19:20			
QTR	8511	Doha	06:25	ABY 123	Sharjah	19:25			
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	RBG 555	Alexandria	19:25			
BAW	157	London	07:10	GFA 217	Bahrain	19:30			
FEG	933	Sohag	07:30	KAC 156	Istanbul	19:30			
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC 674	Dubai	19:45			
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	KAC 057	Dubai	19:50			
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC 616	Bahrain	19:55			
JZR	557	Alexandria	08:15	KAC 104	London	20:00			
JZR	1541	Cairo	08:20	KAC 620	Doha	20:15			
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC 166	Rome	20:20			
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	OMA 647	Muscat	20:20			
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	DLH 624	Frankfurt	20:45			
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:10	QTR 1088	Doha	20:45			
QTR	1070	Doha	09:15	WAN 136	Doha	21:15			
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ALK 229	Colombo	21:20			
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	MEA 402	Beirut	21:20			
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ETD 307	Abu Dhabi	21:20			
WAN	342	Sohag	10:15	KAC 786	Jeddah	21:25			
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC 172	Frankfurt	21:30			
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	UAE 859	Dubai	21:35			
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	KAC 676	Dubai	21:40			
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	GFA 219	Bahrain	21:45			
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KLM 445	Amsterdam	21:50			
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	KAC 564	Amman	22:00			
MEA	404	Beirut	12:10	QTR 1082	Doha	22:05			
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	ETD 309	Abu Dhabi	22:15			
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	AIC 981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25			
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	JZR 241	Amman	22:40			
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JZR 185	Dubai	23:10			
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	JAI 574	Mumbai	23:15			
				BBC 043	Dhaka	23:30			
				PIA 205	Lahore	23:40			
				FDB 071	Dubai	23:45			



Ed Sheeran hints he'll do 'what he wants' on next record

Ed Sheeran has hinted that he could be self-indulgent on his fourth record. The 'Shape of You' singer is already reading his follow-up to last year's record-breaking LP 'Divide' and says he could probably "get away" with releasing whatever he likes. He said: "I'm just excited for the next album now. "It's mad having three back-to-back that kind of have this much success. "It's mad now you can kind of get away with doing what you want musically." The 26-year-old star said that if he was to drop a "random" off-the-cuff record, he'd do a collection of "traditional folk" tracks. He told The Sun newspaper: "like Sir Rod Stewart that album of swing covers - you can just do stuff like that and it wouldn't surprise me. "Or Lady Gaga doing that brilliant thing with Tony Bennett "I'm not saying I am doing a swing album. "If I was gonna do a random one I'd do traditional folk songs. "But I think that's probably like, 10 years away." Meanwhile, Ed recently revealed he wrote a James Bond theme three years ago "just in case". The 'Castle on the Hill' hitmaker has never been approached to write a song for one of the iconic movies, but if bosses of the spy saga do ever knock at his door for help on the soundtrack, he's all ready to go. He said: "With Bond, I've had a theme tune written for about three years, just in case!" And the flame-haired star admitted his recent collaboration with Eminem, 'River', was also something he had had ready for some time. He said: "I just recently did a song with one of my all-time heroes, Eminem and when we did the song together I had already had this song. It's the same with Bond. If ever I am called, I will be like, 'Here you go.'



Ora throws shade at Jay-Z on new song Soul Survivor

Rita Ora has channeled her frustration towards her former record label boss Jay-Z into new song 'Soul Survivor'. The 'Anywhere' singer has called out the Roc-A-Fella label owner on the track, which features on her second studio LP - the follow-up 2012's 'Ora' - and anyone else who didn't believe in her at the very start of her career. The 27-year-old pop star settled a bitter six-month legal battle with the label in June 2016. She was being sued for \$2.4 million by the '99 Problems' rapper's company because they believed she had breached the terms of her contract. However, the lawsuit was settled and the blonde beauty signed with Atlantic Records. Speaking about the track, she said: "It's all based on what people stopped me from doing a few years ago to where I am now. "It's almost like a rebirth of the new Rita. "It's a nice final goodbye to everyone who didn't believe in me from the start." The 'Body On Me' hitmaker - who recently dropped a soundtrack for the 'Fifty Shades Freed' movie with Liam Payne called 'For You' - says that the record tells it like it is, and is not all doom and gloom. She told the Daily Star newspaper: "It tells a consistent story. "I thought about it a lot and I just wanted people to feel like they were on a journey with me, so I am really proud of it. "This album is really calm and it has really calm messages, it just is what it is." Meanwhile, the former 'X Factor' judge has revealed she has been receiving support from fellow Brit star Sam Smith. Speaking about the 'Too Good At Goodbyes' hitmaker's words of encouragement, she said: "I was speaking to Sam Smith the other day and he said to me, 'You've got one of the best voices and I'm so happy for you.' "And it was nice to get that support from other artists you know, them saying that we know you are in a really good, confidence music groove."

McGraw and Hill song hit with copyright lawsuit



Tim McGraw and Faith Hill's song which Ed Sheeran co-wrote has been hit with a copyright lawsuit. 'The Rest Of Our Life', which was a huge hit around the world last year, could cost everyone involved \$5 million in damages after Australian musicians Sean Carey and Beau Golden have alleged that the track is a rip off of their song 'When I Found You', which they penned for Jasmine Rae in 2014. Also listed in the legal documents are Ed's co-writing team - Johnny McDaid, Steve Mac and Amy Wadge. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the suit states: "The copying is, in many instances, verbatim, note-for-note copying of original elements of the Song, and is obvious to the ordinary observer." It will be the second time Ed faces lawyer, Richard Busch, who is representing the pair. The chart-topping singer was sued by songwriters Thomas Leonard and Martin Harrington in June 2016, with the duo claiming Ed's hit single 'Photograph' had a strikingly similar structure to their track 'Amazing', which was released by Matt Cardle in 2012. The songwriters argued in court that the tracks shared 39 identical notes, with similarities "instantly recognizable to the ordinary observer". However, papers were filed dismissing the case with prejudice, with a California federal court reportedly enforcing the terms of the settlement. However, Busch had refused to comment on the precise terms of the agreement. Last year, Matt took to Twitter to clarify he was not involved in the lawsuit and to express his admiration for Ed, saying the 26-year-old star was a musical "genius". Matt, who was the UK 'X Factor' winner in 2010, wrote: "Please read news articles closely. This is not my lawsuit. I think Ed Sheeran is a genius and 100 percent deserves all his success." Meanwhile, in 2015, Robin Thicke and Pharrell Williams were ordered to pay \$7.3 million in copyright infringement due to similarities between their number one single 'Blurred Lines' and Gaye's 'Got To Give It Up'.

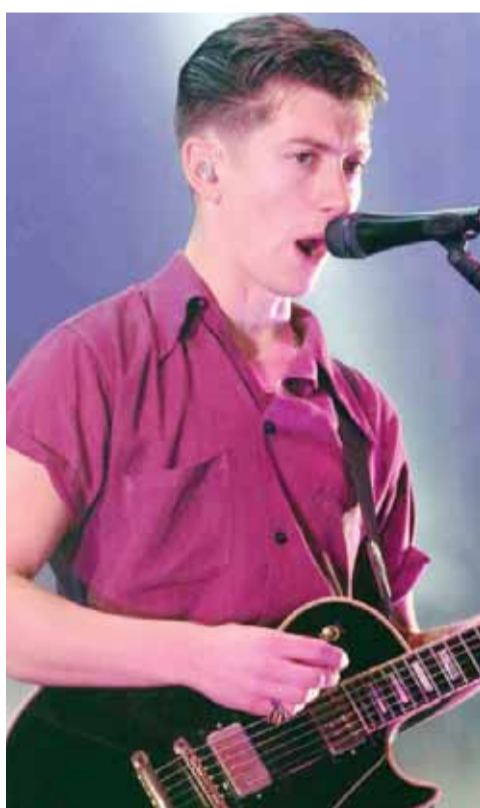
Diplo and Khalid hit the studio

Diplo has been in the studio with rising star Khalid. The 39-year-old producer - who has worked with the likes of Bruno Mars, No Doubt and Snoop Dogg - shared a photo of the pair hard at work "cooking" up a storm on his Twitter account on Thursday morning. The Major Lazer star captioned the photo of the pair: "Cooking with @thegreatkhalid (sic)" Khalid, 19, was among those nominated for this year's BBC Music Sound of 2017 honor. The 'Young Dumb & Broke' hitmaker has been up for countless awards of the past year, and has already experimented with EDM giants, after teaming up with DJ Marshmello on 'Silence'. Diplo is high-in-demand, one of his most recent projects was working with Camila Cabello on her debut solo record. He was oblivious to who Fifth Harmony were when he started working with the 'Havana' hitmaker, which meant he had no preconceptions of the Cuban beauty's talent because he wasn't familiar with the 'Work from Home' hitmakers until they'd met. However, he was blown away by her capabilities. Of working with the 'Crying in the Club' singer, he said: "We love Camila and she's been working with us for a while, even before she left Fifth Harmony, and I just thought she is dope."



Motorhead's 'Fast' Eddie Clarke dies

Motorhead co-founder 'Fast' Eddie Clarke has died. The 67-year-old rocker sadly passed away "peacefully" after suffering from pneumonia, the two surviving members of the group, Phil Campbell and Mikkey Dee, confirmed on Thursday. Revealing their devastation of losing another member of the 'Ace of Spades' metal group in a statement posted on the band's official Facebook page, they wrote: "We are devastated to pass on the news we only just heard ourselves earlier tonight...Edward Allan Clarke - or as we all know and love him Fast Eddie Clarke - passed away peacefully yesterday. Ted Carroll (who formed Chiswick Records) made the sad announcement via his FB page, having heard from Doug Smith that Fast Eddie passed peacefully in hospital where he was being treated for pneumonia... Fast Eddie...keep roaring, rockin' and rollin' up there as goddamit man, your Mot?family would expect nothing less!!! RIP FAST EDDIE CLARKE 5th October 1950 - 10th January 2018 (sic)" Guitarist Phil has been left in a state of "shock" by the news, and hailed Eddie a "true rock 'n' roller". He wrote: "JUST HEARD THE SAD NEWS THAT FAST EDDIE CLARK HAS PASSED AWAY. SUCH A SHOCK, HE WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS ICONIC RIFFS AND WAS A TRUE ROCK 'N' ROLLER. RIP EDDIE. (sic)" Drummer Mikkey had only seen his friend recently and said he was in "great shape". He said Eddie, frontman Lemmy Kilmister, who died in December 2015 from inoperable prostate cancer at the age of 70, and original drummer Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor - who passed away a month before the singer - would be jamming away together in heaven. He added: "OH MY GOD, THIS IS TERRIBLE NEWS. THE LAST OF THE THREE AMIGOS. I SAW EDDIE NOT TOO LONG AGO AND HE WAS IN GREAT SHAPE. SO THIS IS A COMPLETE SHOCK. ME AND EDDIE ALWAYS HIT IT OFF GREAT. I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING HIM IN THE UK THIS SUMMER WHEN WE COME AROUND WITH THE SCORPS...NOW LEM AND PHILTHY CAN JAM WITH EDDIE AGAIN, AND IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY I'M SURE YOU'LL HEAR THEM, SO WATCH OUT!!! MY THOUGHTS GO OUT TO EDDIE'S FAMILY AND CLOSE ONES. (sic)" Eddie kicked off his career performing in the blues band Zeus and came to meet Phil whilst refitting a houseboat, before joining the group in 1976. However, he decided to quit in 1982, and formed Fastway, who went onto to support the likes of AC/DC.

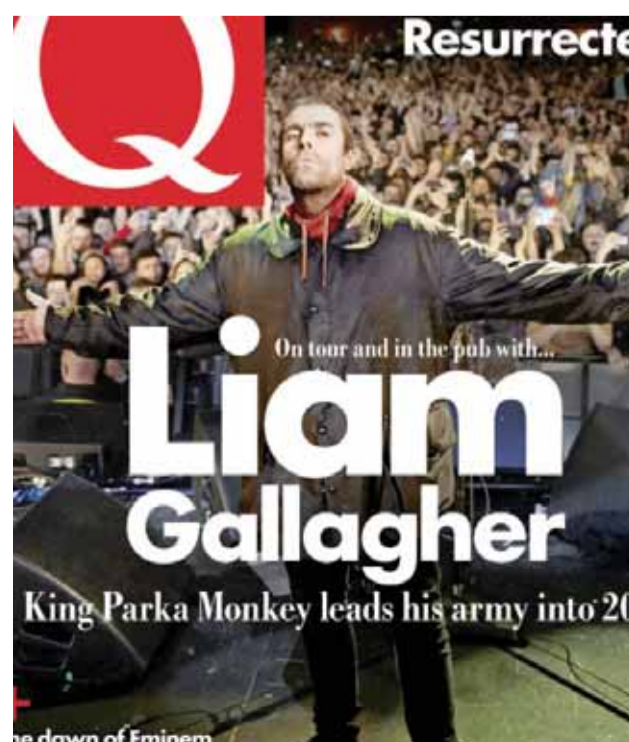


Arctic Monkeys 2018 tour date confirmed

Arctic Monkeys have announced their first tour date of 2018. The 'Do I Wanna Know' rockers - who took a break in 2014 - have now been confirmed to headline the Firefly Festival in the US in June. The band, fronted by Alex Turner, will join Eminem, The Killers and Kendrick Lamar on the bill at the festival in The Woodlands of Delaware from June 14-17, which has been announced on Twitter. But a video which fans believed revealed further tour dates has been revealed to be fake. The cryptic clip shared on Reddit, which has now been deleted, claimed to be from the band's Instagram Story and sparked speculation the numbers revealed dates and geographic co-ordinates of upcoming gigs. Fans guessed the video's clues teased performances at Mad Cool Festival, Primavera Sound, both in Spain, Rock Werchter in Belgium, and even a surprise show in London this week. But NME.com reports the video has been dismissed by official sources, and more 2018 tour dates are expected to be announced over the coming week. Bassist Nick O'Malley recently confirmed the 'Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor' hitmakers began recording their new album in September for release this year.

Liam Gallagher compares himself to Elvis Presley

Liam Gallagher has compared his singing ability to Elvis Presley. The 45-year-old singer has drawn comparisons between his own performances and those of the late music legend because he "makes something else" out of other people's lyrics, and he also believes singer/songwriters like his brother Noel Gallagher and Paul Weller have been "blinded" by his emergence as a solo star. He said: "There's been a smoke bomb gone off, and everyone's been blinded by what's gone down and the smoke's cleared and yours truly is in the middle going, 'Come on, you ****s.' "I know for a fact that he [Noel] is not a frontman. I'm not a songwriter. He's not meant to be in the middle of that stage. I'm meant to be center-stage and no one can touch me. "I've been singing other people's lyrics my whole life and I own them. Once I get hold of them, I make them something else, like Elvis." Liam would love to perform shows where he sings the first three Oasis albums, 'Definitely Maybe', '(What's the Story) Morning Glory?' and 'Be Here Now', in full because that is what the group's fans want to hear. Speaking in this month's Q magazine - which is on sale on Tuesday - he added: "Screw the rest. No one cares after that. "I want to give people what they want and I want to give me what I want."



Lifestyle | Gossip

Rag 'N' Bone Man to perform at BRITs

Rag 'N' Bone Man is set to perform at this year's BRIT Awards. The 'Human' hitmaker - who picked up the Critics' Choice and British Breakthrough Gong at last year's ceremony - has been asked to hit the stage at the music extravaganza, held at The O2 Arena on February 21, for a killer performance. Taking to his Twitter account on Saturday he said: "Jheez! 2017 has flown by super quick. Its pretty mental to think that I bagged 2 awards at the @Brits last year and now I'm heading back to perform #brits (sic)" The 32-year-old singer - whose real name is Rory Charles Graham - will join the likes of Ed Sheeran, Sam Smith, Stormzy and Foo Fighters who are also performing. The 'Skin' hitmaker has had an exceptional 12 months as his debut album 'Human' went straight to No.1 upon release - achieving the fastest selling UK male debut of the decade - and

has so far spent over 47 weeks in the UK charts. BRITs Chairman & CEO and Chairman of Sony Music UK & Ireland Jason Iley said: "Rory epitomizes how dreams can come true. He has had the most amazing 12 months and I'm so delighted to see him back where it all started." The Mastercard-sponsored ceremony will see British comedian Jack Whitehall host. Meanwhile, yesterday the awards will kick off with the nominations launch show, 'The BRITs Are Coming 2018', which will once again be hosted by Emma Willis, and will air on UK TV channel ITV from 5.45pm. Liam Payne, Jorja Smith, Paloma Faith, Clean Bandit and J Hus will perform.



Hugh Jackman's co-star kids

Hugh Jackman's children have cameos in 'The Greatest Showman'. The 49-year-old actor's son Oscar, 17, and 12-year-old daughter Ava were frequent visitors to the set of his latest musical and they had a great time enjoying a brief moment in front of the camera. Asked if the kids had visited the set, Hugh - who is married to Deborra-Lee Furness - said: "Yes. They're both in the movie as spectators in the crowd. They were there for about three days and they both really enjoyed it." Oscar has previously made another brief appearance in another of his father's movies, 'Australia', but he found the experience so boring, it put him off any ideas he might have had about pursuing acting himself. Hugh told Britain's OK! magazine: "Oscar was in 'Australia' when he was 10 years old and [director] Baz Luhrmann had him do the same thing four days in a row. "Literally walk up the steps and walk across and down and he said, 'I don't know how you do your job Dad, this is the most boring thing I've ever done.'" "I was like, 'Great, mission accomplished.'" However, the 'Logan' star may find it harder to dissuade his daughter from a life in the spotlight. He said: "She would love to be on stage to sing and dance and also become a chef. I always respond that a chef is good." Ava was particularly impressed when she saw 'The Greatest Showman' once it was complete. Her father said: "They loved it. Ava said, 'Dad, this is by far the best movie you've ever done.'" She's 12 and so it's right down her alley."



Sting is working on reggae album with Shaggy

Sting is working on a reggae album with Shaggy. The British singer-songwriter has admitted on his website that he and the Jamaican-American rapper got together last year "to jam and create music that reflects their mutual love of Jamaica, its music, people and culture" and, as a result of their time in the studio, they've come up with some "Caribbean-flavored songs." The pair's first single 'Don't Make Me Wait' is set for release on February 2 and, although fans may find it hard to envision their voices together, Sting - whose real name is Gordon Matthew Thomas Sumner - is adamant they have "a lot in common." Speaking to the New York Post newspaper Page Six column, he said: "We have a lot in common. We're both married to very strong women. We both come from small islands that used to belong to the queen. And we like each other. We like each other's voices and music and vibe. We're like kindred spirits." The duo debuted their new single in Jamaica last week at a Shaggy and Friends charity concert raising money for Bustamante Hospital for Children. Meanwhile, the 'Shape of My Heart' hitmaker - who found fame with The Police in the 70s - still has so much work he wants to do before he dies. He said: "There's a child in all of us that looks at cultural icons and goes, 'How could they die?' Because we've invested this sort of godlike immortality to them. 50,000 is from the point of view of someone who's been there watching his friends die and facing his mortality. "Mortality is something that once accepted, it's not morbid. If anything, it makes your life richer - at least, that's the philosophy I'm developing as I speak to you. I'm not ready to die at all. I've still got work to do. But an acceptance of it for all of us is a useful thing, because that's the reality."

Armie Hammer: Working with David Fincher is like a marathon



Armie Hammer says working with director David Fincher is like running a marathon. The 31-year-old actor worked with the acclaimed moviemaker on the 2010 hit 'The Social Network' and Armie admits it was an invaluable experience for a young actor like himself. He explained: "It's the first race you ever run is a marathon, and then every other 10K you run after that seems a little bit easier, you know?" Armie worked with Italian-Algerian director Luca Guadagnino on the romantic drama film 'Call Me by Your Name', which also stars Timothee Chalamet. And Armie has praised the director, saying he created one of the best on-set atmospheres he's ever experienced. He told Collider: "Luca intentionally fostered an environment that felt relaxing, and just languorous, and just enjoyable. "It was one of the easiest feeling movies that we've ever worked on because Luca intentionally kept the vibe on set really relaxed and really true to the tone of the movie." Meanwhile, Armie also revealed he relishes the experience of making independent movies, because he's afforded more freedom. He reflected: "The thing about blockbusters is they're movies made by formula. There are entire companies and corporations that are dedicated to figuring out what they think the audience wants, and what they've got to do for the movie, and all that stuff. "Whereas a movie like 'Call Me by Your Name' doesn't really have anyone doing that. It just lives and dies on its own artistic merit. You don't have a lot of cooks in the kitchen. You don't have a lot of downtime. "You're just kind of making this work, and going through it, and it's a really great experience, to feel like you're just plugged into the process of making a movie, as opposed to making something that if it doesn't make \$800 million, at least, then it's a failure."

Radcliffe 'can see why people are frustrated' over Depp's Fantastic Beasts casting



Daniel Radcliffe "can see why people are frustrated" over Johnny Depp's casting in 'Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald'. The 54-year-old actor has reprised his role as Gellert Grindelwald in the sequel, but some fans slammed bosses' decision to bring him back for the next movie because of his controversial divorce from Amber Heard in 2016, in which she claimed he'd been abusive towards her throughout their marriage before later dropping the allegations, and begged them to re-cast the part. However, although the producers did consider recasting the villain, they later decided against it because the allegations had been dropped - but Radcliffe can see why fans are annoyed by it. Speaking to Entertainment Weekly, the 28-year-old actor said: "It's a very hard thing for me. The 'Fantastic Beasts' producers are the ones who gave me a great start in life and an amazing job. "I can see why people are frustrated with the response that they were given from that ... I'm not saying anything that anybody hasn't already said-and this is a weird analogy to draw - [but] in the NFL, there are lots of players arrested for smoking weed and there is other people's behavior that goes way beyond that and it's tolerated because they're very famous players. I suppose the thing I was struck by was, we did have a guy who was reprimanded for weed on the [original 'Potter'] film, essentially, so obviously what Johnny has been accused of is much greater than that." Meanwhile, following on from the end of the first film, the sequel sees the Dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald escape from the Magical Congress of the United States of America (MACUSA). Now the wizard is gathering followers to raise pure-blood wizards up to rule over all non-magical beings but, in order to stop him and his plans, a young Albus Dumbledore [Jude Law] enlists the help of Magizoologist Newt Scamander [Redmayne] who agrees to help, unaware of the dangers that lie ahead.

Idris Elba found directing difficult



Idris Elba didn't realize how "difficult" directing would be. The 45-year-old actor has stepped behind the camera to work on 'Yardie', and though he had a lot of "fun" making a film for the first time, it wasn't easy. He said: "I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to direct this material, with which I can identify quite a bit. "The story takes place in London and Jamaica, and it's based on the novel [Victor Headley's 'Yardie'], which was popular urban fiction in the 1980s and 1990s. "It's been a lot of fun but the hardest thing I've done. "I never realized how difficult it was going to be, but I loved it and getting to spend time in Jamaica was phenomenal." Idris can currently be seen on camera in 'Molly's Game' and he was "blown away" when 'The West Wing' screenwriter Aaron Sorkin asked him to be a part of his directorial debut. He told Psychologies magazine: "'Molly's Game' is his directorial debut and he's obviously learned a lot from working with so many great directors. "He's a true genius and one of the greatest screenwriters in history. "I was blown away when he called to ask me if I wanted to do his film. I just told him, 'I'm in.'" Idris plays criminal defense lawyer Charlie Jaffey in the movie and only broke from using his character's American accent when his 16-year-old daughter Isan visited him on set. He said: "I had so much dialogue and only a short period of time in which to do it. "I couldn't afford to let myself slip back into my usual voice. "I needed to concentrate on the accent so I would speak to everyone in Charlie's voice. "It was only when my daughter, Issy, came on set to visit me that I would go back to speaking the way I normally do." — Bang Showbiz

Leonardo DiCaprio to star in Charles Manson movie

Leonardo DiCaprio is set to star in Quentin Tarantino's Charles Manson movie. The 'Kill Bill' filmmaker has reportedly asked the 43-year-old hunk to join his line up for the film, which will center around the murder of pregnant actress Sharon Tate - the wife of director Roman Polanski - who was stabbed to death by members of the Manson Family in August 1969, although he won't be playing the leading role as it's believed he's being eyed up to portray an ageing actor, according to Variety. The 54-year-old director - who has written the script for the movie - is keen to secure Margot Robbie to play the role of Sharon, while Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt are rumored to be portraying two other major roles. The film is currently untitled and being shopped around studios looking for co-financing and co-distribution ahead of a proposed shooting date of summer this year. Sharon was eight months pregnant when she was brutally murdered. The notorious cult leader had ordered a group of his followers to attack the inhabitants of a Los Angeles house which he believed was owned by a record producer who had rejected him and over the course of several hours, the quartet used guns and knives to kill the actress and four other occupants. In 1971, Manson - who died last year - and other members of his group were sentenced to life in jail for the killings, as well as a number of other murders committed that summer. If the project does go ahead, it will be the first time the 'Inglourious Basterds' director has made a movie based on true events. Tarantino recently revealed he plans to make two more movies and will then retire.



Lifestyle | Music & Movies



This file photo shows Pakistani social media celebrity Qandeel Baloch arriving for a press conference in Lahore. — AFP photos



Pakistani screenwriter Shahid Nizami (left) and director Angelina Malik attending a promotional event for social drama serial "Mujhe Jeene Do" (Let Me Live) in Karachi.



A Pakistani actress Sabeena Syed posing for a photograph during a promotional event for social drama serial "Mujhe Jeene Do" (Let Me Live) in Karachi.



Pakistani actress Hania Aamir during a promotional event for social drama serial "Mujhe Jeene Do" (Let Me Live) in Karachi.

PLOT TWIST AS PAKISTANI SOAP OPERAS SEEK TO BREAK TABOOS

In life, she chased fame, hoping to make her mark in Pakistani society. In death, murdered social media starlet Qandeel Baloch may have achieved her goal. Today she is a household name, and her tragic story has been turned into a soap opera—one of several immensely popular TV shows seeking to challenge the country's conservative taboos. "Baaghi", which means "Rebel", charts the rise of Baloch from young, exploited girl to internet sensation infamous for her provocative selfies until her shocking murder, with her brother confessing to the high-profile killing. The show airs on private TV channel Urdu 1 every Thursday. Viewing figures are unavailable, but its pilot episode has been viewed more than 1.6 million times on YouTube.



Sultana Siddiqui, a Pakistani television director and producer, speaking during an interview with AFP at her office in Karachi.

"That girl was a lioness. She should not have died yet," says Shazia Khan, a writer on the series. Baloch's fate polarized Pakistan. For some, it inflamed outrage over so-called "honor" killings in which hundreds of predominantly women are killed each year, usually by male relatives, for bringing what they perceive as shame on their families. But the concept of "honor" is deeply embedded in parts of Pakistan's patriarchal culture, and other voices argued that Baloch had made herself a target by her actions—tame by Western standards but deemed provocative in the conservative country. The decision to turn her death into one of Pakistan's popular television soap operas has ensured the debate surrounding such murders of women endures.

Notorious for its high-profile story, Baaghi is just one of a wave of soap operas and dramas airing plotlines that revolve around such social issues: from domestic violence to child abuse, forced and child marriages, misogyny and women's rights. They are devoured by Pakistan's 207 million strong population. Research by Pakistan's media regulator shows that in 2016, 65 percent of television viewers watched drama channels featuring such soap operas. Another survey by Gallup Pakistan shows 67 percent of adult female viewers and 56 percent of adult male viewers watch entertainment shows, mainly soaps. Their popularity makes them a potentially powerful vehicle for progress, says lawyer Benazir Jatoi, who works for women's rights watchdog the Aurat Foundation and has long argued that laws protecting women are not

enough to effect grassroots change.

Blowback

"Mujhe Jeene Do" (Let Me Live), another soap on Urdu 1, highlights the issue of child marriages. "If there (is) not widespread awareness, who would know that it is a crime?" Angelina Malik, the show's director, tells AFP. Pakistan's biggest entertainment channel, Hum TV, is a pioneer in using social issues as soap opera fodder. In 2016 the channel aired "Uddari", or "Flight", which told

How a TABOO ISSUE COULD BE DISPLAYED IN PROPER MANNER

the story of a young girl sexually abused by her stepfather and ignited a debate about the sexual abuse of children inside the home.

"Uddari took the sensitive subject ... to every household where discussion on sex is still a taboo," says one avid fan, Aabida Rani. In "Sammi", which revolves around its eponymous star character, the station highlighted honor killings, forced marriages, and denial of property inheritance to women all in one show. Sultana Siddiqui, a producer who later set up her own TV station, said they wanted Sammi to be a mirror of society, and an example of "how a taboo issue could be displayed in

proper manner." Their efforts are not without backlash, and Siddiqui describes pressure from media regulators as well as a wave of vitriol on social media with people accusing her and her channel of spreading vulgarity and destroying social values. But the shows' popularity kept them on the air despite the blowback, she says.

Flawed portrayals

Even as the shows push for awareness and change, the way soap opera heroines are portrayed can cause consternation. Sadaf Haider, a blogger at the country's major Dawn.com news portal, wrote in October that the storyline for Baaghi followed a predictable Pakistani track relieving the heroine of autonomy—essentially portraying Baloch as a victim. "The actual Qandeel didn't consider herself a beychari (helpless) at all, even a cursory reading of her interviews shows she worked hard and was proud of what she had achieved," Haider wrote. "Qandeel took full responsibility for her choices... So why has Baaghi portrayed something else entirely?" Pakistani journalist Fifi Haroon has complained the portrayal of women in such shows still fits in to a patriarchal narrative.

"Smiling, dewy-faced heroines ... suffer in obstinate silence or misguided stoicism," she wrote in a BBC piece. "Tears are plentiful. Producers now claim that if you don't show women crying, the drama won't garner ratings." Lawyer Jatoi, while praising soap operas as vehicles for change, took a cautious view. "They must ensure they are responsible enough to handle such sensitive topics and address underlying issues so as not to add to the already existing stigmas," she told AFP. Haroon agreed, writing that their makers must be aware of their audience. "It is not just women," she wrote. "Men too are observing what it takes to be a man in Pakistani society and of course, what they can expect from the women in their lives and homes." — AFP



Pakistani director Angelina Malik (second right) posing for a photograph with actors during a promotional event for social drama serial "Mujhe Jeene Do" (Let Me Live) in Karachi.



Pakistani actress Rubian Ashraf (left) and actor Ali Abbas filming the drama serial "Mein Maa Nah Banna Chahhti" (I Don't Want To Become A Mother) in Karachi.



Pakistani actress Fatima Shah Jeelani (center) and actors Ali Abbas (left) and Imran Ashraf filming the drama serial "Mein Maa Nah Banna Chahhti" (I Don't Want To Become A Mother) in Karachi.



Pakistani actress Rubab Hashim filming the drama serial "Mein Maa Nah Banna Chahhti" (I Don't Want To Become A Mother) in Karachi.



Pakistani actress Rubian Ashraf (left) and actor Ali Abbas filming the drama serial "Mein Maa Nah Banna Chahhti" (I Don't Want To Become A Mother) in Karachi.

MARVEL CREATES CHINESE SUPERHEROES TO DRAW ASIA FANS

Chinese superheroes will soon be joining the pantheon of larger-than-life Marvel universe mainstays Spider-Man, Iron Man and the X-Men, a company official said as the comic book giant makes a major thrust into Asia. As part of a push to grow its Asia fanbase, the Disney-owned franchise has released mobile games in China, opened "Marvel Stores" in South Korea and is searching for artistic talent in the Philippines. Marvel editor-in-chief C.B. Cebulski said. "We have been making great strides especially in Asia. We try to hire more Asian creators, writers and artists to bring a piece of their culture to Marvel comics," he said in Manila where he visited a major university for fresh talent.

The comic giant plans to introduce two new Chinese superheroes: "Sword Master" and "Aero" who will be based in China, Cebulski added. "They are going to be heavily based on Chinese culture and Chinese mythology but set in the modern world and they will interact with the other heroes (in the Marvel universe)," he said. These new characters will be drawn in the 'manga' style of Japanese comics that is more popular in Asia, he added.

Cebulski, who has lived the last two years in Asia, serving as Marvel's vice president for the region, conceded that Marvel had not given Asian characters prominent positions in the past compared to mainstays like Captain

America or the Hulk. But this is changing, he said. "We want to have stories that are reflective of every culture." There is huge fan expectation over Marvel's latest flagship movie-Black Panther—which will be released worldwide next month. The film stars Chadwick Boseman playing Marvel's breakthrough black superhero T'Challa, a king of a fictional African nation who first featured in the company's comic books in the late 1960s.

Luke Cage, another popular black Marvel superhero, has also had a recent revival through a popular TV series on Netflix. But

Asian superheroes are still comparatively rare in the Marvel universe despite the franchise's growing popularity there. In the Philippines, a former US colony, Marvel is already deeply ingrained in the nation's popular culture, said Cebulski. Filipino illustrators in turn have also provided art for Marvel comics since the 1970s. People from the Southeast Asian nation are now the third largest nationality of artists employed by Marvel, just behind Americans and Italians, Cebulski said. — AFP



This file photo shows Marvel's new editor-in-chief C.B. Cebulski, speaking at a forum in Manila. — AFP

Chris Hemsworth 'throwing ideas around' for Thor 4

Chris Hemsworth and Taika Waititi have been "throwing ideas around" for a fourth instalment of 'Thor'. The 34-year-old actor - who plays the superhero character in the Marvel series - spent his New Year's discussing the possibility of a fourth movie about the Norse god but insists it is a long way off before any formal decisions are made. He told USA Today: "We gave cheers ... a few times ... We gave cheers to Thor 3. But it also was like what could we do with four? We could do this and this. We were throwing ideas around. But also, just to work together again. That was one of the most enjoyable creative partnerships I've ever had. "It just depends on how The Avengers [movies] all wrap up. I finished shooting and now they are going to edit it and see how the stories play out. There are so many interwoven scenes and stories and characters. [Thor 4] is a conversation for further down the road, if it happens."

However, Chris has previously insisted he would love the chance to play Thor again. He said: "If I had the opportunity to do it again, I think I'd love to. I also think there's an appetite for it now, or there's a far greater range of possibilities of where he can go now, what he can do, just because we've kind of broke the mould a bit. I've just, literally two days ago, finished 'Avengers 4' and that's my contract - my pre-existing contract is done now, so it's kind of like 'wow, that's it.'" And prior to appearing in the third

movie, Chris revealed he'd rediscovered his passion for the character. He added: "Two or three films ago I was like 'okay, a couple more'. I was enjoying it but I was like ... I felt a little restricted. And after this last experience with Taika, and actually these last two 'Avengers, I feel like we've reinvented that character a number of times - even in these next two, he evolves again, and you don't get that opportunity often in a franchise. So I definitely feel a renewed sense of excitement and enthusiasm, and more so than ever, I think." — Bang Showbiz



Chris Hemsworth as Thor

THE LISTENER'S CHOICE AWARD



Nigerian hip hop recording artist and record producer and CEO of Chocolate City Jude Abaga, aka M.I or M.I Abaga, performing at the 2017 Soundcity MVP Award Night at Eko Hotels in Victoria Island Lagos on January 12, 2018. — AFP photos



Nigerian singer, songwriter, performer and actress, Tiwatope Savage-Balogun, aka Tiwa Savage, receives African's Female Artist of The Year Award.



Nigerian hip hop recording artist and songwriter Olamide Adedeji, aka Olamide Baddo, receives the Listener's Choice Award.



Nigerian singer, songwriter, record producer and entrepreneur Innocent Ujah Idibia aka 2Baba, performs on stage.



Nigerian singer, songwriter, and record producer, David Adedeji Adeleke aka Davido, addresses the audience after winning three awards in all including Africans Best Artist of The Year.



South African recording artist and record producer Refiloe Maele Phoolo, professionally known as Cassper Nyovest, receives the Best Hip Hop Award.



Nigerian singer, songwriter, and record producer, David Adedeji Adeleke aka Davido, addresses the audience after winning three awards in all including Africans Best Artist of The Year.



Ghanaian hip hop recording artist and entrepreneur Michael Owusu Addo, aka Sarkodie, performs on stage.



Nigerian hip hop recording artist and songwriter Olamide Adedeji, aka Olamide Baddo, receives the Listener's Choice Award.



Nigerian hip hop recording artist and record producer and CEO of Chocolate City Jude Abaga, better aka M.I or M.I Abaga performs on stage.



Nigerian hip-hop recording artist Chukie Edozien, aka Lynxxx and Ghanaian actress Juliet Ibrahim steps on stage to present an award.



Nigerian actor and former Commissioner for Culture and Tourism in Delta State, Nigeria Richard Mofe-Damijo presents the 2017 Soundcity MVP Award Night.



Nigerian singer, songwriter, performer and actress, Tiwatope Savage-Balogun, aka Tiwa Savage, performs.

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2018



Members of the Chinese National Acrobat Troupe perform at the Capital Circus during the 12th edition of the International Circus Festival in Budapest. — AFP

Website? French newspaper seeks Linotype instead

Jenny Braconnier sits at a hulking grey machine, amid the fumes of molten lead, swiftly typing out the news from northeast France on a strange-looking keyboard that produces lines of metal type. Beside her is a smartphone, one of the few nods to modernity in the deliberately retro newsroom of Le Democrat de l'Aisne. Braconnier, 21, and four young colleagues have mastered a 1970s Linotype machine for the weekly newspaper

courses. I learned it all in a couple months' before two fellow typesetters retired, Braconnier said.

And it isn't not easy to keep a Linotype up and running - in September the rotary press from 1927 broke down, forcing the paper to resort to digital printing for three months. "The clutch gave up, and so did the drive belt," said Kevin Germain, 26, who originally trained as a car mechanic. The newspaper had to find a



A man works on a linotype machine in the printing company's workshop of the "Democrate de l'Aisne" in Vervins.

required for the printing process. "It wasn't easy at the beginning," he acknowledged. "It's part of what sets us apart," said Eleonore Dufrenois, a reporter and assistant director. "The other part is the layout itself, the columns, made with the lead - it's the last in Europe," she said. The Democrat even won a special mention at the "Future of the Press" trade show outside Paris last November. "People buy us because we're different in both content and form," Dufrenois said. "We're unusual".

Safeguarding the future

But maintaining its financial balance is a constant battle, even with a solid base of some 1,100 subscribers who pay 26 euros a year. The paper accepts no advertising beyond legal notices - its main source of revenue - and refuses the subsidies offered by the French government to newspapers, as a gauge of its independence. Annual revenue stands at around A150,000, and the paper is thinking of setting up a foundation or a museum dedicated to the history of the press. There are no plans, however, to expand onto the internet: the Aisne Democrat appears destined to continue emerging from a workshop heavy with the smell of lead and the clacking of metal on metal. But as it pushes ahead after 112 years, the paper is in the market for a new Linotype. — AFP



A man works on a rotary press from 1927, in the printing company's workshop of the "Democrate de l'Aisne".



Journalist and director of the "Democrate de l'Aisne" Eleonore Dufrenois poses in front of the printing company's workshop of the "Democrate de l'Aisne".

founndry to make replacement parts out of steel.

'Young people can adapt'

The Aisne Democrat was founded in 1906 by Pascal Ceccaldi, a recently arrived Corsican who was elected to parliament representing the town of Vervins. At one point the paper was publishing 20,000 copies a day, employing 20 typesetters who could put out up to six pages. These days circulation stands at some 1,500 copies a week that sell for 60 euro cents (\$0.70) each, with the young team backed by former employees as well as the paper's director, Jacques Piraux, 76. "I've got my succession plans in place," says Piraux, who is also president of the Friends of the Democrat, the association which took over the paper in 1987 as it was facing insolvency. He is convinced that "young people can adapt" and keep up the hot-metal-type tradition, which has earned the paper subscribers from as far away as Sydney and Hong Kong.

His most recent recruit is Nicolas Laplace, 29, who recently was fishing around for matrices to slot into the cartridges - in reverse order, as

which covers an area near Belgium that proudly sticks with a technology most papers abandoned decades ago.

The four-page broadsheet, which bills itself "100 percent lead, zero percent web", covers the local farming scene along with more timely concerns like trends in New Year's greeting cards or the tally of anti-fraud operations carried out in the area last year. "It's a place where we do whatever it takes," said Braconnier, who started three years ago at what she readily admits is "an unusual job".

Each strike of the Linotype's keyboard sends a "matrix", part of a mould for forming each character of type, into a cartridge that sets a single line of text. Once it's ready, the molten lead - in fact an alloy of lead, tin and antimony - is poured into the moulds, which are then set for printing. It's an exacting process, and not easy to pick up. "There are no more schools, no more



A worker adjusts letters on a plaque in the printing company's workshop of the "Democrate de l'Aisne".



People work in the printing company's workshop of the "Democrate de l'Aisne". — AFP photos